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Assuming someone were to concern himself with Democritus; the question always occurs to me, Why not Heraclitus? Or Philo? Or Bacon? Or Descartes — or anyone else, for that matter? And then: Why a philosopher, anyway? Why not a poet, an orator? And: Why must it be a Greek, why not an Englishman, a Turk? Isn't the past large enough for you to find something that does not make you look so ridiculously arbitrary?

—Friedrich Nietzsche (1995; 1988)

Unlike the historian, the writer remains so closely involved with action that he can never free himself of the temptation to destroy whatever stands between him and his deed, especially the temporal distance that makes him dependent on an earlier past.

—Paul de Man (1983)

Freud's work is the work of writing, the work of a writer.... From language to skin, pen to hand, there is no gap, no distance, but an essential, organic continuity.

—Lydia Flem (2003)

One

Time, says Thoreau, is but the stream I go a-fishing in. A technique in cinema is to film actors performing in reverse (walking backward across a room), then to reverse the film, restoring the normal temporal sequence of events. The distortion is a faint and liminal occultism, the slightest disconnect between the way things look and how they ought to look. A hallucination within a simulated movement, a disturbance of the reality in which we suspend our belief, a mystery of technical immanence rather than organic transcendence. Critical *distance* and disciplinary *place* might be said to meet like this artificial reality — actors acting backwards — finding its verso in the

naturalized artifice of inverted film: the scholar's "discovery" retracing itself to the act of re-presentation that *is* writing, is writing's translation, and then winching it forward again. In what follows, my argument is that it is fruitless to seek the nextness of new media, and the future of scholarship it carries with it, in anamnesis, in that regress of *techne – nostos – physis*, to a nature conceived as foil for self-organized cyborgization. No, we might better think it, this nextness, as a kind of *remembering forward*, not a reduction of future to past or past to future, *mutatis mutandis*. In what we might call the privilege zone—in order to flag not only the dialers-in but those to whom the system issues a call, a ping, whether they answer or no (and which is not meant to fetishize non-privilege either, to imprison it in some ping-less physis)—the gradual yet massive conversion of analog to digital archive, as well as the next, natively digital production regime and the *mise-en-abyme* of data migration, all this, in the privilege zone, raises questions of the translation and transposition of media, and of mediatization itself, as well as what seems to inhabit it, to *make itself home* there, in remote sensing and home storage, the hard drive. The global village, the world imploded in a caul of socialized electricity, is privatized in the home-bubble, a nut or seed-pod of data, the personal-professional archive whose exponential growth in life online, I want to suggest, shunts modernist critical practice (ours) into reverse. In this closure of critical distance, down the *longue durée* of the library shelf, we see our own work on the "junk-pile of critical history," "instructive as a hyperbolic interaction of critical desire with the modes of production" of our time (Willmott 1996, 207, xv).¹ There is no more necessary perspective than this; for scholarly production, today, no less than less rigorous forms of ubiquitous capture, compulsive diarism, and self-archiving, is an abject embrace of the surveillance state—as much as its self-study, in what we might have to call our "telepathy": the pathos of (critical) distance, of distance which is always already "at" place.²

¹Willmott's reading of McLuhan's *closure* of critical distance (and critical history), for literary and cultural studies scholarship in what we used to call "postmodernity," is a guiding concept for me here.

²See Vatalescu (2004) for an example of methodological reflexivity in scholarly archival work, as imbricated in the surveillance (non-metaphorical, in this case) producing a field of objects. For an emerging debate also subtending my discussion here, see Folsom (2007), along with Freedman, Hayles, McGann, McGill, and Stallybrass (2007). One version of a geopolitical ground for this and similar contemporary (merely) "academic" debates is furnished by Morris (2007). Finally, see Derrida (2007; 1987), along with Luckhurst's (2002) historicizing response to Derrida's essay. See also Royle (1991; 2003).

Two

Distance, place. Two cultures mutually bearing down, like markets—glancingly, as translation's tangent contacts the home circle: infinitesimal flash of the dependence to which both are doomed. After which—each proceeds, seemingly on its way. If, in these just-past juggernaut days, such rare illumination was that of a night tornado in lightning's *Augenblick*, nextness hunting you in the dark, it is not least because new media, like the new economy, like all next things, brought their own talk. And that talk concealed what talk always conceals—the noise in the line, the dropped call, scheduled downtime or sudden crash, all the failures of talk and failures *to* talk. What distance can say of place, place of distance, is always less; moreso *as* less.

But, you are saying, in that very chiasmus, one more: distance *is* place, place distance.

Exactly?

Three

Already in 1873, as Freud enters the university in Vienna, Nietzsche is enamored of an already that isn't yet, the near-at-a-distance, monstrous twins and terminal terms of the scholarly pathos I want to call "telepathy." Its remnant-revenant is "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben," the essay on the utility and the liability of history departments³ for life—each

³Most (2002) suggests we consider carefully the implications of Nietzsche's use of the word *Historie*, rather than *Geschichte*: "[I]f 'Geschichte' often designates history in the sense of the past, the events of earlier times, the learned loan word 'Historie' tends instead to denote history in the sense of the study of history, the academic investigation of the past. Nietzsche's target, in short, is a specific mode of professionalized discourse within the contemporary institutional division of academic labor: on the one hand, a set of State-supported and State-controlled institutions for the training, examination, recruitment, and advancement of a caste of loyal functionaries; on the other, the consciousness of methods and values shared by these functionaries and instilled by them in the minds of their young wards. We will not be too far off if we translate the title of Nietzsche's essay as 'The Use and Abuse of History Departments for Life'" (32).

Brobjer argues that the essay is "not representative of Nietzsche's view of the value of historical studies and methods" and that Nietzsche "had little or no interest in it after he had published it," regarding it as "his least valuable book" (2004, 301-22). Brobjer extracts passages from an 1874 letter from Nietzsche to Erwin Rohde, in which Nietzsche calls the impulse behind the first *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* (including "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben") "dilettantishly immature" and "polemical, negative" (assessments echoed in the tenth section of the essay itself). See Brobjer (2004, 303). More sensitively, Most reads in the essay's very "untimeliness" the unavoidable and non-incidental volatility of Nietzsche's engagement with Humboldtian humanism, confronting the university with its critical limit: "Nietzsche's words are the theatrically effective exit line of a man who already found himself, objectively and subjectively, on his way out of the profession. Modern scholars tend to exaggerate the differences between Nietzsche and his philological colleagues, in part because most of the latter found so little in common with him, in part because he himself felt his subsequent break with philology as a liberation permitting him to devote himself full-time to the philosophy for which

constellation of which offers its own untimeliness. It is a dissection of the *historische Krankheit*, the archive fever, in which Nietzsche excoriates the doctor for creating the illness, and then doctors the doctor himself, extending it. At the point to which we will cut, we have already heard of “monumental,” “antiquarian,” and “critical” history, about the mightily hostile star (*mächtig feindseliges Gestirn*) of historical science, its *fiat veritas pereat vita*, and the wandering encyclopedias (“We are wandering encyclopedias,” Nietzsche says) whose spines read “Handbuch innerlicher Bildung für äußerliche Barbaren.” We have admitted to the cardinal sin of historiography: that chasm, gap, cleft (*Kluft*) of *innen* from *außen*, content or substance (*Inhalt*) from form. Historicism, Nietzsche will suggest, is less an attentiveness to the past than a desire or craving for the future: *die Neubegierde*, the state of being (made) greedy for (or by) the new, of being besotted with the new. One might say: the need to *make* history, not merely, or not at all, to “research” it. The need for the new, for a certain atomized, appropriable future, a future of “micrologies” (*Mikrologien*), as *telos*, tele-future: this, Nietzsche suggests, is where the scalpel of history enters the flesh. Just set a couple of modern biographers, he says, to pondering the origins of Christianity, or of the Reformation: their sober, pragmatic *Neubegier* would quite suffice to make all “*geisterhafte actio in distans*,” ghostly action at a distance, impossible.

Here there are two categorically discrete analogies, themselves cast in analogy. The first is that of the acorn swallowed by “the most miserable animal,” so hindering the *Entstehung*, the origin, development, *rise*, of the mightiest oak (as “modern biographers” might thus foreclose on ghostly *actio in distans*). A figure of possibility—the seed, a possible oak—denatured by nature. Its temporality, now and to come, already and not yet, is dissolved in futurity, in the miserable animal’s animal need. This acorn, Nietzsche says, is like a religion, an art (*eine Kunst*), a genius (*ein Genie*); it is like a star (*Gestirn*), in that a star needs an “atmosphere,” a mysterious circle of vapor (*einen geheimnisvollen Dunstkreis*), an enveloping delusion (*Wahn*), a protective and veiling cloud, in order to ripen:

he has become famous. But in fact the young Nietzsche is far more a part of his professional context than was, or is, sometimes thought. His own pose, of course, was that of a man with one foot in philology and one foot out, enough an integral part of the system to know full well its drawbacks but remote enough from it to be able to recognize them as drawbacks: close enough to diagnose society’s ills, distant enough to cure them” (2002, 51).

The “telepathic” link I offer between Nietzsche and Freud plays on the symmetry of Nietzsche’s attempt to abolish a “science,” invoking scientific intolerance for action at a distance, with Freud’s struggle to establish one—a struggle for the sake of which Freud struggles to accept “thought transference.”

Aren't the things whose vital effects are by no means exhausted prematurely done away with, or at least paralyzed, when we direct our curiosity at the countless trivialities of the life and the works and go out in search of intellectual problems when we should be learning to live and to forget all problems? Just transport in your imagination a few of these modern biographers to the birthplace of Christianity or of the Lutheran Reformation; their sober, pragmatic lust for the new would be just enough to render every ghostly *actio in distance* impossible, just as the most wretched animal can prevent the mightiest oak tree from coming into existence by eating the acorn from which it would sprout. All living things need to be surrounded by an atmosphere, a mysterious cloud of vapor; if this cloud is removed, if a religion, an art, a genius, is condemned to be a planet orbiting without an atmosphere, then we should cease to be surprised that they quickly wither, becoming hard and unfruitful. (1955, 133-34; 1988, 298)

Now: how is a star like an acorn, how could it ripen, how could it conversely suffer a "withering," and how is the eating of seeds by the wretched animal not precisely—"natural"? It "makes no sense." Only, perhaps, in some occult communication (or anticommunication), some sympathy or pathos in distance, between images, or tropisms of images, in heterogeneity; and only, perhaps, in terms of something one might call the critical-archival pathos, the linking of things not in geometric-logical space, but in time, in the existential-phenomenological modern or (better) the nonphenomenalized aninteriority of the *competing* modern.⁴ Earlier, Nietzsche has asked: this *Kluft* of history from life, is it only "our" hallucination (*Liegt die Schuld an uns, den Betrachtenden?*)—or have history and life somehow altered their constellation, and a mightily hostile star risen between them (1995, 108-09; 1988, 271)? In the analogical constellation with which Nietzsche responds, the "mightily hostile star" is opposed, on the one hand, by star-constellation-with-atmosphere, the veiled possible star; and, on the other, by *der mächtigsten Eiche*, the mightiest possible oak, the oak yet to grow. One resists isolation, the other, incorporation: negation and *Aufhebung*, twin barrels of history. The star needs to be left alone by historical science, so as to "ripen," so as *not*

⁴See Harootunian (2007). Harootunian parses what is often today called (even by intellectuals) simply "fundamentalism" as the persistence of Gramsci's "Southern question," in the form of competing modernities generating "collisions" and "discordances" of temporalities. He proposes a rematerialization of Husserl's "thickened present," removed from interior consciousness, as a figure for capital's mixed temporalities erupting from within homogeneous empty Euro-U.S. modern (national) time. This mixture would be understood as the *lived time* of the "lived everyday," a pitting of memory's multiple temporalities against history's singular universal. Alan Liu's revision of "history" as a name for oppositional-humanistic "destructive creation," is, while nominally counterposed (that is, reappropriating the very concept and term Harootunian proposes we discard), a related project—most of all in its critique of the bureaucratic-positivist U.S. academy and its archival practices. See Liu (2004), especially "Introduction: Literature and Creative Destruction" and chapter 11, "Destructive Creativity: The Arts in the Information Age."

to become “mightily hostile”; its “atmosphere” is a medium of resistance to appropriation, to proximation, on the one hand, and of conduction, or connection, on the other

We have here a constellation of topographic and categorial figures, approaching and withdrawing in a rhetorical space of mixed register, which folds into itself, becoming finally impossible to see. The acorn-star, a secret (but not yet hermetic) possibility, is swallowed, suppressed or repressed, by the pragmatic historian, and it is abandoned in “empty space” by natural science: this is “innen / außen,” the pathology of substance itself. That it thus has no ground, no organic context, and that the root of *Entstehung*, here, is a negative (*prevented* *Entstehung*)—this is a disadvantaging, an abuse, a dissection, a *Nachteilung* of the metaphors of seed, of insemination, itself. The relationship of acorn to star, and of star to mightiest oak, are monstrous: teratogenic and repetitious, not reproductive.⁵ There is no substance, no space, *no Being* here; there is no empty space and—no place. Interval, *medium*, is causality, time required by space, by points needing lines, objects needing to get to each other. *There is no place, but there is distance*, we are at the coreless core of the idea here. It would not be the internal maturation of the seed producing difference, but its indigestibility as a foreign body.

Four

“But the child’s analysis threw no light on the matter; the action had forced its way that day into the child’s life like a foreign body.” This is the final anecdote of “Dreams and Occultism,” in the *New Introductory Lectures* of 1933, which, I want to suggest, lives in a circuit or feedback loop including *Totem and Taboo* (1913), “The Uncanny” (1919), and the two papers “Psychoanalysis and Telepathy” (1921/1941) and “Dreams and Telepathy” (1922). The acorn-star of *Totem and Taboo*, its figure for that which makes no sense, is magic (*die Magie*)—or rather, the “principle” of magic, as stated, Freud says, by E. B. Tylor: *mistaking an ideal connection for a real one* (1955c, 83; 1968, 103). Mistaking a breach, that is to say, for a link; a distance for a nondistance. Magic’s mistake, Freud says in *Totem and Taboo*, takes two forms noted by Frazer: in both forms, telepathy is accepted as self-evident, absent any critical distancing (ablation, excision: *die Entfernung*). Imitative or homeopathic magic—the rain dance, or pins stuck in a doll—elides the impossibly long distance between representation (act performed) and reality (anticipated result); contagious magic, by contrast—casting a hex on someone using that person’s hair or fingernail—makes too much of actual contiguity.

Now, this religious technology, “the omnipotence of thoughts” (*Allmacht der Gedanken*), which is, Freud says, the principle of magic: this is, for Freud the “scientist,” at bottom an over-valuation of the psychic. And Freudian

⁵For the sense of “teratogenic” here, see Jacobs (1975).

magic is, then, only and already a form of Nietzsche's (teratogenic) "higher" philosophy. But already it's slipping: modern science too *is* animism, Freud admits, it too seeks to effect the atmosphere begetting rain, and by the time the hesitation reaches his voice, it is no longer clear (but was it ever?) whose *we* this is:

Since [animistic] thinking knows no distances, since the spatially furthest-apart as much as the temporally most different can easily be brought together in an act of consciousness, so too the magical world telepathically removes itself beyond spatial distance and treats as present past connection. In the animistic age the mirror image [*Spiegelbild*] of the inner world must render invisible that other world-image [*Weltbild*], which *we* seem to perceive, which we believe we perceive (1955c, 85; 1968, 105).

Let *us* also notice, Freud says, that these two principles of association, likeness (*Ähnlichkeit*) and contiguity (*Kontiguität*), meet in the higher unity of touch (*Berührung*). Association by *Kontiguität* is direct touch; association by *Ähnlichkeit* is transferential or metaphoric touch. "Some as yet ungrasped identity in the psychical process," Freud says, "no doubt accounts for [*verbürgt*] the use of the same words for both types of connection. It is the same circuit [*Umfang*] of concepts of touch that turned up in the analysis of taboo" (1955c, 85; 1968, 105). That circuit links *desire* to touch with *fear* of touching (*Berührungsangst*, or, as Freud also says, inserting a linguistic foreign body into his text, "*délire de toucher*")—in (a) an originary double meaning of the word "taboo"; and (b) the ambivalence of feeling/touch (*Gefühlsambivalenz*) that the word "taboo" serves to mark. Obsessional prohibitions are liable to displacement (*Verschiebbarkeit*) and will extend themselves from object to object along whatever contextual paths until, Freud says, *die Unmöglichkeit hat am Ende die ganze Welt mit Beschlag belegt*, the whole world is monopolized by impossibility (1955c, 27; 1968, 37).

The principal character of the psychological constellation fixed in this way, Freud says, is *ambivalence toward an object*. Now, in this touching/not touching, this distancing-at, *both* distance and place are modes of projection; thought *as* distance, what Freud calls its *Allmacht*, projects itself altering, as he puts it, "the whole face of the earth," and as such (at the same time) is magically self-proximate, is *außen* as *innen*. Is, in other words, *home*—in precisely that sense in which *the homely and the unhomely are one*. The higher unity in which these impossibilities meet, the touch that isn't a touch, can only be a suspension *in*, not a suspension *of*, opposition—in which we claim one more extension. Not that which resolves, makes soluble, opposed terms in connection *or* dissection, *Berührung* or *Nachteilung*—but a suspension-in-constellation, of truth-as-illusion, of the star *as* the swallowed acorn.

Five

What *pathos* is this? Or, to put it in terms more congenial to itself, though not to say self-same: Which one? Not the historical pathos, the pathos of anamnesis, surgical pathos, pathos of *Nachteilung*; not the subjective pathos, not, precisely, even a “human” pathos. But in the acorn, the number, thing, subject, action, cause and effect, hyphen-punctum-motion-star – in *Berührung im direkten*, the fiction of a pure touch, this pathos of distance, this suffering from distance, implies a suffering of, a *hinnehmen* or taking-there, there-taking, of distance. It crosses the distance from distance to place, *mise en abyme*; it is the *mise en abyme* of distance to place, in a place neither place *nor* distance.

Pathos of *tele-*; telepathos. “Ghostly” *actio in distans*. Distance at origin, distance at end; nonpropagating, yet not outside of time; dependent, yet nonrelational; dissipative, yet autocatalytic; a distancing-at. Teleology at allology; telecommunication at noise; an “always already” at “not yet.” Homeopathic, like “optical contact,” the *pharmakon*, the heimlich. Pathos of *nonpity*, *nonterror*; pathos of *ethos*; secrecy minus the secret; telepathy at, telepathy *as*, allopathy.

Is there a medium?

Six

Mechanism is nagged by *actio in distans*. Either “ether,” intra-atomic, interstellar, molecular or continuous, sensible or occult – or *actio in distans*. Either extension – or: monstrous instantaneity, quantumlike entanglement. Newton (accused of occultism): optical contact, contact at a distance less than a wavelength of light, visible contact, invisible noncontact – no *absolute* contact, yet bodies affect each other, therefore *actio in distans*.⁶ Boscovich: no substance; matter as mathematic points, repelling-attracting.⁷ Maxwell:

⁶See Meyerson (2002): “We know the phenomenon called Newton’s rings, occurring when a lens is pressed against a level sheet. The colour of these rings permits us to calculate the thickness of the intermediary layer. In the centre, where this thickness is least diminished, a black spot is produced. It is ‘optical contact,’ yet it is not a real contact. The two bodies may be brought more closely together, but then there is adhesion” (73).

⁷See Meyerson (2002): “Boscovich supposes that atoms are not corpuscles but geometrical points absolutely divested of space. Each of these points is a centre of forces, or rather of a single force identical with itself at equal distances round the point but varying according to the distance.... Boscovich’s ideas have had considerable influence upon science because he was the first resolutely to strip the atom of extension” (73-74).

The vast interplanetary and interstellar regions will no longer be regarded as waste places in the universe, which the Creator has not seen fit to fill with the symbols of the manifold order of His kingdom. We shall find them to be already full of this wonderful medium; so full, that no human power can remove it from the smallest portion of space, or produce the slightest flaw in its infinite continuity. It extends unbroken from star to star; and when a molecule of hydrogen vibrates in the Dog Star, the medium receives the impulses of these vibrations and, after carrying them in its immense bosom for three years, delivers them in due course, regular order, and full tale into the spectroscope of Mr. Huggins, at Tulse Hill. (1890, 322)

In electromagnetism, light itself *is* magnetic disturbance. The plenum is saved, saved from plurality, from multimedia, it is a luminiferous *or* an electromagnetic ether.

But the medium has other functions and operations besides bearing light from man to man, and from world to world, and giving evidence of the absolute unity of the metric system in the universe. Its minute parts may have rotatory as well as vibratory motions, and the axes of rotation form those lines of magnetic force which extend in unbroken continuity into regions which no eye has seen, and which, by their action on our magnets, are telling us in language not yet interpreted what is going on in the hidden underworld from minute to minute and from century to century.... These are some of the already discovered properties of that which has often been called vacuum, or nothing at all. They enable us to resolve several kinds of action at a distance into actions between contiguous parts of a contiguous substance. Whether this resolution is of the nature of explication or complication, I must leave to the metaphysicians. (Maxwell 1890, 322-23)

Seven

It is the dream of a universal language, of the eigen-code, already written, yet uninterpreted, a tele-telecommunication, magnetically enciphered, algorithmic, propagated, non-instantaneous, interval in time, wave in field, retracable. We can reverse engineer it. But if there is reverse engineering, cannot there be, *must* not there be Engineering, too?

Freud:

the double was originally an affirmation [*Versicherung*] made against destruction of the ego, an 'energetic denial of the power of death,' as Rank says; and probably the 'immortal' soul was the first double of the body.... There are also all those unfulfilled possibilities for shaping our fate [*Geschicksgestaltung*] to which we still like to cling in fantasy, all those strivings of the ego which owing to external misfortune couldn't be carried through, and all our suppressed decisions of will which have given us the illusion of free will...The character of uncanniness can only be stirred from that place where the double belongs to one of the formations of psychical primitive times, long since surmounted, in which it surely had a friendlier sense. (1955d, 235; 1966b, 247)

The double "is" at the beginning, and at every *Willensentscheidung*, every fork in the road where what is possible exceeds what is actual, where I die a little death and am thrown into time. But if there is no time, if time is neither timeless nor time, *and* there is death, then all deaths must already have been died, each throw of the dice been thrown, which means eternally dying. If there is no *first* dying, there is no dying *the same* death, there is no dying a *different* death, no dying at all *compared* to dying, only difference *in* dying, "geisterhafte *actio in distans*": no *innen/außen*, no beginning, no ending of death. And thus (and *mutatis mutandis*) of life. No sameness, no novelty; no future, no history; utility *and* liability, use *and* abuse, advantage *and* disadvantage. Time is not "time of death," time that moves in a line into the "timeless," but *double time*, recurrence.

Stymied by "ambivalence" — that of the words? his own? — Freud gives up explaining taboo, as he will give up explaining telepathy: "We do not know the origin of the horror of incest or even on what basis to guess it" (1955c, 125; 1968, 152). That does not mean that we are done. Undaunted, Freud then projects a mighty articulation of the omnipotence of (I, Freud's) thoughts, a solution "of another kind altogether," which he calls an "historical diversion" (*Ableitung*: "shunt"). Is it the monstrous implausibility of this shunt that makes it so fascinating? It is the story that begins with Darwin's *Urhorde*, is elaborated by the improbably named "Dr. Savage," and leads to the Oedipalization of the totem meal. "Should this equation be more than a misleading play of chance," Freud says — and we can just about hear him soliciting, shaking the dice — "it must permit us to throw a light on the origin [*Entstehung*] of totemism in the inconceivably remote past" (1955c, 132; 1968, 160).

Eight

Telepathy is a relation with *das fremde Ich*. A logic of identification, of self-doubling (*Ich-Verdopplung*), self-dividing (*Ich-Teilung*), and self-exchange (*Ich-Vertauschung*), which is also a logic of substitution, of confounding one's self. Founding is co-founding, *confounding*, confusing. The uncanny reminds us of, indeed remands us to a repetition compulsion, an unintentional return, locating fate where we might only have admitted chance. Must we then admit a secret, Freud asks, in, for example, the obdurate return to a certain number? Might it perhaps number my life span, this number that's everywhere, in addresses and hotel room and railroad compartment assignments (and citations, and productivity evaluation rubrics⁸) – might it perhaps number the days to my death? Am I *on the way home*? Only, only, Freud says, if we are not secure and hardened against superstitions (*Aberglauben*). But-believings; after-parting: we are not critically distant from Nietzsche's polemics. The ground keeps shifting. Recurrence tempts one to locate a *secret* – yet what the uncanny signifies is precisely that there *is no secret*, or else that the secret is given and, in being given, is taken away. *Das Heimliche* shades into *das Unheimliche* because, Freud says, it is not the foreign, but the familiar, repressed. And yet, merely a page on, *das Heimliche/das Unheimliche* is thought as the return, the return that is not a return, of that which *has never been* familiar, and never will be: death. “No person can grasp it [the proposition “Everyone must die”], and our unconscious has as little room now as ever for the presentation [*Vorstellung*] of its own mortality” (1955d, 242; 1966b, 263). Once more, that hesitation: “The uncanny experience comes about when repressed infantile complexes are reanimated by an impression, or when surmounted primitive beliefs seem once again to be confirmed. In the end one should not allow a predilection for balanced solution [*glatte Erledigung*] and lucid representation to keep us from confessing that that the two kinds of uncanny experience classed here are not always sharply distinguishable” (1955d, 249; 1966b, 263). And, of course, that they may *lead one astray*. “We have gone into this field of research,” Freud concludes, “without clearly intending to” (1955d, 251-52; 1966b, 267).

Nine

Telepathy is scholarship's *unhome*. In “Dreams and Telepathy,” three years later (1922), Freud is alarmed enough to address *you* directly. I am afraid, he says, that you, like my mysterious correspondent, will want to *receive* the dream as a telepathic message, instead of analyzing it, as you

⁸On the uncanny (or uncannies) of the UK Research Assessment Exercise, see Royle, *The Uncanny*, esp. “Night Writing: Deconstruction Reading Politics,” (1991, 112-133).

ought to want to do. And if, then (to honor that fear for a moment), we cannot help *but* receive Freud's writings themselves as telepathic—as works of teratogenically *creative* writing—it is because “analysis” now *renders itself* as “Nutzen und Nachteil,” unstitching *and* dissecting, loosening *and* atomizing, freeing *and* pulverizing.

Freud's psychoanalytic messages arrive as writing from “beyond the grave”; as such, they were already there, they cannot *but* be telepathic, in the uncanny double of denying *and* resigning oneself to—and even affirming, even *desiring*—critical distance. To the extent that he *was* writing, “I, Freud” was already dead; to the extent that “I” write about “Freud,” I, too, die. “I foresee,” Freud says, “that this will always be the case in the encounter of psychoanalysis with occultism. The former incites all our instinctive resistance, while the latter is met halfway by powerful and mysterious sympathies” (1955a, 204; 1969b, 172). The task of the analyst in this case is to suffer, to endure, to “put up with” telepathy.

If in 1933 Freud offered the latency of some lost “common purpose,” a universal language of the hive, or insisted, at times, on telepathy *as mechanism*, by which “the analogy with other transformations, such as occur in speaking and hearing by telephone, would then be unmistakable” (1964, 55; 1969a, 59)—what nevertheless *remains*, in *Totem und Tabu* and the papers of 1919–1922, is a kind of shunt or baffle, an indigestible foreign body *in mechanism*. A category mistake; a *Bahnung* which might, to choose an example, offer the telephone to *contact the dead*; and in this, Freud's modelings take up the spectrality of *actio in distans*. The *medium* is not the *bridge*, not *that which* links, that which connects—but *nonbridging* itself, that which *is not bridged*, cannot be bridged, *der Andere*, the neighbor not “as oneself” but *unto itself*. Telepathy, *pathless*, *apathic*: not “apathetic.” *Allopathy* “*via*”—we cannot but bridge, again—*apathy*.

Ten

Chance: this April morning, the sun, music, the smile of someone passing, *you*. Necessity: this April morning, the sun, music, the smile of someone passing.... As when you *placed a call* to my mobile—uselessly circuitous connect—from a pay telephone intersecting my *line of flight*—

Eleven

“It is perfectly conceivable that a telepathic message might arrive contemporaneously with the event and yet only penetrate to consciousness the following night during sleep (or even in waking life only after a while, during some pause in the activity of the mind)” (1955a, 219; 1969b, 191).

Telepathic messages may not live in astronomic time. They can be archived, like your email is archived, held on the sending or the receiving server or one in between, logged elsewhere, delivered to your mail spool, another archive, where your login, client, and filters read it, another archive, you read it and re-archive. But here is where analogy breaks down, the baffle baffles, email is shunted and lost to the dead: for digital bits propagate too. It would take a quantum entanglement machine to extract us from analogy, and would we then, ourselves, be *of* media, or be media-less? “Et la *tekhne* télématique n’est pas un paradigme ou un exemple matérialisé d’autre chose, *elle est cela*,” *it is that* (Derrida 2007, 252). Analogy, *Traumdeutung*, cryptography, *techne* as distance, *techne* as place, can only translate themselves from pure idiom, an idiom already repeated, no longer private, basis already anabasis, no longer “edged”: *ana-lyein*, loosening up, as *re-leger*, regathering. In translating ourselves, in carrying ourselves past death, we die, death overwhelms analogy. In nowness, in newness, the need to be “Herr von Vorsicht,” *der Fernseher*, tele-visor, seer and broadcaster, prophet, fortune-teller, astrologer, historian—*scholar*—are we not precisely archiving *ourselves*, growing what Adorno termed “herbaria of artificial life” (1990, 58), archives and anarchives whose endurance, whose beginnings and ends, *as* archives, cannot be known?

This is how to look to the future, this is, Nietzsche says, how history *can* serve life.

Let’s paint a picture of the spiritual process that is thereby induced in the soul of the modern human being. Historical knowledge constantly flows into him from inexhaustible sources; alien and disconnected facts crowd in upon him; his memory opens all its gates and is still not open wide enough; nature struggles as best it can to receive, order, and honor these alien guests, but they themselves are involved in a struggle with one another, and it seems necessary to overpower and subdue them all if he himself is not to perish as a result of their struggle. Habituation to such a disorderly, stormy, and struggling household gradually becomes a second nature, although there can be no doubt that this second nature is much weaker, much more restless, and in every way more unhealthy than the first. Ultimately, the modern human being drags around with him a huge number of indigestible stones of knowledge, which then on occasion, as in the fairy tale, make quite a racket inside his stomach. This racket betrays the fundamental characteristic of this modern human being: the remarkable antithesis between an interior that corresponds to no exterior and an exterior that corresponds to no interior—an antithesis unknown to the peoples of the ancient world. Knowledge consumed in excess of hunger—indeed, even contrary to one’s need—now no longer is effective as a shaping impulse directed outward, but remains instead hidden in a chaotic inner world that every modern human being, with peculiar pride, designates his own characteristic ‘inwardness.’ Of course, he then says that he has the content and only the form is lacking, but for all living things this is a wholly incongruous antithesis. Our

modern cultivation [*Bildung*] is nothing living precisely because it cannot be comprehended without this antithesis: that is, it is no real cultivation, but rather only a kind of knowledge about cultivation; it remains satisfied with the thought and feeling of cultivation, but never arrives at the resolve for achieving cultivation. (1995, 109-110; 1988, 272-3)

Twelve

And what of *my* archive? – my acorn-star, toward which *this* essay is only – an essay?⁹ Memory-prosthesis, artifice life, life artifice, a second nature where there *was no first*, sick, because there was no health, restless, because there was no rest, you didn't eat that crowd of stones, you found them in you, they were thrown into you, inserted, you found them there, you didn't ingest them. And part of you *lives* in that second nature, the part of you you never knew, the part that isn't familiar, the *Nachteil*, the *unheimlich*, the part *already* dead, not always and yet, not yet.

Which wouldn't be the same, would it, as the repeater sweeping the screen, lighting up one pattern, the next, immanent recombination, no *innen* or *außen*, no surface, no depth? Could we still have those historic stones? Or might we feel them as religion, some *foyer virtuel*, and as a being stitched in there, *myself* the stone, *myself* the foreign body, in a vertiginous *fort/da* of distance-not-place, not interval, not “medium” but – medium again? And from there, from there:

What if *we never came home*?

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⁹Which I might distinguish, in a small way, from “narrative,” as Jameson does not. Still (and still following Harootunian), I follow him here: “Proust and Bergson, Plato and Parmenides: is it idealism as such that generates this ideological illusion, or on the contrary the historiographic arguments that are themselves the source of the idealistic mirage? Or do both spring from some modification in the social order? To offer an answer to these questions is then to propose a specific narrative option (indeed, we have already implicitly suggested one, in evoking the accumulation of information in the contemporary world) which flies in the face of the synchronic hypothesis itself.” See Jameson (2005, 89).

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