

Article

The Seduction of the Name: Universal Marranism and the Secret of Being-in-Language

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Abstract: The author combines Walter Benjamin's speculations on language, naming, and horror with Jean Laplanche's general theory of seduction and his notion of the enigmatic signifier in order to reconstruct what he identifies as the primal scene of initiation into language. Further, the author develops this construction by linking it to a similar structure which he extracts by means of interpretation from Jacques Derrida's commentaries to the Biblical stories of the Tower of Babel and of the Binding of Isaac. Finally, the author shows how the primal scene thus reconstructed should be seen as the transcendental condition of being in language as described by Derrida in his seminal essay on *Monolingualism of the Other* and how this very condition should be understood as a universalized form of the Marrano condition. The most far-reaching conclusion of the argument is, then, that at least for Jacques Derrida, every subject of language is a Marrano.

Keywords: Marranism; language; deconstruction; psychoanalysis; Walter Benjamin

Some time between 1920 and 1922 Walter Benjamin wrote down two brief notes titled *Über das Grauen I* and *Über das Grauen II* (Benjamin 1991, pp. 75–77). Short and sketchy as both pieces are, together they record a splendid speculation concerning the interrelations between affect, body, and language. As such terms as 'eidetic' suggest, in these two pieces Benjamin is playing with phenomenological categories and strategies. However, he uses them in his own, highly idiosyncratic manner, and intertwines them with a number of rather startling notions of his own making.

What Benjamin presents is a quasi-phenomenological analysis of the state of 'horror' (*das Grauen*). Rather surprisingly, according to him, the very essence of the phenomenon comes to the fore in a very peculiar situation: namely, when somebody is woken up by his/her mother from the state of deep meditation or sleep. Strictly speaking, it is the mother's face that, on such an occasion, produces the eidetically pure effect of horror. Even more surprisingly, according to Benjamin, at the moment of such an awakening the mother's face turns into a mirror. In other words, in the state of horror the subject does not really perceive his/her mother, but—due to a curious hallucination—a doppelgänger, a copy of his/her own face that suddenly wakes him up.

The effects of this extreme experience are twofold. First, the horror of awakening affects our body and leads to its 'depotentialization' or even 'disembodiment'. Obviously, it does not mean that our body gets dematerialized. Rather, when we are struck by horror, what crumbles is what Benjamin calls our *Leib*, leaving only the so-called *Körper* as the result of the collapse. These are, again, phenomenological categories, roughly mapping the distinction between the living body and the material flesh, but Benjamin uses them at least partly in his own way. The most elaborate discussion of this distinction in his writings can be found in a slightly later piece titled *Outline of the Psychophysical Problem* (Benjamin 1991, pp. 78–87; 1996, pp. 393–401). What emerges from the latter, dense note is the following conceptual structure.

The notion of *Leib* refers, indeed, to the living body which is identical with the embodied spirit. Such a body is endowed with a general form and clear delineation. It is with and through this body that we participate in society and in the immanence of the historical process. In other words, *Leib* is our body as entangled in the symbolic order. *Körper*, on the other hand, is a paradoxical entity. It is the aspect of our being through which we are riveted to materiality, but it is also through *Körper* that we are subject to God—and only this type of body can be expected to resurrect, whereas our *Leib*, enmeshed in the network of signs as it is, will surely disintegrate. *Körper* is the stamp of our aloneness and singularity, and yet it lacks clear form or delimitations. Moreover, it is not to be perceived as a primitive entity which then gets tattooed with symbols. *Körper* does not precede *Leib*; rather, indeed, it is the residual product of its decomposition. We experience it in pain or pleasure, and as the receiver of perceptions. Also in this text Benjamin claims that we are most powerfully communicated with our *Körper* when we perceive someone else's face. The note on horror teaches us that this very experience is at its most acute when we are confronted with our mother's face at the moment of awakening.

Thus, we can appreciate the full meaning of the first effect of horror. In horror, our structured body (*Leib*) trembles and gets depotentialized, momentarily turning into a shapeless, residual flesh (*Körper*), the material, borderless singularity which is subject to God. Secondly, the experience affects our linguistic capabilities. In horror, we are temporarily devoid of speech. Benjamin discusses this crucial effect in the final paragraph of the first note on horror and devotes to it the whole, shorter note no. 2. Both passages are sufficiently lucid and inspiring to be quoted in full. Here is the ending of *Über das Grauen I*: 'Very important: together with the depotentialization of the body in the state of horror, the other pole, that of language, is dropped, too. What is meant is not only the acoustic speech, but language as such in the broadest sense of expression. From that moment on the very possibility of language seems an incomprehensible act of grace and the feeling that it is something natural seems like a sleepwalker's stroll over a tightrope' (Benjamin 1991, p. 77). This striking idea is further developed in the second note. For here is the full text of *Über das Grauen II*: 'The muteness in the state of horror is a primitive experience. Suddenly, with other capabilities intact, amidst other people, in broad daylight, you are devoid of language, of any capability of expression. And that consciousness: that this muteness, this incapability of expression is rooted in man as deeply as—on the other hand—the capability of speaking which permeates him; that this impotence was bequeathed to him as an atavism by his ancestors' (ibid.).

It would be tempting to compare (and possibly contrast) this eccentric and rich speculation with a number of theories that relate language to affect and the maternal. Julia Kristeva's understanding of the semiotic as well as her vision of the abject comes to mind as a natural candidate for such a promising exercise (Kristeva 1982, pp. 1–32; 1986, pp. 89–136). Here, however, I would like to link Benjamin's speculation to another scene taken from a quite different author. The thinker I have in mind is the great psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche who has developed an original vision of the birth of human sexuality known as the general theory of seduction, elegantly summarized in his *New Foundations for Psychoanalysis* (Laplanche 1989, pp. 89–151). Famously, at the beginning of his career, Sigmund Freud tended to believe in the factuality of the 'seductions' (i.e., rapes and/or intrusive sexual encounters) that his patients told him about, and naturally saw them as traumatic and pathogenic. Later, Freud rejected this stance to a large extent and claimed that his patients' stories about seduction reflect their own unconscious fantasies, rather than actual events. Laplanche laments this change, while pointing out that until the very end of his career Freud did insist on the reality of certain primal, traumatic and seductive scenes in his patients' stories. Following this streak in Freud's thinking Laplanche claims that the category of seduction should be kept. However, it should not be applied to the more or less common pathological situations, but to the inevitably premature and traumatic birth of human sexuality as such. It is the adults that initiate us into the world of sexuality when we are not yet ready for this. When it comes to sexuality, it is always too early for us, while—on the other hand—we are always too late: this social-sexual play had started always already before we appeared

on stage and thus, before we can become mature players, our first loves must end in misunderstanding, pain and catastrophe.

More precisely, according to Laplanche's general theory of seduction, our sexuality is born due to the always premature encounters with the so-called enigmatic signifiers, the sexually charged messages or interpellations sent to us (usually unconsciously) by the adults. These messages are both traumatic and seductive. Internalized and repressed, they form the very sources of the sexual drive understood as a distortion of, and a deviation from, our simple biological instincts. Thus, our unconscious is not 'ours', as it is formed by the contingent, enigmatic, traumatic encounter with others, the first of them being usually our own mother or, rather, the mother's breast. Moreover, the enigmatic message may be recognized as the transcendental origin of our linguistic capabilities. According to a number of (otherwise very different) psychoanalytic thinkers we actually acquire spoken language as a never-satisfactory substitute for the loss of the primal object, i.e., the maternal breast itself (e.g., Abraham and Török 1994, pp. 127–28). However, the act of seduction as described by Laplanche marks the more originary origin, both transcendental and contingent at the same time, which can be recognized as such only belatedly and after the event. The enigmatic message has seduced us both into the world of sexuality and signs in the first place. The symbolic system thanks to which we map the world, others and ourselves, can be seen as stable and consistent only thanks to the partial assimilation (or, as Laplanche says, translation) and a partial necessary repression of the originary enigma. The enigmatic signifier reappears as such an origin only when the surface of the signifying speech gets radically broken by the return of our unconscious sexual desire.

If we permit ourselves to combine Benjamin and Laplanche, we can see their speculations as curiously complementary. In particular, the scene of horror as described by Benjamin can be seen as a belated reactivation of our catastrophic encounter with the full power of the seductive, traumatic enigma as described by Laplanche. Ironically but adequately, the Benjaminian scene appears as a dialectical reversal of, and a complement to, the Lacanian mirror stage. According to Lacan's classical speculation, in the early mirror experience we narcissistically identify ourselves with our own image; this experience integrates our body and enables us to form relatively stable I, even if at the price self-alienation (Lacan 2006, pp. 75–81). Instead, Benjamin's mirror stage disintegrates our body. It leads us back to the more originary origin than the primary narcissism—the one described by Laplanche—when we were struck with otherness and seduced both into the world of sexuality and into the world of signs.

More importantly for our purposes, one is tempted to link this primal scene of seduction to Benjamin's own theological speculations. As we have seen, Benjamin's meditations on horror themselves are not free from a theological element: *Körper* which comes to the fore in this experience is what can be called the theological body of man, a body that marks his/her absolute singularity and his relation to God. For his part, Laplanche himself points out that the asymmetrical relation between the adult and the child in the scene of seduction may be seen as analogous to the equally asymmetrical relation between the eminent reality of God and the being of the created world, as described by the Cartesian tradition (Laplanche 1989, pp. 123–24). And, in a different context, Eric Santner has already suggested a fruitful isomorphism between Laplanche's vision of the enigmatic signifier and Gershom Scholem's famous idea of the 'nothingness of revelation' as developed in Scholem's letters to Benjamin himself (Santner 2001, pp. 33–40).

In his seminal essay *On Language as Such and on the Language of Man*, Benjamin claims that at the moment of his creation man was given that very same language which God used when creating the world (Benjamin 1996, pp. 62–74). According to the second version of the creation story, alone among the created beings, man is created out of a material. This seeming inferiority is, in fact, a mark of his superiority, for it means that man was not created through word and was not subjected to the creative language by naming. Rather, an originarily and essentially nameless being, he now completes the work of creation by naming other entities himself with the very same language they were created through. The purity of this language and man's linguistic bliss get lost only at the moment of the Fall

which for Benjamin finds its logical completion in the destruction of the Tower of Babel. In fact, the two events, unrelated in the Bible, can be seen as two aspects of the same catastrophe.

However, combining Laplanche's vision of the enigmatic signifier with Benjamin's phenomenology of horror opens a path toward a most natural revision of this theological pattern. It enables us to see man as receiving language in an act of original revelation at the same moment he is subdued to it. This revelation/subjection can be perceived as the very act of naming man by God that Benjamin so forcefully denied to have taken place. Moreover, the now-triple act of revelation, subjection and naming is to be seen as the traumatic interpellation, the seduction by the enigma of the name, which throws us into language, orders us to speak, while making it impossible for us to control the origin. If so, then there is no need for the hypothesis of the Fall which subverts man's almost divine sovereignty—almost divine and not divine proper only because it manifests itself only in naming and not in creation itself—for the very act of receiving language questions human sovereignty and thus it is indistinguishable from the Fall. And if the scene of horror and trembling as described by Benjamin is the originary repetition of such a primal scene of seduction understood as the psychotheological description of the origin of our being-in-language, then we have to revise the point that Benjamin makes in his second note on horror. It is not only that 'this muteness, this incapability of expression is rooted in man as deeply as—on the other hand—the capability of speaking which permeates him'. Rather, now we can see that these two qualities that ultimately define our humanity spring from one and the same though divided origin: it is the enigma which introduces us to language, but which—when confronted in repetition or belated reactivation—robs us of any capability of speaking and leaves our bodies in horror and trembling.

Now, I believe that this primal scene of language which emerges if we combine Benjamin on horror with Laplanche on seduction, should be further combined with a parallel scene which emerges from the work of Jacques Derrida. This scene can be reconstructed from a number of his writings, in particular from the essay *Des Tours de Babel* and from his book on *The Gift of Death*. Briefly speaking, Derrida can be read as linking three Biblical locations: Sinai as the site of revelation, Babel as the site of destruction and Mount Moriah as the site of secret and trembling.

The link or, simply, identification of Sinai and Babel rather obviously emerges from the opening pages of Derrida's essay on the Towers (Derrida 2002, pp. 104–11). In this essay, taking Voltaire's commentary on Babel as his point of departure, Derrida argues that God destroyed the Tower by naming it with his own revealed name which thus can be identified as 'Confusion': 'Babel means not only confusion [. . .] but also the name of the father, more precisely and more commonly, the name of God as name of father. The city would bear the name of God the father and of the father of the city that is called confusion. God, the God, would have marked with his patronym a communal space, that city where understanding is no longer possible' (ibid., p. 105). Thus revealed, the divine Name ruins the Tower of the homogeneous, potentially universal empire and breaks the equally homogeneous language which from now on will be always infected with the virus of *differance*. Thus, whereas actually and factually language does exist earlier, the moment of destruction of the Tower can be seen as the return of the more originary origin of speech, the one which establishes it and disestablishes it at the same time, an act which is to be identified with the revelation on the uncontrollable Name, the only Sinai you can count on Derrida's world.

However, this scene at Babel-as-Sinai is to be further linked to the moment of Akedah as read by Derrida in *The Gift of Death* (Derrida 1996, pp. 53–81). Famously, in his *Fear and Trembling* Kierkegaard argued that Abraham's decision to obey God and sacrifice his son marks the leap that the knight of faith makes when transcending the talkative logos of the ethical stage of existence and entering the utter secrecy and silence of the religious stage. In his deconstructive reading of Kierkegaard's reading of Abraham's story, Derrida argues that, paradoxically, in order for the argument to hold the ethical stage must be transcended and kept at the same time: 'Abraham must assume absolute responsibility for sacrificing his son by sacrificing ethics, but in order for there to be a sacrifice, the ethical must retain all its value, the love for his son must remain intact, and the order of human duty must continue to

insist on its rights' (ibid., p. 66). Thus, the so-called religious stage cannot be seen as a separate domain over and above the ethical. Rather, we should see Abraham's decision as a disruptive inscription in the very field of the ethical, with the silence of Abraham as the deconstructive moment of secrecy which troubles the domain of language and the ethical law, permanently reopening them to the moment of alterity and justice. What injects this moment of silence and secrecy into human language and into the field of ethical law is the call of God or, again, his Name: 'One must behave not only in an ethical or responsible manner, but in a nonethical, nonresponsible manner, and one must do that *in the name of duty, of infinite duty, in the name of absolute duty*. And this name which must always be singular is here none other than the name of God as completely other, the nameless name of God, the unpronounceable name of God as other to which I am bound by an absolute unconditional obligation, by an incomparable, nonnegotiable duty' (ibid., p. 67).

We can conclude, then, that the Name of God, which as the virus of deconstruction and confusion inserted itself into human language with the destruction of the Tower of Babel, reappears and receives its true ethical significance in God's address to Abraham. Moreover, it is received and responded to in the very silence and secrecy to which Abraham was forced when travelling to the Mount Moriah. And it is this very secrecy that causes literal trembling which marks the permanent return of the disruptive Name: 'A secret always makes you tremble. [. . .] It suggests that violence is going to break out again, that some traumatism will insist on being repeated. [. . .] We tremble in that strange repetition that ties an irrefutable past (a shock has been felt, a traumatism has already affected us) to a future that cannot be anticipated' (ibid., pp. 53–54).

So here is the sequence of equations that I insist on. On my reading, the Benjaminian scene of horror is to be seen as the repetition of Laplanche's scene of original seduction. This scene, in turn, is to be equated with the revelation of God's Name in Babel and on Mount Moriah as understood by Derrida. What emerges from this complex sequence is the psychotheological primal scene of the original introduction to language, a scene which precedes the time when we actually start speaking. The scene marks the moment of seduction by the Name—which, combining revised Benjamin on language with unrevised Derrida on Babel, we can now recognize as being *both* God's name *and* the true name of the first man. It is also the moment of making and breaking the language as such, of inscribing the aspect of secrecy and muteness into its very texture, and act of infection which only establishes language properly as the element potentially subject to the permanent deconstructive opening. Only naturally, then, the trembling collapse of our structured bodies and the mute oppression that Benjamin describes in his notes on horror can be perceived as our belated confrontation with the divided origin of our being-in-language, which is responsible both for our linguistic capabilities and for our muteness.

One can note that coherent as the above argument may be, it involves a curious gender mess. Both Benjamin (when discussing horror) and Laplanche (when discussing seduction) focus on the relation between the subject and the maternal. The cluster of arguments that I point to in Derrida at least seem to be focused more on the paternal regime, with God as the terrible father who seems to appear also in Benjamin's own theological speculations on the origin of language. However, if we follow Derrida more closely, the centrality of the paternal figure in his argument may appear as much less certain. For both revelatory scenes we have pointed to in Derrida—while linking them to each other—that is, the Babelic and the Akedic moment, concern the ultimate subversion of phallogocentric paternity rather than the establishment of the absolute phallus called God. His or her name is confusion: s/he seduces us into language by naming us and disestablishes every phallic sovereignty without establishing his/her own. Moreover, it is to be noted that at least in one important text Derrida explicitly focuses on the link between language and the maternal, clearly understood along the lines of the above argument. Namely, in an infinitely long footnote to the book on *Monolingualism of the Other*, he discusses Hannah Arendt's attitude to her German *Muttersprache* during the Nazi times and her defensive dictum that it was not the language that has gone mad. Derrida remarks that what Arendt does not take into account is that language as such can be mad after all in a different sense

and that, moreover, as he says alluding to his own *Circumfessions*, ‘the mother of the language called “maternal” may ‘be able to become, to have been, mad (amnesiac, aphasic, delirious)’ (Derrida 1998, p. 87). Thus, the relation to the maternal is not that of the original coziness and of a natural bond which makes us feel at home in our mother tongue. Even though unique and constitutive for the subject, the relation as Derrida describes it is marked by originary otherness and contingency, we might say: by the originary colonization.

Now, I believe that it is precisely *Monolingualism of the Other* that in a particularly lucid way shows the very dynamics of the linguistic existence inaugurated by the primal psychotheological scene I have been reconstructing so far. In other words, my claim is that the linguistic predicament that Derrida analyzes in this text implicitly assumes the traumatic and destructive seduction by the divine Name as the transcendental condition of its possibility and as its (belatedly recognized) origin. Moreover, my ultimate claim is that even though in *Monolingualism of the Other* Derrida does not explicitly refer to the Marrano phenomenon that he discusses in other texts so sympathetically (e.g., Derrida 2007, p. 13), in this very book Derrida can be seen as presenting the very being-in-language of any human subject as a universalized Marrano predicament marked by inherent secrecy which is initiated by the primal scene of naming. *For Derrida, every subject of language is a Marrano.*

Daringly, Derrida takes his private biographical trajectory as the blueprint for his general vision of the constitution of the linguistic subject as such. The trajectory is that of a Franco-Maghrebian Jew and a patriot—or a ‘matriot’—of the French culture in general and of the French language in particular. As far as the status of culture is concerned, Derrida universalizes his predicament into the radical statement concerning its inevitable colonialism. He writes: “‘Colonialism’ and ‘colonization’ are only high points, one traumatism over another, an increasing buildup of violence, the jealous rage of an essential *coloniality* and *culture*, as shown by the two names. A coloniality of culture [. . .]’ (Derrida 1998, p. 24). And further: ‘All culture is originarily colonial. In order to recall that, let us not simply rely on etymology. Every culture institutes itself through the unilateral imposition of some “politics” of language. Mastery begins, as we know, through the power of naming, of imposing and legitimating appellations’ (ibid., p. 39). And finally, in a most lucid way: ‘The question here is not to efface the arrogant specificity or traumatizing brutality of what is called modern colonial war in the “strictest definition” of the expression . . . On the contrary. Certain people, myself included, have experienced colonial cruelty from two sides, so to speak. But once again, it reveals the colonial structure of any culture in an exemplary way’ (ibid., p. 39). Thus, every being in culture, even in the ‘maternal culture’, which is constitutive for the very emergence of the subject, is marked by originary contingency and violence. In Derrida’s words, it has the structure of ‘alienation without alienation’ (ibid., p. 25), for there is no subject prior to it to be considered alienated by the originary colonialism.

This originarily colonial nature of any culture finds its most vivid expression in the relation between subject and language. Derrida suggests that his position within French language can be defined by the paradoxical formula which gets repeated throughout the text like a magic incantation: ‘I only have one language; it is not mine’ (ibid., p. 1). Again, ostensibly, this formula refers to a most peculiar Franco-Maghrebian-Jewish predicament which marks Derrida’s own biography. It is the predicament of a radically decentered minority which—having no specific language of its own—breathes the linguistic element of an empire which it does not ‘own’. Derrida says: ‘As for language in the strict sense, we could not even resort to some familiar substitute, to some idiom internal to the Jewish community, to any sort of language of refuge that, like Yiddish, would have ensured an element of intimacy, the protection of “home-of-one’s own” against the language of official culture, a second auxiliary in different socio-semiotic situations’ (ibid., p. 54). However, Derrida does not hesitate to universalize the formula which defines his personal position. For if any culture is colonial, then whatever my geo-ethnic position, even my mother tongue, the language that, deep down there, I can call my only language, is not my own. Thus, Derrida may say quite explicitly: ‘Consequently, anyone should be able to declare under oath: I have only one language and it is not mine; my “own”

language is, for me, a language that cannot be assimilated. My language, the only one I hear myself speak and agree to speak, is the language of the other' (ibid., p. 25).

The biographical, historical and political coloring of Derrida's argument notwithstanding, this is precisely the condition of the subject introduced to language on the primal scene described above: the scene which seduces us into the world of signs, but at the same time disinherits us, makes it impossible for us to feel at home in our only language and to control the origin. If we 'owned' our language, if we controlled its origin, we would have been gods and the catastrophe of the Tower would have been undone. But the origin, the moment of naming, is also the moment of absolute alienation and subversion of any subjective sovereignty that we might ever aspire to. A vivid sign of this initial catastrophe of naming which turns us into speaking subjects is the speechless horror we feel when confronted with the origin once again.

And it is this very linguistic predicament that, I believe, should be identified as universal Marranism. Of course, it is a peculiar, deconstructed and deconstructive form of Marranism, freed from the limitations of its original, historical form. If Marranism means keeping your secret Judaism within the official element of Christianity that one officially professes, then—obviously—neither Derrida is a Marrano, nor—even more obviously—is he treating this condition as universal. Moreover, this is not the case even if being a Marrano means (slightly more metaphorically) that you are keeping a secret yet well defined identity within the element of Christianity, Islam, Judaism or any other religious or atheist/republican discourse, an identity which connects you to a community you have been cut off from or at least defines you as a stable, consistent individual. However, in his book on Marranism considered as the model of modern identity, Yirmiyahu Yovel suggests that even the historical Marranos should be studied as forming a peculiar group of individuals with distorted identities rather than simply as people who were 'in fact' Jews. Yovel stresses the extent to which the Marranos were dramatically estranged from Judaism itself which at least some of them desperately tried to keep on practicing. Thus, without finding their home in the religion they have converted to, at least some of the Marranos were losing a stable identity that could be really cherished in secret and so they were becoming 'heretics to all religions' (Yovel 2009, p. 164).

If we think about Marrano condition along these lines, but move even further away from well-defined subjective identities, we can ultimately arrive at the proper understanding of what I perceive as Derrida's universal Marranism. What is crucial for the deconstructive Marranism is precisely the condition of the subject who, though submerged in the element s/he finds himself/herself alienated in, nevertheless is constituted by this very element and has no private, secret language of his/her own. The secret that the deconstructive Marrano keeps is not a set of propositions or ritual gestures, it is the very condition of alienation without alienation, of that infinitely small, secret fold of subjectivity within the language that constitutes it, a fold that, in turn, is constitutive for language as such as infected by the virus of *differance*. This very subjectivity comes into being (into being-in-language) by the primal scene of scene of seduction and naming described above, which is both the act of initiation and estrangement. And if Derrida is right in *Monolingualism of the Other* and, indeed, if he is right in everything he tried to say about language from the very outset of his project, then the Marrano condition thus defined is, indeed, the condition of every subject of language.

How does this non-propositional, non-essentialist, universal, deconstructive Marranism manifest itself? In the last section of *Monolingualism of the Other* Derrida answers this question in a particularly vivid way. It does not come as a surprise (and agrees fully with what Walter Benjamin told us) that if every subject has one language which, however, is not his/her own, then—paradoxically, but logically—Derrida can identify every subject of language as, in a sense, marked by secret aphasia. He takes this keen observation as the starting point for a striking idea. Namely, that when the linguistic/aphasic subject, rather than pretending that s/he fits nicely into his/her mother tongue like a glove, is true to the secret fold that s/he is, then s/he acts as if s/he were trying to do something impossible: to translate from a language to come into the language s/he speaks. Thus, Derrida can offer one of the most powerful definitions of deconstruction as such: 'That too is a peculiar phenomenon

of translation. The translation of a language that does not as yet exist, and that will never have existed, in any given target language. This translation translates itself in an internal (Franco-French) translation by playing with the non-identity with itself of all language. By playing and taking pleasure' (Derrida 1998, p. 65). Incidentally, I would not hesitate to identify the pleasure Derrida is talking about with sexual enjoyment that, according to Jean Laplanche, returns within the breaks of discourse. However this may be, though, it is only by means of that internal, deconstructive translation that each time reopens our present language, our law, our home to what is to come—a translation which is both an act of playful pleasure and an ethical act of justice—that we remain true to our secret Marrano condition and to that primal scene that introduced as to being-in-language: to that horrifying seduction of the Name.

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