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Effacing the Face: Botox and the Anarchivic Archive

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Effacing the Face: Botox and the Anarchivic Archive

At the 2003 Oscar Awards, a little-known production team from Melbourne Australia won the Oscar for Best Animated Short Film, for a film entitled *Harvie Krumpet* (Elliot 2003). Afterwards the producer, Melanie Coombs, noted that attending the Oscars was 'like being at Madame Tussaud's except they were live people' (Loane, 2004: 25). Coombs' comment appeared in a short opinion article by Sally Loane in *The Sun Herald*, entitled 'Come on Mum, it's Botox Time'. Loane contextualized Coombs' statement in terms of the effects of Botox, and its dramatic appearance in circles such as entertainment, fashion, beauty and Hollywood cinema. From Coombs' comments, an image emerged of a group of actors who, as a result of their use of Botox (or whatever other cosmetic treatments are or were in vogue), no longer looked like 'live' people. Coombs knew they were 'live' people, but they *appeared* as if they were not. No names were named, and no fingers directly pointed; they were a 'they', and whoever they were, to the eye of an independent Australian film producer, they appeared as characters from Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum, caricatures of themselves, testaments to their own memories *while they were still alive*.

It was a throwaway comment, a metaphor, an observation, nothing more. It is also worth noting that *Harvie Krumpet* was a claymation film. Already accustomed to seeing malleable material in motion, perhaps Coombs finds all actors a little wax-like, a little statuesque. Nevertheless, some significance adheres to her comment. Wax, as a malleable substance that is easily moulded into a given form, and the material of choice for the imitable Madame Tussaud, has a string of connotations that have to do with the simulation of the human form and the archivization of the appearances of luminaries. Further, the drawcard of Madame Tussaud's is that the characters are extremely life-like, that some reality-effect floats about them. Wax is used to preserve the brightness of stars even after the light has gone out, to enshrine their memory in a substance perfectly suited to the 'impression of reality' that constitutes such a use. Yet, while life-like, the character is also frozen, cut down in the midst of life. If we look closely, we can begin to see the marks of the sculptor's chisel, the flesh has the waxen hue of a corpse. Wax records what is past and gone; it was the material of choice when instruments for recording sound, such as the wax cylinder, were first invented. Wax is also used as a metaphor in descriptions of memory. In Plato's *Theaetetus*, Socrates gives the example of memory as a wax tablet in our minds, which receives impressions as we perceive the world (X 191c-196c). Similarly, the underlying material of Freud's Mystic Writing Pad, the apparatus with which Freud compares the human mind and memory, is wax (Freud, 1959: 227).

With this string of connotations in mind, Coombs' comment begins to take on a larger resonance. Botox is a cosmetic technology, and is thus concerned with changes to the appearance of the face and the surface of the skin. More specifically, Botox is one of the many technologies that form the arsenal of an 'appearance industry' dedicated to reducing 'the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles' wherever they may appear. Botox is an anti-aging product, designed to reduce the *appearance* of aging. Within this context,

an analysis of Botox can tell us about the foibles and preoccupations of a culture obsessed with the face and the surface, with youth and beauty, and with the apparent danger of aging, which is to say, of *looking one's age*.

The same analysis could be performed on many of the technologies and techniques that underpin the appearance industry. Aside from anti-aging face cremes, chemical peels or laser re-surfacing, and cosmetic surgery procedures such as facelifts, rhinoplasty, and blepharoplasty, the technologies most directly comparable to Botox are collagen and fat injections. In these cases, fat, collagen or a synthetic 'filler' such as Restylane is injected into the areas around existing wrinkles, plumping up the surrounding area and thus lessening the appearance of wrinkles for a limited time. This is the bare physical reality of such technologies, and their 'selling point' is equally clear. But this selling point is not value-free, it invokes a host of assumptions about the value of youth and the evils of aging. Coombs' comment also suggests that Botox and its associated technologies are tied up with some relation of human beings to time and memory, for the actors she observed have appropriated the image of their own past – we must remember that Madame Tussaud's is a museum, a place of recording, archivization and the cessation of time.

Given this association, Botox as a cosmetic technology can also be understood as a writing technology, and further, as a technology of the archive, and it is here that Botox is differentiated from its associated technologies. While both Botox and fat and collagen injections minimize the appearance of wrinkles in the present, only Botox attempts to project this minimization into the future, purporting to reduce the ability to *form* wrinkles. Botox's temporality is complex, for it operates simultaneously as a re-writing of the past and a writing for the future. But like many technologies, and like any product designed with its longevity in the market in mind, Botox is a *pharmakon*, it poisons as it cures, it claws back what it dispenses. The economic imperative that drives the appearance industry is only ever partially concerned with the success of its products; of equal importance is the inevitable failure of its products, which necessitates further expenditure. Botox delivers the youthful, human face at the same time as it takes it away and replaces it with a technical simulacrum, mobilizing fantasies both of human youth and beauty, and technological transcendence, commodifying the very passing of time in this movement.

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Botox is the brandname of a cosmetic treatment, 'botulinum toxin type A', produced by multinational pharmaceutical company Allergan. Botox is injected into muscles around areas of the face that form wrinkles or lines – corners of the eyes, between the eyebrows, around the mouth, the neck – and for a period of up to 6 months it 'freezes' the muscles so that the face is no longer able to perform the movements that produce wrinkles. Since its introduction into cosmetic use in 1987, Botox has become the most popular cosmetic treatment (surgical or nonsurgical) in the US. In 2005 in the US alone, 3,839,387 Botox injections were performed (Donohoe, 2006). At an average cost of more than $500US, Botox is well over a billion-dollar industry.

Botox is a highly diluted form of botulinum toxin, one of the deadliest and most powerful neurotoxins known. Botulism, a disease contracted from canned foods that have been poorly preserved, is caused by botulinum toxin; often fatal, it causes muscular paralysis by blocking electrical signals between the brain and the muscular system (Misra). Botulinum toxin has also been used as a potential agent in chemical and biological warfare. Subsequent to the first Gulf War, Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq was found by UN inspectors to possess thousands of litres of botulinum toxin for use in biological warfare (UNSCOM, 1999) (what is less well-known is that this arsenal had been developed from cultures sent to Iraq by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention under the Reagan and first Bush administrations – see Turner, 2002). Similarly, the Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo, perpetrators of the 1995 Tokyo subway sarin gas attack, manufactured botulinum toxin as part of their biological weapons arsenal (Lifton, 1999: 186). They even went as far as dispersing the toxin in public areas of Tokyo three times between 1990 and 1995, although failing in each case to inflict the damage they were intending (Lifton, 1999: 187-188).

Despite the failure of Saddam Hussein or Aum Shinrikyo to inflict large-scale damage with it, Botulinum toxin has powerful cultural connotations, as well as proven function, as a poison. What is interesting, however, is that within the apocalyptic thought of Aum Shinrikyo, or more specifically the thought of Aum's guru and leader Shoko Asahara, botulinum toxin was also figured as a kind of cure, as it was part of Aum's arsenal of biological and chemical weapons. Aum's overall goal was to bring about an Armageddon or apocalypse as a purification of the world, and its various weapons programs were understood as the means by which to achieve this end. Robert Jay Lifton's analysis of Aum Shinrikyo and Shoko Asahara, *Destroying the World to Save It*, builds this simple logic directly into its title. Although the implementation of botulinum toxin never succeeded in its aims, the role it was intended to play was always a double role of creator/destroyer, and poison/cure (Lifton, 1999: 59). As such, botulinum toxin qualifies as the perfect expression of the logic of the *pharmakon*, the poison that is also a cure. For Aum Shinrikyo, botulinum toxin cures on a social level *at the same time* as it poisons on the human level, and these movements are one and the same.

Understood metaphorically as a poison and cure within Aum's apocalyptic framework, botulinum toxin has also been uncovered as a 'miracle cure' by the scientific and medical community. In the late 1980s, a diluted form of the toxin was found to be useful in treating patients with muscle-spasm conditions, such as cerebral palsy (Brandt 59). Since that time, many other medical uses for Botox have been discovered; it is licensed for use to treat facial spasms, cervical dystonia, spasticity, and excessive sweating, amongst other conditions (Brandt, 2003: 59; Misra, 2002). In 1987, two Vancouver doctors, Jean and Alistair Carruthers, discovered that Botox could also be used to 'clear' wrinkles by blocking the muscles that cause them. Botox 'blocks the nerve impulses that control muscle movement by restricting the patient's abilities to contract the facial muscles. No contraction of the muscle equals no movement of the skin lying over it and no movement equals no wrinkles' (Brandt, 2003: 58-59). As we shall discuss however, Botox is more than just a chemical poison that cures various ills. The cost of each treatment, the brevity

of its effects and the repetition of treatment this brevity requires, allows us to understand Botox again as a *pharmakon*, as a substance that poisons while it cures, that negates its function as it functions and, in this instance, that writes at the same time as it erases.

'No movement equals no wrinkles'; Botox sells itself, hardly needing the no-doubt considerable resources of Allergan's marketing department when its premise is so self-evident, so clear and unequivocal, and when its performance so succinctly meets the needs of the appearance industry. No movement: no wrinkles. No wrinkles: no worries. 'I haven't frowned since 1987. I have a picture of it' states Jean Carruthers in a 2002 interview in *The Vancouver Magazine* (Smith, 2002). 'The goal is that she won't be able to raise her eyebrows' explains Dr Patricia Wexler to *Time* journalist Bruce Handy (Handy, 1998: 72). Wrinkles are one of the 'signs' of aging, a process expressly forbidden, demonized even, by the appearance industry. They are signs that appear on the face over time, traced there by the expressions that mark one's passage through time and through life; one's facial expressions. Botox renders one's face unable to form certain expressions, which therefore reduces the likelihood that wrinkles will appear. For most people, the inability to form certain facial expressions is apparently not a problem, indeed it is a boon. Maggie, Dr Wexler's patient, is not concerned about her frozen forehead. 'People aren't that observant ….They don't say, "Hey - you can't raise your eyebrows"' (Handy, 1998: 72). Dr Wexler concurs: 'The upper one-third of the face doesn't have to be mobile for normal facial expression' (Handy, 1998: 72). There is a flipside, however, to this inability to form certain facial expressions; and that is, simply, the inability to form certain facial expressions. There is (at least) one group of people whose livelihoods rely on the ability to form facial expressions: actors.

The face of the actor is a complex thing. Traditionally, it has invoked a mechanical doubling or technological training of the face in the science of expression (Roach, 1993: 140). It is from the face that expression, and thus character, and thus the scene of acting, springs, and there is always an apparatus surrounding the production of the actor's face. The face of the actor must *work*, it must be put to work in the service of the play or film, and it must function according to principles of expression. It must work in the eyes of the audience or spectator, which is to say, it must produce the truth of the act, and in the words of Jean-Louis Baudry, like film, the actor must give the audience the 'impression of reality' (Baudry, 1992: 697-698). Ironically, it appears that the use of Botox in the entertainment industry has put the lie to this impression of reality. Actors can now be caught in the act of acting; like Coombs' wax figures, they can be seen to be acting themselves. Recent accounts of Botox use in the film industry have focused on the problems casting agents and film directors face when auditioning actors, who can no longer emote as required. Of Botoxed actors, Paul de Freitas of the British Casting Directors' Guild notes: 'We waste a great deal of time weeding them out at the audition stage. We watch them on film and when you get the close-up, there's simply no subtlety of emotion at all' (*MX Magazine*, Feb 10, 2003). London casting agent Jeremy Zimmermann had the same problem with Mickey Rourke: 'I had to veto Mickey for the leading role in a British film I'm working on. I had to explain to his agent that we wouldn't be using him because his face looks so frozen after his recent operations…. He looks so strange now' (*NW Magazine*, April 21, 2003). Martin Scorcese and Baz

Luhrmann are two film directors who have publicly voiced their opposition to the use of Botox in the film industry, frustrated by difficulties in finding actors able to express non-verbal emotion, especially anger. As Luhrmann notes, 'their faces really can't move properly' (Kruszelnicki, 2003).

Their faces frozen, made strange, some actors are said to no longer even look like themselves. Denise Chamian, casting director for Tim Burton's 2003 film *Big Fish*, notes: 'You look through magazines and watch television and you see that a lot of these women don't even look like themselves anymore' (Weiner, 2004: 34). While the idea of looking or not looking like oneself is a common epithet used to describe someone who looks out of sorts, we cannot ignore the aporetic nature of this notion. How is it possible to not look like oneself, unless one is not oneself? And yet, how could one not be oneself? Alternatively, if we take it as given that it is possible to not look like some publicly circulated image of oneself, this also implies that in the normal course of things one in fact looks *like* this image of oneself, and that it is an image which will always precede one's self, representing oneself from the beginning, an apparatus of appearing *like* oneself that conditions any notion of *being* oneself.

The apparatus of appearance, here, consists of a treatment in which the wrinkles and lines of the face are temporarily erased, and the ability to form them is temporarily blocked. Wrinkles are one of the *signs* of aging; cosmetics manufacturer Olay has even gone as far as identifying the '7 signs of aging' which their Total Effects range can fight, as if the appearance of the seventh sign might trigger some personal or cultural armageddon (Olay, 2007). Wrinkles are traces left by time and experience on the face, and are thus a kind of writing and of memory, which Botox purports to erase. Advertisements for Botox and other facial treatments are explicit in their description of the evidence of life and time on a face as writing, as a system of marks, and moreover, as a writing that is out of control, an *undue pressure* which must be put in check. 'Your toughest wrinkle between your brows took 10 years, 2 mortgages, 153 car repairs to get, and ten minutes to do something about it' (Botoxcosmetic.net). '[E]very single one of the 15,000 facial expressions that you make each day is damaging your skin' (Skindoctors, 2004). These texts specifically place the face at the centre of some automatic recording device, ceaselessly recording little sadnesses, little joys, *petit mort*, *grand mal*. The everyday *event*, the quotidian fact of existence in time and space, is positioned as something that must be *survived*, an aberrant *condition*, something which marks and mars the face, always distancing it from the reified, pure, uncluttered, unmarked surface of the ideal or imagined face, the face that is out of time, before and after time, always to-come; the face of the future.

What is this interest in reducing the face's ability to emote, and thus *preventing the event*? What is so wrong with frowning, with raising one's eyebrows, with smiling? All of which is to say, what is so wrong with *expression*, and how is it that the act of *ex*-pressing – a sending out, an outering – has come to be read and simultaneously vilified as an *im*-pressing – imprinting, marking, writing? These essentially normal acts become deviant when they are seen as forms of writing that do damage; within this schema, the face is always able to have damage done to it, by the sun, by frowning, by smiling. By its

very passage through time the face is in great danger, so fragile, so easily cracked, so easily broken. This face, this blank mask of death-in-life, dies as it is written. We can thus treat the face as a 'text' of some sort, a biological surface or substrate upon which experience, life, and events in general write, and this writing records by *marking time*. This is also to suggest that this writing on the face has something to do with an 'archive'.

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Common understandings of the archive revolve around the collecting of records. The *Collins English Dictionary* defines 'archive' as '1) a collection of records of or about an institution, family, etc. 2) a place where such records are kept. 3) to store (documents, data, etc.) in an archive or other repository'. Archives typify the recording function of writing, they exploit writing as a mechanism for the storage of ideas and time, and thus of memory. The face is an archive inasmuch as it stores and displays the marks of time and experience for each individual. It is a visible, 'live' memory, borne out of the stuff of life and lived everyday; it is personal, yet it is public, it is there for all to see. It is also in some way a representation of an interior archive, for the face is often understood to display on the outside what has gone on, and is going on, on the inside; the eyes as 'windows to the soul'. In *Archive Fever*, Derrida positions his discussion of the 'psychoanalytic archive' squarely inbetween the archive of psychoanalytic works that Freud has left as his own 'impression' on culture, scholarship and medicine, and the archive of the psychic apparatus that Freud theorized, which functions on the tracing of psychic impressions. The archive is thus to be understood as a physical collection of records *and* a psychic apparatus, and the analysis of the latter has conditioned a great deal of the content of the former. Derrida's text contains analysis of a number of Freud's writings, but most importantly, it recalls the notion of the psychic apparatus outlined by Freud in his 'Note Upon the Mystic Writing-Pad'. It also recalls Derrida's own earlier analysis of the 'Note' in 'Freud and the Scene of Writing'.

In the 'Note', Freud describes the functioning of the psychic apparatus by way of a comparison to a childrens' toy, the Mystic Writing Pad or *Wunderblock*. The Mystic Writing Pad is a wax slab covered by a sheet of wax paper with a sheet of transparent celluloid on top. A 'pointed stylus' is used to make impressions on the celluloid. Where the wax paper is forced into contact with the wax slab, dark marks appear. When one lifts the wax paper and celluloid from the wax slab, the marks disappear, leaving a clean writing surface once again. However, traces of what has been written can still be seen if one examines the surface of the wax slab. This double function of a surface with unlimited receptive capacity, and a substrate for the permanent storage of traces, is compared to the psychic apparatus, which is also defined (by Freud) by this double function; the psychic apparatus is said to consist of the perceptual system (*Pcpt.-Cs*), which receives perceptions but retains no permanent trace of them, and 'mnemic systems' (both 'memory' and 'the unconscious' are implicated in these systems), which lie 'behind' the perceptual system and from it receive and preserve traces of excitations (Freud, 1975: 228). Thus Freud explains the psychic apparatus by way of an analogy with a technical apparatus, and both apparatuses present us with an image of the archive. The

psychic archive preserves traces of excitations – memories – as the wax slab preserves traces of earlier writings.

Freud takes his analogy further, arguing that the periodicity of writing and subsequent erasure that constitutes the functioning of the Wunderblock, is like the 'current' of 'cathectic innervations' sent from the mnemic system to the perceptual system. Freud asks us to picture two hands engaged with the Mystic Writing Pad. One hand writes on the surface, thus bringing the two levels of the apparatus into contact, while another periodically lifts the wax paper from the substrate; at this moment, what has been written on the surface is erased and what has been preserved in the substrate is revealed (Freud, 1975: 232). Freud uses this picture of a periodic and temporal spacing to describe the movements of consciousness:

> It is as though the unconscious stretches out feelers, through the medium of the system *Pcpt.-Cs.*, towards the external world and hastily withdraws them as soon as they have sampled the excitations coming from it…. I further [have] a suspicion that this discontinuous method of functioning of the system *Pcpt.-Cs.* lies at the bottom of the origin of the concept of time. (1975: 231)

Two aspects of this scenario must be emphasized. Firstly, Freud argues that consciousness consists in this 'flickering-up and passing-away' of perception, and that in the periods when there is no contact between the layers of the psychic apparatus, 'consciousness is extinguished' (1975: 231). Secondly, as Freud also mentions in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, there is a suspicion that time is experienced as a function of this periodic 'sampling' of the world by the feelers of the unconscious (1959: 54). Significantly, this experience of time, which is also consciousness, is a function of writing, for it is a function of the moments when the wax paper is impressed upon the wax slab, which is to say when the perceptual and mnemic systems meet and when memory traces are preserved. Derrida finds in Freud's insistence on the psychic trace, a moment in which writing as technical supplement is found to condition the very functioning of the biological system it supposedly supplements:

> Temporality as spacing will be not only the horizontal discontinuity in a chain of signs, but writing as the interruption and restoration of contact between the various depths of psychical levels…. We find neither the continuity of a line nor the homogeneity of a volume; only the differentiated duration and depth of a stage [*scène*], and its spacing. (Derrida, 1976: 111)

Writing conditions time and consciousness as the space between tracings, and the archive records time as the spacing between recordings, between inscriptions. Archives need time, they exist in it and of it. There is a temporality of the archive and it functions on the periodicity of inscriptions, of impressions and expressions.

In *Archive Fever*, Derrida enumerates various etymologies and connotations for the word 'archive', which further inflect the archive with a number of interesting contexts. Derrida begins with the *arkhē*, government, which coordinates the double senses of

commencement, and commandment, to *begin*, and to *rule*, both of which are found in the word *arkhein* (Derrida, 1995:1). The *arkhē* thus governs by both topological and nomological principles, principles of space and of law. A later term, *arkheion*, refers to the repository of official records, which is also the home or domicile of the *arkhon*, the ruling magistrate (1995: 2). The nomological principle acquires topological control; the documents that house the law are housed alongside the ruler. Derrida further inflects this domiciliation of the archive with the sense of a gathering together of signs, a cohering or ordering of signs which has to do with ensuring that there is nothing which is out of place, nothing which is not under control, nothing secret or hidden that could break the absolute power of the *arkhon*:

> The archontic power, which also gathers the functions of unification, of identification, of classification, must be paired with what we will call the power of *consignation*. By consignation, we do not only mean, in the ordinary sense of the word, the act of assigning residence or of entrusting so as to put into reserve (to consign, to deposit), in a place and on a substrate, but here the act of *con*signing through *gathering together signs*…. Consignation aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration. In an archive, there should not be any absolute dissociation, any heterogeneity or *secret* which could separate, or partition, in an absolute manner. (1995: 3)

Contrary to popular understanding, the archive, then, is not only concerned with writing and recording and individual memory. It also involves the writing of law and the constitution of social memory, the organization of these writings, their interpretation, and their dissemination. As Derrida states in a footnote, '[t]here is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation' (1995: 4). If the archive exemplifies the writing of law, it is access to the archive and the degree of interpretive freedom governing this access, that determines the nature and experience of the law. We can thus revise Derrida's comment regarding the relation of secrets to the archive. It is not necessarily the case that the archive can admit of no secrets. A secret leads a double life; it is secret *to* those who know of its existence, and it is secret *from* those who do not know of its existence. The central issue of the secret, then, is the question of from whom a secret may be kept, and for how long. If there is a secret part of the archive; if there is some part of the archive that is differently coded; or even if the archive itself is secret, is it secret from or present to the public, and what is the relationship of the *arkhon* to this secret? The question of control is key; who or what is in charge of this archive, and what uses is it put to; what goes in to the archive, and what is kept out; towards what is the memory inscribed in the archive oriented?

Botox, as one of the more bizarre and culturally complex cosmetic treatments of the moment, is a play or game played with the archive. It is the institutionalization of a new kind of law, a takeover of the facial archive, and a physical capture of the face. Botox, with its freezing of the facial muscles and elimination of smile lines, frown lines and crows feet, all the little signs that appear on the face over time to mark the passing of

time and living of life, is a refusal to allow the face to record time, to record the face's passage through time, to signify and thus recall all that the face, and the 'owner' of the face therefore, has experienced; its joys, its loves, its sadnesses, its pain. Simultaneously, Botox is a re-writing of memory and the archive, a reconstitution of a history, a creation of a *virtual* history of the face, a virtual history bereft of the pain, love, joy, sorrow and experience that leave their marks on the face; an unmarked, un-re-markable history. Unremarkable because, of course, Botox also dictates the future state of the archive; how can time write on the face now that it no longer emotes? No movement: no wrinkles. Botox *effaces* the face, it produces it by taking it away. If the face is written, Botox is a system of writing not as the leaving of marks, but in the sense of *erasure*. Botox is a *pharmakon*, and its writing is equally ambiguous, poisoning as it cures, destroying as it creates. Botox is secret writing, the writing of secrets, it is writing as re-writing, anti-writing, as always-already a palimpsestical operation. Botox is like that moment of pseudo-erasure when the inscribing surface of Freud's Mystic Writing Pad is lifted from the wax substrate, halting consciousness, halting time, leaving nothing to see, but everything yet to be seen.

An untrustworthy surface, the skin, a paper annoyingly palimpsestical, it insists on maintaining the records of its encounters with life, just like the Mystic Writing Pad, and the 'mnemic systems' of which Freud was so fond. To what degree does the skin function as an analogue of the 'unconscious', or as a representative of the psychic archive, and what does Botox have to do with this? In 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', Derrida notes that 'writing is unthinkable without repression' (1976: 113). He refers to the truism that to write anything at all one must also always not-write something else. The violence of writing is the invocation of what is not written, and the pressure of the ever-present limits of what is written. Writing has an unconscious, it recalls and requires the unconscious, and writing on the skin is subject to the same law. Botox, as a writing that is an erasure, is pure repression, the re-pression of ex-pressions and their reinterpretation as im-pressions.

Ironically, there is no repression without the failure of repression, which is to say, without return. Freud reminds us that '[r]epressions that have failed will of course have more claim on our interest that those that may have been successful; for the latter will for the most part escape our examination' (Freud, 1957: 153). Successful repressions, like well-kept secrets, are of no real interest. An interesting side-effect of the erasure of wrinkles by the freezing of muscles, is what is known as 'muscle recruitment'. Particularly around the 'scowl line' or area between the eyebrows, muscles nearby the frozen muscles compensate for the inaction of their neighbours by attempting to recreate the effect of frowning. Dr David Becker, assistant professor of dermatology at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York, notes: 'After receiving Botox, a patient may unconsciously attempt to recreate the facial expressions in the area where treatment has paralysed their facial muscles…. What can happen is that other nearby muscles, compensate – this can have the effect of actually creating new wrinkles' (Ripe Publications, 2007). Just when we least expected it; just when we thought we had done away with all that was past, with all that was present and with all that was going to have been; just when we thought we had commenced afresh and anew and commanded the

face to freeze, what do we witness but the return of the repressed. The patient 'unconsciously' begins to emote again; the mask cracks and writing begins again.

The Botox face institutes the archive as a complex system of secrets, and necessarily 'dirty' secrets that some will wish never to let out. Like the unconscious, with its intricate system of repressions and depressions, the face holds secrets, cordons off some areas of its archive so that only invited guests may enter. Facial tics and other involuntary spasms stand as emergences or rupturings of the pure surface, and they mark the crossing over of the 'unconscious' to the surface, the moments when secrets begin to seep out. Likewise, 'muscle recruitment' and the appearance of *secondary* fine lines and wrinkles represent a return of the archive to the surface, the moment when writing, and thus time, begins again. What to do with this return of the repressed? How to cope with this unconscious *compensation* now that writing and time have recommenced? Dr Patrick Bowler, chairman of the British Association of Cosmetic Doctors, advises the following: 'I have seen this (muscle recruitment) happen, particularly when people have Botox between the eyebrows. It is usually easily corrected by injecting a little more Botox into the affected area on follow-up visits' (*MX Magazine*, Feb 18th, 2003). It is thus time for the next injection, which brings with it the promise of another, and another, and another, and in this potentially endless cycle of technological fixes we find ourselves *en mal d'archive*, in archive fever, sick of archives, in need of archives, in need of the destruction of the archive, burning for the spectre of the archive, destroying the archive to build it again, chasing it away to call it back, to bring it back home, where it belongs; repetition compulsion, destruction drive, Botox as the *anarchivic* archive (Derrida, 1995: 91 & 10-12).

In his theory of the repetition compulsion, Freud gives us the image of instincts which strive constantly to 'restore an earlier state of things which the living entity has been obliged to abandon under the *pressure* of external disturbing forces' (Freud, 1959: 67; my italics). Freud notes that this earlier state of things, abandoned under pressure from external forces, cannot be a state that has not been experienced. 'On the contrary, it must be an *old* state of things, an initial state from which the living entity has at one time or other departed and to which it is striving to return' (1959: 70). This state, Freud argues, is death, the non-being inscribed at the origin of all that *is*.

Whether we understand the repetition compulsion in a psychoanalytic or cultural context is neither here nor there. For instance, we have already mentioned the way in which the cult Aum Shinrikyo approached botulinum toxin, and sarin gas, as social purifying agents, designed to bring about the destruction and thus purification of the world. Eschatological thought is fundamentally concerned with reconstituting some imagined past state from which the world is understood to have fallen; the impossibility of a 'true' return, and of a return that will remain 'back there', conditions eschatology such that this performance of the return is enacted again and again. Aum Shinrikyo's recurrent use of botulinum toxin and failure in each case to reach their goal, testifies to this fundamental condition in a particularly ironic manner. The apocalypse is programmed, like a machine, and its function is always to *fail* to appear, and to return at the same time, like the ghost, the spectre, or any old messiah.

Repetition compulsion, eternal return, *apocalypse machine*; again and again we witness the fantasy of the return that never fully succeeds, and so finds its purest expression in the *repetition* of this return. Botox, then, as eternal return, eternally returning the patient to an earlier state, turning back the pages of time, impatiently flicking forward and turning them back again. Botox plants the death drive right in the heart of the archive, it ensures that the archive of the face will be destroyed as it is created, and it places this logic, which is simultaneously the logic of *technology*, and of *capital*, at the centre of its function. 'In other words, the radical destruction can be *reinvested* in another logic, in the inexhaustible *economistic* resource of an archive which capitalizes everything, even that which ruins it or radically contests its power' (Derrida, 1995: 13). If Botox is a *pharmakon*; if Botox is both a poison and a cure, we can also say that the poison *is* the cure and the cure *is* the poison, and that this is Botox's selling point, its apparatus of capture. It is not the case that there are two separate functions, the curative and the poisonous – rather, what cures poisons and what poisons cures. The destruction of the archive is the promise of the archive, the promise of destruction is the re-creation of the archive. It is thus that we find ourselves *en mal d'archive*, in archive fever. Botox exists, on the surface, at first sight, to destroy the archive of the face; to delete it, to wipe it clean. Simultaneously, its purpose is to empty out the future, to stop the recording, to project the blank face into the future. And yet, beneath the surface, at second sight, unconscious forces have been put to work; the face fights back, re-surfaces, forces its writing to begin again. The face is thus delivered again to the anarchivic archive, and the Botox-upgrade-cycle continues.

Being that *Archive Fever* is drawn from a speech to commemorate the opening of the Freud Museum in London, a museum in the 'house' of Sigmund Freud, Derrida asks a question concerning the technologies of archivization. Had Freud known of, and utilized, the modern technologies of communication and information storage such as email and the computer, would the archive of psychoanalysis be qualitatively different? And further, would Freud's theories of the unconscious and its own archivic technologies of storage and of memory be different had he the model of the computer to work with, rather than the Mystic Writing Pad? The question is one of the determination of the archive by its technology; not merely the storage mechanisms of the archive, but its structure, and very make-up, which is also thus a determination of the future of the archive, and what is archivable. Derrida fashions a 'retrospective science fiction' in which Freud and his contemporaries developed their theories in a technoscape of computers, printers, faxes, teleconferences and email, and describes the resultant shock-waves that would echo across the psychoanalytic archive:

> [T]his archival earthquake would not have limited its effects to the *secondary recording*, to the printing and to the conservation of the history of psychoanalysis. It would have transformed this history from top to bottom and in the most initial inside of its production, in its very *events*. This is another way of saying that the archive, as printing, writing, prosthesis, or hypomnesic technique in general is not only the place for stocking and for conserving an archivable content of the past which would exist in any case, such as, without the archive, one still believes it was or will have been. No,

> the technical structure of the *archiving* archive also determines the structure of the archivable content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event. (1995: 17)

The question of the future of the archive is crucial here. Firstly, the archive is oriented towards the future inasmuch as it exists in order that some future use is made of it. The archive will not be made use of in the past, it is only in some future time that it will be useful, that it will be understood why it recorded what it has. Use may have been made of the archive in the past, but this use will no doubt have entered into the archive itself, it will have been archived in its turn and again the archive will be oriented towards the future. Secondly, that which the archive will record, that which the archive will become, that which will be available for interpretation, that which will be there for all or some or none to see, is determined by the technical form of the substrate. Not merely must there be an *arkhon* to preside over the interpretation and dissemination of the archive, but there is a technological or abstract *arkhon* which is the very form of the archive, which conditions what is acceptable for entry into the archive and what is not.

The future of the face under Botox relies on just such a question of technological determination. What the face will become, what it will re-present, will be determined by the presence of the toxin, its strength, its degree, its decree. The future form of the facial archive will be determined by one's Botox regime(n). Botox will take-over the writing of the face, the governance of the face, and will act as the word of the law, it will write with the authority of the proper name of the Face. Much of the popular writing on Botox refers to its use as a pre-emptive strike against aging (Devine, 2004: 15). Botox use is not solely about appearing in the present in the same form as you appeared in the past; it is about ensuring that your future appearance will recall the present that was lived under Botox. Botox use is thus a projection, a virtualization, throwing forward in time one's appearance and ensuring that the biological writing of time does not appear on the surface in the meantime. Despite all this projection, however, despite these pre-emptive strikes against the return of the present, you still have to 'top up' the toxin; each application wears off eventually, as the muscles break free of the toxin and come back to life. Writing, and time, for some months kept at bay, assert themselves again. In order to maintain this new, technically placated surface, you must engage with the 'upgrade cycle' of all technical systems, and get an update, another shot. This new face, this blank face, this technically re-surfaced, stripped bare face, is again only on loan, and the economic structure proper to it is that of the *license*. The relation to software licensing is hard to ignore; the new, blank, technologically perfected face has an extremely limited lifespan, a built-in obsolescence that reproduces the process of aging at a dramatically contracted tempo. Botox essentially turns what was inevitable – aging – into a measurable, technical, calculable, and thus capitalizable, sequence; quarterly injections to top up the toxin. This commodification of the face, then, is in fact the commodification of time as it appears on the face, the commodification of the writing of time, and thus the commodification of the archive and the desire for its destruction – which is at the same time its resurrection.

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