

Archival Obsessions: Arnold Dreyblatt's Memory Work

Astrid Schmetterling, in: art journal, winter 2007

A dimly lit room with a simple wooden desk and chair (plate 1). A hanging lamp illuminates a kind of writing-pad that is inserted into the tabletop. It is a rather contemporary writing-pad, a computer screen on which words, sentences continuously appear, disappear, and re-appear. '... to transfer to a records centre for temporary storage ... one hand writing upon the surface of the Mystic Pad while another periodically raises its cover ... to erase, to wipe or rub out, literally or figuratively ... archivist was an officer of great dignity ...' Fragments of text flash up, fade, are overwritten by new text segments, leaving faint traces before they vanish.

The Wunderblock (2000) is the title of this installation, alluding to the children's toy that provided Sigmund Freud with a model for the representation of his theory of memory. As is widely known, the actual 'Mystic Writing-Pad' consists of a slab of wax that is covered with a transparent sheet, the top end of which is fixed to the slab. The sheet itself is divided into an upper layer made of transparent celluloid and a lower layer made of a thin translucent waxed paper. When one scratches or writes on the pad with a pointed stylus, it presses the lower surface of the waxed paper onto the wax slab and the grooves become visible as dark traces on the surface of the celluloid. If one separates the double covering-sheet from the wax slab again – either by lightly pulling the sheet from the free lower end or, in more recent versions of the toy, by raising the sheet with a slide –, the writing disappears from the surface and the Mystic Pad is ready to receive fresh inscriptions. On closer inspection in suitable light, one can, however, discover that the writing is retained upon the wax slab itself as a permanent trace. This small device's dual structure could thus serve to demonstrate Freud's novel concept of our perceptual apparatus as having both an unlimited receptive capacity and a potential for indefinite preservation, functions that hitherto had been regarded as mutually exclusive. By dividing these capacities 'between two separate but interrelated component parts or systems,' Freud solved the problem of combining them.

... [W]e possess a system *Pcpt.-Cs.*, which receives perceptions but retains no permanent trace of them, so that it can react like a clean sheet to every new perception; while the permanent traces of the excitations which have been received are preserved in "mnemic systems" lying behind the perceptual system.¹

Freud proposed that 'cathectic innervations' are sent out and withdrawn through rapid periodic impulses from within towards the permeable system *Pcpt.-Cs.* As long as that system is cathected, it receives perceptions and transmits them to the unconscious mnemic systems. Consciousness fades when the cathexis is discontinued. Freud likened this motion to the stretching out of feelers towards the external world and hasty withdrawal as soon as

enough of the excitations coming from the outside have been sampled. He compared the Mystic Pad's covering sheet consisting of celluloid and wax paper to the 'perception-consciousness system' and its external protective shield (whose task it is to diminish the strength of excitations coming in) and the wax slab with the 'unconscious system' behind them. The becoming-visible and the disappearance of the writing on the Pad could then be equated with the flickering-up and passing-away of consciousness in the process of perception.

Freud assumed that 'our psychical mechanism has come into being by a process of stratification: the material present in the form of memory-traces being subjected from time to time to a *re-arrangement* in accordance with fresh circumstances – to a *re-transcription*.'² He therefore had to concede that the analogy between the Mystic Writing-Pad as he knew it and the psychic apparatus, in which memory is laid down 'several times over' in 'various species of indications,' had its limitations. Neither were the permanent traces left on the wax slab ever utilised, re-arranged, re-transcribed again, nor could the Mystic Pad 'reproduce' the effaced script by itself the way our memory can suddenly re-call experiences that left their traces on our unconscious. The restrictions Freud encountered reveal to what extent analogies and metaphors of memory are both informed and limited by the technological developments of their creator's time. 'Is the psychic apparatus,' Jacques Derrida thus asked, *better represented* or is it *affected differently* by all the technical mechanisms for archiving and for reproduction, for prostheses of so-called live memory, for simulacrum of living things which already are, and will increasingly be, more refined, complicated, powerful than the 'mystic pad' (microcomputing, electronisation, computerisation, etc.)?³

It is precisely this question of the relationship between contemporary technology and memory, between memory and its 'techno-prosthetic' metaphors, that Arnold Dreyblatt's digital version of the *Wunderblock* addresses. Attempting to simulate our psyche's capacity for reproduction, fragments of sentences stored on the hard disc of the computer rise up to the surface, inscribe themselves randomly on the screen, fade, are overwritten by new text segments, evanesce, and re-emerge (plate 2). Never can a text be perceived in its entirety. Passages of Freud's *Note upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad'*, as well as terms from a *Glossary for Archivists, Manuscript Curators, and Record Managers* write, erase, and repeat themselves simultaneously. '... *the writing vanishes and, as I have already remarked, does not re-appear again ... the files are usually in simple sequence as by date or number ... a memory device ... been erased, it cannot be reproduced from within ...*' Although the analogy between Dreyblatt's *Wunderblock*, which can only draw on an already completed selection and input of data, and the psychic apparatus that is constantly confronted with new information and

has the capacity for being permanently altered by new input, is limited as well, the electronic device seems to resemble the workings of our psyche much more closely than the children's toy. Sentences drift into and out of visibility just as consciousness flickers up and passes away in the process of perception, just as memory-traces flash up and disappear in deliberate and involuntary acts of remembrance. Fading in and out, the words turn into traces which, when they briefly become legible, are always already left behind, traces of a script, which are traces of a script. A re-transcription, a reproduction, rather than a production of an original. 'The conscious text,' Derrida wrote,

is ... not a transcription, because there is no text *present elsewhere* as an unconscious one to be transposed or transported. ... There is then no unconscious truth to be rediscovered by virtue of having been written elsewhere. ... The text is not conceivable in an originary or modified form of presence. The unconscious text is already a weave of pure traces, differences in which meaning and force are united – a text nowhere present, consisting of archives which are *always already* transcriptions. Originary prints. Everything begins with reproduction.⁴

The unconscious as a succession of archives is an image that Freud himself delineated. His spatial conceptualisation of the psychical apparatus as having been created by a 'process of stratification' led him to compare the organisation of memory with 'dossiers', 'files', 'collections' in which individual memories are registered, arranged and re-arranged according to different categories and 'themes'.⁵ By elucidating this topographical notion of interior processes with an exterior device, the Mystic Pad, Freud did not only integrate contradictory functions within a differentiated, layered system. His model, as Derrida argued, also integrates the necessity, inside the *psyche* itself, of a certain outside, of certain borders between insides and outsides. And with this *domestic outside*, that is to say also with the hypothesis of an *internal* substrate, surface, or space without which there is neither consignment, registration, impression nor suppression, censorship, repression, it prepares the idea of a psychic archive distinct from spontaneous memory ... the institution, in sum, of a *prosthesis of the inside*. ... The theory of psychoanalysis, then, becomes a theory of the archive and not only a theory of memory.⁶

Arnold Dreyblatt's *Wunderblock* is situated at this border between inside and outside. Juxtaposing traces – (archived) traces of (archived) traces – of Freud's text on psychical mnemonic processes and those of a manual for archival practices, the work reveals the artist's concern with both internal and external processes of recording and storing, with (internal) archives of the unconscious and with (external) archives as prostheses of memory. Dreyblatt is interested in the ways in which, in the shift from oral to literate societies, memory

has been progressively externalised in storage media.⁷ Oral communities preserved their collective memory through the recounting of stories, histories and genealogies and depended on 'living memory' for the sustenance of their identities and values, for the continuation of their traditions. They used objects – beads, knotted strings, wooden panels etc. – to support memory, as early literate societies utilised written and pictorial devices to stimulate mnemonic activity, while we now increasingly rely on aids – books, files, libraries, archives, computers – to replace our memory. 'The less memory is experienced from the inside,' Pierre Nora remarked, 'the more it exists through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs.'⁸ Yet, the scaffoldings that are erected in Arnold Dreyblatt's installations are porous and render inside and outside continuous with each other.

The ReCollection Mechanism (1998, plate 3) is a dark, meditative space. An endless digitalised text is projected onto a translucent wire column, as well as onto the walls, ceiling and floor, creating a mesmerising 'dynamic hypertext-architecture'.⁹ Slowly moving, layers of biographical and historical data continuously unfold and disappear. Transient, ungraspable life-stories. Two computers randomly search through hundreds of terms, which Dreyblatt has selected from the text with the aid of linguistic software. '... *breakdown ... invention ... election ... advocate ... library ... active ...*' As soon as a word is found, it is marked visually and read aloud – through a specially designed sound-system – by a female or male voice. '... *newspaper ... infantry ... lyric ... health ... nobility ... collaborator ... performed ... library ...*' At first isolated, the voices begin to overlap in time, creating new chains of associations for the words they utter. '... *refugees ... clerk ... uncle ... documents ... daughter ... taylor ... piano ... building ... summer ... functionary ... composition ...*' An oral and visual metaphor of the processes of searching, sorting and finding, of reconstructing and losing. How do we remember? What do we remember? And what do we (choose to) forget? A 'mnemonic scaffolding', which shows that the metaphors of memory are not only informed by the technology of their inventor's time, but that our thinking about the interior processes of remembering is, as Douwe Draaisma has argued, shaped by the very technology we invent for the exterior storage of information.¹⁰

The source material for this installation was taken from the *Who's Who in Central and East Europe* of 1933 (published in Zurich in 1934), a copy of which Arnold Dreyblatt discovered in a second-hand bookshop in Istanbul in 1985. Randomly turning the pages of that book, Dreyblatt found himself entering 'a complex network of personal and collective myth construction, a geo-political memory of Central and Eastern Europe put together as if a puzzle from thousands of individual stories.' One of the few biographical dictionaries for the whole of Eastern Europe until a similar volume was published in 1989, it revealed 'an image of a vanished world captured at a critical point in time, which only a few years later would all

but cease to exist.¹¹ Although mostly written in the third person singular, the biographies had apparently been penned by the individuals themselves. They therefore disclosed more intimate information – *‘in early 1933, he contracted tuberculosis and is now in Austria on convalescent leave’*, *‘after a nervous breakdown in 1902, he became increasingly interested in Symbolism’* –, more bizarre, banal, funny details – *‘in 1914, he discovered the direct amidation of aromatic compounds (German letters patent no 287 758)’*, *‘she loves flying and takes part in every congress of the International Aeronautic Federation, whose president is her husband, Prince Bibesco’*, *‘since 1917, he has dedicated himself completely to his literary work as he is of the opinion that the profession of law has no ethos’* –, more misplaced vanity and self-confidence – *‘he owns 8 patents as inventor and introduced a new electrical signal system, which is recognised as the best in the world’*, *‘she was very successful with her dramatic compositions “Les amants du ciel” about the life of military pilots and received enthusiastic reviews from very famous military experts’*, *‘his patriotic songs united the Latvian people in political moments of fate’* – than entries in a contemporary dictionary of this kind would. Obsessively reading and re-reading the material, optically and thematically linking fragments of different biographies and historical details, Dreyblatt created – at first manually with index cards and then with a computer programme – a variety of pathways through the individual stories. With his sympathetic eye for curiosities and for the uniqueness of each life, he was particularly drawn to those who are no longer famous. He chose 765 biographies and cut them up according to more than a hundred categories. Reorganising them into new puzzles, he revealed the intertextual relationship between micro- and macro-historical details, between individual and collective memory.¹²

Another of the projects resulting from this ‘de-constructive’ work is a book, *Who’s Who in Central and East Europe 1933*, published in 1995. The bottom part of each page contains a continuous alphabetical list of the chosen biographies with some basic information, while the main part of each page presents segments of those life-stories classified according to categories such as ancestors, education, goals in life, journeys, expeditions, emigration, languages, expertise, minorities, forgotten provinces, ideologies, revolutions, religions etc. Furthermore, the book is interspersed with anonymous historical amateur photographs, which are not directly linked to the texts: families, groups of friends and professional colleagues pose in their homes or outdoors, with objects meaningful to them, dressed up for parties, performing on stage, playing an instrument, sitting at a desk, presenting their worlds to the camera. The readers are invited to actively browse through this web of information in a non-linear fashion, to pause upon curious details and strange photographs. Inspired by Dreyblatt’s excitement about the revelatory potential of each piece of information, they can follow the many cross-references, moving forward and backward, or undertake their own

associative journeys through this labyrinthine site of memory. Although this project – now also accessible on the Internet¹³ – is marked by a sense of loss and a desire to commemorate a part of the world that has undergone so many major ruptures, it does not offer a nostalgic attempt at total reconstruction of the past. It rather explores, as Jeffrey Wallen suggested, the ‘tensions between fragmentation and recovery’. It splits biographies into their components and brings them to life in new configurations. ‘What is restored ... is always different from, other than, what has been “lost”.’¹⁴ Linear histories are decentred and allowed to form multiple rhizomatic linkages. The ensuing proliferation of stories posits the act of remembrance not as the restoration of a static past, but as a performative process, which stages and re-stages, and thereby continuously reproduces its object.

The performative dimension of memory is more emphatically, even literally, enacted in large-scale installations and performances that Arnold Dreyblatt has developed from the same source material. *Memory Arena* (1995, Hamburg, Munich, Copenhagen), *The Memory Project* (Amsterdam, 1998) and *The Reading Room* (Bern, 2001), among other projects, are complex spatial embodiments of mnemonic processes. Guided by uniformed receptionists, the viewers traverse various passageways, waiting and administrative areas. Passing related exhibitions on the way, they are lead to a central space, the ‘Memory Hall’ or ‘Memory Arena’ (plate 4).¹⁵ A dark diffused light creates a sense of mystery. Large black transparent screens display live searches through the *Who’s Who in Central and East Europe* database.

Dynamically moving, appearing and disappearing, the texts seem to be floating in space. Flat display cases present further texts – from the *Who’s Who*, from materials on memory and on the nature of archiving, as well as from other projects –, which are flowing into one another. During performances, the display cases are turned into reading tables. Hundreds of people come together to participate in multiple simultaneous readings from files created out of the *Who’s Who* biographies and additional sources. The previously invited readers, some well known, others less so, are chosen from a cross-section of the respective city’s society, from professional institutions, political organisations, the arts and sciences, the media, from minority groups and subcultures. Mirroring bureaucratic procedures in public archives, ‘administrative staff’ makes sure that each individual finds their way through the labyrinthine transit spaces, receives the right file, and proceeds to the correct place where the file has to be read at a precise time. The files are checked out from the ‘Great Archive’ and transported to the central space to be read aloud. While being recited, the texts are simultaneously projected onto data walls. The schedule of events is displayed on user terminals fed by the ‘Computer Navigation Centre’, as well as on blackboards detailing the names and professions of the readers, the number of their reading station, the title of the file selected for them, and the exact starting time of their performance (plate 5). Although the whole event

has a precise time limit, four or five hours each day for a set period, it conveys a sense of perpetuity. The sound of the hundreds of voices simultaneously vocalising segments of the different biographies seems to have no beginning and no end. A carefully orchestrated babel of accents, intonations and inflexions.¹⁶ Visitors can wander around, listen to the readings, watch the display boards, and look at the exhibitions or sign up to become readers themselves. They can get lost in the endless stream of information presented, drawn into the worlds opened up. They can move closer to an individual recital of specific texts, accidentally fall upon a detail that arouses their curiosity, and then do further research in the 'Great Archive' or in the 'Computer Navigation Centre'. Just as the Renaissance 'theatres of memory' – embodiments of the ancient technique of memorisation based on the projection of images onto (virtual) spaces – attempted to bring to life stored knowledge through *imagines agentes*, images which would move visitors to activate their memory, this contemporary version creates a spatial setting for the revitalisation of historical texts through the active participation of the public. Yet, unlike the previous models, which assumed the possibility of a cohesive restoration of static data, this digital *Memory Project* refuses coherent narration and rather presents its (historical) objects as fragments, traces, openings. A 'theatre of memory' that stages memory not as a simple retrieval of stored facts, but as a constantly changing reinterpretation of the past in the present.

The ways in which Arnold Dreyblatt makes use of the potentials of digital technology for the simulation of the (interior and exterior) processes of searching and finding, losing and reproducing, for the representation of memory as archiving, lead us back to Derrida's question whether the psychic apparatus is 'better represented' or 'affected differently' by new archival mechanisms. Although 'neither of these hypotheses can be reduced to the other',¹⁷ they are interdigitated in Dreyblatt's projects. Not only do the works replace static storage models with a 'dynamic montage of remembrance',¹⁸ they also point to the digital media's capability for generating, rather than merely depicting, identities. 'Archival technology,' Derrida affirmed, no longer determines, will never have determined, merely the moment of the conservational recording, but rather the very institution of the archivable event ... To put it more trivially: what is no longer archived in the same way is no longer lived in the same way. Archivable meaning is also and in advance codetermined by the structure that archives.¹⁹

Thus for Derrida, the archive is not only the place for conserving 'an archivable content *of the past*', but – by producing the event as much as recording it, by conditioning 'the *impression*, before the division between the printed and the printer' – it also determines the archivable content's and its own relationship to the *future*. The question of the archive then becomes the

'question of a responsibility for tomorrow.'²⁰ The question of the archive's responsibility towards an unknowable future to come has been translated into multiple questions circling around concrete aspects of archiving and conservation in another of Dreyblatt's own archival projects. *Artificial Memory* (1999, plate 6) is a database – in development since 1993 and containing more than 1200 pages of text and photographic material – of institutional reports and of worldwide conversations between archivists on the Internet. What is designated for storage for tomorrow's generations? How is it archived? How does the loss of the archive's physical location, brought about by digitalisation and networking, influence the archiving process? How does the method of archiving alter, or produce, the event to be archived? How does the fact that most letters, manuscripts for articles, essays, books are no longer written by hand, transform their content? How will thus archived events be remembered, or rather reproduced, in the future? Do certain events or certain technology defy archiving altogether? Dreyblatt displays those records on an endless paper scroll, which is mounted on an illuminated glass case. Following the texts that are spread along the whole length – about eighteen metres – of the scroll, frequently losing one's thread and starting again at a different place, one encounters discussions of any aspect of archiving in any part of the world one can imagine – China, Japan, India, the United States, South Africa, Zambia, Bosnia, Poland, Germany, France ...

Mon June 29 13:00:11 1998, Catastrophe. I am the Director of the Virgin Islands Archives, which are located on St. Thomas. As you may know, we have just experienced a devastating hurricane. One of my concerns is the fact that we will not have any electricity for quite a while, possibly several months ... do you know of any archive, which would have our microfilms until we have our electricity back?

The decision to present those documents on the 'fragility of record keeping'²¹ (Dreyblatt, 1997b) in the form of a *paper* scroll alluding to – still existing – ancient parchments, highlights the professionals' concerns about the ephemeral nature of *electronic* and *digital* storage devices, some of which currently have a life span of no more than five years.²²

The technically conditioned storage problems, of course, are only one aspect, albeit an important one, of the determination of archivable content, of the archive's relationship to the future. There is, as Foucault and Derrida reminded us, also a politically conditioned obliteration of information. The question of what and how events are archived for tomorrow includes the question of suppression and exclusion, the question of power. 'There is,' Derrida argued, 'no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory.'²³ Who has access to the archive? Who creates the conditions for the production of archivable content? Who has the authority to designate and to obliterate, to name and to classify what is archived? Who has what Derrida called 'the power of consignation'? The power of 'gathering together

signs' in order to unify the archive, to institutionalise it in a way that 'there should not be any absolute dissociation, any heterogeneity or *secret* which could separate (*secernere*), or partition, in an absolute manner.' An ordering of the archive that 'is never without that excessive pressure' that Derrida named as 'impression, repression, suppression.' A 'gathering together of signs,' a 'gathering into itself of the One' in order to create a stable identity for an archive, for a nation or a people, that 'is never without violence.'²⁴

In some respect, Dreyblatt's monumental performance projects, indeed, dramatise the archive as a site of power relations, as a place from which order is given. The artist and his administrative staff take on the role of the 'archons,' the guardians of the archive, who command, who represent the law, who possess the authority to interpret and classify the documents in their charge. Participants have to submit to precise rules. They are lead through the transit areas in a controlled way, have to be, as mentioned above, at the correct place at the right time, and to follow the protocol of events meticulously. Readers are neither permitted to see the files beforehand, nor are they allowed to diverge from the text that has been selected for them. If they do not keep the order(s), they are requested to leave. The archive as 'the law of that which can be said.'²⁵ Participants are also asked to complete questionnaires with details about themselves, which are filed in Dreyblatt's *People Network Database* (1995 onwards). Mimicking bureaucratic systems to an exaggerated extent, these almost machine-like operations seem to stage what Theodor Adorno called the 'totally administered society'. Yet, by displaying the alienating dimensions of bureaucratic societies and the hierarchical order of traditional archives, Dreyblatt's projects instantly undermine those totalising systems. They set up the structure and its critique in a simultaneous double move. For from within the very controlled setting, the many voices reading and the display boards presenting fragments of different texts disrupt the precise order according to which they are orchestrated. If the traditional function of archives is to regulate and stabilise identity and history, then Dreyblatt's archival practice has a destabilising effect. By deconstructing linear biographies and facilitating a potentially endless reconfiguration of their components, the artist's archives give voice to the unregulated, the dynamic, the incomplete. If the act of 'gathering together signs' aims to ensure that there is no 'heterogeneity or *secret*'²⁶ which could threaten the unity of the traditional archive, then Dreyblatt's 'dispersal of signs' posits precisely heterogeneity and multiplicity as generators of new identities, new memories, and new archivable meaning(s).²⁷ And in the bizarre and the funny, the banal and the extraordinary details that the artist teases out of his subjects' life-stories there surely hide many secrets still to be revealed.

Notes

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¹ Sigmund Freud, 'A Note upon the "Mystic Writing-Pad"', 1924, *Standard Edition*, 19, London, 1953-74, 228-230.

² Sigmund Freud, 'Letter 52 to Wilhelm Fliess', 1896, *Standard Edition*, 1, London, 1953-74, 233.

³ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz, Chicago and London, 1996, 15.

⁴ Jacques Derrida, 'Freud and the Scene of Writing', *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass, London, 1978, 211.

⁵ Sigmund Freud, 'The Psychotherapy of Hysteria', *Standard Edition*, 2, London, 1953-74, 288-301.

⁶ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 19.

⁷ Arnold Dreyblatt, 'The Memory Work', *Performance Research*, 2:3, 1997, 91-96. Also see Jacques-Alain Miller, 'Extimité', trans. Françoise Massadier-Kenney, in Mark Bracher et al, eds, *Lacanian Theory of Discourse. Subject, Structure, and Society*, New York and London, 1994, 74-87.

⁸ Pierre Nora, 'Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*', trans. Marc Roudebush, *Representations*, 26, 1989, 13.

⁹ Claudia Banz, 'Clemens Weiss, Hanne Darboven, Christian Boltanski, Joseph Kosuth, Arnold Dreyblatt', in cat. *Das XX. Jahrhundert. Ein Jahrhundert Kunst in Deutschland*, Nationalgalerie Berlin, 1999, 586.

¹⁰ Douwe Draaisma, *Metaphors of Memory: A History of Ideas about the Mind*, trans. Paul Vincent, Cambridge, 2000.

¹¹ Arnold Dreyblatt, 'Zur Geschichte dieses Buches', *Who's Who in Central and East Europe 1933. Eine Reise in den Text. Text – Bild – Performance*, Berlin, 1995, 5.

¹² Dreyblatt, 'Zur Geschichte dieses Buches', 6.

¹³ See <http://www.dreyblatt.net>.

¹⁴ Jeffrey Wallen, 'Memory Arena', unpublished conference paper presented at the Modern Language Association Conference, Toronto, December 1997.

¹⁵ Each of these projects had distinct architectural and technological structures (the central area in Amsterdam was, for example, called the 'Memory Hall', while the main space in the

Memory Arena was, indeed, the 'Memory Arena'; the display cases used in the Amsterdam installation were not used in the *Memory Arena*, as this project was solely conceived as a performance). Some also used different additional source materials (in Bern, for example, texts on the history of immigrant presence in Switzerland were collected from Swiss archives). I, nevertheless, allow myself to interweave descriptions of these projects, as their general features and principles are similar. For more detailed discussions of the events see cat. *Arnold Dreyblatt. Aus den Archiven//From the Archives*, Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken, 2003. Dreyblatt's own *Project Descriptions* can be found on his website (www.dreyblatt.net).

¹⁶ It is perhaps these polyphonic orchestrations, in which each voice's entry is timed according to a carefully arranged score, that most clearly reveal Dreyblatt's training as a composer. Having studied and worked with Morton Feldman, John Cage, La Monte Young, Alvin Lucier and others, Arnold Dreyblatt founded an ensemble, *The Orchestra of Excited Strings*, and has been composing, performing and recording music since the late 1970s. Although Dreyblatt has pursued the musical and the media art works as separate strands in his career, these strands are woven together in the reading projects.

¹⁷ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 15.

¹⁸ Wolfgang Ernst, 'Archive im Übergang', in Beatrice Von Bismarck et al, eds, *interarchive. Archivarisches Praktiken und Handlungsräume im zeitgenössischen Kunstfeld/Archival Practices and Sites in the Contemporary Art Field*, Cologne, 2002, 139.

¹⁹ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 18.

²⁰ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 16-18.

²¹ Arnold Dreyblatt, 'Archived Memories. Interview with Arnold Dreyblatt', *Intelligent Agent*, 1:11, 1997, 147-152.

²² Jeff Rothenburg once stated that '[d]igital documents last forever – or five years, whichever comes first.' See Martin Warnke, 'Digitale Archive', in Von Bismarck et al, eds, *interarchive*, 202.

²³ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 4.

²⁴ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 3-4, 78.

²⁵ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith, New York, 1972, 129.

²⁶ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 2-3.

²⁷ 'The archivist produces more archive, and that is why the archive is never closed. It opens out [to] the future.' See Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 68.