

Derrida's writing: Notes on the Freudian model of language

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Abstract: We intend to resume the debate of Derrida on the concept of language and its encounter with psychoanalysis. Despite observing the influence of the philosophical tradition of metaphysics on the metapsychological concepts of psychoanalysis, Derrida acknowledges in the Freudian discourse a potential for deconstruction of the concept of language as being associated with a verbal representative activity. Finally, we discuss how the hypothesis of conception of the unconscious as writing and of writing of the unconscious implies another interpretation of discourse in psychoanalysis in which a junction between force and sense is promoted.

Keywords: Derrida, psychoanalysis, language, writing, unconscious.

In Freud, I prefer the partial, regional, minor analyses, the most adventurous probes.

Derrida.

Introduction

With the thought of deconstruction, Derrida begins a remarkable study of the fundamentals of Western thought, analyzing the strong appreciation of the phonetic aspect of language and its relation to logocentrism. Refusing the idea of a transcendent model of language that excludes the observation of intensities, he conceives language from the idea of writing closer to writing in the physical plan and contrasts two models of language: that of Phonetics and that of writing¹. Based on the concept of writing as a system of traces, Derrida develops a critique of the metaphysics of presence and the alleged connection between phonetic language and logocentrism.

The issues involving the movement of deconstruction lead Derrida to the discourse of psychoanalysis. Although recognizing the influence of the philosophical tradition of metaphysics on the metapsychological instances of psychoanalysis, the author finds in Freud's discourse a potential for deconstructing the concept of language, especially in his choice of representing the psyche through metaphorical models of writing. Next, we will see how this dialog between Derrida's writing and the concept of language in Freud's work is established.

1 In the Brazilian translation of Derrida's work, the term 'écriture' was translated as 'escritura' [scribing]. Some reviewers of Derrida's work chose to use the term 'writing' due to its greater proximity to the idea of written and text. To avoid altering the text of the quotations, we decided to use the two terms.

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The thought of trace

Derrida's notion of writing does not separate writing and speaking. Thus, to suggest that oral language already belongs to writing, the concept of arche-writing is formulated. Writing, in the strict sense, clearly remains secondary, but it can only be secondary because the 'natural' original language never existed: it has always been, itself, an arche - writing. Speech already is, therefore, arche-writing (Derrida, 1967/2006). The concept of arche-writing seeks to move from the binary opposition, proposing a general inscription independent from individual writings, which usually oppose speech. Writing refers not only to inscription, but to the possibility of inscription. In this sense, writing is not a graphical derivation, a result from speech, but the possibility of articulation between speech and writing.

The issue of arche-writing transits between the questions concerning the origin and transformation of writing systems. An origin that is lost in time, which merges in an arche-origin, which is writing itself. There is no way to represent the relation of the representation with the allegedly originary presence, since the representation is also a 'de-representation'. Derrida seeks to inscribe the concept of writing as an absence, thus questioning the classic concepts of origin, precedence, and originality: "obviously, it is not a question of resorting to the same concept of writing and of simply inverting the asymmetry we call into question. It is a matter of producing a new concept of writing" (Derrida, 1972, p. 32).

Writing is conceived as a system of traces and the essence of this formulation is that the trace does not derive from a presence, which would make it an empirical mark.² The trace implies retaining the difference in a structure in

2 The term 'la trace' used by Derrida in the books *Of Grammatology* and *Writing and Difference* was translated in the Brazilian Edition as 'rastros' [tracks]. In this work, we chose to use the term trace because of its proximity to the concept already established in the field of Psychoanalysis.

which the difference appears as such. To affirm that the difference is presented as such means that it presents itself as difference and not as presence of a difference. In this case, the difference is not an identity, nor the difference between two identities. No concept of metaphysics can describe it. As explained by Derrida (1967/2006), “the absence of another here-now, of another transcendental present, of another origin of the world manifested as such, presenting itself as irreducible absence in the presence of the trace, is not a metaphysical formula that is replaced by a scientific concept of writing” (p. 57). The thought of trace is not a surrogate of the metaphysical formula, it does not create a game of opposition, but offers a tool to deconstruct metaphysical assumptions.

The notion of trace is defined by its absence of origin. In this case, the non-origin is originative. Its reconstruction can only be accomplished through a non-origin. According to Derrida, “saying that it is originative is at the same time erasing the myth of present origin. That is why ‘originative’ must be understood under *erasure*, without which we would derive the difference from a complete origin” (Derrida, 1967a, p. 188).³ To formulate a notion of trace without origin, it is necessary to assume that the trace itself destroys itself. This is the idea contained in the concept of arche-trace. It is contradictory and unacceptable under the logic of identity, since it is not based on the empirical presence of the trace. It all starts by trace, but at the same time there is no originative trace. The trace indicates not only the disappearance of origin, but the nonexistence of origin. The trace becomes origin of origin, prior to the entity. “It is necessary to think life as trace before determining the entity as presence” (Derrida, 1967a, p. 188).

The thought of trace does not seek a return to a transcendental origin, even because it does not arise as a paradigm to the full presence. To articulate the idea of pure, absolute trace, Derrida refers to the concept of difference that is central to the philosophy of deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence.⁴ The trace in its difference refuses a ‘beginning’. *Différance* is defined by its independence from any sensitive, audible or visible, phonic or graphical plenitude. Although the difference does not exist and “is never a present-entity out of all plenitude, its possibility is directly prior to all called sign” (Derrida, 1967b,

p. 77). Derrida describes the difference as a structure and a movement that are not subject to thinking based on the opposition presence-absence. “*Différance* is the systematic game of differences, of traces of differences, of the spacing whereby the elements refer to each other” (Derrida, 1972, p. 33). The difference of the trace occupies the place of origin as a mark of an archaic inscription that cannot be comprehended in the opposition of presence-absence, but is prior to it as an undecidable medium. Therefore, the trace implies the suspension of any reference, as well as the over-coming of the oppositions.

The problematic of the trace is a strategic point of the deconstruction movement. And the issues involved in these questions, such as the primacy of the present, the full presence, and the presence for oneself and of consciousness that bring Derrida close to Psychoanalysis. In a dialog with Roudinesco, Derrida states that, at the time he wrote *Of Grammatology*, he knew little of the works of Freud and Lacan. When elaborating the problematic of the trace and the deconstruction of logocentrism and phallogocentrism, between 1963 and 1965, he begins to understand and analyze the debt of Freud to Metaphysics. From this moment, Derrida explains, Psychoanalysis becomes part of his “own”.

However, that which was not already visible foretold itself in ‘dotted’. It was essential to place the problematic of the trace, main principle of contestation, *strategic lever of deconstruction, in and on the edge of Psychoanalysis*. In *Of Grammatology* and, especially in *La différance*, I tried to establish, at least, the need to reinterpret a certain track of Nietzsche and Freud. The issue of *différance*, or trace, is not thinkable based on self-awareness or presence for oneself, nor in general on the full presence of the present. I felt clearly that *there was in reserve, in Freud, a powerful reflection on trace and writing. On time too*. (Derrida & Roudinesco, 2004, p. 204, emphasis added)

In the text “Freud and the scene of writing”, Derrida (1967a) brings some of the concepts of grammatology to discussion in the field of Psychoanalysis. A debate will be conducted on the idea of the unconscious as writing and writing of the unconscious which implies another interpretation of discourse in Psychoanalysis. Despite the intimacy of Psychoanalysis with the philosophical tradition of Metaphysics, Derrida finds in Freud an ally in the work of deconstructing logocentrism.

There is no way to overlook the complicity between Psychoanalysis and the metaphysical tradition of the presence in the substantiation of its metapsychological instances. Many Freudian concepts fall within the logocentric repression system that are organized in an exclusion of the body of the written trace and are constructed supported by internal-external and subjective-objective oppositions, among others. However, the interest of Derrida is

3 We decided to keep the original translation of the works of Jacques Derrida we used. Noteworthy, in the Brazilian edition of the book *Writing and Difference*, the French term ‘différance’ was translated as ‘diferencia’ (while the regular spelling would be *diferença*), and it was also translated as ‘diferencia’ in the Brazilian edition of *Of Grammatology*.

4 Derrida uses the term ‘différance’ instead of the French term ‘différence’. From the point of view of sound, the two pronunciations do not differ; the difference is strictly graphical. Evando Nascimento (2004) observes that this was a way found by Derrida to reverse the metaphysical privilege of *phoné*, as reading is necessary to understand the distinction between the two terms. The *différance* is readable, but not *audible*. Derrida avoids reducing *différance* to differentiation to prevent a return to difference determined by the logic of identity. From the point of view of Nascimento (2004), the ideal would be to abstain from translating the term *différance* and leave it as some sort of ‘foreign matter’ in the language. This would help deconstruct the traditional value of difference as opposition between supposed contraries.

not focused on the ‘great Freudian conceptuality’, although he admits that this conceptuality has been necessary to break with Psychology in a given context of the history of sciences. The great machines such as ‘self’, ‘ideal self’, ‘id’, ‘superego’, states Derrida, are nothing but “provisional weapons, rhetorical utensils assembled against a philosophy of consciousness, of the transparent and fully responsible intentionality” (Derrida & Roudinesco, 2004, p. 207). The purpose of Derrida is not to follow the great Freudian theoretical machines and their functionalization, but precisely to demonstrate “the need for some ‘différance’ that erases or shifts its borders” (Derrida & Roudinesco, 2004, p. 209). The singularity of Derrida’s reading is the attention to an interpretation of the *discourse*, and not of the *concept* in Freud’s work.

It is true that Freud’s discourse – his syntax or, rather, his work – is not to be mistaken for these necessarily metaphysical or traditional concepts. It surely is not fully understood by this definition. The precautions and ‘nominalism’ with which Freud manages what he calls the conceptual conventions and hypotheses are evidence of that. And a thought of the difference relates less to the concepts than to the discourse. (Derrida, 1967a, p. 181)

Derrida’s proposal is to conduct a reading of Freud’s work through the discursive axis on the textual continuity and discontinuity and not on the systematic theory restricted to metapsychological concepts, thus enabling to perceive the extent of the observations on trace and writing (Birman, 2007). Some Freudian texts are examined with the aim of highlighting a conception of unconsciousness consisting of pure traces that questions the logic of the metaphysics of presence. Covering the models of the psychic apparatus exposed - “Project for a scientific psychology” (1895), “Letter 52” (1896), “The Interpretation of Dreams” (1900), and “Note on the ‘Magic Writing Block’” (1925) -, Derrida points out how, throughout Freud’s work, a structural model of writing is gradually enhanced. Freud’s route goes from a mechanical model to a model that enables projecting the psychic apparatus, in its entirety, into a ‘writing machine’. According to Derrida, in this route between 1895 (“Project for a scientific psychology”) and 1925 (“Note on the ‘Magic Writing Block’”) the originality of a written trace metaphor is identified.

Some evidence of the thought of trace are found in the “Project for a scientific psychology” (1895). On the concepts of memory and facilitation (Bahnung) the difference in action is recognized. An interesting fact in the formulation of memory - as exposed in the ‘Project’ - is that it distances itself from any explanation from naturalism or a Phenomenology. Freud assumes that the organism is affected by internal and external quantities, but the production of quality and the consciousness do not occur immediately. This would be a way to reject the hypothesis that the quantities or impressions are equivalent to an

empirical experience. To explain the basis of memory as a system able to be changed permanently, it is necessary to assume that something produces a resistance to the free movement of quantities in the body. Freud refers to the notion of ‘contact barriers’ that establishes a different passage of quantities depending on the resistance of neurons. In this model, the memory is not identified to the impression of a trace, but to the difference between the traces. The memory is no longer considered as a property of the psyche to encompass the very essence of the psyche. In this sense, the true origin of the memory and, therefore, of the psyche lies in the difference between the facilitations, similar, in this case, to a metaphor of the written trace (Derrida, 1967a). The Freudian conception of memory establishes that only with the facilitations, in the difference between the traces, between the quantities the quality is established. Quality would be a final consequence of the set of periodic oppositions of the quantities.

One should not, therefore, say that exploration without difference is not enough for the memory; it is necessary to specify that there is no pure exploration without difference. The trace as memory is not a pure exploration that could always recover as simple presence, it is the indiscernible and invisible difference between the explorations. We know, therefore, that the psychic life is neither the transparency of the sense nor the opacity of the force, but the difference in the work of the forces. Nietzsche said it well. (Derrida, 1967a, p. 185)

The force produces a kind of cartography of facilitations and establishes a writing embodied in the grooves of these facilitations. The sense, therefore, is tributary of the force. The facilitations do not precede any quantity, they relate to the pure time that joins the periodicity spacing. The idea of time is essential in this structure. When Derrida acknowledges the *différance* in the conception of memory, it is not a time interval necessary for consciousness or for the postponing of an action, but an absence of origin of trace (Major, 2002). The constant rearrangement of traces exceeds the metaphysical idea of time, because the trace is not a mark that is part of the past, which can cause a future effect. The Freudian concept of *nachträglichkeit* is recognized for its uniqueness of not exhausting itself in metaphysics or in science. Derrida (1967) argues that “the temporality in Freud does not lend itself to a phenomenology of consciousness or of presence, and there is no doubt that one can then contest the right to even call it time, prior present-now, retarded, etc., everything that is in question here” (p. 82). The concept of ‘a posteriori’ calls into question the presence itself and is essential for Derrida’s writing on the trace and the *différance*, in that it indicates a de-substantialization of time, an emptying of the present/future/past substantiality. In this sense, there is not a pure present as opposed to the past. The past is present in the

present and the present always-already past. The very concept of *différance* brings the question of the time inscribed in its name.

The “a” of *différance* also reminds that spacing is timing, deviation, retardation, by which intuition, perception, consummation, in a word, the relation with the present, the reference to a present reality, to an entity are always differed. Differed because of the very principle of the difference that wants an element to not work and not signify, to not acquire nor provide its ‘sense’, unless by referring to another element past or future, in an economy of traces. (Derrida, 1972, p. 35)

In 1895, in the “Project for a scientific psychology”, Freud presents a representation of the psyche as a topography of traces, constructed by a map of neural facilitations which enables describing the workings of the psyche by spacings and differences. According to Derrida, in ‘Project’ (1895), the problematic of the facilitation resembles a metaphor of written trace, but gradually Freud’s work develops a “configuration of traces that we cannot represent if not by the structure and functioning of a writing” (Derrida, 1967a, p. 183). After the conceptualization of “Letter 52” (1896) and “The Interpretation of Dreams” (1900), the trace starts to become writing and the metaphor of writing starts to ponder the psyche in its entirety unfolding in two series: the structure of the psychic apparatus (the psychic apparatus as a writing machine) and psychic text (the psyche as writing).

Freud’s “Project” (1895) provides an idea of a map of neural facilitations that is compared to a system of traces, but still no sufficient elements had been found to think of the psychic structure as a writing machine. Only in 1925, in the article “The Note on the ‘Magic Writing Block’”, Freud achieves a better illustration of the constitution of the trace in a single model for the two systems that seemed incompatible since the ‘Project’ - perception and memory. Freud’s description on the invention of the Magic Writing Block is especially rich in its analogy with the metaphor of writing. We highlight, next, a small fragment of the text.

There is now in the market, under the name of ‘Magic writing block’, a little invention that promises to achieve more than the sheet of paper or the chalkboard. It claims to be nothing more than a writing board, from which notes can be erased by an easy hand movement. However, if examined more closely, one discovers that it is a hypothetical construction of our perceptual apparatus and that, in fact, it can provide both an always ready receptive surface and permanent traces of notes taken on it. (Freud, 1925, p. 287)

In this new configuration, the issue of quality is examined in a unique way, it does not appear neither inside

nor outside. A third system is proposed such as the interleaved sheet of the Magic Writing Block. At the time of writing, the incision (the excitement) produces the groove in the resin (perceptual impression) and the consciousness perception appears secondarily, as a reading of the trace already registered. The metaphor of the Magic Writing Block can bring together the text *content* and *structure*. Freud describes,

if we imagine one hand writing on the surface of the Magic Writing Block, while the other periodically raises the sheet from the wax board, we will have a concrete representation of the way by which I tried to represent the functioning of the perceptual apparatus of the mind. (Freud, 1925, p. 290)

Derrida resumes three possible analogies between the writing apparatus and the perception apparatus. Firstly, the indefinite storage and conservation of the concomitant traces in a receiving surface that is always available; Secondly, the possibility of erasing the traces in a first layer, of perception-consciousness, assimilated to the celluloid sheet of the Magic Writing Block that does not compromise the permanence of the traces on the board compared to the unconsciousness. So far, the two analogies are associated with, essentially, to the space of writing and its extent. The last analogy refers to the time of writing and temporality as spacing. As Freud comments, “I still suspect that this discontinued method of operation of the Pcpt-Cs. system lies deep at the origin of the concept of time” (Freud, 1925, p. 290). Derrida considers that the temporality is not just the discontinuity of the chain of signs, as had already been observed in the ‘Project’, but it is also the psychic writing as interruption and resumption of contact between the psychic layers. In this sense, the temporality is part of the structure of the psyche.

Derrida’s interest in the Magic Writing Block metaphor consists in the representation of the functioning of the apparatus with all functions: from the reception to the registration of writing. Derrida’s interrogation is not whether the Magic Writing Block metaphor is effective to represent the psyche. There is a ‘transvaluation’ of the elements. Derrida’s first question is: what is a text? And the second is: what would be the psyche to be represented by a text? On the one hand, there would be no machine nor text without a psychic origin, but Derrida adds that *there is also no psyche without text*. The originality of the model proposed in the Magic Writing Block, thought of as a writing machine, is the implication of all the elements, since there is no machine, nor text without psychic origin and there is no psyche without text. The consequence is another way of conceiving the language. There is not “a” text, it will always be a production without origin. It always makes reference to the absence of origin that does not admit the idea of a transcendental anteriority of language. The writing would not be apprehendable, but it is as a movement of the text that produces text, of a text always in production.

Following the way of the metaphors of the path, of the trace, of the exploration, of the march grooving a pathway opened by effraction through the neuron, the light or wax, wood or resin to inscribe violently in a nature, in a matter, in a matrix; following the relentless reference to a dry tip and a writing without ink; following the tireless inventiveness and dreamlike renewal of the mechanical models, this metaphor doggedly replacing traces with traces and machines by machines, we ask ourselves what did Freud do. (Derrida, 1967a, p. 225)

Derrida follows the movement of Freud in the scene of the writing and of the text produced in this scene.

Metaphonic, non-linguistic, and a-logical writing

Based on the dream scene, Derrida resumes the criticism about the connection between phonetic language and logocentrism. The central argument of the discussion is based on the fact that the writing of the dream is a non-phonetic writing that escapes the domain of non-contradiction and resists the metaphysical assumptions.

In Freud's works, there is a transgression in the usual sense of the language. Freud suggests that the language is not restricted only to the expression of thought in words. In this sense, his view is aware of the sign language of hysteria, of the pictorial language of dreams, of visions: a very comprehensive conception of language. We also highlight his singular perception of language marked by the recurrent choice for writing models, a fact especially valued by Derrida. Really, we can observe that Freud's metaphorical models of psyche are not imported from spoken language, nor from verb forms, nor from phonetic writing, but especially from a writing. Thus, in "The philological interest of psychoanalysis", Freud declares textually: "If we think that the means of representation in dreams are mainly visual images and not words, we see that it is even *more appropriate to compare dreams to a writing system than to a language*" (Freud, 1913, p. 212, emphasis added). It is a model of language as a metaphor for writing, which is never subject, exterior, or posterior to speech. According to Derrida (1967a), the use of metaphor, in this case, is essential, because "the gesture of Freud opens a new kind of question about the metaphor, the writing, the spacing" (p. 182).

The metaphor of writing of dreams allows for a reflection about the psychic text. Freud observes that the texture of the writing of dreams is not in a phonetic form, but irreducibly graphical. To approximate the oneiric writing, says the author, it is necessary to follow the direction that is opposite to consciousness, comparable to a retrogress of alphabetic writing to pictographic writing. The construction of dreams transforms latent thoughts, which are expressed in words, into sensory images, mostly in the form of visual images. Derrida signals Freud's preoccupation on unifying and not separating speech and writing in

the oneiric phenomenon. An initiative that approximates Derrida's writing of writing. The general idea is that writing comprises the entire field of linguistic signs - phonic or graphical.

Henceforth, we will need to interpret the topical, temporal, and formal regression of the dream as a way back in a landscape of writing. Not simply of transcriptive writing, the rocky echo of a deafened verbatim, but lithography prior to the words: *metaphonic, non-linguistic and a-logical*. (Derrida, 1967a, p. 193, emphasis added)

Representation in dreams works like a theater play, a form of expression of the writing of the word, as a painting or sculpture of the signifiers. According to Derrida, this model is characterized by the subordination of the word in the dream scene. Such as captions in comics, in the picto-hieroglyphic combination, the phonetic text appears only as a complement to the narrative. The analogy chosen by Freud to indicate the inability of dreams to represent certain logical connections is exemplary. "In old paintings, small tags were hung on the mouth of people represented, containing, in written characters, enunciations which the painter had lost hope of representing pictorially" (Freud, 1900, pp. 332-333). This view shows how "the general writing of dreams surpasses the phonetic writing and one again puts the word in its place" (Derrida, 1967a, p. 209).

Words are used in dreams the same way as any other pictographic, ideogrammatic element. Derrida points out that not only things condense words and the non-verbal signifiers can be interpreted in verbal representatives; however, we must also recognize that "words, as they are attracted, seduced, in the dream, towards the fictitious limit of the primary process, have the tendency to become pure and simple things" (Derrida, 1967a, p. 210). Therefore, words enter the dream system, submit to it, but lose their function, in that they are treated 'primarily' as things and not according to their sense. For this reason, it is a model of writing irreducible to the word.

It is possible to find in the figurative content of the dream a writing that is written about the economy of words, although not obeying a phonic reference. The phonetic writing, in this case, would be a writing of the writing. Derrida (1967a) notes that in the oneiric elaboration, when some verbal aspect is invested, its phonetic transcription is apprehended away from the center, in a network of mute writing. These transpositions of words into things enable chains that do not follow the linearity of logical time, of the time of consciousness, of the time of verbal representation. In this sense, they are productions of texts that are not under the principle of non-contradiction.

As we have seen, the text of phonetic writing finds no privilege in the general writing of the dream, and we should also observe that the dream does not enable any full translation into words. A fact that should cause no surprise,

since Freud (1915-1916) declares that the dream is not a medium of communication. Resorting to analogies between ancient writings and the writing of the dream only reinforces the fact of the limit of its decipherment. Even when the language of dreams is compared to hieroglyphic writing, it does not hold, however, the idea of a fixed correspondence between the elements. Dreaming is not transcribing words as a decryption of a message. The impossibility of completely recovering the dream by means of words is evident, which means the limit of its interpretation.⁵

Freud understands the writing of the dream as a figurative writing or a rebus. A fact to be considered is that a figurative writing allows for a reading that differs, for example, from an image of a conscious perception. In figurative writing, signs should be read according to their significance and not according to their image value. When we transport this issue to the experience of the unconscious, we can affirm that the unconscious does not use signifiers, it produces them, and also creates their significance. (Derrida, 1967a).

The sense of writing is in the absence of a comprehensive code. And, as there is no prior significant material, we could infer that the dreamer must "devise one's own grammar" (Derrida, 1967a, p. 196). The reading of a text "with no code" only occurs when it is considered "in comparison" to the other elements of the text. We know that Freud, in "Conference XV" (1915-1956), resorts to numerous examples from ancient writings. When referring to Chinese writing, for example, he highlights the fact of the infinite possibilities of meanings, only the context making the correct understanding possible. Similarly, dreams are not certain to interpretation, they can only be examined in comparison with other elements. Although, in the first topic, Freud proposes rules for interpretation within an objective of making conscious the unconscious (a connection to the logocentric metaphysics), the possibility of translation, or even a total interpretation, seem definitely limited, since both are based on substitution of signifiers. In order to assume a translation system, it would require a permanent code in which the signifier, when replaced, kept the same meaning. If there is no possibility of replacing signifiers while preserving the same meaning, the difference between signifier and signified is not that radical. (Derrida, 1967a).

As argued by Derrida, a faithful translation of a dream to another language is impossible. The very concept of translation already has in itself the risk of suggesting the existence of a prior text, as if it were possible to recover an impression of yore. To do so, one would have to assume that the content of the meaning can be conveyed, for example, from the dream's unconscious stage to the language of the consciousness. This is the problem faced by Freud in explaining the transposition of the representations between the conscious and unconscious systems. When an unconscious idea reaches the consciousness, its record continues

in the unconsciousness? In the metapsychology, Freud will delve into the subject proposing the topical and functional hypothesis.

Derrida emphasizes that the conscious text could not be thought of as a translation of an unconscious text. This would assume a text present elsewhere and the fundamental principle of the text is that it is irreducible to the concept of presence. The value of presence would threaten the very concept of unconsciousness, as the unconsciousness would be given substantiality. We need to consider that the unconsciousness is weaved by pure traces of differences formed by files that are already transcriptions.

Unconscious writing is thought as a psychic energy that circulates between the unconsciousness and the consciousness. Therefore, there is not a written text fixed somewhere. The writing is transcriptions, transformations of the text. Derrida proposes a thought about writing without origin, which assumes a text always yet to come, which implies that meaning is always ambiguous, multiple, and widespread.⁶

The text is not conceivable in the form, original or modified, of presence. The unconscious text is already woven of pure traces, of differences in which *sense* and *force* converge, text that is present nowhere, consisting of files that are always-already transcriptions. Originative impressions. Everything starts with reproduction. Always-already, that is, repositories of a meaning that was never present, whose present meaning is always reconstituted later, subsequently, supplementarily: *nacträglich* also means supplementary. The appeal of the supplement is originary here and excavates that which reconstitutes later as present. (Derrida, 1967a, p. 200, emphasis added)

The term of translation and transcription, ponders Derrida, comprises the danger of assuming a prior text that could be transported, without detriment, from one system to the other. The conscious text is not a transcript because there is no text in the present and impassive unconsciousness. The text is always a reconstruction a posteriori. The transcription of unconscious writing would not be a repetition, given that there is no prior text, the text is always original in its own secondariness. Thus, the writing is constructed in its own transcriptions.

The problem of the metaphor of translation is the possible separation between force and extension of the text. The distinction between force and sense belongs to the metaphysics of consciousness and presence, "or rather of the presence in the verb, in the hallucination of a language determined from the word, from the verbal representation" (Derrida, 1967a, p. 202). This is a problem that does not escape the attention of Freud and leads him to recognize

5 Freud signals the limit of interpretation when he admits the irreducible character of the drive traces. For example, in the classic expression 'navel of the dream', as a remainder which is irreducible to analysis.

6 As observed by Major (2002), Derrida's conception of writing directs "a critique of structuralism in psychoanalysis and of the primacy, perhaps, of imperialism, of the signifier and the symbolic order as developed in Lacan's conception" (p. 17-18).

the limit of the interpretation operation. This limit appears, for example, when the sound of the word, the verbal body, is not translatable, does not fade before a meaning. Derrida considers that this verbal body is not translatable to another language: “putting the body aside is really the essential energy of translation. When it re-institutes a body it is poetry” (Derrida, 1967a, p. 198). According to Freud, psychic writing would not be subject to translation, since there is only a single energy system and translation is not achieved only by switching signifiers.

Final considerations

Freud is not restricted to a linguistic model based on a semantic or significant dimension that excludes the intensive observation of language. However, Freud’s work is marked by numerous paradoxes, and different perspectives and possibilities of approaching the language are found. The central matter in this debate is

whether psychoanalysis would have managed to include the issue of intensity in the language of the unconscious. We emphasize, in Derrida’s reading, the recovered originality of the Freudian discourse, firstly by acknowledging the notion of unconscious as force and, secondly, by attention to the unified observation of speech and writing in analyzing the oneiric phenomena. The dilemmas and difficulties in translation (interpretation) of the unconscious text serve to demonstrate that the text consists not solely of representatives. In this light, Freud’s effort is clear when seeking to define a broader conception of language, without restricting it only to expression of thought in words, as is the case with the sign language of hysterical women and with the pictorial and sensorial language of dreams. Through the concept of ‘psychic text’, it becomes possible to conceive the unconscious as a permanent writing produced on the economy of words and not by their meaning; therefore, a language crossed by intensities.

A escrita de Derrida: notas sobre o modelo freudiano de linguagem

Resumo: Pretende-se retomar o debate de Derrida sobre a concepção de linguagem e seu encontro com a psicanálise. Apesar de constatar a influência da tradição filosófica da metafísica nos conceitos metapsicológicos da psicanálise, Derrida reconhece no discurso freudiano um potencial de desconstrução da concepção de linguagem associada a uma atividade representativa verbal. Por fim, aborda-se como a hipótese da concepção do inconsciente como escrita e a escrita do inconsciente implica outra interpretação do discurso na psicanálise em que se promove uma junção entre força e sentido.

Palavras-chave: Derrida, psicanálise, linguagem, escrita, inconsciente.

Écriture de Derrida: notes sur le modèle freudien de la langage

Résumé: Cet article se propose de reprendre le débat sur la conception de Derrida de la langage et de sa rencontre avec la psychanalyse. Tout en notant l’influence de la tradition philosophique de la métaphysique sur les concepts métapsychologiques de la psychanalyse, Derrida reconnaît dans le discours freudien le potentiel de déconstruction de la notion de langage associée à un représentant de l’activité verbale. Enfin, s’adresse aussi l’hypothèse de la conception de l’inconscient comme écriture, et l’écriture de l’inconscient implique autre interprétation du discours dans la psychanalyse puisqu’elle favorise une jonction entre la force et le sens.

Mots-clés: Derrida, psychanalyse, langage, écriture, inconscient.

Escritura de Derrida: notas sobre el modelo freudiano del lenguaje

Resumen: En este artículo se pretende reanudar la discusión sobre la concepción de Derrida del lenguaje y de su encuentro con el psicoanálisis. A pesar de observar la influencia de la tradición filosófica de la metafísica en conceptos metapsicológicos del psicoanálisis, Derrida reconoce el potencial discurso freudiano de la deconstrucción del concepto de lenguaje asociado con una actividad representativa verbal. Por último, se aborda como la hipótesis de la concepción del inconsciente como escritura y la escritura del inconsciente implica otra interpretación del discurso del psicoanálisis, ya que promueve una unión entre la fuerza y el sentido.

Palabras clave: Derrida, psicoanálisis, lenguaje, escritura, inconsciente.

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