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Writing in Deconstruction *vs* Speech in Structuralism (Jacques Derrida *vs* Ferdinand de Saussure)

Writing in Deconstruction "vs" Speech in Structuralism

Speech is already in itself a writing. Any concept that is to name, to stay for the abstract or concrete reality is made up of a mental trace. There is always a sleepy-waiting yet ever present trace at the origin of the representation and the naming of any ontological phenomenon. The trace is itself The apriori ontology – and this is how writing is pre-eminent to the later formal verbalization of any already traced concept of any abstract or concrete phenomenon of reality. The trace is the very possibility of the existence. The whole reality is originally "written", then existing and finally spoken.

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Jacques Derrida points out in his second chapter, *Linguistics and Grammatology*, of his 1967, *Of Grammatology* that speech is a form of writing. To sustain this apparent paradox he begins with a quotation from J.-J. Rousseau and ends his argumentation with Husserl's vision. Though much of Derrida's debate concerns Saussure's linguistics, his tone is that of a speculative yet charismatic philosopher. Though Derrida might not convince in his linguistic approach, however he certainly makes the philosopher within every of its presumed readers think twice.

"Writing is only the representation of speech, it is bizarre that more care is given to determining the image than the object." (Rousseau 1990: 336). This quotation from Rousseau is the starting point for Derrida to demonstrate exactly the opposite, reaching Husserl's assertion: before being the object of a science (concerned with language or the whole ontology), writing is much more, writing is the very apriori condition of the episteme.

"The important function of written, documenting expression is that it makes communications possible without immediate or mediate personal address; it is, so to speak, communication become virtual. Through this, the communalization of man is lifted to a new level. Written signs are, when considering from a purely corporeal point of view, straightforwardly, sensibly experience; and it is always possible they be intersubjectively experienceable in common. But as linguistic signs they awaken, as do linguistic sounds, their familiar significations. The awakening is something passive; the awakened signification is thus given passively, similarly to the way in which any other activity which has sunk into obscurity, once associatively awakened, emerges at first passively as a more or less clear memory. In the passivity in question here, as in the case of memory, what is passively awakened can be transformed back, so to speak, into the corresponding activity: this is the capacity of reactivation that belongs originally to every human being as a speaking being. Accordingly, then, the writing-down effects a transformation of the original mode of being of the meaning structure, [e.g.] within the geometrical sphere of self-evidence, of the geometrical structure which is put into words.

It becomes sedimented, so to speak." (Husserl, 1989: 164).

For this Derrida makes war with the idea of Linguistics as the science of language, revealing the false assumption on which it was raised in the first place: the phonological foundations of Linguistics are looked down upon as the original sin of a later structural corruption of the scientific perspective concerned with language. Derrida states that there is a very consolidated tradition of the phonological orientation of Linguistics, Troubetzkoy, Jakobson and Martinet being the mere perfectionists of Saussure's intention, this being the reason for which Derrida's deconstruction is applied prevalent to the texts of the later mentioned, as Saussure is considered the initial responsible and most guilty of them all.

The phonological perspective states that there is a privileged articulated unity where the significance and the acts of language are possible: that is the unity of sound and sense within the phonic. This is how writing came to be thought derivative, accidental, particular, exterior, doubling the phonic aspect of language. Aristotle, Rousseau and Hegel considered writing as "sign of a sign", and for Derrida this means the "reduction of writing to the rank of an instrumental enslaved to a full and originarily spoken language" (Derrida 2002: 29). As a reaction to this tremendous injustice and false thinking Derrida proposes nothing less than a new science, called Grammatology, "of which linguistics-phonology would be only a dependent and circumscribed area" (Derrida 2002: 30).

For Saussure the essence of language remains forever uncontaminated by writing: "... language does have a definite and stable oral tradition that is independent of writing, but the influence of the written form prevents or seeing this." (Saussure 1974: 24). However, Saussure is not original in this respect, for he only reasserts what Plato and Aristotle stated long time before, according to them writing being restricted to the model of phonetic script and the language of words. Aristotle's definition in this respect is the following: "Spoken words are the symbols of mental experience and written words are the symbols of spoken words" (Aristotle 1990: 25 [1, 16a 4-6]). Saussure's definition is nothing but an echo: "Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first" (Saussure 1974: 23). We point out that Aristotle mentions the "mental experience" as the first step of spoken words, a step highly ignored afterwards and out of which Derrida will make full usage in his paradoxical argumentation of the preexistence of writing over speech. Yet, at this moment, we will concentrate our attention on Saussure's much more obvious shortcoming in his conviction of the derivative status of writing. Derrida emphasizes that Saussure's definition is fundamentally incomplete since it only applies to a certain type of writing: the phonetic writing. Yet, writing – and language in general (thus linguistics implicitly) – is a function in fact never completely phonetic. Completely subjective and rather absurd, Saussure's highly capricious and preferential definition of the linguistic object outlaws writing and consequently totally ignores it as the episteme: "The linguistic object is not the written and the spoken forms of word: the spoken forms alone constitute the object" (Saussure 1974: 23-24). For Saussure the spoken word is already a combination of sense and sound and he imposes a new terminology that applies to the domain of spoken language alone, an essential detail ignored afterwards: "I propose to retain the word *sign (signe)* to designate the whole and to replace *concept* and *sound-image* respectively by *signified (signifié)* and *signifier (signifiant)*" (Saussure 1974: 67). Consequently, in Saussure's vision writing has to be phonetic, writing is the outside dimension, the exterior representation of language and of the "thought-sound" unit. The units of significations function without any contribution from writing, they are preexistent, writing played no part in the process of birth of language, yet it has to operate with spoken language as such. According to Derrida, writing has the undeserved status of the outcast and solely the fascination of the original phonetic unit Saussure imposed prevented writing from being the rightful protagonist of the "drama" called language.

Derrida pays much attention to his approach in arguing the pre-emption of writing. He dismisses such simple syllogisms as: "Most people pay more attention to visual impressions simply because these are sharper and more lasting than aural impressions" (Saussure 1974: 25). For him, such an explanation is even dangerous because makes out visibility "the tangible, simple, and essential element of writing" (Derrida 2002: 42). This is only one of the paradoxes Derrida uses in his study, yet we must note that for him writing does not seems to be what one is commonly used to. Moreover, he speculates on an assertion made by Saussure, which could also be considered as a paradox: "The thing that constitutes language is (...) unrelated to the phonic character of the linguistic sign" (Saussure 1974: 7). Thus, for Derrida language is not phonic and writing is not visible. If language is not phonic (though the linguistic sign might be), then writing is not an "image" or "figuration" of language, writing is not sign of a sign. What annoys Derrida the most is exactly the fact that a certain model of writing was imposed as instrument and technique of representation of a system of language: that is the system of language associated with the phonetic-alphabetic writing, exactly the vision that makes out

of writing nothing more than the derivative status of sign of a sign. For Derrida logocentrism is not the valid basis of the episteme, but a mere passing and false mode, an "epoch" that preferred, promoted and wrongly imposed speech, whereas it placed in parenthesis, suspended and suppressed not only the genuine status of writing, but even "free reflection" on the origin and status of writing. For Derrida logocentrism seems to be the despotic totalitarian regime that prevented all linguists (including and starting with Saussure) from determining "the integral and concrete object of linguistics" (Saussure 1974: 7). Fortunately Derrida is the redemption knight that saves writing from this undeserved status of "the wandering outcast of linguistics" and he does such a good deed in a most unorthodox way: he deconstructs Saussure's discourse, revealing how "writing itself is the origin of language" is what Saussure actually thought when saying exactly the opposite. Such a redemption must have been quite uncomfortable for Saussure's (en)grave(ing).

The deconstruction of Saussure's discourse then concentrates on his thesis of the arbitrariness of the sign. Derrida points out that there is a great discrepancy between writing and the spoken word, in the sense that by no means writing is to be reduced to – and considered dependent by – the thought-sound unity and least at all writing could and should be a mere image of the thought-sound unity.

"If «writing» signifies inscription and especially the durable institution of a sign (...), writing in general covers the entire field of linguistic signs. In that field a certain sort of instituted signifiers may then appear, «graphic» in the narrow and derivative sense of the word, ordered by a certain relationship with other instituted – hence «written», even if they are «phonic» - signifiers" (Derrida 2002: 44).

What we come out of this witty play of words is once more Derrida's constant striving in pushing the boundaries of the episteme, rethinking linguistics. He refers not to the traditional "phonic-graphic writing" which stays for the "spoken word", but to a much, much larger field of "linguistic" signs, traditionally called "symbols", plunging into semiology, a place where of course that Saussure's thesis of the arbitrariness of the sign does not and cannot apply. Derrida makes his best to reveal that Saussure's thesis is fundamentally incomplete and thus even pointless, since it only refers to a special sort of writing, one among many others. "This thesis successfully accounts for a conventional relationship between the phoneme and grapheme (in phonetic writing, between the phoneme, signifier-signified, and the grapheme, pure signifier), but by the same token it forbids the latter be an «image» of the former" (Derrida 2002: 45).

Derrida even comes out with another speculative paradox to contradict and thus deconstruct the traditional concept of writing as "image" of the language. He asserts that even in the particular case of

"... the synchronic structure and systematic principle of alphabetic writing – and phonetic writing in general – no relationship of «natural» representation, none of resemblance or participation, no «symbolic» relationship in the Hegellian-Saussurian sense, no «iconographic» relationship in the Peircian sense is to be implied" (Derrida 2002: 45).

He challenges this long time standing scientific conviction with such childish argument as "the phoneme is unimaginable itself, and no visibility can resemble it" (Derrida 2002: 45), this being nothing more than pure sophistic rhetorical play of words. Using long digressions Derrida ultimately admits that his goal is "the de-construction of the greatest totality - the concept of the épistème and logocentric metaphysics" (Derrida 2002: 46). Of course, no deconstruction of one episteme is possible without implicitly imposing another, and this is exactly what Derrida does. After reasserting that writing is neither the "image" nor the "symbol" of language, thus being more exterior to speech, Derrida makes a flashing climax of his paradoxes stating that, at the same time, writing is more interior to speech, *speech being already in itself a writing*. This may look as a contradiction, yet it only depends on what one understands by writing. Derrida made his best to differentiate the concept of writing from the traditional "sign of a sign" understanding, and this is the reason why he states that (his) writing is more exterior to speech. He always emphasized that writing is much more than phonetic writing, thus being unrelated to speech (and certainly not dependent to and derivative from speech in the common sense of spoken words). To understand why, at the same time, he says that writing is more interior to speech, speech being already a particular sort of writing, one must accept the pre-eminence of writing over speech. Nevertheless, what means writing for Derrida, after all?

To Derrida writing is much more than the traditional graphic concept. The graphic understanding of writing is merely the last prosaic phase of the original reality of writing (whereas somewhere in between these two Derrida placing speech). For him, "even before being linked to incision, engraving, drawing, or to letter, to a signifier referring in general to a signified by it, the concept of the *graphie* [unit of a possible graphic system] implies the framework of the *instituted trace*, as the possibility common to all systems of significations" (Derrida 2002: 46). The fundamental

concept of Derrida's episteme thus becomes not writing, but trace. What exactly means trace to Derrida (and consequently writing and further on speech as a sort of writing) can only be understood by means of stepping out of linguistics and wander into a confusing, speculative sea of philosophical and even theological arguments. To make it short, the trace seems to be, in Derrida's vision, some sort of virtual existence, a monadic reality, a purely ontological archetype, not an expression, not a content, but all of these suspended even before they actually come into being. "The field of the entity, before being determined as the field of presence, is structured according to the diverse possibilities - genetic and structural - of the trace" (Derrida 2002: 47). Applying this vision to Saussurian episteme - and deconstructing it, of course - in Derrida's own words "there is neither symbol nor sign but a becoming-sign of the symbol" (Derrida 2002: 47). Derrida finds part of support in Peirce's treatment of the relationship between symbol and sign:

"Symbols grow. They come into being by developing out of other signs, particularly from icons, or from mixed signs partaking of the nature of icons and symbols. We think only in signs. These mental signs are of mixed nature; the symbol parts of them are called concepts. If a man makes a new symbol, it is by thoughts involving concepts. So it is only out of symbols that a new symbol can grow. *Omne symbolum de symbolo*. A symbol, once in being, spreads among the peoples. In use and in experience, its meaning grows. Such words as *force, law, wealth, marriage*, bear for us very different meaning from those they bore for our barbarous ancestors. The symbols may, with Emerson's sphinx, say to man, Of thine eye I am eyebeam." (Peirce 1960: 169, paragraph 302).

Any concept that is to name, to stay for the abstract or concrete reality is made up of a mental trace. There is always a sleepy-waiting yet ever present trace at the origin of the representation and the naming of any ontological phenomenon. The trace is itself The *apriori* ontology - and this is how writing is pre-eminent to the later formal verbalization of any already *traced* concept of any abstract or concrete phenomenon of reality. The trace is the very possibility of the existence. The whole reality is originally "written", then existing and finally spoken.

Derrida seems to be very much delighted by such "de-construction of the transcendental signified", Peirce being highly praised for his acknowledgement that *the thing itself is a sign*. In his *The Principles of Phenomenology* Pierce stated: "... the idea of *manifestation* is the idea of a sign." (Peirce 1955: 93). Anything that simply exists comes out of the idea of a sign and can only be interpreted further by means additional of signs. "From the moment that there is meaning there are nothing but signs. *We think only in signs*" (Derrida 2002: 50), the world itself is a sign and it manifests and expresses itself through indefinite signs.

Mentioning once again such traditional - yet wrong - acceptation of writing as one is to face in *Phaedrus*, which condemned writing as play - *paidia* - and opposed such childishness to the adult gravity of speech (Plato 2006: 151, 277e), Derrida refers to a science of writing before speech and in speech, called grammatology. This new science Derrida aims to is to cover a vast filed within which linguistics is to delineate its own, smaller area, with the limits Saussure prescribes. Finally, Derrida admits that one may replace/substitute semiology by grammatology, and reaching this point he becomes once more confusing and paradoxical. He does not and cannot name the precise object of grammatology and thus delineate its rigorous area and reveal its episteme. Why is that so? Because this new science of grammatology does not yet exist - consequently it is impossible to say what it would - or could - once be. Nevertheless, one thing is for sure: linguistics is only a part of this new general science and the laws that will some day be discovered by grammatology will be applicable to linguistics. Seeing such a tremendous generosity on the part of Derrida, one cannot stop wondering whether we face a philosophical visionary mind or just a spoiled whimsical rhetor.

It comes out quite clearly that Derrida is not such much concerned with constructing grammatology, but with deconstructing linguistics. He is mostly annoyed by the fact that semiology, though theoretically including linguistics, being more general and comprehensive, it continued to be regulated as if it were one of the areas of linguistics. The pattern of the linguistic-sign remained exemplary for semiology and dominated the ever un-delineated master-sign. "... linguistics can become the master-pattern for all branches of semiology although language is only one particular semiological system" (Saussure 1974: 68). This is precisely what Barthes revealed as the actual intention of Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*: "In fact, we must now face the possibility of inverting Saussure's declaration: linguistics is not a part of the general science of signs, even a privileged part, it is semiology which is a part of linguistics: to be precise, it is that part covering the *great signifying unities* of discourse." (Barthes 1972: 11).

All of these happened because of the so-called "civilization of writing" that human kind inhabited for a long, long time; that is of phonetic-writing, which means logocentrism. Yet Saussure himself stated, curiously enough, that language is comparable to a system of writing. Not comparable, says

Derrida, but a species of writing. The problem starts from Saussure's own discourse, as usually. There are several times when trying to define language that Saussure draws his arguments from rather questionable examples related to... writing. It makes one think: which came first? The supposed object of linguistics or the object by whose means language can be determined? Let us follow Saussure's discourse: "Language is a system of signs that express ideas, and it is therefore comparable to a system of writing, the alphabet of deaf-mutes, symbolic rites, polite formulas, military signals, etc. But it is the most important of al these systems" (Saussure 1974:16). Even further, when striving to explain the phonic difference as the condition of linguistic value, Saussure found nothing else helpful but writing itself: "Since an identical state of affairs is observable in writing, another system of signs, we shall use writing to draw some comparisons that will clarify the whole issue" (Saussure 1974: 119). All Derrida has to do is to oppose Saussure to himself, revealing his inconsequent episteme. Rather than being the "indispensable correlative", writing seems to be the very foundation of linguistic sign.

Derrida then concentrates on the thesis of difference as the source of the linguistic value. Saussure constructs this thesis making full usage of the phonic aspect of the linguistic sign, the phoneme being intrinsic to the linguistic difference. Yet Derrida is ever present in speculating on contradictory phrases he picks up now and then from Saussure's discourse. Derrida points out that while difference in language comes down to meaning, yet Saussure stated that sound has little to do with valuable/meaningful language. "The thing that constitutes language is, as I shall show later, unrelated to the phonic character of the linguistic sign" (Saussure 1974: 7).

"... it is impossible for sound alone, a material element, to belong to language. It is only a secondary thing, substance to be put to use. (...) the linguistic signifier, which is not phonic but incorporeal - constituted not by its material substance but the differences that separate its sound-image from all others" (Saussure 1974: 118-119).

"The idea or phonic substance that a sign contains is of less importance than the other signs that surround it" (Saussure 1974: 120). What then is the essence of language, which gives it value and meaning, if not the phonic *secondary* aspect? That is something we are yet to find out.

Derrida emphasizes further on statements of other phonology favoring linguistic discourses, starting with that of Jakobson and Halle, who contradicted Hjelmslev and his glossematic (which requires the neutralizing of the sonorous substance).

"In contradiction to the universal phenomenon of speech, phonetic or phonemic writing is an occasional, accessory code that normally implies the ability of its users to translate it into its underlying sound code, while the reverse ability, to transpose speech into letters, is a secondary and much less common faculty. Only after having mastered speech does one graduate to reading and writing. " (Jakobson-Halle 1956: 16).

This argument for the secondariness of writing Jakobson and Halle used is dismissed as inconsistent, its pertinence being based only on a preferential - thus subjective - logic of time sequence. It is not enough for writing to appear after speech in ones conscience to make out of it an auxiliary parasite. The two scholars also refer to the imperfection of graphic representation:

"There is a cardinal difference between phonemes and graphic units. Each letter carries a specific denotation - in a phonemic orthography, it usually denotes one of the phonemes or a certain limited series of phonemes, whereas phonemes denote nothing but mere otherness (...) Graphic signs serve to interpret phonemes or other linguistic units stand for these units, as the logician would say. This difference has far-reaching consequences for the cardinally dissimilar patterning of letters and phonemes. Letters never, or only partially, reproduce the different distinctive features on which the phonemic pattern is based and unfailingly disregard the structural relationship of these features. There is no such thing in human society as the supplantation of the speech code by its visual replicas, but only a supplementation of this code by parasitic auxiliaries, while the speech code constantly and unalterably remains in effect." (Jakobson-Halle 1956: 16-17).

Letters only partially reproduce the different distinctive features on which the phonemic pattern is based, but this is not - at least not to Derrida - an argument for the secondariness of writing, but precisely for the necessity to reconsider writing as unrelated to and not derived from speech. He points out, once more, that the claimed inadequacy of graphic only refers to the common alphabetic writing (something glossematic does not limit itself to) and thus urges for a "reforming of the concept of writing" (Derrida 2002: 55) itself.

Derrida also contradicts André Martinet who criticized all those who questioned the essential phonic character of the linguistic sign.

"Beaucoup seront tentés de donner de raison à Saussure qui énonce que « l'essentiel de la langue... est étranger au caractère phonique du signe linguistique», et, dépassant l'enseignement du maître, de déclarer que le signe linguistique n'a pas nécessairement ce caractère phonique." (Martinet 1965: 19).

["Much will be attempted to prove that Saussure is right when he announces that «the thing that constitutes language is... unrelated to the phonic character of the linguistic sign», and, going beyond the teaching of the master, to declare that the linguistic sign does not necessarily have the phonic character".]

For Derrida is not a question of going beyond what Saussure meant, but precisely to extend and rightly reveal what Saussure would have actually wanted to say, but somehow forgot to... Here is a sample of Saussure's unconscious thought, expressed by the "medium" called Derrida:

"I believe that generalized writing is not just the idea of a system to be invented, an hypothetical characteristic or a future possibility. I think on the contrary that oral language already belongs to this writing. But that presupposes a modification of the concept of writing that we for the moment merely anticipate" (Derrida 2002: 55).

To push the limits of the paradox to hallucinatory boundaries, Derrida finds support for such courageous overlapping of Saussure's discourse in the work of.... Martinet himself.

"... il est très important de modifier la terminologie traditionnelle relative à l'articulation de signifiants de façon à en éliminer toute référence à la substance phonique comme le fait Louis Hjelmslev lorsqu'il emploie «cénème» et «cénématique» au lieu de «phonème» et «phonologie». / On comprendra toutefois que la plupart des linguistes hésitent à modifier de fond en comble l'édifice terminologique traditionnel pour le seul avantage théorique de pouvoir inclure dans le domaine de leur science des systèmes purement hypothétiques. Pour qu'ils consentent à envisager une telle révolution, il faudrait les convaincre que, dans les systèmes linguistiques attestés, ils n'ont aucun intérêt à considérer la substance phonique des unités d'expression comme les intéressant directement." (Martinet 1965: 20-21).

["... it is most important to modify traditional terminology relative to the articulation of signifiers so as to eliminate all reference to phonic substance; as does Louis Hjelmslev when he uses «ceneme» and «cenematics» instead of «phoneme» and «phonematics». / Yet it is understandable that the majority of linguists hesitate to modify completely the traditional terminological edifice for the only theoretical advantages of being able to include in the field of their science some purely hypothetical systems. To make them agree to engage such a revolution, they must be persuaded that, in attested linguistic systems, they have no advantage in considering the phonic substance of units of expression as to be of direct interest."]

There is one way to consider and agree on the derivativeness of writing. If the original, natural language had itself always been a writing, an "archewriting", than the common vulgar acceptation of writing can be looked upon as a dissimulation of the archewriting. Yet this archewriting can never become the object of a new science, but instead *the trace* could and should.

The linguist that pleases most Derrida is Hjelmslev and his *Principes de grammaire générale* (1928). For him grammar is independent of semantics and phonology:

"Phonematics must consider the phonemes as elements of the language system, without regard to the particular way in which they are symbolized. They may be symbolized by means of sound, but they may be symbolized quite as well by several other means, e. g. by means of letters, or any other signals adopted by two or more individuals. / There is no necessary connection between sounds and language. The decisive fact is that other symbols than sounds *can* be used to express phonemes." (Hjelmslev 1973: 159).

The linguistic unit is to Hjelmslev *the glosseme*, that has little to do with the traditional Saussurian linguistic sign, though the starting point may be vaguely the same: "Since language is a form and not a substance (Saussure), the glossemes are by definition independent of substance, immaterial (semantics, psychological and logical) and material (phonic, graphic, etc)." (Hjelmslev-Uldall 1935: 13f). Even more, in the *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language* (1943), Hjelmslev emphasizes another contradiction of Saussure discourse. Though Saussure maintains that language is a form and not a substance, yet the difference signifier/signified (that can be substituted by the opposition expression/content), sets as bases precisely the point of view of substance. Hjelmslev criticizes the idea of language naturally bound to the substance of phonic expression. To say, "that the substance-expression of a spoken language should consist of «sounds»" (Derrida 2002: 58) is nothing more than a mistake, the original sin Derrida obsessively talks about. Eberhard Zwirner and Kurt Zwirner pointed out that that speech is accompanied by and may be replaced by gesture and not only the so-called organs of speech but all the musculature cooperate in the exercise of "natural" language. Moreover, the same linguistic sign may be manifested in writing (the phonetic or phonematic notation and the so-called phonetic orthographies, such as Finish). Thus, a "graphic" substance is addressed exclusively to the eye and doe not need to be transposed into a phonetic "substance" in order to be understood. Thus, it is difficult to say what is derived from what. This is even more difficult when considering that the very discovery of alphabetic writing is an event that

took place in prehistory. As Bertrand Russell noted, we have no means of deciding which came first as human expression: writing or speech "It is not known how or when language arose, nor why chimpanzees do not speak. I doubt if it is even known whether writing or speech is the older form of language. The pictures made in caves by the Cro-Magnon men may have been intended to convey a meaning, and may have been a form of writing. It is known that writing developed out of pictures, for that happened in historical times; but it is not known to what extent pictures had been used in prehistoric times as a means of giving information and commands." (Russell 1927: 46-47).

H. J. Uldall revealed another paradox of Saussure discourse and of language in general: only by means of the conceptualization the difference between form and substance, it is possible to "... explain the possibility of speech and writing existing at the same time as expressions of one and the same language" (Uldall 1944: 11f). Concentrating ones attention on the substance, Hjelmslev admits (in a footnote): "An analysis of writing without regard to sound has not yet been undertaken" (Hjelmslev 1953: 67), while Uldall steps even further: "the substance of ink has not yet received the same attention on the part of linguistics that they have so lavishly bestowed on the substance of air" (Uldall 1944: 13-14). Uldall emphasizes the mutual independence of the two kind of substances of expressions: in orthography, no grapheme corresponds to accents or pronunciation (a fact that was the misery and menace of writing for Rousseau) and, reciprocally, in pronunciation, no phoneme corresponds to the spacing between written words.

Though glossematics pleases Derrida in some respect and to some extent, yet it only lingers at the periphery of what he assumes a hypothetical grammatology would one day be. Glossematics still operates with a popular imperfect and limitative concept of writing. The "form of expression" linked by correlation to the graphic "substance of expression" may be a novelty, but it has little or nothing to do with Derrida's "arche-writing". This implies not merely the form and substance of graphic expression, as glossematics does, but non-graphic expressions also. Even much more, the assumed arche-writing "... would constitute not only the pattern uniting form to all substance, graphic or otherwise, but the movement of the *sign-function* linking a content to an expression, whether it be graphic or not" (Derrida 2002: 60). For Derrida the arche-writing seems to belong to the Husserlian reference to a transcendental experience ("By absolutely virtualizing dialogue, writing creates a kind of autonomous transcendental field from which every present subject can be absent. (...) Writing, as the place of absolutely permanent ideal objectivities and therefore of absolute Objectivity, certainly constitutes such a transcendental field"; Derrida 1989: 88). Transcendental phenomenology belonging to metaphysics, Derrida steps out of linguistics (or even semiology) and apparently implies that his virtual grammatology is very much related to philosophy (if not even a new philosophical vision concerned with witty speculations on the archetypal origin of language).

Derrida makes his best to deconstruct the traditional acceptance of the Saussurian "material" substance-expression of the "sound". He does this by means of emphasizing the contradictions or at least paradoxes from Saussure's discourse itself. Saussure distinguishes between the "sound-image" and the objective sound. According to Derrida, there are two problems with this epistemological stand. First, the sound-image is the structure of the appearing of the sound (l'apparaître du son) which is anything but the sound appearing (le son apparaissant). This sound-image (and not the sound itself) is what Saussure calls signifier, whereas he reserves the name signified not for the thing, but for the "concept". "I propose to retain the word *sign [signe]* to designate the whole and to replace *concept* and *sound-image* respectively by *signified [signifé]* and *signifier [signifiant]*" (Saussure 1974: 67) "The sound-image is what is *heard*; not the *sound* heard but the being-heard of the sound. Being-heard is structurally phenomenal and belongs to an order radically dissimilar to that of the real sound in the world" (Derrida 2002: 63). The "sound-image," the structured appearing [l'apparaître] of the sound, the "sensory matter", distinct from all mundane reality, is called the "psychic image" by Saussure: "The latter [the sound-image] is not the material sound, a purely physical thing, but the psychological imprint of the sound, the impression that it makes on our senses. The sound-image is sensory, and if I happen to call it «material», it is only in that sense, and by way of opposing it to the other term of the association, the concept, which is generally more abstract" (Saussure 1974: 66). Derrida points out that before Saussure, Baudouin de Courtenay thought that the phoneme is a sound imagined or intended, opposed to the emitted sound as a "psycho phonetic" phenomenon to the "physio-phonetic" fact. It is the psychic equivalent of an exteriorized sound.

One could say that Derrida steps into psychology as a means of constructing the episteme of the future science of grammatology. However, it is not the fact, after all. Psychophonetics is just another instrument of deconstructing traditional structuralism, without necessarily constructing much of anything afterwards. What he proposes is a sophistic metaphysical speculation. To Derrida the so-called psychic-image seems to be just a manifestation of the

ambiguous archetypal *trace*. "The unheard difference between the appearing and the appearance [*l'apparaissant et l'apparaître*] (between the «world» and «lived experience») is the condition of all other differences, of all other traces, and *it is already a trace*" (Derrida 2002: 65). *The trace* is of course anterior both to physiological or psychological manifestations of the sound. "*The trace is in fact the absolute* origin of *sense in general.* The trace is the difference which opens appearance [*l'apparaître*] and signification" (Derrida 2002: 65). Though it comes quite to be obvious that the concept of "trace" has little to do with linguistics or even semiology, philosophy being the only known science yet whose instruments could analyze it, Derrida is vigilant in cutting down all possible approaches: "... No concept of metaphysics can describe it" (Derrida 2002: 65). If trace can explain anything and if nothing can explain the trace, then there is no hard work for Derrida to conclude that one should not bother with such futile issues as the sequence of speech and writing, both of which being phenomena of the invisible and imponderable trace:

"... is there a sense in establishing a «natural» hierarchy between the sound-imprint, for example, and the visual (graphic) imprint? The graphic image is not seen; and the acoustic image is not heard. The difference between the full unities of the voice remains unheard. And, the difference in the body of the inscription is also invisible" (Derrida 2002: 65).

Quite ineffable.

Towards the end of the chapter, Derrida slides more and more towards psychology and psychoanalyses in his inexhaustible attempt to outcast logocentrism. "... what is natural to mankind is not oral speech but the faculty of constructing a language, i.e. a system of distinct signs corresponding to distinct ideas" (Saussure 1974: 10). Constructing a language is a psychological ability before being a physical outcome; articulation is reevaluated as a mere way of manifesting for the "psychic imprint" that is the trace itself. Which could mean "physical speech" is an expression of the "psychological writing". "The idea of the «psychic imprint» therefore relates essentially to the idea of articulation. Without the difference between the sensory appearing (*apparaissant*) and its lived appearing (*apparaître*) («mental imprint)..." (Derrida 2002: 66). What is striking is the fact that Derrida is far from being original. The psychic or mental imprint had already been outlined long before by several linguists as the origin of speech, each of them in its own particular vision: Aristotle ("mental experience" Aristotle 1990: 25 [1, 16a 8]), Baudouin de Courtenay and Saussure ("sound-image") being the ones mentioned by Derrida himself. Derrida comes out with his own part when considering this "mental imprint" as a phenomenological expression of the original metaphysical arche-writing: "That the logos is first imprinted and that imprint is the writing-resource of language..." (Derrida 2002: 68). To argue that writing comes first and speech second Derrida even mentions no other than Freud, to which dream work is comparable rather to a writing than to a language, and to a hieroglyphic rather than to a phonetic writing (Derrida 2002: 68). The mental imprint may thus be perceived as a synonymous to the dream work, an argument that does nothing else than getting the arche-writing closer and closer to psychoanalyses and not metaphysics ("a phenomenology of writing is impossible" (Derrida 2002: 68) previously states Derrida...).

To Derrida the "oral speech" can never stand for the plenitude of meaning, for there is no perfect unity between signifier and signified. This kind of unity and thus true meaning can only be found in the trace. What actually means "trace" to Derrida is not simple thing to understand. He relates his notion to Levinas, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Freud, a thing that makes one realize it has to do first with philosophy. No matter what name and acceptation the trace might have in various philosophical visions, one thing that interests Derrida is that trace is "dominant and irreducible". In his most expanded and explicit definition/characterization of the trace, Derrida undoubtedly places the episteme of his future grammatology in the fields of metaphysics and phenomenology.

"If the trace, arche-phenomenon of «memory», which must be thought before the opposition of nature and culture, animality and humanity, etc., belongs to the very movement of signification, then signification is a priori written, whether inscribed or not, in one form or another, in a «sensible» and «spatial» element that is called «exterior». Arche-writing, at first the possibility of the spoken word, then of the «*graphie*» in the narrow sense, the birthplace of «usurpation», denounced from Plato to Saussure..." (Derrida 2002: 70).

On the other hand, Derrida is very much irritated that the entire history of metaphysics strived towards the reduction of the trace:

"The subordination of the trace to the full presence summed up in the logos, the humbling of writing beneath a speech dreaming its plenitude, such are the gestures required by an onto-theology determining the archeological and eschatological meaning of being as presence, as parousia, as life without difference: another name for death..." (Derrida 2002: 71).

Logocentrism is seen as nothing less than death itself. There are many philosophers guilty of such a fundamental malign. One could start with Plato:

"And now, since you are the father of writing,

your affection for it has made you describe its effects as the opposite of what they really are. In fact, it will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember from the inside, completely on their own. You have not discovered a potion for remembering, but for reminding; you provide your students with the appearance of wisdom, not with its reality." (Plato 2006: 147, 275a); "... writing shares a strange feature with painting. The offspring of painting stand there as if they are alive, but if anyone asks them anything, they remain most solemnly silent. The same is true with written words. You`d think they were speaking as if they had some understanding, but if you question anything that has been said because you want to learn more, it continues to signify just that very same thing forever. When it has once been written down, every discourse roams about everywhere, reaching indiscriminately those with understanding no less than those who have no business with it, and it doesn`t know to whom it should speak and to whom it should not. And when it is faulted attacked unfairly, it always needs its father`s support; alone, it can neither defend itself nor come to its own support." (Plato 2006: 148, 275e)

We are to continue with Spinoza, for whom the Understanding – or logos – was the *immediate* infinite mode of the divine substance, calling it "... a *Son, Product or immediate Creation* of God, also created by him for all eternity and remaining immutable to all eternity." (Spinoza 2002: 59). Next it is Hegel who imagined "... a theology of the absolute concept as logos..." (Derrida 2002: 71) and we are to come down on this line to all linguists who accredited Saussure's decree.

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