

ELLE-MEME: THE PLACE OF WOMAN IN THE DISCOURSE OF  
JACQUES DERRIDA

BY

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### ABSTRACT

The language of the post-modernist/deconstructionist discourse is genderized. It is set in a language of violence directed against Woman. In it, Woman, who has always existed on the edge of the phallic discourse, is pinned up as a model for the displaced, phallogenically failed, Post Modernist Man. He prescribes how She lives on the margin -- without ever asking Her to corroborate his story of Her -- and resolves to strive after her mode of being, though conveniently without ever surrendering his phallic, prescriptive power to it.

Woman, meanwhile, is continuously pushed outside the discursive process for which she is taken as model, pinned on its hinge by the unrelenting, appropriating, raping phallus. She remains forced into silence.


In looking in this thesis particularly at Derrida's work Spurs, Nietzsche's Styles, I consider the double process of how Woman becomes inscribed like this on the edge of discourse. In the first chapter, I consider how She is transformed from enigmatic Other into non-other, non-being, into becoming nothing more than the *operation* of the phallic, appropriating pen. In the second chapter, I consider how this transmogrification is prescribed into Her through the language of violence/rape.


Having problematized the ongoing positioning of Woman within Derrida's post-modernist discourse, I come no closer, however, to freeing Her/me from it. For if Woman were to speak out against Man's prescriptive gesture, She would be accused in the very act of speaking "I," as becoming subject and so of desiring to essentialize herself as speaking subject, as Man. The reciprocal assumption to this is that if Woman does not speak out, She therefore accepts the role prescribed into Her. I cannot accept this either/or threat. Therefore, what I can say is happening within these pages is the jamming of the spaces between the dichotomy of Man/Woman which forces Woman into becoming no more than Man's conduit.

Once the appropriating rapier's thrust across the space between Man-Woman is anatomized, the gesture is exposed as a desire for the anathema presence in its demands for both woman's distant silence and her reception of the appropriating mark. Put another way, the stylistic process demands a witness to its mark, which makes it present, if only


fleetingly, while at the same time it demands that the witness be a continually dissolving horizon within which the mark disappears, leaving only a trace, nothing definite, in order to erase its desire and focus instead on the failing action of possession. Threatened into her position of silence, Woman becomes the ideal witness. Without voice she can only, as Tostevin puts it, "bear witness" (*sophie*, 49) to the mark imposed upon her; she can never speak out and bear witness *against* the inscriber without, so the logic goes, becoming that inscriber. Any way one looks at it, Woman can never speak/can never speak herself. This silence is deadly when it is understood as consent. Thus, by exposing (which may not be the same thing as disseminating) the space between the dichotomy's terms--a space Derrida considers as only "distance" or as the non space: the abyss-- as a place before the stylistic mark is received, Woman /women/I may find a(n other) way within it to discover and to communicate without compromise, Woman, *elle-meme*.

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How can I properly express thanks to my mother and my family, *sine qua non* ?

And thank you, Stephen, for your continual tolerance of the many mishaps of my style; for putting up with a variety of Derridas and Nietzsches and ledges; for the letters of direction that came and went from prehistoric pit to all too present clear cut; for the risk of here and now; and especially for saying this is worth saying. Thank you.

go for it benj!

To  
Louise Schraefel  
with all my heart

The question is whether the difference constituting the other as other has, a priori, to be marked sexually. I don't know. When I say "I don't know," I mean that in order to ask the question as I have posed it, one must presuppose that the addresser himself or herself is determined before the other's signature, that the sex of the addresser is itself determined before the other assumes responsibility for the signature. Well, nothing seems less certain to me. I will go so far as to risk this hypothesis: The sex of the addresser awaits its determination by or from the other. It is the other who will perhaps decide who I am--man or woman. Nor is this decided once and for all. It may go one way one time and another way another time. What is more, if there is a multitude of sexes (because there are perhaps more than two) which sign differently, then I will have to assume (I--or rather whoever says I--will have to assume) this polysexuality. This is what I risk...

Derrida  
The Ear of the Other (53)

It would be possible to assemble here a collection of "great passages" from literature and philosophy to show how, unobtrusively but crucially, a certain metaphor of woman has produced (rather than merely illustrated) a discourse that we are obliged "historically" to call the discourse of man. Given the accepted charge of the notions of production and constitution, one might reformulate this: the discourse of man is in the metaphor of woman. //

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak,  
Displacement and the Discourse of Woman ( 169)

If the author is male, one finds that the female destiny (at least in the novel) rarely deviates from one or two seemingly irreversible, dualistic teleologies: monster and/or angel, she is condemned to death (or sexual mutilation or disappearance) and/or to happy ever-after marriage.... //

Increasingly, women feminist readers reach the point where they can no longer read "the men." That is, they begin to find the repetition unbearable. This is true of both kinds of male fictions -- "fiction" and "criticism." This limit, when reached, is particularly relevant in the case of criticism, however, when one realizes that the majority of male critics (in all of their incarnations) seem not to have read (or taken seriously) what feminist criticism has produced. They continue either to ignore or else to incorporate it into an untransformed reading system, with an ironic wink of the eye, a guilty humanistic benevolence, or a bold stroke of "male feminism." //

Alice Jardine, "gynesis" (48)

she writes to make a name for herself  
then loses it in the writing

forges an image that throws her out of herself  
to fill the hiatus between extremes of loving

dons a mask of a woman  
to prove that's what she is

what does woman want?  
the question asks too little

- Lola Lemire Tostevin  
*'sophie*

Philosophy seems plagued with the question/existence of otherness. Our culture is imbued with a dialectical sentiment that says us/them, me/it. We live within the metaphysics of this dialectic. It is a dialectic in which the phallogocentric philosophical system translates the us into "men" (we philosophers) and the them into "women." In this system of polarities so clearly announced by Pythagoras and usurped by Plato (see Table One), Man is aligned with the center, the orientation of the logos/law, the good, and Woman is the representative of all that which is unknown, distracting, and most importantly, yet-to-be-grasped and subdued by Man. This last relation which sees woman-as-the-unattainable sets up, perhaps, the most ponderous dialectic of this metaphysics in that Woman becomes an enigma, a dialectic within a dialectic. Aligned with all that is ununified, formless, irrational, socially bad, Woman's side of the dialectic is clearly portrayed in opposition to that of Man's side of the dialectic, the latter representing goodness, value, Truth. However, if she is more subtly also the receptacle of all unconquered differences, of the unknown, of the non-Man, then she is also aligned with Truth, becomes in fact the very desirable Platonic Truth that is being sought by Man but has yet to be understood, and hence tamed and assimilated. As such, Woman has been held up, somewhat confusedly, as both Siren and Truth, or more familiarly, whore and madonna. Despite the seeming aporia implicit in this coupling, this polarity is the most enduring, unquestioned position of the metaphysics of our culture. As a consequence, it is the most regularly upheld and portrayed standard in the fictions of men writers since its inception.

It is the complete lack of any questioning of these dialectical associations of Woman in even the most current philosophical discourse that this thesis takes issue with, for in these texts, the functioning place of polarized woman as whore and madonna is merely resituated; the associations of woman with the madonna /whore , siren/truth are maintained. The text on which I shall focus in this thesis as a prime example of this lack of questioning

is Jacques Derrida's Spurs, Nietzsche's Styles. In this discourse Derrida approaches the subject of style and the writing self through Nietzsche's writing on woman.

In playing with Nietzsche's writings on Woman, Derrida assumes that he "re-constitutes" (MacDonald, 123) a "movement and system" in Nietzsche's work not apparent when Nietzsche's anti-feminist statements are taken in isolation. Derrida's newly created Nietzsche focuses on a supposed attempt on Nietzsche's part to re-situate the association of Woman as Truth in a way that will undermine the Platonic sense of truth that espouses Truth to be a single, phallogocentric position/value/moment. In the place of this previous value, Nietzsche is shown to assert a privileging of truth as non-truth, as Woman; that is, as a multiplicity of surfaces, sometimes contradictory, always held in tension, reflecting what Nietzsche calls his "grand style."

For Nietzsche, truth-as-unity is to be disparaged as the coward's way out of the dilemmas, tensions and multiplicities of Reality. Hence, to be sucked into the pursuit of that Truth is to be seduced by the artistic femme fatale Truth who merely presents a surface of resolved tensions in terms of unified, hermeneutic constructs. This Truth is Woman for Nietzsche, Plato's Woman, and this is not a compliment. In Nietzsche, then, the negative associations of the Woman dialectic are enhanced in his re-distribution of the term.

But for Derrida, Nietzsche's project of re-inventing Truth as merely an illusion of absolute unification fails "for reasons that are absolutely structural" (MacDonald, 123). The "grand style" does not escape a fundamental problem as Derrida sees it. It does not or cannot free itself from the orientation of a philosophical discourse which moves towards meaning, towards defining, even in terms of multiplicity, a truth. Such static "formalization" (MacDonald, 123) is impossible (see *Differance*), and so Derrida proceeds from the point of Nietzsche's failure. And yet, in his subsequent brilliant dance that deconstructs the entire metaphysical obsession with the nature of truth (be it as either

Plato's Woman as madonna or Nietzsche's Woman as siren/whore/artist) in favor of a more vital concern with process, with the functions of writing and style, Derrida ultimately maintains a genderized process of writing that upholds Woman as concept aligned with the above mentioned traditional associations. In Derrida's concern with the operation of style, Woman only becomes further de-personalized, employed finally as an arbitrary construct of the stylist. In essence, Derrida, by an intricate, intellectual dance, appropriates Woman into a construct of the stylist's psyche, and effectively nullifies her.

and is this  
what McFadden  
does?

The consequence of such a transmutation of woman from the status of person to intellectual construct is essentially a denial of presence, and hence of necessity. But this is Derrida's *coup de don* as he asserts his concept of style as a function of the appropriating phallus/self. In this, Derrida connects himself to the (specifically France-French) post-modern crisis in which to be called a Man is now more of an insult than to be called a Woman. According to Derrida, we are all Men when we write since style is of the man (man: philosopher/truth quester/master of the Sphinx), and reflect the Man's effort to appropriate/conquer the unknown, the woman. It is the Man's effort to give meaning to the void. Man creates something where there was nothing before by determining the void to be merely the effect of something beyond it, that being the process of appropriation which is unfinished, indefinite, deferred.

Those immersed in the ongoing debate of the post-modernist crisis realize that this action of assimilation is, ultimately, futile since meaning is perpetually deferred (see Differance). This awareness of indefiniteness has resulted in a new appreciation of alterity, and consequently, of Woman in the philosophical, allegorical sense of the name (see Alice Jardine's article "Gynesis" for a thorough overview of the genesis and direction of writings dealing with this concern).

Such a new appreciation of alterity is, nonetheless, centered in a process of appropriation in which sexuality is a gift, a creation, not real. Differences are employed but are false since everything still reflects the phallic self. This phallic reflection is especially relevant to literary criticism in that it is a discourse on style, on the writing and reading self. What is more fundamental to critical interpretation than how we create/approach texts? And if this view is essentially re-inscribing not a gender neutral but highly sexist position of reading, what value does it have? Nothing is innocent. Surely the traditional maintenance of this dialectic is one of the least innocent tools of any position asserted by any other male philosopher, even if he wears the guise of one transcending "topographical" (MacDonald, 121) issues of gendered personhood. What then is the place of a discourse that entirely denies woman in what is exposed as a fear not celebration of difference?

The following thesis is an attempt to deal with these issues. It is parenthetically surrounded by its glossary and appendices whose function needs to be explained here. Unlike Derrida's Glas, I should like to propose an understanding of this text's layout in order to facilitate your reading of it without, that is, prescribing a set method for reading it.

Because Spurs is an outgrowth of Derrida's earlier highly jargonized work, it depends for its interpretation on an understanding of this prior work. Spurs is permeated with unannotated references to the concepts of Derrida's corpus till the writing of Spurs. In the appended glossary, I have tried to discuss these ideas relative to their implications for Woman in Spurs. I should like the glossary to be considered as interactive with the main thesis as opposed to supplementary to it. Further, it is in respect to convention that the glossary follows the chapters. Ideally, the glossary would run in parallel columns to the main chapters.

The shorter appendices are more a complement of additional information. Derrida's discussion in Spurs is created through an interpretation of Nietzsche. In particular,

Nietzsche's Grand Style serves as a backdrop for Derrida's discussion of style/woman. The first appendix is a brief explanation of my understanding of the Grand Style. As such it expresses the interpretation of the Grand Style I use throughout this thesis.

Often Derrida makes partial reference to a rich passage from Nietzsche that a reader familiar with Nietzsche would know. However, as I do not expect the reader to be on such familiar terms with Nietzsche, I have presented a selection of passages from the philosopher in full that Derrida has drawn on. By having the option to consult this appendix, the reader may better appreciate both Derrida's manipulation of the Nietzschean text as well as my interpretation of his use of it. Similarly, in the third appendix, I have presented a brief selection of quotations from Heidegger on both Nietzsche's Grand Style and his Will to Power, which Derrida interprets as the will to appropriate. Since Heidegger plays such a strong part in Spurs as the counter-voice to Derrida's, again the reader less familiar with Heidegger's work may find these glimpses at the actual Heidegger of use while reading my critique.

Similarly, Table One demonstrates the traditional system of oppositions that inform our culture's metaphysics. Table Two reflects Derrida's own system of oppositions as constructed under his advice by one of his interpreters. The tables' similarities are presented as a backdrop to my discussion of Derrida's failure to resituate the alignments made with Woman.

Finally, the material covered by the chapters of the thesis can then be summarized as follows. The first chapter establishes and questions how Derrida utilizes the term/object Woman in order to displace it and subjugate it to the phallus's proprietary desire. The second chapter deals with the language of violence in the text that is used against woman in order to carry out her continued displacement and to keep her from entering into the discourse.

Though I have drawn heavily on Derrida's Of Grammatology, Autobiographies, and Dissemination for the glossary, I have focused entirely on Spurs for the primary discussion. My concern is with Derrida's treatment of Woman, and that treatment's consequent effect on our interpretation and further development of post-modernist theory relative to Woman. I am motivated by a concern for self-preservation, out of my own fear that Derrida's discourse is silencing a Woman's voice (whatever that may be) in what is not a deconstruction but a re-inscription of the patriarchy he seemingly defiles. Though there are scattered references to Woman throughout his writing, Spurs presents Derrida's most thorough treatment of woman in his work to date.

Further, although a few women theorists such as Jardine and Spivak have presented some commentary on Spurs, on the whole the text has gone largely uncriticized by the feminist community. I stress readings or the lack of them by women on this text because although several men have written cogently on the text, Roy Boyne being the most notable among them, they do so with little respect to the multiple references to woman and what such references imply.

Finally, I should like to draw attention to the work of Luce Irigaray and its role in my interpretation of Spurs. Her books This Sex Which Is Not One and Speculum of the Other Woman were drawn to my attention after I had completed my research for this thesis. During the writing of the following chapters, I kept coming back to her book as it affirmed, supported and assisted my counter-reading of Derrida's Spurs. Her writings on Freud, Lacan and, indirectly, Derrida have certainly formed a lattice work of understanding for my own critical analysis. It is a framework I hope to pursue.

Mais -- la femme sera mon sujet.  
 Il resterait à se demander si cela revient  
 au même -- ou à l'autre.

(36)

But woman is my subject, says Derrida, wondering whether or not style and woman really do not simply amount to the same thing. To himself. As subject. Or to himself as subjected. Which is not the same thing, but far less, in which woman becomes the manipulations/end product of a phallic pen, and so not style, but stylized, the subject of style/the stylist. But what woman is being addressed/subjected/stylized? For it seems that woman (as she has always known) is not one but several, though perhaps not in the same sense that "we (men)-philosophers" (not me, woman, silenced) may suspect<sup>1</sup>.

In the context of philosophical discourse, there would seem to be a web-like line cutting among several variations of the word "woman." There is "woman" (in quotation marks because of her assumed lack of reality, of blood) as strictly metaphorical that the "we (men) philosophers" would claim exists. This "woman" is the epitome of the wrong side of the Pythagorean oppositions -- that is, until lately, when the postmodernist crisis of the mid-seventies (the period in which *Spurs* was written) kindled an amazingly new interest in this heretofore banished table of apotheosis, and hence generated a new interest in woman, or more particularly, her clothing and its function. For example, in *Spurs*, metaphorical, negative, seducing woman takes center stage as model for Post-Modernist Man

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<sup>1</sup> To quote Luce Irigaray:

Female sexuality has always been conceptualized on the basis of masculine parameters. Thus the opposition between "masculine" clitoral activity and "feminine" vaginal passivity, an opposition which Freud -- and many others -- saw as stages or alternatives, in the development of a "normal" woman, seems rather too clearly required by the practice of male sexuality. (23) [in contrast to this, Irigaray suggests the following in consideration of woman's pleasure:]

Woman touches herself all the time, and moreover no one can forbid her to do so, for her genitals are formed of two lips in continuous contact. Thus, within herself, she is already two -- but not divisible into one(s) -- that caress each other. (24)

Woman always remains several, but she is kept from dispersion because the other is already within her and is auto erotically familiar to her.(31)

experiencing the fear of "*perd le style*" or loss of the phallogocentric power/meaning/origin. In *Otobiographie*, another of Derrida's works seminal to this period, it is the mother figure who reveals to the postmodern man the nature of the Subject and its untenability, through the death-life associations Derrida makes with her womb/tomb (see name). In other words, woman, in her many guises (but which woman?) is seen as encapsulating the correct behavior and metaphorical awareness for the truly postmodern Man. Man is to heed her example (which will be described in detail in the following pages) of disinvesting himself of phallogocentric tendencies.

Metaphorical woman, however, has not always been held up so kindly as model. The women of the world are not unfamiliar recipients of the blows of "whore, seductress, chaotic influence, the lesser sex" that have castigated the bloodless metaphor they have been seen to represent.

Second, there is the woman of the real world, the woman/women Nietzsche and Derrida deride for feminist, unfeminine leanings. It becomes necessary to refine this category further from the general sense of women as an anthropomorphic, gender specific group, to woman in the singular. It is as a woman in the singular that I refer to myself and my experience as part of the larger context of women. It is also in this respect as a woman in the singular that I exist, though without credentials, as Lacan might suggest, to speak on my own behalf as woman in this educated discourse on Woman. I make such a distinction between women/woman since generalizations beyond a certain point break down at cultural, generational boundaries that extend beyond the point of my own research. My voice can only travel so far. Therefore, for the sake of some semblance of clarity regarding these terms and their use in the proceeding presentation, the term "woman," appearing thus in quotation marks refers to the philosophical metaphor/construct; women refers to the living, breathing group with whom you interact, and woman refers to me speaking to you

(463)

as a member of the group women. Finally, the term capitalized -- Woman -- refers to an amalgamation of all three levels since I wish to consider the inter-relation of these terms in the text and experience under consideration. Although distinctions can be made regarding Woman, they are rarely drawn.

A crisis point occurs immediately amid these distinctions when we consider the whole concept of a woman asserting herself as subject, as writing subject. The difficulty occurs not because we do not have an awareness and knowledge of ourselves-as-woman to communicate but rather as Irigaray puts it:

I am a woman. I am being sexualized as feminine. I am sexualized female. The motivation of my work lies in the impossibility of articulating such a statement; in fact that its utterance is in some way senseless, inappropriate, indecent. Either because *woman* is never the attribute of the verb *to be* nor *sexualized female* a quality of *being*, or because *am a woman* is not predicated of *I*, or because *I am sexualized* excludes the feminine gender. In other words, the articulation of the reality of my sex is impossible in discourse, and for a structural, eidetic reason. My sex is removed, at least as the property of a subject, from the predicative mechanism that assures discursive coherence.

(This Sex, 148)

"I", writing this, enter into the indecency of this enforced position. "I" participate in a perpetual compromise on my/women's part by entering into the facade of subject, the "I," in order to be heard by men. The desire to be heard by men at all is a question of survival since it is men who prescribe and maintain the understanding of subject-object oppositions that I wish to question here. In order, therefore, to facilitate the confrontation and deconstruction of the subject-guise's impossibility not only for myself/women, but for communication among women and men I offer up these questions. Are these three varieties of Woman unrelated? Is the position of you men on one "woman"/women/Woman not reflective upon the others?

*I* feel the effects of these spurs of generalized assumptions. And if the metaphorical woman, the philosophically constructed woman bears no resemblance to me, or rather is

completely unrelated to me, then why call this man's construct woman at all? How can there be two, never to be considered except one at a time? For if signs refer to each other, and differ to each other, I feel your men philosopher's sign of your woman piercing me as I deflect the style every time I attempt/dare to speak, to interject, to comment, to contradict your assumptions of who I/she/we are.

And so, in this thesis, in an effort to make the points (often brutal, often enfolded in the language of violence) of differance among these signs more present to you, another commonly undifferentiated term will be redefined. The term "we" will often be divided deliberately into "you" and "me or we-women". "You" refers to those of you reading this from the position of the academy which reflects the ideology of the "we philosophers" who are men, or are women, like myself, prepared to be men for this encounter. "Me/we-women" refers to those of us women struggling within a language, an inherited/enforced model of communication in order to find our own voice.

Though I have already compromised myself in order to assert myself here in terms of subject, I choose to make this distinction, to break the "we" because I can only pretend to be part of the writing of we (men) philosophers. for I have no rights as subject to the category of men philosophers for the reasons expressed above. I speak outside of it, on the periphery of it, jutting in through these particular hinges of differance among this term Woman. You may not be able to hear the difference in my voice from yours, and that is understandable, for in this system, as woman/women, I have no voice, and so adopt yours. But I can rearrange these signs, these texts so that you may glimpse me on this edge apart from you, though not separate from you, in fact touching, a tangential proximity. After all, the edge i stand on is a part of your cognition. Thus we, you and me, speak from different though connected places. You from where you choose to be; me from where I have been placed by you.

// (463)

I make these distinctions because it is dangerous for me, and perhaps for you, to assume a divisible woman; two women: one who becomes a subject-- Derrida's, and so no longer a woman but all along only an appropriatable process; and another who is kept at a distance, from where I speak to you. Dangerous because even though you assume your subjected woman who is really only an operation and hence woman no more, I am still here. Still woman. Different from you. In this state, I am unknown to you, from a distance opaque and inaudible. Inadmissible as such to your circle. And this inadmission is intentional on your part. For to move closer, listen to me, allow me to speak, might demonstrate that your assumptions about me, about all versions of woman are wrong too. And then where would you be?

Let us, you and me, then look at the woman<sup>x3</sup> of Derrida's Spurs to see if this is not so. In this section, let us trace how Woman is presented (whichever woman that may be. Let's leave that open for the moment). Let us take a look and see who/what surfaces as, is presumed to presume to be, and so becomes, Woman. And then, then we can look at the implications of what happens to us women in consequence.

\*       \*       \*

The full title of Spurs (Spurs, Nietzsche's Styles) states that this text is going to involve Nietzsche in terms of his style(s), or approach to writing. However, Derrida quickly calls this titular focus into question when, as we've seen above, Derrida says style/woman is his subject. So the association of Nietzsche's style (my subject is style) and Nietzsche's woman (but really it is Woman, the same thing or the other) can be made. The equation implied by this is that style amounts to woman; Nietzsche's style amounts to Nietzsche's woman.

Nietzsche's woman? Which is Derrida's subject? Let us look again:

The title of this lecture was to have been

*the question of style.*

However -- it is woman who will be my subject.

It remains to be seen whether this does not amount to the same thing -- or to the other.

(my trans., 34-36)<sup>2</sup>

This is surely an intriguing alignment on Derrida's part. Nietzsche is not the most misogynist western philosopher, but his writings are among the most straight forward in their denouncements of woman as anything more than the saving, sexual, teasing, companions of men. As Nietzsche put it, referring to those women who chose to challenge this role:

Unless a woman seeks a new adornment for herself that way -- I do think adorning herself is part of the Eternal-Feminine?--she surely wants to inspire fear of herself -- perhaps she seeks mastery. But she does not want truth: what is truth to a woman? From the beginning, nothing has been more alien, repugnant or hostile to woman than the truth--her great art is the lie, her highest concern is mere appearance and beauty. Let us men confess it: we honor and love precisely this art and this instinct in woman--we who have a hard time for our relief like to associate with beings under whose hands, eyes, and tender follies our seriousness, our gravity and profundity almost appear to us like folly...We men wish that women would not go on compromising herself through enlightenment...And I think it is a real friend of women who counsels them today: *mulier taceat de muliere.*

(BGE, 230)

Derrida's association of style/Woman with Nietzsche's style/Woman makes me immediately wary of any comment that Derrida as a twentieth century male philosopher may make about Woman if he uses Nietzsche's misogynistic writings on Woman as his primary text, writings that Derrida admittedly does not see as misogynist. In quoting from Nietzsche's writings like the above, Derrida queries:

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<sup>2</sup> Generally, I have used Barbara Harlow's translation of Spurs. There are instances, however, where Harlow's translation becomes too liberally interpretive, straying from the actual French text, and/or losing the sense of Derrida's word play. In order to reflect a closer approximation of that text, I occasionally submit my own translation.

Must not these *apparently* feminist propositions be reconciled with the enormous corpus of Nietzsche's venomous anti-feminism? Their congruence, a word which I would oppose here by convention to coherence, is very enigmatic but rigorously necessary. Such will be the thesis of the present communication  
 Truth, the woman is skepticism and veiling dissimulation, and this is what must  
 be able to be thought.

(my trans. 56)

Asserting first that any of Nietzsche's writings are only *apparently* feminist (as if to see Woman as truth and thus as merely a dissimulator is a feminist idea) leaves open the implication that these writings of Nietzsche are, though not feminist in their *intent* (and I use the term advisedly), useful in terms of a discussion on style/Woman. As such, Derrida removes these special cases of Nietzsche's writing on Woman from the definitely "anti-feminist" corpus, but at the same time maintains them within it. Such maintenance is "rigorously necessary" in that both sets of writing reflect, despite their thrust, the same sentiment: "Truth, the woman is skepticism and veiling dissimulation, and this is what must be able to be thought."

Further, Derrida's compilation of the various Nietzschean texts he draws on in *Spurs* goes largely without qualifying commentary. Derrida does not divorce himself from the opinions he reiterates. He deliberately disengages himself from the text at two particular but similar movements. The first occasion is when he takes issue with Heidegger's position on Nietzsche's "History of an Error". In this instance, he speaks as a philosopher criticizing the weaknesses of an incomplete text (70-82). The second instance is far more gentle, but equally deliberate. This occurs at the moment Derrida brings his reiteration of Nietzsche's texts to a crisis, to a point where he can say Nietzsche fails, or gets lost in the enigma of his own text (100-101). Other than these moments, Derrida's voice is in mixed confusion, jutting in and out of Nietzsche's. And why should it be disengaged in criticism of a text that Derrida has already exculpated from censure? After all, what matters is not the

slant of Nietzsche's "anti-feminist" corpus, but rather that his oeuvre reflects a particular alignment of Woman with which Derrida concurs, or at least finds useful, not to dismantle, but to build upon.

As you can see, locating Derrida's own voice in his paraphrases is not immediately at issue. Finding the path his text traces is, for it marks itself on the body of Woman. To find this path is to move through my above mentioned suspicion of Derrida's selection, compilation, use, and seeming complicity with the Nietzschean texts on Woman. Nietzsche never wrote a polemic exclusively on Woman. His oeuvre has only a few aphorisms related to Her and these are scattered sporadically throughout his work. In Spurs, then, Derrida creates the illusion of a cohesive Nietzsche on Woman which does not exist except in this ensemble. It is from this ensemble that Derrida defers, engaging his apparently tacit complicity with the Nietzschean commentary on Woman he creates. Seeing this, let me propose to you why Derrida creates the illusion of a Nietzschean polemic on Woman only to break away from it to build upon it in his own voice. .

Nietzsche is presented by Derrida as the primary philosopher in the western tradition to challenge the status of Platonic truth. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Nietzsche aligned truth, not with the traditional associations contingent with Man (circle, order, sun, etc.), but with all the associations of Woman (other, multiplicity, disorder, etc.). By saying that Plato's truth is really like Woman, he implies that truth is nothing but surfaces. Truth, in the Platonic sense of the word, is never to be found in some ultimate One, but in the many, or the multiplicity of surfaces perpetually held in tension by the mind through the written style (See Appendix A, Nietzsche on Truth).

Derrida, too, reflects on truth along these lines, focusing more specifically on writing and the Subject instead of Woman and Truth (see Writing). Writing for Derrida does not reflect the Subject, the alleged referent of writing. Rather, it creates infinite

deferrals away from the referent. Like Nietzsche's truth, the referent Subject is dispersed into the veils of reference until one surrenders it as having never existed. In presenting Nietzsche this way, Derrida makes Nietzsche speak on his subject, writing/subject by using Nietzsche's terms Truth/Woman, all of which falls neatly under the rubric of style. It is this parallelism of interests that dictates the Nietzschean texts Derrida chooses. Derrida's ultimate point -- that the subject never existed -- delineates the places where Derrida will bring the chosen texts into crisis on the subject of truth. //

These parallels are deliberately created on Derrida's part. As Derrida says, nothing is innocent, and this alignment he creates has more than philosophical consequences. The point of crisis, to which Derrida refers in Spurs as "epochal" (106-107), reaches out primarily to a cultural and political deconstruction of phallogocentrism, but ultimately re-inscribes it. The heaviest cost for this reformulation is absorbed, not surprisingly, by Woman, leaving the masters of the phallus free to re-prescribe/inscribe the institution. Nietzsche's texts on Woman therefore give Derrida the familiar lever he needs to open up his discourse on writing and set it more profoundly (obviously) into such a cultural/political field. If writing becomes woman (56-57) then Derrida can extrapolate his anti-subject work on writing into a larger area of consideration. Nietzsche becomes an imperative, almost empirical text for this operation. His views on truth/Woman/style carry Derrida far enough in his anti-Platonic truth generalizings for him to establish his operation's credibility. He does this before he breaks with it to inject it, take it further with differance to the point of non-Subject since Nietzsche does not disallow the Subject in terms of it as Truth.

In this new Nietzschean text on Woman, not only does Derrida annihilate the Subject in its largest terms, he more specifically annihilates Woman, even Woman as other. By association, you and I might expect that the eradication of Woman would in turn mean the eradication of the phallus, of phallogocentrism as Derrida seems to desire. But such is

far from the case. Though Derrida removes Woman from her functional status as Other (the function becomes unnecessary), the writing subject, far from being eradicated, still exists as the dominant Male Phallic Stylist (hereafter, see phallic as an umbrella term for the Man-aligned side of the oppositions. Woman is therefore penumbral).

The continued existence of subject is qualified to mean that it acts only as the construct of the writer's mind. It is an illusion for the act of writing (with a practised stylist) to perform through/upon, nonetheless it is still present, even though this version of subject seeks forever to become-feminine (not to be confused with "becoming woman"), to be perpetually in the act of achieving differance, non-Subjecthood, Otherness. Woman "as-such" is unnecessary here since the writing itself (as opposed to writer) usurps Woman's function (and that is her only value, as cipher, as function, without which then nothing) in its own desire/movement to become undone as its own other<sup>3</sup>.

The result of this uni-sexed writing is that by it, Derrida can heal the wound he inflicted upon the Phallus and its philosophy of static truth-gazing. Towards this act of suturing, of regrafting the phallus, Derrida asserts we are all of us both the Phallic subject and the Other. Perpetual writers, in other words, in whom the Phallus is the voice of the I striving to be represented but perpetually confronted with its own deferred representation. We are all of us men in the act of writing, in the act of becoming-Other, feminine, perhaps Woman. But even that is not so certain. The only thing of moment under consideration here is, not finding truth or the abyss, but rather following the perpetual movement of the veils, the process. So Woman, or her figure/function is "abducted" (40-41) into the perpetually umbral operation of the abducting, ever present (no matter how hard it is seen as trying to disappear), phallic pen

Loretta!

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<sup>3</sup>This very confusing narcissistic pseudo-Tantric tendency imputed to writing will be dealt with as thoroughly as possible in chapter two.

\* \* \*

In Spurs Derrida re-marks (see Dissemination) Woman in text (and remember, there is nothing outside the text) as non-present, non-other. She is not locatable as She, objectifiable, but in the ideology of only-surface/only-representation, is finally reduced to an unlocatable process, an effect created out of the pen-in-process, the inscription. As an illusion, a surface whose only function is to reflect to you the desires and needs you would have Her fulfill. Derrida suggests that Woman-as-effect/non-other ruptures the surface of the mirror by denying Her actual presence in this reflective operation, since presence/otherness is impossible in the world of differance.

has  
Magfado  
do  
this?

Why Woman at all then? Why maintain Woman in this servile metaphor? This question is raised throughout this chapter and is problematized on several levels, not the least of which is the seeming complement Derrida understands this de-positioning of women/Woman in the deconstructive process to be. Women/Woman actually have a privileged position in discourse by reflecting so dearly its non-presence in their own absence in it and displacement by it. It is a sticky point/horn/margin that this thesis rides, for though I do not wish nor presume to assert a re-essentialized Woman in defence of Derrida's compliment/supplement of Woman, neither do I comply with his nullifying of Woman in which the propriative phallus remains intac(i)t.

With this risk of the edge/fold/veil in mind, let us consider Derrida's process of processing Woman into this gap-ing-because-pierced glimmer.

Derrida brings Woman before you as a specimen for your consideration. The air of his talk is reminiscent of a Victorian doctor back from the perils of a dark and dangerous laboratory investigation, so allow me to set the scene visually. Seated above him are you,

his peers, well dressed older men with a license to investigate cadavers and hysterical females. He begins his address, gradually unveiling the case on the platform at his side. Woman, you hear, is his subject. His research object. The veil is pulled off the case to reveal a shrouded figure with the contours of the aforementioned Woman. There is a murmur in the audience; some of the younger scholars lean forward, anxious for a better look (55). With his specimen before you, however, he gives warning: you must stay back and not touch. The risk of death through contact is imminent (44-45; 48-49).

Already, however, the words of the illusionist are being reiterated: stay back, don't touch, just look. No one in the audience is suspicious though, and the caution to fake this distance is powerfully effective. Maintaining this distance between you and the subject of examination becomes critical for reasons more akin to the purposes of the illusionist than the doctor. Indeed, Derrida as mythmaker, not scientist, condemns, with Nietzsche, scientific criteria for verifiability since what he speaks of is something that is always illusory (55). The effect Derrida wishes to demonstrate initially, that of his subject's desirability and seductiveness will be lost without this suspension of the scientific method:

The play of silhouettes which is created here by the hyphen's pirouette [which Derrida imposes into the German "*Dis-tanz*"] serves as a sort of warning to us to keep our distance from these multifarious veils and their shadowy dream of death...Not only for protection (the most obvious advantage) against the spell of her [the woman's] fascination, but also as a way of experiencing it. That distance is *necessary*...to mistake this necessity for just another approach, however, would be at the risk of death *elle-même* [literally, herself, not the gender neutral "itself". the word play is very visible in the french]

(49).

Death is imminent in coming too close; a death of self, and a death of the concept being presented of Woman, too, which might be different close up. Death also from falling prey to representation, surfaces, believing in them and falling prey to them. If you do not keep your distance, you cannot enjoy the play of seducing without being seduced.

Woman is after all only representation. As such, bridging the imposed distance is related to, as Derrida puts it "the somnambulist risk of death, death's dream, sublimation and the dissimulation of nature"(47). Hence fear becomes the chief motivator for you to stay out of Derrida's specimen's reach.

You may also note that the specimen under glass is entirely inaudible. From this distance, you can only watch. The auditory precaution is ostensibly for your protection, so that, perhaps, you will not be lured/tempted to touch as a result of the sounds it makes. Or on the other hand, the sound, if close enough to be heard will not be siren-esque, but instead will ruin the illusion of desirability being so carefully maintained here. The other risk, of course, is that if Woman is heard speaking in her own voice<sup>4</sup>, Derrida's work may be invalidated. Such a possibility is given no consideration. Instead, Derrida quotes Nietzsche at great length to establish his main risk, the loss of desirability. For according to Nietzsche, it is out of the "hubbub" and great noises of a man's "plots and plans" that he senses his peace is to be found in the calmness he perceives in the distance, and in that calmness are enchanted beings for whom he longs. And these beings? "*...they are women.* He almost thinks," says Nietzsche, "that there with women dwells his better self" (45).

The "somnambulant" (47) state that the man has entered in his reverie of tranquility is reluctantly burst by the following reflection:

But still! But still! my noble enthusiast,  
there is also in the most beautiful sailing  
ship so much noise and bustling,  
and alas so much petty, pitiable bustling!

---

<sup>4</sup> The concept of woman's voice/language as something distinguishably or covertly different from man's is only recently receiving critical consideration. For the purpose of this thesis, it is not necessary to suggest the wheres and hows of that voice's location. Suffice it to say that such difference is possible, but that women have not been allowed space in which to consider their own voice/symbology. Where to do so was once considered the act of an hysteric is now often considered the rantings of a separatist who threatens the pursuit of equality by stressing such difference.

The enchantment and the most powerful effect of  
 woman, is, to use the language  
 of philosophers, an effect at a distance,  
 an *actio in distans*; there belongs thereto,  
 however, primarily and above all -- *distance!*  
 (47)

Silence, tranquility, exist then as a desirable but unachievable illusion, not to be found in either the reality of Man or Woman, according to Derrida. And yet, this reminder of cacophony, expressed as Nietzsche's daily reality, is the only noise we hear in Spurs. Neither is there noise or auditory allusions in Derrida's text, nor, as I have said, does the subject herself ever speak. You never hear Woman's response to Derrida's investigation. You never hear her tell of her sense of position, if it has always been to be held at a distance before you. Her voice, her movements have just been equated with distracting white noise, a siren's call, too dangerous to attend to. A silent lab capable of observation and analysis at a distance will yield up what Derrida insists "must be able to be thought" about Woman.

So, though Nietzsche's writings may, according to Derrida's paraphrase "be coiled in the labyrinth of the ear" (43), he will by no means make the same mistake. Distance, demanding solely visual and intellectual attention, without interruption from either the reality/noise of Man or Woman's "pitiable bustling" is now safely in place and will remain so throughout Derrida's presentation.

Not surprisingly then, Derrida relies entirely on visual evidence. Through it, his credibility is established by your own visual assent to his presentation. You see before you everything as he describes it. Thus, his expertise on this dangerous matter will allow him, after this initial presentation, to change gowns and address you as a contemporary Freudian, a psychoanalyst. Drawing from both the observations of Nietzsche (another Victorian) as well as his own attendant analysis, Derrida goes so far as to elucidate the motivation behind the movements of his specimen, his subject. Unlike Ulysses who heard

the sirens song and lived to tell about it, Derrida takes no such chances. Careful observation and professional consultation alone are the bedrock of Derrida's analysis. You are awed.

Before you is a Siren under a bell jar, placed on the highest shelf of the lab. An element of mystery and great anticipation surrounds the audience as Derrida continues the execution of his report, explaining as he goes the various movements and uses of the veils on the figure, continually hinting at the moment of complete unveiling. It is this teasing promise of ultimate revelation that keeps his audience glued to his every word.

A woman who has snuck in cries out, "Charlatan! Illusionist!" and is immediately recognized and sedated before being returned to the ward. Her chart reveals her to be a self-proclaimed feminist. Analysis asserts that she is an hysteric with delusions of grandeur, rightfully put away by her husband for the proper treatment.

Derrida alleviates the disturbance caused by this interruption saying, "Feminism is nothing more than women aspiring to be like men!...Nietzsche well denounces in Feminism its lack of style" (64). A rustle of knowing laughter, and Derrida has all attention back on the subject at hand. No one, however, is on the look out for another woman in the audience. No one has barred the doors of the hall against the feminists' arrival.

Having established, then, all the criteria necessary for his audience to perceive his observations, Woman, the veiled figure before you is subjected to Derrida's iteration of its(her/my) effect on you. Derrida's first point then, has been to relate "this barely allegorical figure" (51) to you, to men as a conduit of your desire and fear, as an *actio in distans*.

In this place of desire and fear, Woman also appears, without surprise, just as she has been maintained throughout your tradition. Once again, she is the Other, the opposite, the negative value -- what Sabina Lovebond refers to as your "negative sexual term"

(Lovebond, 5). Ironically, it is in this position as negative Other that she, through Nietzsche's grand style, comes to represent your most valued term, Truth, and it is on this reversal that Derrida's delimiting of Woman depends.

In Derrida's next correlation, he re-iterates this Nietzschean alignment of Woman to Truth as Nietzsche understood it. In this correlation, Woman is again reflecting your own desire of attainment. But for Nietzsche, as we have seen, Woman, though desirable as Truth, represents the lie of Platonic Truth since Platonic Truth, like Woman, is a surface. Many of them. Veils upon veils. Onion skins waiting to be peeled, yielding up nothing but themselves. As Derrida puts it, Woman averts truth. There is no such thing then as either of them; just their trappings, skilfully hung (51).

With Truth and Woman rated as equally insubstantial, equally related to an abyss of illusionary substance, the fear-value of their attraction becomes predominant. There is no longer a need to keep away from Woman just because of a fear of disillusionment, but now even the distance that separates you from Her is charged with loss, with if you will, illusion. Distance shifts from being the device of the all knowing male, the Man who knows how to seduce without becoming seduced (49). Subtly, distance has been shifted into the Woman's hands as a deliberate device used to gull the unwary Man into believing in Her, in a single Truth. Instead of appreciating the illusion of Her veils, the philosopher-knight (39) becomes enmeshed in them.

Derrida might assert that this shift in emphasis upon who is using what tools to what end as merely "weapons circulating from hand to hand, passing from one opponent to the other," (57) but I must stress that any sense of opposition has been only been asserted, not established by Derrida. In fact, Nietzsche does not so readily yield over the power of distance to the so called opponent. In terms of his own Grand Style (see Appendix A), Nietzsche saw the multiple surfaces of so called Truth as a truly masculine, virile

accomplishment. Holding the veils in tension was closer if not to truth, then to reality: to say "there are nothing but surfaces" is to maintain your entire philosophical heritage at risk, on the edge of itself. It is at this edge that Derrida will separate himself from a complete alignment with Nietzsche's version of truth. As Derrida states:

Truth can only be a surface. But the blushing movement of that truth which is not suspended in quotation marks casts a modest veil over such a surface. And only through such a veil which thus falls over it could "truth" become truth, profound, indecent, desirable. But should that veil be suspended, or even fall a bit differently, there would no longer be any truth, only "truth" -- written in quotation marks. *Le voile/tombe*.

(59)

In other words, by maintaining the tension of the veils, by maintaining the multiple surfaces *as they are hung* truth without suspension becomes a possibility, can be seen to exist in terms of the struggle of Nietzsche's Grand Style. Some form of representation is possible in Nietzsche's style: reality may replace Truth, but Reality is seen to exist as expressible, as subject. And Woman never can be expressed in these terms for Derrida. So Nietzsche and Derrida part company. I shall consider this distinction in more detail at the end of this chapter, but for the moment, we need to consider Nietzsche's style relative to Derrida's use of it in more detail.

The relevance of Nietzsche's shift away from the one to the many is significant for Derrida and the relation to Woman. Like Derrida's perpetual differing/deferring difference, Nietzsche grand Style resisted resolving the tensions into a unified whole. Seeking such a resolution would merely recreate the Platonic scheme. In these stylistic terms, Woman becomes severed/several. She can be valued at one moment for reflecting a beautiful surface, where dwells Man's better self, and reviled on another plane for tempting Man into a dream of death. She is reconsecrated as the perfect receptacle for Man's trauma with truth/reality.

Woman, then, is forced to maintain her position as Man's nemesis, enigma, and yet <sup>MacFadden!</sup> his own reflection. She is never distinguished from his need. And in this position of mirror, of crisis, She becomes Derrida's epitome for differance in a manner that supercedes the grand style. For though Nietzsche will say there are only surfaces, Derrida will go further to dissolve those surfaces (for they reflect at least the possibility of tangibility) and say there is only the movement of differance. Woman becomes a consequence as opposed to a generator of an effect in that case. Thus, where Nietzsche can be said to have learned his Grand Style from the skepticism of old women (Joyful Wisdom, 64, 125), Derrida can be seen as dissolving even that link with Woman as substantial in favor of Woman as derivative.

Woman is used. She has a purpose. Like a pin cushion, like a clothes line (a clothes line with intention), She is held at bay for your own protection, and, less honorably, your own titillation. Further, She is dehumanized in servitude. Though Nietzsche, through Derrida's paraphrases, credits Her with intent, intent to seduce you for Her own pleasure, not for any interest in you. This is never her doing. Still further She is distilled to an outcrop of your own desire, not even a surface recognized as reflecting such desire. Ultimately, She is, in Derrida's analysis, nothing more than a locus for your appropriations.

\* \* \*

In order to perceive more clearly Derrida's purpose/need for transfiguring Woman from being into effect, from Other into Supplement, let us consider the progress of the transmogrification through Derrida's use of Nietzsche.

Nietzsche's Woman, as Derrida creates Her, is both reviled and celebrated, and this on several levels. As Derrida sets out in the "Positions" section of Spurs, she is reviled

because she knows the truth, which is that there is no truth; she is reviled as well because her use of surfaces (the operation that Nietzsche's grand style seemingly emulates) would seem to cover up that knowledge, that truth of truth, and so would seduce the swayable philosopher into her illusion of depth. On the other hand, she is given credit for knowing how to use the tools of her trade truly in order to mirror the man's desire for an image of reality that is settled, unifiable, substantial. As such, she is the "power of affirmation" (94-99).

But who says that Woman is playing this game of surfaces in the Man's world? Quite simply, what good does it do Woman to serve the interests of a Truth that has done nothing but subjugated her? Indeed, as Gayatri Spivak proposes, Woman is only doubly displaced by a perception of her in league with Nietzsche's or Derrida's vision of Truth. Moving from the position considered above of Woman as good/bad model, to reconsidering Her dubious status of subject ("woman is my subject"), Spivak states:

It is my suggestion that woman, who is the "model" for deconstructive discourse remains a woman generalized and defined in terms of the faked orgasm and other varieties of denial... "Woman will be my subject." We give the "subject" its philosophical value of the capital I. In the place of the writer's "I" will be woman. But, colloquially, "my subject" means "my object". Thus, even if "le style" (man?) "revient à elle" (returns or amounts to her) is an affirmation of "ce qui ne revient pas au père" (that which does not return or amount to the father), the author of *La question du style*--that displaced text that does not exist, yet does, of course as *Éperons*--having stepped into the place of displacement, has displaced the woman-model doubly as shuttling between the author's subject and object. If, then, the "deconstructive" is "affirmative" by way of Nietzsche's woman, who is a "power of affirmation," we are already within the circuit of what I call double displacement: in order to secure the gesture of taking the woman as model, the figure of woman must be doubly displaced.

("Displacement..." 170-171)

Woman is first objectified, held at a distance, displaced as we have seen from any level of subjecthood, and so displaced from a position of participant. She is then moved further from the edge of discourse by Derrida's manipulations that push away from a

consideration of being/meaning in favor of process. In other words, his own "gesture of taking the woman as model," and his consideration of the appropriate-ness of that gesture is prioritized over consideration of the model Herself. Woman gains nothing in this discourse.

Further, Derrida is prepared to accept and develop Nietzsche's triple assumptions about Woman's relation to Truth without Woman being allowed to challenge these accusations/associations. All knowledge of what Woman thinks or feels about her role in this game of Truth is derived from the experience of "we-philosophers" watching from an occluded *dis-tanz!* So for our next step, let us, you and me, consider more particularly, the actions Woman is assumed to perform.

We've considered how Woman must be held at a distance because of Derrida's fear of being ensnared in her web of "skepticism and veiling dissimulation" (65) It is assumed then, that she is an active participant in the attempt to seduce you philosophers. Says Derrida, "The seduction of the Woman functions at a distance, the distance is the element of her ability" (48-49) -- an ability she is seen as using deliberately against Man. Further, her perceived deliberate use of distance is geared towards Man's perversion as well as his seduction. States Derrida, "there is no such thing as the essence of woman because woman averts, she is averted of herself. Out of the depths, endless and unfathomable, she engulfs and distorts all vestiges of essentiality, of identity, of property" (51). Thus as Woman inflicts herself on Man, she loses her self in that she is without any more substance than the veils she wields. And as we have seen with Derrida as opposed to Nietzsche, even the veils themselves have no substance. At this point of Woman's aversion/dissolution of herself, Derrida concocts Woman as effect. Woman, then, while trying to trap Man into a deeper belief in Truth is herself flying into differance. This brings us back to the level at which Woman is appreciated.

Still, even when "it is no longer man who affirms her" (97), when Woman is supposedly affirmed as a "dissimulatress," affirmed "by herself, in herself and in man," not "answering" to man from either of the above "reactive," negative, positions, -- even then she is an artist or whatever in Man's, in Derrida's terms, reflects what He wants in reality, truth and art. With respect to/respecting her assumed self-knowledge, Derrida insists:

...if woman is truth, she at least knows that there is no truth, that truth has no place here and that no one has a place for truth. And she is woman precisely because she herself does not believe in truth itself, because she does not believe in what she is, in what she is believed to be, in what she thus is not.

(53)

Several things are suspect here. The question again is what value is it to her to reflect Man's reality, especially when that reality is only seen in terms of conflict with him, where Her art is seen as most effective when it victimizes Him, when in fact her art is seen to exist only in terms of power over Man, suspended, as Derrida insists, on a fear of castration (59). No consideration is given to the potential uniqueness of Her art which may neither express such a reality, nor depend at all on such conflict.

Pictured in these terms, Woman can be seen as having no other desire than to torment you at the edge of your experience. Derrida sets up the game quite neatly:

Into such a void [of differance] woman throws her anchor. Because the "woman" although interested a little in truth, she believes only a little that the truth, in its own right, does not concern her anymore. It is the "man" who believes that his discourse on the woman or on truth concerns her ...the woman. The circumvention. It is the "man" who believes in the truth of woman, woman-truth, and in truth [whose??] they too are men, those women feminists so derided by Nietzsche. Feminism is nothing but the operation of a woman who aspires to be like a man, a dogmatic philosopher, claiming truth, scientific objectivity, this is to say with all the illusions of virility to which the effect of castration is attached. Feminism wants castration and a castrated woman. Lost the style.

(62,64 my trans)

Woman, then, is enmeshed in differance. She exerts her knowledge by playing on Man's projections -- projections, which, according to Derrida here, are almost entirely boring to her. Yet have we not just seen that her art, her daily bread is dependent upon these projections? And if she is not truly interested in truth, knows that it does not concern her, then in what is she interested?

Certainly not in what the Nietzsche's (and by association, perhaps Derrida's) feminists are seen to be after. Feminists in their quest for knowledge, and most particularly for knowledge about themselves, we must also understand, merely get lost in the webs they once cast upon men. According to Derrida, they get tangled in the web of their own castrations. In fact, they lose the ability of their art. They have no style, that is, no ability to cast that web, to entice, to castrate Man. Perhaps they're not interested. Perhaps they've found something better to do.

The image inscribed of Derrida's Woman again epitomizes differance/ Writing. In that figure, she is, at this point in the text, the most penetrating interpreter of Man's world. Of course, what defines a Woman's world is not even considered for there is no such thing in Derrida's Nietzsche to consider. What we can consider, however, is whether she achieves the status of arche-interpreter because she exerts this vision from her own experience, or rather because she is not there at all. She exemplifies a perfect vision of man's reality because she is designed by him to be its model. Style is not lost, but Woman is, for she is stylized/subjugated, no longer to be seen as style, which is tracable, which returns to the man's hands:

One can no longer seek her, no more than one could search for a woman's femininity or female sexuality And she is certainly not to be found in any of the familiar modes of concept or knowledge. Yet it is impossible to resist looking for her.

(71)

Woman is no longer to be found, though Derrida/Man as stylist seeks her . From here, Woman is no longer Other, but effect, an effect whose necessity is to push man to resist, reject, rise above itself/herself. Nietzsche's alignment through Derrida of Woman with style has been redefined, making the question of where Woman is impossible. But is Woman just effect when I am still here? And why should She risk dissolution, "avert herself" in Her practices if that merely perpetuates her subjugation, removing her further from a position of true power in the world she shares with Man?

Even though Derrida admires what he sees as Woman's capacity to be only difference or, for that matter, writing, and wishes to move that way himself, he still maintains his position of controlling power over Woman. Man as subject/subjugator, then, is style; he is the controlling influence upon his writing, upon Woman. "Style is my subject/Woman is my subject." It does not amount to the same thing, or to the Other. In the double movement of the inscribing, phallic self, the stylized subject reaches out, with style, to that which escapes it. The attempt to hold down difference through writing is style, and writing supposedly mocks such efforts. Woman averts herself, supposedly happily, artistically, right out of style, right into imperfect subjugation. Writing cannot write itself; Woman is described stylistically.

Nietzsche's Woman/Truth/Style was presented as existing in multiple but tangible layers beyond/OUTSIDE/OTHER THAN the unifying grasp of the philosopher. As style she embodied the creature who knew their were only veils, and she knew how to use them for her delight (which seems to equate with the consternation of impotent philosophers). Now it/she is rephrased as merely the Man's efforts to confront/deny/seize writing-as-difference. Though you cannot resist looking for here, SHE IS NOT THERE. SHE IS NOT. There is for Derrida only representation, only difference, which is not static,

knowable, but process, *actio in distanz!*. The first switch in the Nietzschean alignment of Woman has been made.

Though I have said Derrida eludes being pinned down (as Woman is) to a particular voice in the text, as he only occasionally asserts one, the process of the Nietzsche and Woman he creates reveals his traces, his style. In that style, he does not ever have to jeopardize his position as subject in his admiration/replication of Woman-as-effect. After all, whose effect is this Woman's?

\* \* \*

We've seen that the course Derrida is taking with Woman is to re-invent her from Other into Effect. We have also glimpsed the correlation between Woman- as-effect to Derrida's construct of differance. In that correlation Woman-as-effect still retains the characteristics of Nietzsche's understanding of her. Even though she becomes an effect of his pen, she still resembles an active figure. In the following section, I wish to consider Derrida's further reduction of Woman's figure in which even the semblance of Otherness is removed. Indeed, even as he relates Her directly to writing, Woman is removed from the equation, eliminated in what he refers to as the "feminine operation."

Woman (truth) will not be pinned down.

In truth woman, truth will not be pinned down.

That which will not be pinned down by truth is, in truth -- feminine. This should not, however, be hastily mistaken for a femininity, for female sexuality, or for any of those other essentializing fetishes which might still tantalize the dogmatic philosopher, the impotent artist or the inexperienced seducer who has not yet escaped his foolish hopes of capture.

The distance/divergence of truth which elevates itself, which raises itself between quotation marks (machinations, cries, flight of a crane, of a hooker), all this which is going to compel the setting of Nietzsche's writings between quotation marks of the "truth" -- and in strict consequence, of all the rest -- which is therefore going to *inscribe* the truth - - and by strict consequence in general, not what we call the feminine itself: the feminine "operation."

(54,56 my trans.)

Repeated here is the non-substantial quality of Woman, of truth, but from this relation, Woman is quietly removed as Derrida's focus shifts from the effect in existence -- Woman/truth -- to how that effect is created or suspended beneath the pen -- the feminine operation. The subtle twist describes that this so-called feminine is divorced from female sexuality, femininity or any other "essentializing fetishes", that is, those things conceived of as absolutes, like sexuality as opposed to gender -- those things that Derrida asserts exclude the easy possibility of differance. Whether female sexuality, femininity, is essentializing or not is never considered. On this too, Woman goes unheard.

Derrida emphasizes that he is not talking about "the feminine" because to do so would entrap him in such a fetishistic involvement with a concept, attempting to substantiate it. Instead, by focusing on a process, an "operation," he can remain in flux, active, non-subjective. An effect, like his voice in this text, remains knowable not through itself but only glimpsed through its traces. Nietzsche's "operation" is qualified as feminine, as having those traces, because of Derrida's previous correlations: Woman is qualified as Feminine; Woman is also qualified as Truth which is really "truth," therefore since Nietzsche is more than a Woman, is a man, the process of his writing which creates an active Woman concept must be an feminine operation.

Derrida has grabbed hold of and unhinged femininity from sexuality, from Woman Herself. Indeed Derrida goes further in establishing Woman as no more than a construct reflecting the issue from Nietzsche's pen:

Nietzsche as is everywhere evident in his texts, is a thinker big with thought. He is the thinker of pregnancy which, for him, is no less praiseworthy in a man than it is in a woman. Indeed one might imagine Nietzsche, who was so easily moved to tears, who referred to his thought as a pregnant woman might speak of her unborn child, one might well imagine him shedding tears over his swollen belly.

(65)

Gestation and birth now become the higher property of writing Man (see Dissemination for the relation of the child to text). In other words, Nietzsche, Derrida's model Man in Spurs is both Man and Woman --at least in what he does with his writing -- and writing for Derrida is everything. Woman is no more than Man's created, *inscribed* reflection of his struggle with Style, with Appropriation. Therefore, it is his folly which has severed this reflection from himself and allowed him to believe in an actual, capturable Other, Woman.

Derrida deals specifically with this folly in his discussion of Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's "History of an error." In taking apart Nietzsche's perceived "*inscription of woman*" (87) in the deterioration of the truth Derrida states, "The becoming-female is a "process of the idea" (*Fortschritt der Idee*) and the idea a form of truth's self-presentation. Thus the truth has not always been woman nor is the woman always truth" (87).

Derrida goes on to say that once, as Heidegger put it, Plato could assert "I Plato am the truth," but that was at a time before the dilemma of presentation/representation -- a sort of *in utero* period of truth. So, Derrida continues, bringing us up to date in the progress of the Idea (Heidegger's concept for Truth):

But, once this inaugural age has given way to the second age, here where the becoming female of the idea is the presence or presentation of the truth, Plato can no more say "I am the truth" For here the philosopher is no longer the truth. Severed from himself he has been severed from truth. Whether he himself has been exiled, or whether it is because he has permitted the idea's exile, he can now only follow its trace. At this moment history begins. Now the story starts. Distance -- the woman -- averts truth -- the philosopher. She bestows the idea. And the idea withdraws, becomes transcendent, inaccessible, seductive. It beckons from afar (*in die Ferne*). It veils float in the distance. The dream of death begins. It is woman.

(87)

In his separation from himself, Man creates an active Other who resists and intrigues him. The idea exiled from himself. Technically, therefore, what becomes Woman

is His property. He has rights to it/her. What Derrida's work does is to disentangle Man from his "foolish dreams of capture" by getting him to consider Woman as already posed by him, reclaimed into his writing self. Woman becomes most emphatically only Adam's rib, and a rib separated from him only when his consciousness entangles itself in a quest for meaning instead of process.

Spurs then becomes the process of re-discovering "becoming -female" in order to reverse its effect of a creation and belief in an actual other. With this process of reclamation, however, Derrida does not attempt to find "the truth," allowing Plato to say again "I am the truth." Rather, by appropriating the process of "becoming-female" he can recreate the self as nothing but text, as a process floating through a sea of differance, but not floating freely, without intent. It is vitally important to be able to confiscate the feminine operation, writing, Woman so as to know the heretofore perceived opposite and in that knowledge, appropriate it, wield it with all familiarity of ownership. Derrida's work, as we shall see in the next chapter, is even more particularly than Nietzsche's the work of appropriation.

What such appropriation leads to, of course, is that Derrida ability to say, not that Nietzsche is Man and Woman, for "there is no Nietzsche as such" but that there is neither Man nor Woman. The terms "man," "woman" imply far too much subject-objectivity for this new transcendent, literate being. Woman, as we have seen, doesn't exist/never existed, and hence, has no Other or experience of other. Such is the logic of the text. Man, on the other hand, transcends himself and consequently his need for an Other.

This is Derrida's/Man's myth of creation, not mine. I do not feel the same need to transcend by difference, my being Woman. My experience is other than yours or your understanding of mine, but neither is it inferior nor equal to yours. Terms like "becoming female" have no meaning to me except that they pierce into me, demand that I assimilate

myself and my understanding of communication into yours for my own safety, at the least. Despite the cerebral transcendence/denial of sexuality, despite the fear of difference, I am still here.

Such a reduction/assimilation/appropriation as the one proposed by Derrida's elimination of Woman/transcendence of Man leaves disregarded Woman's blood, her symbolism, her cycle, her nature. Derrida pays no attention to this, citing only Nietzsche's commentary on the pregnant, female animal; that a woman in Nietzsche is characterized by her ability/willingness to be pregnant (146-149). Nietzsche, however, does refer to his own inability to deal with what he perceives as ugly, as an affront to his desire:

When we love a woman, we easily conceive a hatred for nature on account of all the repulsive natural functions to which every woman is subject. We prefer not to think of all this; but when our soul touches on these matters for once, it shrugs as it were and looks contemptuously at nature: we feel insulted; nature seems to encroach on our possessions and with the profanest hands at that. Then we refuse to pay any heed to physiology and decree secretly, "I want to hear nothing about the fact that a human being is something more than *soul and form*." "The human being under the skin" is for all lovers a horror and unthinkable, a blasphemy against God and love.  
(Joyful Wisdom, "59" 122)

Though Derrida does not use the terms "soul and form," that is where his redefinitions are suspended: out of the Nietzschean idea of "natural". Writing is without blood and can therefore envision a cerebral, bloodless pregnancy. Man can conceive of himself in those bloodless terms because as Nietzsche admits, he doesn't have to deal with that reality; he can in fact rage against it and ignore it. Thus, he can conceive of bearing a child/idea in lifeless terms, can intellectualize the process out of nature and into metaphysics.

Woman's blood, however, threatens the capacity of such an intellectualized reduction of herself, for Woman's blood, more than pregnancy, differentiates her as being. She, too, is perpetually in process. But unlike the perceived "feminine operation" of Man,

\* \* \*

We have reached a hinge in the text where we can consider Derrida's own question for this text, that is the question of Style in terms of Woman-as-writing. From this fold in the text we can cross Derrida's traces at another angle to catch another glimpse into Derrida's need for Woman's elimination. From this particular movement, we can consider the deliberate actions against Woman carried out in order to accommodate Derrida's positions. But now, at this locus, Derrida asserts that the original "question of Style" and Nietzsche's style in particular are to be "immediately unloosed as a question of writing" and this because "The question of woman suspends the decidable opposition of true and non-true..." (107).

Early in the text we are told of Woman, "She writes (herself). Style returns to her. In other words: if style was (much as the penis, to Freud, is the normal prototype of fetishes) the man, writing would be the woman" (56, my trans.). In other words, if style and writing were entities, not processes, it would be feasible to conceive of Woman as the embodiment of writing, and Man as the form giver, imposer, style, upon that writing. Man as Namer, inscribing. Through this vision Woman must embody writing until she is nullified, replaced by Man's "feminine operation," or, as Derrida later refers to it, "the Nietzschean operation" (81).

Though Derrida credits Nietzsche with the feminine operation, as I have said, he does not credit him with having escaped his own style's message, for Nietzsche imposes a style on writing *to make it say something*. His grand style creates the truth in all its multiple layers. The multiple tensions of his style are there to reflect a dynamic truth, as if he understood his Woman as holding all these veils, and there was Truth: a multiplicity of surfaces. For him, a multiplicity of styles recreates this understanding of Truth. Nietzsche, however, hasn't quite caught the unmotivatedness of the sign, of writing, of Woman, in

Derrida's understanding of her as by-product, not constant, and so "is perhaps himself a little lost in the web of his text" (101). Again, Woman is *really* writing, not style. In other words, she's just a series of references that are always deferred, that promise no location in a representum, in a style. She writes (herself) without style, and because writing cannot be written, fixed, she writes herself off the page.

It would appear here that Derrida is denouncing in Nietzsche his style which is also the phallic prototype of the fetish. And yet, Derrida and Nietzsche both condemn feminism and philosophers for their lack of style (64). It seems that Derrida is contradicting himself, though I think it is a quality of style that Derrida finds lacking in both Nietzsche and his Feminists that he condemns. Style for Derrida must not impose a tangibility, a law, inscribe a knowledge, a truth. Nietzsche is still involved in doing this. His Feminists are perceived as being involved in the same quest. Style, when it is unloosed as a question of writing, must reflect writing. Style must parry with itself in order to "[rip] through the veil" (107), or the myth of decidability. Derrida's style, then, parries with Nietzsche's, brings it to crisis, in order to rend his construction of truth in multiplicity. For as writing is differance, style, by being active, lets writing loose, disseminates writing to be itself. I use the term "itself" with caution for fear of implying a subjectivity of writing which would be anathema to Derrida.

It is the actions of the stylate spur, of Derrida's own style in Spurs that I focus on in the following pages. Before you turn to that discussion, a few thoughts remain to stir your consideration of what we have looked at here.

First, please bear in mind that Derrida's text assumes that Woman/Feminists, those Women who lack style, are looking for the same thing the same Truths, as Woman that he attributes to Nietzsche or to the "foolish dogmatist." Because we do not hear the Feminist, we cannot assume this to be so.

Second, in Derrida's own terms, Woman, when allowed to exist in the text, is aligned with writing. One would extrapolate from Derrida so far, however, that writing cannot come into being or difference without style. Put another way, writing cannot be perceived without style. Thus even the ripping style imposes a form on writing, desires a knowledge of writing, of Woman. Would not abandoning the phallic practise of style bring Derrida/Man really closer to experiencing difference, to escaping his own metaphysical web? Derrida does not appear prepared to become Woman (as opposed to become female/idea/exile), which is what such a transition in his terms would mean. He will not become his own supplement, for by maintaining the pen, the phallus, he still clings to those needs of his dogmatist philosophers, his Feminists. Woman remains subjugated in him.

Third, Derrida's transcendent Man who is neither man nor woman is a presumed possibility for women to attain as well. Certainly there are tremendous benefits to speaking as a non-Man, and certainly many women probably see that as the only possible level of, in particular, academic discourse, but again to invest in that role is for Woman to be co-opted out of exploring her style-less potential for her own voice. We would once again be wearing either the clothes you give us or yours entirely, masquerading and speaking in tongues about things outside our economy, our interests beyond those of basic survival in your world.

Finally, and supplemental to the last point, the style in which Derrida proposes his transcendent non-Man should move is violent, "...is necessarily the abyss of proper-ty, the violence also of an event which befalls without being" (119). It presupposes the need to pull everything perceived on the fringe of the abyss into it in a perpetual motion of sexless, genderless appropriation. As such, this is still a man's style, created through his perception of Man's metaphysics and desires. Derrida has not considered that Woman/women, on her own terms, allowed to assert those terms, would not want to participate in such an activity -

- especially one that despite its alleged sexlessness still maintains and thrusts against "woman" as its chief construct for interpreting/appropriating/ stylistically ripping through (her) in a quest for its own perpetuation, its own immortality. Exclusive, non-ironic use of such a style would mean a woman's complicity in her own continued subjugation to the phallic order.

And so, by way of an emphasis on what impresses the mark of the stylate spur in the question of woman (note that this is not (according to the well-turned phrase) the woman's figure. It is not the figure of the woman precisely because we shall bear witness to her abduction because the question of the figure is at once opened and closed by what is called woman); by way also of an announcement of what will henceforth regulate the play of the sails (of a ship, for example) around the apotropaic anxiety; and finally, by way of a first glimpse of some exchange between Nietzsche's style and Nietzsche's woman...these lines from Joyful wisdom...

(41)

The language of violence, of rape, permeates Derrida's writing on "the question of style," the "question of woman." The intellectual-philosophical move towards her annihilation which we "witnessed" (to use Derrida's term) in the last chapter is carried out through the medium of aggression. As Derrida says at the initiation of his discourse "we shall bear witness to her [the Woman's] abduction." We find out shortly after this sentence that this need for such an abduction pivots around "the apotropaic anxiety" on the stylist's part. That is, around his ability to ward off evil.

In all, the language of the text evidences a violence against Woman. The stylist, the Nietzschean, and Derrida all raise arms against Her towards Her dissolution. Hence the title of this chapter, "viol" *rape* : the only name for such focused violence against Woman.

We (you and I) need to consider this language of violence because it is just that. Violence. Against Woman. Derrida demonstrates it in the writing of Nietzsche as well as in his own work, at that point at which he separates himself from Nietzsche to discuss his own course of appropriative process. To say the least this is very disturbing because the language of aggression is so blatantly focused against women. As such, far from liberating Woman, as Derrida sees Nietzsche and himself doing, his language mutilates her in the language of sexuality and is deaf to any cries of protest. The language proceeds, as we have seen, on assumptions that predicate these seemingly defensive verbal gestures. But as was the case in asking which Woman is really being discussed here, we must ask, are these

verbal thrusts of a stylistic rapier detached from the actual, physical/intellectual rape against any Woman? Is Derrida any more detached from the reality of Woman than Nietzsche who called feminists (ostensibly, non-metaphorical, living and bleeding females) "abortions"? My point is that just as Nietzsche drew for his example of metaphorical woman from the actions of the women of his time, is Derrida not doing the same thing? Is he not prescribing in his language how, where, and where not, "woman" can exist? and these positions are prescribed at knife point. We women must stand mute to this abduction, displacement and violent nullification. But we women do not, though our screams often go unheard, the rapes unreported.

In order to consider the inscription into the Woman's body of this language of violence, we can see Spurs in three postures of aggression. These are in the discourse on style, the discourse on castration and the discourse on appropriation. In the first of the three movements, style becomes an action of self defence against the other, the Woman. The second movement reveals why this initial posture is necessary. In the second phase, castration becomes a weapon attributed to the Woman. It is a weapon that Woman still uses to advance her dark purpose against the man, even though she does not believe in it. For this reason, style acts to counter the effect of castration. In the ultimate movement, Derrida seemingly nullifies the stylate spur as well as the castrating Woman through a process of appropriation. Through this action, the sexes are eliminated, but what remains is still the "spurring operation," the appropriating phallus, valued now not for what it pins down (for such stability is impossible) but for its perpetual motion of acquisition. The phallic action against all otherness, all Woman-ness is maintained. The language/style/inscription of violence is simply resituated into a valued position. Woman throughout remains victimized to the phallic interpretation of heterogeneous assimilation.

The institution of violence in the text begins with its treatment of style. We have seen that Nietzsche's style -- the Grand Style -- is constructed through a multiplicity of tensions that are capable of holding in them, for example, the triple contradictory perspectives of Woman. The image is of so many sheets pegged down, flapping in the breeze, or of the sails on a single ship, tied to the mast, billowing. And yet Spurs would redirect us to consider style not as the veils/sails (*les voiles*) but as those punctures in *les voiles* that allow them to be secured, held down, held fast, maintained, functional. Style holds something else in place for a particular purpose. It is not something in and of itself, rather, it impresses itself upon some other material. The stylist then becomes the imprinter, the manipulator of sails/veils, of writing. It must not be forgotten that Derrida allows the possible correlation between Woman as writing and man as style. Indeed, even though Derrida allows for this only in conditional terms, his entire text, as we have seen, moves towards such an alignment. Eventually, it deconstructs it, and supplants it with an argument that calls for attention to process over any stratification. Hierarchization is merely the consequence of process.

In the meantime while the alignment is allowed, style in the "question of woman" is very specifically nothing other than aggression specifically directed against her, into her. Indeed, nowhere else in the text is the language of violence so clearly focused as an act against Woman. The description of style and its operation becomes the description of rape.

In the section of Spurs entitled "Distance" Derrida speaks of style as a spur's or stiletto's mark, or as the double effect of a rapier, which both attacks and repels, leaving its mark, that aspect of itself that shows up only on contact with the other, imbedding part of itself (but not "itself" as such, only a *dynamis* {see "name" in the glossary}) in that material (like the sperm left after the entry). It is also the rostrum of a ship which "cleaves" the

"gaping chasm"<sup>1</sup> of the sea's "hostile surface," protecting it against "the terrifying, blinding, mortal threat" of that which is seen to be equally, "obstinately" thrusting (does the sea thrust?) itself into view (39).

What becomes readily apparent in the relation between the style/Woman construct is the language of confrontation. The Pythagorean opposites/oppositions between man-woman, subject-object(other) are maintained in which the right hand side of the opposition is continually regarded with suspicion. Style, therefore, functions as an operation by the subject against/upon the other in terms of sexual aggression. The formless, chasmic sea of "other" is to be "cleft" by the philosopher-man's ship (by the "rostrum", which, to be precise, is defined in Funk and Wagnall's as the prow of a war ship). The action of the stylist's rapier or stiletto (Derrida's terms) is akin to rape: the unveiling of this "gaping chasm", the "cleav(ing)" of it and the final "deflower(ing)" of it are all actions of force against/upon/into the Woman-as-other.

To throw a veil over this language of *autracity*<sup>2</sup> (in the same way that the curtain is closed upon the suffocated Desdemona), Derrida does not here refer to the other directly as "woman", and yet what else can be "deflowered," and by what other than the style, the subject, not the subjugated of this discussion? Our perception of Woman as subject begins to take on the sense of subject beneath a ruling power.

The rape is couched in the terms of a Grail quest: it is, after all, a pursuit of truth. The other/Woman is set up to appear to hold truth by being seen as an unpenetrable mystery. Therefore, the mystery exists to be penetrated -- by force, if necessary -- its sanctuary unveiled, and truth revealed/taken/KNOWN and thus appropriated.

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<sup>1</sup> In the French, *abîme*= gulf, chasm

*abîmer* = to spoil, beat up, to sink.

This word play only adds to the perception of the language here as a contest of aggression.

<sup>2</sup> *autracity*: combination of *atrocious/audacity/autre-city*.

On good authority from Nietzsche, however, Derrida insists that Truth-as-such, "the presence, the content, the thing itself, meaning, truth" (38) is not to be found here. We are by now not unfamiliar with Derrida's view that the full presence of anything, any concept on a sign, is never realizable. Hence his name "*déjà*" for this point regarding the action of style against the other:

And style thereby protects the presence, the content, the thing itself, meaning, truth -- on the condition that it should not already be that gaping chasm which has been deflowered in the unveiling of difference. Already, the name of that which effaces itself or subtracts itself in advance, leaving nonetheless a mark, a signature subtracted in the very same thing from which it withdraws itself -- from the present -- which must be taken into consideration.

(38, my trans)

Style, we are to understand from this, will "protect" (this term is left undefined) not rape/appropriate these goods providing only that they are virginal, have not *already* been raped by the cleaving prow and so shown to be not the good other, "the thing itself", but the bad other, the Woman, always, only the Woman. The only thing style protects when used as a vehicle to appropriate "the thing itself" is its own interest. It must save itself from itself, blinking at the "unveiling of difference" which denies "the thing itself."

Style exists after the Grail quest is shown up as suffering from the *déjà* effect. As Derrida describes it:

The style-spur, the spurring style, is a long object, a word, which perforates as it parries. It is the oblongi-foliated<sup>3</sup> point (a spur or a spar) which derives its apotropaic power from the taut, resistant tissues, webs, sails and veils (voiles) which are erected, furled and unfurled around it.

(41)

It still thrusts forward in its own interest, imbedding its mark in even more veils than before the exposed mark of *déjà*. In fact, everything other than this long object is

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<sup>3</sup>Foliated-leafed coated divided into layers covered in layers. The phallus like object, the spur is thus well protected against any inimical advances upon it.

connected to it through its perforations, and is subject to the stylist's whim of furling/unfurling. It is the ultimate vehicle of appropriation. That is its apotropaic power. Apotropaic: to ward off evil. The evil in this case can only be the Woman who is seen (made to appear) to threaten (for her own pleasure) the action of The Grand Style, the action of taking as much as possible in lieu of holding the "thing itself".

Style, even after it is revealed to be incapable of pinning down the Other, is still therefore intimately involved with sex and with the Woman in particular. Style is the vehicle of aggression in a mocked up struggle of the sexes, not of ideas, in which Woman is demanded to be/is assumed to be interested. In essence, (Derrida's) style cannot act without struggling against the other, the Woman. Or more particularly, style has no purpose *other than* to act against The Woman, the other, for the double purpose of warding it off, holding it at bay, while simultaneously caging it more and more completely. Apotropaic appropriation.

Woman is still perceived as a thrusting, active "mortal threat" for the stylist. And yet, is she? Does the Woman move against the man in what Nietzsche calls and Derrida reiterates as a war between the sexes? Such a war or conflict as envisioned by a need for an "apotropaic power" would attribute to Woman an equal and perpetual distribution of power. It would assume that she is an equally operative subject acting against her own other, but only for the base purpose of supplying her own insidious pleasure. The second movement of aggression in Spurs assumes this distribution of power in its discussion of castration, and that is its point of fallacy. Woman's alleged movement, far from being free to attack and withdraw as she pleases, is utterly restricted and prescribed. The language of violence in the discourse on style becomes more a threat to Woman should she/I/we resist our imposed position as castrating Woman. The rapier is truly in the stylists' hands, though Derrida will insist otherwise, indeed that all the weapon's changing hands "confuse sexual

identity", that Woman strikes back, strikes the Grail-questing philosopher. Note, however, that Derrida's only allusion to a Woman holding a blade is to her use of it against herself: Cranach's Lucretia stabs herself(55). Just prior to this, Derrida quotes Nietzsche's words of contempt towards a Woman who cannot so use a blade.

Thus what we see is not an equal distribution of power. Woman is silenced, gagged, bound, raped; held to a point where her wounds (for the language of weapons changing hands implies violence done, wounds given) are even self inflicted (87). Further, Woman is not only set up against the man but against herself, her sisters:

And not only is castration the operation that each sex perpetrates against both itself and the other, castration is that very operation of woman contra woman.

(93)

There is something very spurious in this perspective. If Woman were the equal aggressor against her other, as if man were that other, what value would there be for Woman to fight against herself unless she is the *object* not subject of some economy in which her being chosen by the man, the male subject, over another of her sex is the element not of her power/ability but of her survival (see Irigaray's essay "Women on the Market" in This Sex for a discussion of women as commodities)? As object/slave to this economy, how could she possibly fight against/rape the man when she is a victim/object to his stylate-spur? Even Derrida will admit that only a fool believes that Woman *really* castrates (61), that she *really* has any power against the stylist. Still, she is put forward in this role by Derrida for your consideration and my instruction.

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As the discussion pivots from the action of the stylist against the other to the alleged action of the other, Derrida draws attention to Nietzsche's term for women at the end of Nietzsche's introduction to Beyond Good and Evil. The German word is *Frauenzimmer*. Derrida notes that this word is a "term of contempt, an easy woman" (55). Such attention to

this term puts the discussion of Woman's relation to truth/ Woman as castrator on the level of Woman as whore, not madonna. She is devalued in a term relative to the man, the stylist and his use for Her. Indeed, the discussion on Woman as castrator following this focus on Woman as "easy" depends upon your association of the Woman as castrator with Woman as whore. It depends upon seeing Woman as involved in only a sexualized role that demands her constant attention upon and service to the male subject. She cannot be seen to exist apart from this dependency. To this end, castration, which is a sexually involved act, is portrayed as something Woman is involved in for her own pleasure (88). Far from being described, then, as an equal to the stylist, retaliating/defending herself against his stiletto's thrusts, she is (we women are) portrayed as a sort of skeptical, cynical Marlene Dietrich-esque man-eater, addicted to her own pleasure:

"Woman" has need of castration's effect, without which she can neither seduce nor give vent to her desire -- but evidently she does not believe in it. "Woman" is who does not believe in that [castration] and who amuses herself [with it] or takes aim [at it] (*en joue*). She aims at, amuses herself with (*en joue*): a new concept or new structure of belief of man's that is to be laughed at [*visant à rire*.]

(60, my trans)

In the game/war of sex, then, it is Woman whose knowledge about herself and her abilities therein far out-strips the man, the stylist, and it is a knowledge of loss: "she knows, with a knowledge that no self-respecting or dogmatic philosopher is going to be able to measure, that castration has no place" (60, my trans). She cannot effectively castrate but She can fake it, and this is Her so-called power, utterly dependent upon Her relation to the man.

In other words, Woman is harmless to the phallic power, but Her supposed knowledge within the sexual relation is a valuable tool for the phallic position. It is important to note once again however that Woman speaks Herself neither about Her own

pleasure nor Her position as castrator. Her involvement and ability are entirely conjured up by Derrida through his careful adaptation of Nietzsche.

To recapitulate, Woman's role in the discourse of violence that Spurs entertains seems confused. Woman is initially presented as an equal and willing participant in the war of the sexes. Unlike the man, Her desire is not to acquire/ appropriate some higher value (like Truth) but is only to corrupt/ incapacitate the man on his quest for Her pleasure (which is not valued). Her only functions are to seduce and to castrate. Indeed, Derrida, in a lengthy passage on Nietzsche's "History of an error," takes great pains to align Nietzsche's depiction of the evolution of truth as a construct with Woman as castrator. Though Nietzsche's own text goes past the moment at which "truth becomes woman" (see Appendix A) Derrida halts at this association, aligning it to Woman as castrator. The portrait he creates of her in this role is of a psychotic hysteric.

Derrida insists in his use of Woman here that she is always already castrated, and that because of this, she acts out against man, the uncastrated:

In the epoch described by this parenthesis the story's fabulous plot might be somehow linked with the motif of castration in Nietzsche's text, with its enigma of truth's nonpresence.

What is signified in red letters around "*it* [elle, referring to "truth" la vérité] *becomes woman*, it becomes Christian..." I am trying to demonstrate that this is "she castrates (herself)", she castrates because she is castrated, she plays at her castration in the epoch of a parenthesis, she feigns the castration -- suffered and inflicted -- in order to master the master of distance, in order to produce the desire at the same time, this is here "the same thing" kill it.

(88, my trans)

Such a statement assumes that Woman first of all believes in the Freudian myth that She is castrated, and secondly, as a result of this, exhibits a certain vindictiveness at war with all otherness around her, as well as raging jealously at those uncastrated (men) around her, those masters of "out-distancing distance," arousing them only to whack off the locus of that arousal for her own pleasure, her own greed, her own hysteria. Without getting too enmeshed in the evocation of Freud's analysis on femininity which this passage provokes,

we ought to "consider the source" of this antiquated, Victorian, though still dangerously pervasive analysis.

Quite simply, Freud sees Woman, again from a strictly visual perspective, as the lesser sex, not the other sex. He sees her genitalia as less than, as lacking (her/my clitoris as an undeveloped "little penis") and thus he projects his fears and the assumptions of his analysis onto the Woman. Like him, she must notice, on observing the little boy and then herself, her own lack. She eventually decides that her mother and all women share this lack, and consequently develops a mad case of penis envy with simultaneous hostility directed healthily (Freud insists) towards her mother and all "castrated" women until social conditioning can align her to her unquestionable position as the sexual inferior. From this point she can resign herself to serving the needs of the superior, complete sex. Only the hysterical woman would assert that she is equal, that she too can participate, can exert her own symbology, that her genitalia are different, not lacking. Freud's treatment of such hysterics was to help them to reconcile themselves to their own femininity, that is, to their sexual inferiority (see Freud's essay "On Femininity" and Irigaray's "The Blind Spot of an Old Dream of Symmetry").

Derrida's representation of Woman as castrator reflects a Woman who suffers from penis envy (which regards the penis as the only locus of pleasure). She seems to know that she can't have her own (pleasure) and so turns on all others who have either resigned themselves to their lack, "suffered or inflicted", or who have a penis. In this creation of a mad woman, Derrida supports if not the actual ability of Woman to castrate, then at least Her impassioned desire to inflict castration, to act against the castrated. And since all women are castrated, men are the only ones who really need fear her.

As if this were not enough, Derrida quickly turns from this presentation of the castrated woman to glean more examples of castrating woman. He finally focuses on the

only place where Nietzsche himself aligns castration to any aspect of his discussion: Christianity. But the castration that Nietzsche aims at in Christianity is not directly the same as that brand of castration which permeates Derrida's Spurs. Nietzsche's castrating Christianity is a church of extirpation directed against self-indulgent pleasure. From this, however, Derrida insists that castration is "that very operation" of woman contra woman. Since the Christian church is a castrator, an extirpator of pleasure, it is therefore a Woman. Since the church is "hostile to life" (Nietzsche's words) as a church of excision, of mutilation, then it must be against Woman "who is herself life" (Derrida's words) (90). The whole thing is ridiculous. All otherness is titled Woman, and Woman is seen therefore to fight against herself in an "hysterical" attempt to impose her castrating ways in a manic frenzy against the stylist, the subject. Against the Good. She is seemingly self-motivated and crazed, setting up man as an enemy.

But, you are very quickly told, Woman has no power to effect castration and so relies instead on castration's effect (61). In other words, while you hold and use a real rapier in your hands, on your side of the battle, Woman holds none. She has nothing but her alleged ability as an illusionist. Surely this is a very dangerous game for Woman to play: to "thrust" (39) herself unarmed against the rostrum of the oncoming credulous/dogmatist philosopher. And even if she has some chance at seducing, scaring the hell out of such a nincompoop who only ends up "castrating himself," (59) what hope does she have against the wise and well padded stylists such as Nietzsche or Derrida who know enough to keep their distance, to seduce without being seduced, leaving Woman *impotent* (if such a word can ever be used regarding Woman)?

It is in this regard that Woman's position of castrator as implied by Derrida is highly questionable. Women do not participate of their own volition. Such effrontery would soon find them impaled. They must enter this game because they have no choice,

because they are far from equal in this mock battle. Woman's position is inscribed here, not derived from observation. Do not forget that while Woman is seen not to castrate, to only play at this war, this aggression, the stylist's thrusts, the rapier, the word, the oblongi are not so mitigated. They remain actual, effective, always inscribing their effect upon the Woman's body.

Derrida thus only partially deconstructs the concept of Woman as castrator. He would declaw Her, as it were, in order to maintain Her as an object of observation very much still at a distance. Safe and untouchable, an educational device for you his audience. He values a certain quality of the ability he allots to Her: Her supposed knowledge that castration in Her hands is only an effect, but one that She will play at anyway for Her own pleasure. These qualities are what extend Her status of "good model" that we saw in chapter one since:

...woman is recognized and affirmed as an affirmative power, a dissimulatrix, an artist, a dionysiac. She is not affirmed by man but is affirmed herself, in herself and in man. In the sense i am speaking of all the time, castration has no place/does not take place. And anti-feminism, which condemned woman only so long as she was, so long as she answered to man from the two reactive positions, is in its turn overturned.

(96 my trans)

To begin with, Woman is seen here as contemptible because She "answered to man" from a reactive position relative to his truth quest. That is, Woman is condemned in the first place for not being truth and in the second place for pretending to be truth, "playing at it for her own advantage" (96) over the man. Both of these positions threaten the philosopher's location of Truth in Woman; Woman's denial of her maintenance of truth threatens the Man's credibility.

It is only when Woman is seen to detach Herself from Man and His truth, to enter into a Dionysian relationship with Her self, that She is valued at all by wise philosophers like Derrida and Nietzsche. Such wise stylists have always seen Her this way. As such,

they have nothing to fear from her, since from this perspective "castration has no place". Woman is affirmed, as Man breathes a sigh of relief at finding her to be unthreatening in this position to his phallus, since, they rationalize, She really isn't interested in it after all. She becomes useful then in her position as *Frauenzimmer*. You and I are to understand from this that this is the proper way to translate feminism: a Woman's dionysiac play at castration that is unthreatening to a knowing stylist (man). From this understanding of Woman as non-threatening, we begin to see what Derrida sees as valuable in maintaining Woman as illusionary castrator. It is a double-faced attribute.

First, if Woman's power of violence is reduced to an illusory effect completely understood by the wise stylist, then Woman as an opposing other is nullified. She is appropriated into man's control via his knowledge of her ways. It is therefore safe to affirm for his own use the quality of a known, non-threatening, entertaining object of his possession. As Derrida summarizes those three women of Nietzsche:

**He was** [in so far as "he" once existed as a subject, like those essentializing fetishes], **he dreaded this castrated woman** [the woman who was not truth]

**He was, he dreaded this castrating woman** [the woman who played at being truth]

**He was, he loved this affirming woman.** [the woman whose ways are known, under control, do not pose a threat to Him.]

(101)

The first two women who are seen as involved in the man are "dreaded" which can be interpreted either as "feared" or as "found totally repugnant". The third woman is fully under the stylist's awareness and in her seeming indifference (which ought to be interpreted as servitude) is "loved".

The second moment of consideration and value for Derrida in Woman-as-(illusionary) castrator is in her relation to appropriation. If the wise stylist is truly wise then he will not fall prey to the illusion of Woman as castrator. He will see her for what she is

and so, with this knowledge of her artificiality he will grow bigger, more powerful, encompassing her, and thus more impervious to attack, using her for *his own* pleasure. Ultimately, Woman chained perpetually to this role as known illusionist proves the power of the phallus's prowess. As Derrida puts it:

The stylate spur passes through the veil. It rents it in such a way that it not only allows there the vision or production of the very same thing, but in fact undoes the sail's self-opposition, the opposition of veiled/unveiled (sailed/unsailed) which has folded over on itself. Truth in the guise of production, the unveiling /dissimulation of the present product, is dismantled. (107)

The stylate spur, the phallus, is given an all-seeing credibility over the veil of the castrating, mythic Woman. It nullifies not only Her effect but Her *presence* as actual other, because actuality, truth, "the present product" is impossible, thanks to this new perspective of the phallus not just as appropriater but also as disrupter, unveiler. Every time the phallus unveils the presence as illusion, it gains/appropriates knowledge for itself by disallowing otherness. Woman becomes necessary as the greatest example/victim of the appropriative power of the disrupting, violent phallus. The language of rape circulates around this relationship of Woman being determined finally not as warring other, but as servant, acting only to serve the need of the phallus, giving it the perfect locus ("epoch") to demonstrate its appropriative prowess. The phallus remains unthreatened. The threat to the Woman, however, of this relentlessly raping phallus is never measured. After all, it is Her function to involve Herself around the whim of the furling/unfurling stylate spur.

\* \* \*

The disruption by the stylist of seeing Woman as castration is affirmed in the textual references to Oedipus that Derrida draws from Nietzsche. The myth of Oedipus itself is foliated upon the various positions of Woman (though other cultures have seen this relation reversed [see Castration]). Further, as has been shown, the discourse on Woman

takes place in strictly visual terms. Oedipus's awareness is also ocular, and his subsequent blindness, punishment for his lack of sight, of penetration into the Truth, is self-inflicted. The alignment between blindness and castration is ancient. Because of these parallels between the text's and Oedipus's dealings with blindness and castration as relative to Woman, it becomes crucial to consider who inflicts blindness/castration, who demands that there be only visual terms of reference and why these demands are incurred by Derrida in this text.

In the text, blindness is always self-inflicted upon the male subject when it takes place. It is a violent consequence of the Man's refusal to regard Woman with the proper perspective, from the appropriate distance. That is, blindness occurs when the Man does not deny Woman tangibility, presence. The "Gaze of Oedipus" section of Spurs, in direct contrast to the voluntarily blind philosophers, is punctuated by definite statements regarding Woman's non-presence: "there is no such thing as..." is the favorite, re-echoing statement of this section. For instance, Derrida asserts that "there is no such thing as woman." This on the heels of having called Nietzsche blind/lost at being unable to resolve his (Nietzsche's) triple outlook/reaction to Woman into this conceptual non-presence (101).

Blindness is the arch-crippler of the philosopher who bases his "truth" or "perceptions" on visual models and approaches towards reality. (Derrida, Nietzsche, even the dogmatic/credulous philosopher are all fixed in this visual mode of justification). For example, as above, Derrida's only condemnation of Nietzsche, where he separates himself from his predecessor, is when he calls Nietzsche "rhythmically blind" with regard to Woman. Nietzsche does not see totally.

Here is where the relation to blindness/castration is made "apparent," for in a parallel sense, Derrida accuses Nietzsche of partially castrating himself before the issue of Woman, getting too close to his own truths to really see the total impossibility of Truth in

any form. Whether it be in maintaining a single truth/presence or a plurality of veils (or types of Woman), belief in a form of presence (which exists in the contradictory tensions of the grand style) has not been surrendered. This is Nietzsche's partial blindness, a stylistic myopia that simply cannot see far enough (or refuses to keep the object far enough away). Hence "Nietzsche himself did not see his way too clearly there" (101).

In being rhythmically blind, or blinded by falling for whatever projections he has created for Woman, the stylist/man-philosopher fails to employ his stylate-spur, his phallus, effectively. He loses the "well honed" (70) piercing instrument that operates at a distance in order to appropriate while in flight. In this respect, blindness becomes only a degree of castration. The "rhythmically" blind philosopher like Nietzsche still has his phallus. In his blinded state he risks his ability to use it effectively in a system of metaphysics that demands ocular sagacity.

The (self) castrated philosopher on the other hand, the credulous dogmatist, has no phallic capacity to see, to penetrate whatsoever because he has succumbed entirely to his own "dream of death" or "foolish hopes of capture" in a belief in the presence of a phallogenically ordered Truth (or Woman). He has yet to "see" that "Woman is but one name for that untruth of truth." Therefore the "philosophical discourse blinded flounders on these shoals and is hurled down the depthless depths to its ruin" (51). Castrated, even the discourse is completely blind. The philosopher's own perverse insistence castrates himself, blinds him (not unlike Oedipus who insisted to be told "the truth" and so blinded himself). Castrated, he is hardly capable of "rending the veil of presence" (107) so crucial to the appropriating philosopher.

Though Derrida counts those philosophers, who blindly hold faith with Platonic truth, as perceptually castrated and phallogenically ineffective, they still impose their anxious perceptions onto the body of the Woman. She is still held by them. Derrida says the inept

philosophers castrate themselves before their perception of Woman; that she is therefore unpierced by them. However, he describes her still as being held before these incompetents in an apparatus, restricted (61). Whether she stands before the effective phallus of the Derridean stylate or before the resenting probes of the blind/castrated dogmatist, Woman is abused, because no matter what the position of any breed of philosopher, hers never changes. Seen differently, perhaps, but it is only the man whose perceptions are allowed to alter his reality and allow him to use his stylate-spur effectively.

Since she has proven to be ineffective at castration, Woman then has no role in this blinding/castrating game other than again to receive the piercing effects of, to be a locus for, the phallus, a place for the phallus to tear. After all Derrida does not only speak of the stylist ripping through veils, but through the hymen, the ultimate locus for the phallus. His use of the hymen I shall consider shortly. For the moment, let us consider once more Derrida's indictment of Feminism. "They too want a castrated woman" he cants of feminists, continuing, "Nietzsche well denounces in Feminism its lack of style." Why his invectives center around castration/lack-of-style should now become more clear.

Whether Derrida is limiting himself to the feminist movement of Nietzsche's time or is drawing into his consideration his understanding of current feminist politics is left open by the text. Feminism in its broadest sense, seeks to step outside Woman's prescribed roles in order for the Woman to consider her own body. It seeks a voice and seeks the right to express itself, exploring its own symbology, its similarities, its distinctions from the patriarchal male counterpart. Feminism is women asserting difference, a different place. This is not the same thing as saying Woman wants to be subject in the same sense that the man is subject in his own discourse. Perhaps some women who call themselves feminists may want this, but that is by no means a representation of the larger feminist community.

The understanding of feminism that comes across in Spurs does not take that possibility into consideration:

And in truth the women feminists upon whom Nietzsche ladens sarcastic remarks, these are men. Feminism is the operation by which the woman wants to resemble the man, the dogmatic philosopher, laying claim to truth, science, objectivity, this is to say with all the illusions of virility the effect of castration attaches to them. Feminism wants castration-- also of the woman. Lost the style.  
Nietzsche well denounces in feminism the lack of style:  
(64, my trans)

The assumption here is that a Woman who seeks access to the tools of Man (science, philosophy, medicine, literature) wants to put them to exactly the same use as men have. By "men" here I mean those "men" Derrida derides just before this passage, where man is set up in quotation marks: "It is "the man" who believes in the truth of woman, in woman-truth." (62). As we have seen, such credulous dogmatic belief in presence is untenable to Derrida. Thus it is a very particular kind of man to whom feminists are being compared, a blind, castrated man, a man lacking in phallic effectiveness, having surrendered it to "castration's effect."

There is a strange kind of logic at work in these comparisons which I shall consider momentarily. On the face of it, Derrida's comparisons could be seen to mean that feminists have neither the eye nor the stylistic tool necessary for perceiving the truths of non-presence with which their own non-feminist examples had heretofore provided them. These feminists have forgotten or disregarded what Derrida has learned from them, that is:

...if woman *is* truth, *she* knows that there is no truth, that truth has no place, and that one does not have truth. She is woman in so much as she does not believe in it, the truth, thus neither in what she is, what she is believed to be, what she thus is not.  
(52, my trans)

In other words, a Woman is a Woman in so much as she does not believe in truth, in the thing itself. Relating this to the feminist question, feminists are seen as seeking after

the castrated visions of, at best naive, incompetent, castrated men ( again, the Woman's voice is absent in explanation of her own position as feminist). They are aligned with a caste of castrates. Like the castrated men who have of their own volition submitted to castration (self-inflicted) and hence are seen to have given up their power, and as such are derided, these feminists too have supposedly given up their power: the power of distance and seduction, the power of castration's effect.

What is questionable in such a presentation of women, of feminists is to be found on several levels. On one level there is the questionability of the so called castrated man's loss of power. By power I mean power over the other, over Woman. After all, it is Derrida who asserts that Woman in the hands of these men is "force[d] just as surely as ever into the same old apparatus...trapped once again in a phallogentrism" (61). The terms "force" and "trapped" only enhance a perception that these castrates still exert an effective power to imprison Woman.

On another level, that feminism wants castration and a castrated Woman is also spurious. Such a premise insists that feminists (women speaking) want to maintain the discourse of dogmatic philosophers simply because they want to look at themselves from a perspective other than that prescribed/inscribed into them by the phallic power. It assumes that if feminists were to achieve a discourse, it would be identical not to stylists like Derrida and Nietzsche, but to the discourse of the de-phallic, credulous, truth believing men. As no feminist/Woman speaks in the text, the verifiability of this statement in terms of the text is not ascertainable. Nonetheless, without going too far afield, one finds that the rejection of "feminism" by a largely academic Parisian woman's movement of the mid-seventies had just these fears in mind. Feminism, it suggested, by seeking equality (of discourse) with man is doomed by this equality to repeat the same phallogentric pattern of power -- this phallogentrism being equated of course with the castrated "men". The beliefs

of these anti-feminists assert that women must seek to transcend sexuality itself, liberating themselves from topographical, sexually oriented limitations of phallogentric power so as not to be trapped by it (Jardine, Gynesis 9-10). It seems to be these sentiments that Derrida is drawing on for his own anti-feminist position.

Though such concerns may be valid cautions, they are given disproportionate attention relative to the issue of actual, sexual difference, and to the reality of the time (the mid-seventies or now). Women do not have equality, do not have an equal stand in the power structure, and hence are outweighed by men in a discourse on power. Further, were women to have an equal (whatever that means) voice in the patriarchal discourse, or further yet, were women to take hold of the rei(g)ns of power, pre-historic evidence, evidence of matrilineal cultures gives no sign that women in power would simply re-iterate a patriarchal system of value.

On yet another level regarding the issue of wanting castration and a castrated Woman, Derrida's position imputes that feminists wish to hold onto a value structure that has prescribed their position, that has forced them into that "same old apparatus." What would a Woman want with a perspective that denies her her own voice, with this action of violence against herself? What evidence is there that with a voice, her own voice, Woman would say the same things as a man, unless she is co-opting her voice, disguising herself as a man (castrated or not) in order to experience the pleasure of speech, even though that speech is one of self-denial?

Further, because Derrida accuses feminism of wanting castration, it suddenly becomes anathema for a Woman to want castration when he has spent the entire text applauding Woman's using the *effect* of castration. Perhaps that is the point of difference. Perhaps whereas Derrida sees Woman as playing at castration's effect, unable to actually castrate, feminism might actually be able to pull it off --literally? But again, where is there

evidence besides Nietzsche's and Derrida's interpretation of Feminism that this is what it desires? We have already seen that a castrated man would be little less of a violent threat against Woman, so what would be the advantage to Woman?

Women do not have a phallus to be subject to castration (despite what Freud may suggest to the contrary in regarding the clitoris as a "little penis"). Derrida, however, has put discourse strictly in terms of the phallus: those who speak are either like Nietzsche and Derrida, what one might call phallically aware, or they are phallically disinherited: blind or castrated. Both assume the presence/absence of a phallus. Both assume that discourse of any kind is impossible without the trace of a phallus. Feminism, the movement of women blind to their power position as other, women who blindly move away from this position towards discourse on themselves, are naturally assumed to be aligning themselves with the blind, the castrated. Again, there is nothing here to substantiate the view that a Woman's discourse seeks parity with patriarchal, phallic discourse. We (women) have yet to affirm our own discourse; it goes largely unknown because the validating authority of our culture, the men, do not hear it, cannot or will not attempt to interpret it, a discourse that may not speak in words, "the hymen's graphic, the pharmakon" at all. Though it may "speak" in terms of tangents, and most importantly through differences unhomogenized. *Perd le style*. Our voice has no place without the phallic thrust.

Derrida's position on feminism attempts to attribute to feminism the language of violence, of oppression that he knows so well in his own phallic discourse. By aligning feminism with castration/lack-of-style, Derrida has done nothing to displace the primacy of the phallus in any discourse, in particular a discourse on the economy of power. His misunderstanding/selective interpretation of feminism, his mis-seeing of it reflects more a fear of loss of his own phallically established position than an understanding of Woman, of Feminism in general. It reflects a true fear of Woman actually gaining a place in the

discourse of power wherein the phallic position may not be so certain. Such fear predicates the rationale for locating the text's position of Woman-as-non-presence in the myth of Oedipus.

Oedipus's first action in his own drama is that he solves the riddle of the Sphinx, the perturbation caused by a puzzler that was half woman. He penetrated the riddle, saw it and answered it, appropriating the powers accorded to him through this action. Mythic history is replete with examples of male figures secretly penetrating the hidden wisdom of the always female keepers of mystery. Oedipus becomes the most appropriate allegorical figure for this text because Oedipus also experiences a self-inflicted blindness, a castration, as the result of an inappropriate (rhythmically blind) use of his phallus. His punishment reflects that his intrepid gaze may actually have been that of a blind man all along. Whether Derrida would accept this view of Oedipus as always blind, always a castrate is open to question.

Bearing in mind these views of Oedipus as a phallically dubious stylist, we can once again approach that turning point in the text which bears his name. As stated, the section of Spurs entitled "the Gaze of Oedipus" puts forward ultimatums on the status of Woman. It finally asserts what the text has been leading up to till that point: "There is no such thing as woman." The stylate spur is celebrated as the veil render of presence. "The question of true and non-true is suspended." The place for differance, for the non-present, for the trace (see Writing) is established in this section. In that suspended moment between true and non-true, the thing itself and simulacrum, Derrida founds the place for the final movement of the language of violence. "...the biographical desire has been inscribed in the text. The mark which it has left behind, irreducible as it may be, is irreducibly plural" (105).

In the plurality, undecidability of the marks left inscribed on the Woman's body (as writing) the phallus's true power as appropriator is unloosed and secured. The gaze of Oedipus is celebrated not for what it discovers -- for that ultimately is what causes that gaze to be cut out, causes Oedipus to go forth blind/castrated -- but for its "intrepid" relentless quest, its biographical desire to have everything, leave its mark in everything, to appropriate by understanding, despite the cost. The cost of that gaze, of the activities of the relentless stylate-spur, is never considered by the text. The text does not entertain the notion that the disorder of King Oedipus's world is only appeased when he blinds/castrates himself. Spurs proceeds on the model of Oedipus as a right royal caveat for in-appropriate phallic behavior. Let us consider the trace of this raping, ripping phallus, then, as it passes into the suspended space it cuts.

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The last phase of establishing the language/action of violence relates the space of differance, of process over meaning, of indecision to the hymen. In this way, the operation of the phallus is affirmed as acting upon the Woman, for the hymen is located within the Woman. Derrida's consideration of hymen, however, disregards the hymen's inseparable association with Woman. In dealing with the hymen as unrelated to Woman -- as a thing in itself -- Derrida effectively reduces Woman once more to no more than the effect of her parts. She becomes the unnoticed frame of the hymen wherein castration's effect -- the suspension between true and non-true -- is inscribed (99).

By way of an explanation of the above, consider the following statement on feminine distance that Derrida makes early in the text:

The feminine distance abstracts from itself the truth in suspending the relation to castration. Suspending as one is able to draw tight or stretch out<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The two verbs used in this phrase "tendre ou étendre" are almost identical in meaning. Étendre, however, has the alternative meaning of "to lay out/to knock out" or "to be failed or clobbered." The word play

a canvas, a relation, etc, that one leaves at the same time -- suspended -- in indecision. In the *epoch*.

(58, my trans)

What is stretched tight in the "feminine distance" is internalized into the Woman in what Derrida later on in the text refers to as the hymen, or more particularly, the hymen's graphic, the pharmakon, or more simply in this case, writing/poison (see Dissemination for pharmakon). We have already seen how Derrida relates writing to Woman, but in this move to internalize the effect of feminine distance to hymen, Derrida creates a vehicle that can be bridged by the phallus. Whereas the feminine distance was not to be crossed, there is a cultural imperative for rupturing the hymen. Any advantage Woman had of keeping the inscribing phallus from her in the imposed feminine distance is now lost as rape becomes legitimated in the context of the hymen. This legitimization is first established by Derrida making the hymen a necessary place for the appropriative phallus to rend. As Derrida states later in the text:

But the hymen's graphic, that of the pharmakon, without itself being reduced to it, inscribes castration's effect within itself. Everywhere operative, and most especially in Nietzsche's text, this graphic, which describes a margin where the control over meaning or code is without recourse, poses a limit to the relevance of the hermeneutic or systematic question.

(99)

The feminine distance is suspended in relation to castration; the hymen now maintains that relation, creating castration's effect, understood as a margin of undecidability, which supposedly, by its nature, calls into question the hermeneutic system. The hermeneutic system is that which defends the concept of meaning, of the thing in itself, of truth/being in itself. Derrida earlier in the text describes castration's effect in the same terms of margin within its initial relation to the feminine distance:

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implied by this choice of an otherwise redundant verb reflects a constant sense of aggression against the woman in all dealings with her.

Inasmuch as its mark, a non-mark even, indicates that area where castration is no longer determinable, it describes a margin whose very consequences are incalculable.

(61)

What these parallel relations of hymen/feminine distance to castration's effect imply is a locus of undecidability and appropriation. They reflect a non-presence that forces an exterior/other place to the hermeneutic project of the so-called castrates. Such an awareness of castration's effect, of the margin it creates, is what the phallus as the rending stylate-spur has been promoting. However, why this effect is deliberately moved from outside the Woman to inside is because the awareness of this margin can only be reached once the veil is torn. In Derrida's terms, the phallus must rend the hymen: "The stylate-spur passes through the veil" leaving bits of it hanging in tatters so that the veil is neither raised nor lowered (107). What greater veil is there than the hymen for the phallus to pass through? As Derrida asks, is not this unveiling tantamount to the same thing as the fetish of veiling, of believing in the veil? (107-109) Would not such unveiling be the same thing as establishing another kind of thing in itself, like the hymen's presence? The risk of this similarity is too great for Derrida; the risk of its resulting in another castration too great and so in an effort to save the phallus from this castrating censure, Derrida plays with the very amorphous nature of the hymen in terms of the phallus's operation upon it. Notice that by removing Woman from this issue, dealing only with hymen, and the right of the phallus to violate the hymen, the question of rape of the Woman, or of Woman being once more treated as mere property is avoided by the text.

Instead of rending for the sake of revealing a margin then, for the sake of a kind of perpetual display of non-presence, the phallus is licensed to act against the hymen, against Woman in terms of that margin it reveals as it rends. That is, the phallus is seen to be perpetually involved in the non-static work of appropriation, of give and take, and most particularly, take, for the phallus is, according to Nietzsche and Derrida, ideally suited to

the taking operation. It is crucial to understand appropriation, then, as a process as opposed to a possession where the hymen is the locus for that gesture of appropriation. As Spivak states:

The hymen is of course at once both itself and not-itself, always operated by a calculated dissymmetry rather than a mere contradiction or reconciliation. Yet if the one term of the dissymmetry is virginity, the other term is marriage, legal certification for appropriation in the interest of the passage of property.

(Spivak, "Displacement..." 174)

To possess would imply presence, whereas the continual process of appropriation, what Spivak calls "the passage of property," implies a clear seeing ability that operates outside the hermeneutic (castrate) structure, whose goal is not to possess but to inscribe itself as a margin into everything it contacts, to push what it contacts to the edge of decidability.

Derrida settles the primacy of the phallic operation in terms of sexual difference. After describing the sexual difference in Nietzsche's terms of "the process of appropriation," Derrida shows how sexuality is a derivative of this process:

Thus, in numerous analyses (which it is impossible to elaborate here), the woman's appearance takes shape according to an already formalized law. Either at times woman is woman because she gives, *because she gives herself* herself, while the man for his part takes, possesses, indeed, takes possession. Or else at other times, she is woman because, in giving, she is *giving herself for*, is simulating and consequently assuring the possessive mastery of her own self. The *for* which appears in the "to-give-oneself-for," whatever its value, whether it deceives by giving only an appearance of or whether it actually introduces some destination, finality or twisted calculation, some return, redemption or gain, into the loss of property, this *for* nonetheless continues to hold the gift of a reserve. Henceforth all the signs of a sexual opposition are changed. Man and woman change places *ad infinitum*...Should the opposition of give and take of possess and possessed, be nothing more than a transcendental snare which is produced by the hymen's graphic, it would then escape not only dialectics, but also any ontological decidability.

(109-111).

This analysis moves the question of appropriation into the realm of the hymen's graphic, and from there, consequently outside of hermeneutic decidability. The

methodology of this move, however, is gravely suspect. It ultimately converts Woman into a man in the "to give oneself *for*". The "for" indicates a desire *for* the phallically aligned quality of possessing. This conversion of Woman into man does not reflect a reciprocal conversion of man into Woman. Man does not here give up his phallic power in order to give. How then can Man and Woman be seen as changing places? Only the Woman is seen as mutated, as being truly a man at heart (a castrated man since she lacks a phallus, whether a feminist or not?) with a strange desire still to give herself to, become part of the truly phallic (not castrated) man? Woman is entirely displaced or absorbed by this phallic alignment that depends not so much on a desire for mastery as Derrida quotes Nietzsche, but in an attempt to assuage her alleged penis envy.

Derrida is still inscribing a desire in Woman for the phallus and its propriative power. He must do this in order to nullify sexual difference, for if man and Woman are delimited as only different sides of the propriative gesture of which the propriative process is effectively master, then the phallus remains and Woman disappears. As we have seen, the phallus is the key proprietor; Woman is only its receptacle, and as such is displaced into the ether. As Derrida puts it when referring to the gap between truth and non-truth as abyss (as what has been called prior to this feminine distance, hymen, castration's effect):

Perhaps truth's abyss as non-truth, appropriation as appropriation/a-propriation, the declaration becomes parodying dissimulation, perhaps this is what Nietzsche is calling the style's form and the no-where of woman. The gift, which is the essential predicate of woman, appeared in the undecidable oscillation of to give oneself/to give oneself for, give/take, let take/appropriate.

(121, emphasis mine)

Woman-as-space, as effect is inscribed here. As gift, she is only that undecidable and, most importantly, unappropriatable thus non-present mark of the action that arises from the propriative process of give/take. She is reduced to being only the effect of style's form, and therefore of the phallic operation which evokes a plurality, a non-singular

presence which denies the thing in itself, denies everything but the phallic operation.

Derrida neatly escapes his own deconstruction by evoking not the primacy of the phallus, which would imply the untenable presence, but by establishing the propriative process which is phallic in nature (and I use the term nature advisedly).

In the epoch of this process, Woman as effect has no place/does not take place. She is only a margin, a periphery, a consequence of. She is again twice displaced: once for being truly phallic in orientation (giving herself for) and once again for being only the frame of her effects as distance, castration, hymen, truth's abyss, all of which in the Derridean canon distillates out as "writing." Writing, by its Derridean understood nature is the final (true?) locus of the propriative phallus, of style, which while seeming to possess, to imply meaning, is always only reflecting itself into *differance*, is itself abyss. As Derrida says of property:

Even as it [proper-ty] is carried away of itself by its desire [to appropriate], it founders there in the waters of this its own desire, unencounterable -- of itself. Pass into the other.  
(116, my trans)

That last phrase is in the French imperative. It is in the form of a command in which Derrida demands of property to pass into its other in a narcissistic, male homosexual desire for its own reflection. Derrida never denies that this is the relation at play: "The active/passive opposition speculates reflectively its own homosexual effacement into infinity, where it is assumed in the structure of idealism or the desiring machine" (151). I stress though that this reflection is entirely male homosexual since female sexual desire/pleasure is never reflected. Only the desire for/playing with the loss of the phallus is presented. Woman, Her sexuality, her desire is over and over again denied while the phallus/subject which has forced itself upon her/into her is never questioned.

Once again but by another path than we traced in chapter one -- this time by violence -- Woman is effaced in the so-called elimination of sexual difference. The

consideration of sexuality, however, is selective. Woman is either held at knife point or is forced into a restrictive apparatus where she is silenced, where she is forced to act, to display the characteristics the rapier inscribes in her. As such, she is seen only as a conduit of the phallus, as being entirely involved in the phallic game. Difference/heterogeneity, far from being celebrated, is crushed into a phallic homogeneity that reflects the homosexual economy of its phallogocentric masters -- masters who despite their words towards the nullification of sexual difference have no intention of surrendering their phallic prowess.

In this, Woman is tormented, scarred, enslaved as the effect of the master. If she were seen as anything else, if her discourse were developed, she would threaten, not by her own desire, but by a phallogocentric paranoia, an assumed patriarchal superiority. There is nothing to celebrate here. The spurs of this text are most surely imbedded in Woman, keeping her in a place to serve the patriarchal process that perpetually rapes her for its own satisfaction.

I started this thesis in an attempt to find woman in Derrida's theoretical discourse. I embarked on this quest because Derrida is such a major figure in today's literary discourse that his pronouncements on just about anything germane to his areas of expertise become if not law, then the line or the limit at which the law is determined. His discourse often sets the parameters of consideration on the given topic, and as I have a vested interest in a man's pronouncements on me as woman, I am particularly affected/concerned by his writing in this regard.

What I have found in studying his treatment of woman is most disturbing. Woman is not to be found. In fact, according to Derrida's discourse, she has no place in which to be found. Or perhaps more properly, woman is not an entity properly associated with a place since she is only a consequence of an action (a phallic action) that determines her as a sexualized event horizon. She is reduced to an effect, alternately labelled as and equated as no more than castration's effect, hymen, abyss, "truth" (where the quotation marks are of the utmost importance) feminine distance. Why woman at all then? Because, it would seem in one respect at least, the term Woman is a philosophical/Derridean generic for all these effects and contexts. And second to this, though by no means supplementary, Woman as term is the most obvious title for a phallic receptacle, the phallus being wielded (until recently) by the man. Sadly, in terms of the text, the name Woman assigned to this function as servant of the phallus is appropriate. Though she is initially presented in Spurs as the man's other, it is very quickly established that the sense of Woman as equal other is a myth. Woman is "furled and unfurled" at the whim of the phallus's desire. The language of violence in the text reflects that not only is she servant to this phallus, but actually slave, raped by the veil rending phallus if she serves it; impaled upon it if she attempts escape, that escape being in the form of asserting a desire to speak. Indeed, Woman in Derrida's work is pushed down a degenerating scale. She is described as man's antagonist, his enemy, always trying to subvert him by seducing him into the abyss; she is then reduced to

artistic servant/slave, functioning as a conduit for the phallic desire, a place for the phallus to explore, and ultimately she is nullified as no more than a consequence of the phallic action. Sexuality/Woman is dismissed as derivative of the phallic process of appropriation. The phallus remains.

As becomes quite obvious, Woman is only ever understood in terms of the phallus, in terms created by a living man who only regards Woman according to his own experience. Throughout the entire process, Woman's position is never heard. Since the whole discussion is entirely related to sight, no voice is ever heard. Nothing in this text is auditory, as if that would give something away, threaten the ever enlarging property of the phallus. Even the print on the page is silent, passing through my/your eyes. So Woman is finally seen to be nowhere.

The consequence of this loss of Woman is that Derrida does not displace patriarchy, he does not transcend sexual difference, he does not liberate Woman. Quite the contrary: Derrida's discourse on Woman, which seeks only her obliteration, not the phallic man's, does nothing but re-inscribe the patriarchy by giving the phallus a revitalized license to subjugate the Woman beneath it. By invoking the concept of non-presence, of only difference, Derrida creates an outside to such disarray that privileges process over the thing itself, over presence. Woman falls into the category of presence. The phallic action which is appropriative is related to process. This very nicely banishes Woman and maintains the effective symbol of patriarchy and its oppression of Woman. If she is known only as relative to the phallus then she has no particular voice. Her writing need never be considered except as relative to the phallic model, and therefore it is often considered bad, unworthy, too different. Woman is determined then, not in terms of difference, but in terms of the speaking/licensed to speak subject, the man. For despite Derrida's position that it is only the phallic process of appropriation that really exists, somebody has to wield that phallus, and who else can/will but the man? To this Derrida may assert that we are all men

when we write and that thus women can speak; they need only adopt the phallic tongue, the stylate-spur to do so. Indeed, how else could I write this to you now but that I have compromised my own voice in order to write to you men in your language, how else but that I have in some gesture of partial transvestism adopted your voice, and thus inscribe it at least in part against myself? But as Luce Irigaray suggests:

To claim that the feminine can be expressed in the form of a concept is to allow oneself to be caught up again in a system of "masculine" representations in which women are trapped in a system of meaning which serves the auto-affection of the (masculine) subject. If it is really a matter of calling "femininity" into question, there is still no need to elaborate another "concept" -- unless a woman is renouncing her sex and wants to speak like men. For the elaboration of a theory of woman, men, I think, suffice. In a woman(s) language, the concept as such would have no place.  
( This Sex, 122)

It is this co-opting of Woman's identity, of Woman as different from, not derivative of the phallus that the academy must guard against. If women can only be legitimized via the patriarchal canon, can only speak by assimilating the phallic voice of a man, instead of through their own, then the academy has locked its doors to women as women. Derrida's theory in such a scenario becomes a tool for the establishment to legitimize a stance that sees women's studies courses as peripheral to the literary/theoretical discourse, as fringe, as existing not as part of a mandate but by the good graces of the paternal academy. It isolates women instead of encouraging their discourse.

Woman is. She is not an effect derivative of the phallus; she is not Adam's rib. Derrida's Spurs never considers the possibility that perhaps Woman is not sexualized female in terms relative to the male, in terms that demand Her sexuality be understood as a castrated version of the man's, as essentially phallic. That Woman's pleasure does not depend on her ability to "play at castration's effect" or to receive the phallus is also invisible to this text. Woman/I do not need to be understood or SEEN (as both Freud and Derrida

insist) relative to the phallus. As Irigaray puts it, our lips are always touching. To quote her further in the same place:

When you say I love you -- staying right here, close to you, close to me -- you're saying I love myself. You don't need to wait for it to be given back; neither do I. We don't owe each other anything. That "I love you" is neither gift nor debt. You "give" me nothing when you touch yourself, touch me, when you touch yourself through me. You don't give yourself. What would I do with you, with myself, wrapped up like a gift? You keep ourselves to the same extent that you share us. You find ourselves to the extent that you trust us. Alternatives, oppositions, choices, bargains like these have no business between us. Unless we restage their commerce, and remain within their order. Where "we" has no place.

I love you: body shared, undivided. Neither you nor I severed. There is no need for blood shed, between us. No need for a wound to remind us that blood exists.

(This Sex, 206)

In such an attempt as this to explore a woman's voice, what that might potentially mean/sound like, castration's effect, indeed the entire concern with the phallic discourse is what truly has no place when one wants to discuss difference or Woman.

But perhaps Derrida does not really want to discuss/understand Woman/women. Perhaps he through his text only seeks to put woman in her place relative to his phallic discourse, for woman seen outside this patriarchal context would be seen as a threat to the appropriative process: there would be someone else (the phallus assumes) desiring the same territory.

So much of Derrida's discourse rests on these kinds of neurotic, unsubstantiated assumptions about Woman's desire. Woman, women writing may not have this awful need to assimilate and appropriate everything. This will never be determined unless women and women's writing are allowed to "take place," unless there is an effort to see and hear woman outside of the context of the phallus. Unless there is an effort to overcome fear of difference, of seeing difference as something that must be assimilated somehow into

sameness, where difference/heterogeneity become the same in that they are all marked by the phallic operation.

But until such time as men stop seeing women as those entities solely involved in man's castration, perhaps it is somehow our good fortune that men turn a blind eye to women outside her/our relation to his/your phallus, your discourse, and that in the blindness of men to her own discourse, Woman will at least have space to work it out, in a place where our lips can speak together, and we can experience tangential touches of difference instead of chasmic distances and loss.

What both you and I must not forget, though, is that woman's exploration of herself, in her own terms is only carried out while She is/I am imprisoned, as object/servant/effect of the man's phallic/appropriating/raping thrust.

Derrida's work on writing in Of Grammatology is fundamental to all his work following it. It is the specific relation between the concepts of trace and death within *écriture* that I wish to consider as they pertain to Spurs.

The term "trace" in Grammatology becomes the stepping stone to Derrida's concept of differance. The trace is an active state that continually reflects the "writingness" of language. It is the effect of the "becoming unmotivated" of the sign, and hence of the symbol perpetually becoming sign becoming a threat to presence, to living speech (57).

Because the sign is perpetually becoming unloaded, because the process of the sign's deferring its presence is continually variable (as it will always be assumed to reflect more or less of an assignable signified) the trace is both verb and noun. The paths from the word are multiple, spiraling, crossing, and can only be glimpsed, never listed, perhaps never really there, but this effect is always operating. As Derrida states "the pure trace is difference" and differance is active. Thus trace is not a finite state (which would imply presence) but a space between the signs, always operating. Like writing, the trace is anterior to all signs, though not locatable in some elsewhere behind the sign. It never exists as the trace "as such".

The trace is the action that causes the sign to give up assignability, definition, Presence. Trace becomes the destruction of the Saussurean sign through Saussur's own arguments, for it is these that allow the trace's effects, if not the trace itself (under erasure) to become visible.

Once the effect of the trace has been acknowledged, Derrida moves on more deliberately to what becomes the central issue of putting writing as anterior to language, and that is the metaphysical prominence of subject/presence/truth. As Derrida says:

Constituting and dislocating at the same time, writing is other than the subject, in whatever sense the latter is understood. Writing can never be thought under the category of the subject; however it is modified, however it is endowed with consciousness or unconsciousness, it will refer, by the

entire thread of its history, to the substantiality of a presence unperturbed by accidents, or to the identity of the self-same in the presence of relationship. And the thread of that history clearly does not run within the borders of metaphysics. To determine an X as a subject is never an operation of a pure convention, it is never an indifferent gesture in relation to writing.  
(68-69)

Nothing is innocent. As writing is a "testimonitory" thing, the thing to which it refers is made untenable. What a dubious practice! To continue speaking and referring when such is made impossible with the effect of the trace. This means that the shift in emphasis is again made more necessary, a shift from language/presence to writing/trace/differance. And to this end, Derrida focuses on the visible aspect of the words on the page as he states: "Spacing as writing is the becoming-absent and the becoming unconscious of the subject" (69).

From this Derrida purports that presence falls into the spaces on the page in the same way that the sign's assigned "thing in itself" falls into the abyss of differance. In this way, the "becoming sign of the symbol" becomes, in this larger context, the death of the subject:

As the subject's relationship with its own death, this becoming is the constitution of subjectivity. On all levels of life's organization, that is to say, of *the economy of death*. And the original absence of the subject of writing is also the absence of the thing or referent (death of the subject?).  
(69)

Death becomes part of the economy of presence. It becomes a trace, anterior to life, living, a continual threat to the impermeability of presence. In the same way, then, that the trace is anterior to writing, death is anterior to the subject. Death is the subject trace, a threat to its permeability. Death, too, like the trace, is a process, invisible, acting in absence, perpetually present though not in itself. Similarly, there is no death as such, only a kind of dying. Writing and living are linked. By death. Of the subject. So writing becomes a political, not a strictly metaphysical thing.

But what are the consequences practically and politically of looking at the world from the perspective of these negative processes of absence (death/trace)? It seems that this focus on death instead of living, difference instead of proximity assumes just as much of a finality, absoluteness, or definitiveness as the construct subject/truth has. Derrida might suggest that such relativism is an effect of our inability to escape our own metaphysics. Nonetheless, this apparently de-subjected way of looking, or deferring to look at the world, then, is death centered. Derrida suggests that we can no longer support the primacy, ultimacy, superiority of the static phallic subject once we are aware of the active process of death and the abyss surrounding it, perpetually deconstructing it.

In *Spurs*, the philosophers maintaining the subject, searching for the truth, dream a "dream of death". That is, they are lured by the flowing veils of woman, of the words of truth, to find the ultimate truth within those folds. To their horror, they find that they have been courting the abyss and promptly slide into it, gone forever. And so the violent usurpation of writing upon language, upon the subject, becomes the fundamental movement of Derrida's flight around the phallus as his deconstructive gestures attempt to wake up the philosopher. His method of arousal is highly questionable however in terms of its *object de style*. Derrida asserts a recapitulatory violent style that in its efforts to focus on its own perpetual acts of taking, post-pones the effects of the abyss. By focusing its energy on the propriative process, meaning, and the spaces it falls into, becomes less and less of a concern. The cost of this liberation from the abyss, however, is a legitimized violence against the non-subject, of which Woman is the chief example (see chapter two for this discussion).

Seen in non-violent terms left unconsidered by Derrida, could it not be that the space meaning falls into -- the death experienced by the subject -- is an effect of the abyss because this difference is still held up as relative to the phallus? That there is no desire to

truly escape the fallen phallic ghost as it clangs its chains around this new consciousness. The need to move in terms relative to even an impotent phallus reflects not the becoming unmotivated of the sign so much as the becoming male of the woman, the consummate patriarchal symbol of otherness. This operation-mutation upon the woman-as-other is carried out most particularly in Derrida's *Spurs*. We see, in *Grammatology*, *Spurs*, and in fact, all of Derrida's writing, this new perspective of becoming-unmotivated and its shift in metaphysics away from the thing itself is always brought into alignment with the allegedly fallen patriarchal, logocentric primacy. Hence, the abyss is the only alternative to the phallic truth/subject. And yet, how much richer would be the discourse if deferrals from one sign to another were allowed to touch tangentially instead of to be separated spacially, slipping into the abyss. And if there is no *one* but only *other*, what phallus is there --was there ever -- to compare this touch, this differing to? For the phallus is also deferred, fallen. The proximity of differances becomes anterior to the abyss, to space, which has nothing to do or say to otherness. Perhaps proximity, tangentiality, is always already outside the metaphysics of the thing itself and so, such tracing play cannot conceive of touch, of two where it perceives only one or else nothing.

What I'm concerned with is the application then of this allocation of death-writing to Woman. The maintenance of these opposites has consequences: even in this new look at old alignments, no one looks newly at Woman. Perhaps she is an example *par excellence* of writing; she is maintaining the veils and sails of writing and so is herself nothing but veils. This still reflects only the phallic perspective which seeks to understand through castrated eyes the woman who is never allowed to speak for herself, in fact cannot speak. The philosophy that Derrida inherits does not allow for Woman to have a voice. It is the privilege of the subject to speak, and in Derrida's economy Woman is still on the fringe of subject-ness. Perhaps, however, there are other ways to speak, ways that Woman has

always spoken that are silent and do not insist on the subject. Perhaps Woman has never written, but has always touched, caressed, danced and allowed difference instead of opposition, because she, as Irigaray says, is not one but two, always touching. But back in Derrida's world of violence and usurpation, the touch Woman receives at the hands of the stylist, of the man of difference, who is always seeking to assimilate everything into some sort of homogeneity even in its heterogeneity (at least it's all different, all one, all hetero) is still rape in the spirit of difference. She is still held in isolation, disallowed the touch of others like herself, for in Derrida's vision of difference and appropriation the only touch is imposed, a grasping clutching of the desire to have, always frustrated but never mitigated.

The motif of castration recurs and recurs throughout Spurs, and in fact throughout much of Derrida's oeuvre. The model of castration that Derrida relies on is restrictively male oriented in that it reflects little more than a recapitulation of Freud's and Lacan's, and Lacan's is pretty much a recapitulation of Freud's. Lacan's model merely re-situates Freud's out of "reality" and into the "symbolic" in order to institute the same psychological space for both men and women -- in terms of men's experience. It was, after all, Lacan who said, like his Victorian cousin Nietzsche, that women do not have the tools to speak about themselves and ought to cut it out since he knows them so well and can express their problems accurately. Thus when speaking of castration as a model Freud's is the most pervasive.

But Freud and his disciple's versions of castration (the men's versions) are not the only concepts with which to interpret the gesture of castration, in particular as it relates to Woman. There is a plenitude of myths from all cultures, especially those which had a Goddess religion or matriarchal/matrilineal society, that relate castration, and its euphemism "blindness" with a desire on the man's part to *become like woman*. The only resemblance that Derrida's writing has to this mythos is that in both ancient society and Derrida's work, castration is often self-inflicted. There the similarity ends.

Let us briefly review the Freudian model and then consider its antithesis in the mythos and practices of our pre-Platonic mind.

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The Freudian model of castration is located in fear. On the woman's part it supposedly revolves around her "loss" of capacity to be like the man. As if an originary knowledge speaks to her about her genitalian inferiority, she spends the rest of her maturation automatically resigning herself to her subservient role beneath the phallically intact, superior male. The degree to which she resigns herself is in Freud's terms the measure of her femininity. Derrida's texts do not seem unaffected by such an interpretation

of femininity. Thus, a woman as a "little girl" sees herself as having been castrated already, though she knows not by whom or how the operation took place. She cannot situate her fear or fright at this loss in anybody (though hatred of the mother may be tied up in her suspicions). Her only choice, if any of this reflects the reality of her/my experience, is to fear her superior male, much the same way as one is to love and fear god.

The man as "a little boy," however, has many places to locate his fear. There's the little girl who, visibly castrated, initiates his panic. His reactions run the gambit of what happened to her? She's different! if it happened to her it could happen to me! In this way the little girl is held in suspicion, feared as either being different, queer because of her loss, and in a sense of the taboo, his association/attraction with her may betray him into losing his penis. He grows to know his sexual superiority over the woman, but never loses a fear of her as the creature who will possibly castrate him. He could become a victim to her envy or perverse (hysterical) pleasure. Castration, which will make him as a woman is portrayed as a fate worse than death.

In the practices and mythos of pre-Platonic and non-Platonic (usually agrarian) cultures, castration was a deliberate bid for power on the man's part, ironically, to make him *more* like a woman. The phallus became the worthwhile price/sacrifice to join, gain or steal a woman's power. The later in the period one goes, the closer to a desire for absolute possession of that power one comes. The following discussion of the mythos is drawn from Barbara G. Walker's The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets, Marilyn French's Beyond Power, and Merlin Stone's When God was a Woman for their discussions of the times, rites, and myths associated with the conceptualization of castration.

In agrarian cultures, the phallus of a chosen consort to the matriarch was sacrificed ||| to the land in service of the mother. No ostensible gain to the male is understood other than

his status at having been chosen for the Goddess. In cultures where men were rising in power, rituals were performed in which they castrated themselves in order to have a "bleeding hole" like the mother and so would be just as in touch with her energy and ways as the women. These rites are noted for becoming progressively a demonstration of machismo to the point where eventually wounds alone were inflicted and the phallus was left merely beaten to a pulp.

In the transitional phase of the mythos, however, when certain female entities retained power/knowledge, the blinding of one eye as a castration metaphor still implied an association with the goddess. There occurred a partial womanization in the blinding/castration without which that knowledge could not be received. In the Nordic tradition, for example, Odin steals into the Fates' layer and steals a taste from their cauldron of secrets (knowledge), traditionally understood as filled with their "sacred" menstrual blood. With this knowledge he re-creates himself on a par with the Fates, and is ever after noted as having only one eye. Many other myths run along the same theme where the hero either steals (in which case a form of castration is always imposed) or offers to sacrifice his manliness for a share in the Goddess's knowledge.

Many patriarchal groups retained the self-castration concept in their heroic myths, but translated it into blindness or the loss of an eye. The association of blindness to castration is patriarchal in its origin. Once the Goddess association of an "All Seeing Eye" is transferred to the male deities (Horus, for example), the eye becomes a metaphor for that knowledge appropriated through it. This association is particularly relevant to a consideration of Derrida's paralleling of blindness with castration, and sight with appropriation (see Chp.1, 14-16 and Chp 2, 57-60). Being blinded reduces the ability of the all seeing eye to function. The God is left impotent, castrated. Similarly, his Eye is put out if he is castrated. Women were generally still associated with the castrating act, though

it was more often than not self-inflicted (Oedipus, for example, put out his eyes with Jocasta's clasp). By this time, however, castration was no longer imposed by men to gain from women but by women against men.

We can see in this redistribution of the mythic center of power and knowledge from Woman to Man, the seeds of Freud's interpretation of castration and its associated fear in the man of woman. Freud is the inheritor of these upstart patriarchies' mythos. Just as Lacan re-situates a presumed reality into the symbolic, Freud translated the underlying mythos of his inheritance into his psychological analysis.

In Freud's culture, as well as in Derrida's fictions, the primacy of the phallus is threatened by a fear of castration, of, in other words, effeminization. Woman's sexuality is consequently understood in terms of the phallus. Which she does not possess. Which possess her. She is conditioned by her society to accept her inferior role in it because of her lack. As Sally Cline and Dale Spender's book Reflecting Men at Twice their Natural Size demonstrates, women can still fear for their lives if they refuse to accept their allotted subservience to men. It is this relativistic imbalance to a fearful phallic order that costs Woman her difference, her personhood, her existence in both our culture and Derrida's discourse. || !✓

There is no self, no I, no tangible, knowable, non-deferring entity in Derrida's cosmos of *écriture*, thus the only thing that remains of the self is the name, suspended as it is between biology and biography. In *Otobiography*, Derrida discusses the relation of the name to the writer, the text, and the reader. As with all Derrida's constructs related to *écriture*, the name is not a static, knowable entity. It is the "dynamis" mediating between the writing/written self:

This borderline [which is the name] --I call it dynamis because of its force, its power, as well as its mobile potency--is neither active nor passive, neither outside nor inside. It is most especially not a thin line, an invisible or indivisible trait lying between the enclosure of philosophemes, on the one hand, and the life of an author already identifiable behind the name, on the other. This indivisible borderline traverses two "bodies," the corpus and the body, in accordance with laws that we are only now beginning to catch sight of.

(5)

Unlike his various corollaries to the name, however, such as hymen, trace, and even "woman," the name is the most direct term Derrida has used to address the problematic of associations between the writing and written self, and between the appropriation and the appropriated. In dealing with the function of this term as it is suspended, active between "the corpus and the body," Derrida also involves himself directly with an "economy of debt" established by *écriture* as the process of appropriation.

Also of importance in creating the name as active operator in *écriture* is that the name is most clearly, visibly *of writing*. The signed name is an inscription identifying a bond, a debt between the inscriber and the inscribed. It has no other connotation. I refer specifically to the signature as opposed to the auditory version of one's name for two reasons. First, if, as Derrida suggests in *Of Grammatology*, writing comes before speech anyway, then speech and the spoken name become derivatives of the signature. The signature forms a clearer referent to writing than the spoken name. Second, there is,

however, enough of a conceptual difference between the written and the auditory for Derrida to have grave misgivings about associating himself or his work with elocution.

Those things which are spoken, especially in a pedagogical environment, tend to be crystallized, audibly carved in stone. Such illusionary stability is entirely contrary to the fluxive work Derrida is developing in his deconstructive sense of writing. Referring, for example, to the volume of proper academic conventions to be endorsed at a lecture, he says:

These are but some of the imperatives of classical pedagogy with which, to be sure, one can never break once and for all. Yet, if you were to submit to them rigorously, they would very soon reduce you to silence, tautology, and tiresome repetition...I do not teach truth as such; I do not transform myself into a diaphanous mouthpiece of eternal pedagogy. I settle accounts, however I can, on a certain number of problems: with you and me or me, and through you, me, and me, with a certain number of authorities represented here.

(3-4)

Silence and repetition: antithetical associations of speech from which Derrida has his haven in writing. And so, the name, the signature, is written, dynamic. It is itself the name which cannot be spoken, and is appealing as a construct for that reason in both its lack of stability and confusion of referents.

But the name is also the name of *le mort*, the dead man. It is appropriate that grammatically, Derrida is locked into the masculine form of *mort* in the phrase *un nom de mort*. It connotes both the name of death as well as the name of the dead man. Though *le mort* in such a phrase also refers grammatically to the dead person, in terms of Derrida's own text, the dead woman aspect of dead person is simply not considered. It is always the dead man when there are associations of writing to sex, associations in which the writer/inscriber/appropriator is always male. States Derrida:

Only the name can inherit, and this is why the name, to be distinguished from the bearer, is always and a priori a dead man's name, a name of death. What returns to the name never returns to the living. Nothing ever comes back to the living...

(7)

Appropriately, the section of Derrida's Otobiography which deals with the name is called *la vivante*: the living, sexualized female. In french, *vivant*, like *mort* can take either form. In Derrida, it cannot. Through this alignment of gender reflections of the possessor and the possessed re-occur. The writing man, the dead man inscribes himself upon the feminine, the life giving by imposing his name upon it. What *le mort* appropriates in his name Derrida refers to as feminine because of the appropriated's long standing philosophical associations with Woman-as-Other, and feminine because of Nietzsche's (from whose work Otobiography is drawn) and Derrida's associations of the eternal, living mother who lives beyond the son, who buries the son, and is, essentially, the son/writer's caretaker. *La vivante* is compelled through the name's bond upon it: it lives on past the dead man and takes responsibility for receiving and paying out the debt the son has incurred in his appropriative gesture, and pays it out *in his name*. As Derrida says, "only the name can inherit...nothing ever comes back to the living." The exchange of property, of debt, reflects very old laws of inheritance and settling of accounts. Further along, Derrida establishes the allotment of the name's will:

This life will be verified only at the moment the bearer of the name, the one whom we, in our prejudice, call living, will have died. It will be verified only at some moment after or during death's arrest [trans. reprieve from death]. And if life returns, it will return to the name but not to the living, in the name of the living as a name of the dead.

(9)

Life, or the ebb and flow of differance, imposed upon by the writer in his name, is received into *le mort's* name. We shall consider this bartering of life in a moment, for we are discussing not the biological life -- that is inconsequential -- but the life or "ruse of life" that the name receives in the text. The "ruse of life" exists in the appropriated differences of the text. As soon as differance is imposed upon in style, noun in the name, it is no longer at liberty, no longer free of contrivance. In this way, the name receives our reactions to the text, and hence receives credit for the text's "life." Not surprisingly, our

responses to the text which the name receives as its own, as its due, do not reach back to the author *himself*. This in itself is not a new literary development, but the suspension of the name between text/author//text/reader is unique in its creation of an horizon through which the exchange takes place.

The name of the man is not the dead man's possession in that it merely receives his inscriptions. It is his, rather, under retainer. Though the name is associated most intimately with him, it also works with us, as we have just seen, between the texts under the name and those who read those texts. Derrida then develops two contingent levels of exchange. On the first level of the name's mediation, that between corpus and body, work and author, Derrida states:

His own identity...the identity he lays claim to here is not his by some right he has drawn up with his contemporaries. It has passed to him through the unheard-of contract he has drawn up with himself.

(8)

The name receives "the plurality of masks" with which the writer, Nietzsche, invests himself. That is his right of appropriation, what Nietzsche calls his "Protean arts" (BGE 230 #350). The multitude of written, various masks stylistically created but nominally corresponding to the signature Friedrich Nietzsche do so because Nietzsche has inscribed them this way, with the name as mediator between his pen and his texts' identities. The bond is "unheard of" because it is a written bond, dynamic.

On the second level of the name's mediation, existing between us and the text, we are not reading passively. Rather, we are watching/involved in a continual exchange among ourselves and what *le mort* calls his own in his name. It is an economy of debt in which we cannot be static non-participants As Derrida explains:

He [*le mort*] has taken out a loan with himself and *has implicated us in this transaction through what, on the force of a signature, remains of his text.*

(8)

We are the ones paying the loan. We pay into the debt that the name collects in what status we give to the name via our response to its many masks. And hence the process of our involvement in the signed text, the auto-biography is in terms of exchange:

It is also our business, this unlimited credit that cannot be measured against the credit his contemporaries extended or refused him under the name F.N. Already a false name, a pseudonym and homonym, F.N. dissimulates, perhaps, behind the imposter, the other Friedrich Nietzsche. Tied up with this shady business of contracts, debt, and credit, the pseudonym induces us to be immeasurably wary whenever we think we are reading Nietzsche's signature or "autograph," and whenever he declares: I, the undersigned, F.N.

(8)

We must never forget, and the pseudonym, the name which is other than the writer, reminds us that we are dealing with the name or the names, the dynamis and not the bearer of the name.

Because of our relation and the dead man's to the text through the name, the name balances the economy. It is the currency of *écriture's* exchange. Not unlike the pound note which is inscribed "I promise to pay...", the name is a locus of appropriation. We give into the name our praise or curses; we credit it with the text it claims. The living writer is inconsequential to what the dead man's name receives, on behalf of the living, always as a banker for the writer. And the writer, too, then hands into the name's keeping its texts. It is a manager of possessions.

The bond seems incredibly stable; there is always an understood claim perpetually being made to an existing text. We even hand over anonymous texts to some unknown but ghostly present name. Appropriations are then very much at stake in this economy with the name. We may hand over the rights to a text but great battles are fought to maintain the name of the dead man with his intellectual property. Seemingly, the name is thus entrusted with the estate in order to keep it alive perpetually, even though nothing that name incurs ever returns to *le mort* whether he is living or dead. However, as I have touched on earlier,

the name is *le mort's* bond, an extension of himself there to represent collection or payment. *La vivante* is the operator bound to enact this payment in *le mort's* name. She herself is nameless, faceless, enslaved difference to the name:

It is life that has to return eternally (selectively, as the living feminine and not as the dead that resides within her and must be buried), as life allied to herself by the nuptial annulus, the wedding ring.

(12)

The living feminine, the mother who buries the dead man must always imbue the name with its possessions, its textual appropriations. Life returns to the name, not to the living. The wedding ring, the bond, reflects the lawful, perpetual rites which the dead man and readers expect from the name. And it is in the dead man's name that the living (mother) is bound to return to fulfill the son's debt long after the son and his contemporaries are gone. If life does not return to the text? How can the bond with the name be broken or at least dishonored, or can it?

He [the dead man, Nietzsche] never knows in the present, with present knowledge... whether anyone will ever honor the inordinate credit that he extends to himself in his name, but also necessarily in the name of another.

(9)

The bond is not severed, even though it is taken out by *le mort* in our name and even *la vivante's*. Thus does the dead man not only continually appropriate through his *écriture* the matter of his text, he also appropriates into his name our response. It's only fair, since we *take* from his text. All is received in the patronymic. But as stated earlier, there is a very definite relation between *la vivante* and the name, for it is life which both the writer and ourselves give the text. Life, *la vivante* functions for the name, thus the name, in true fashion of its association with *le mort* appropriates life as it enters the name from either the pen or the audience. The living, which is process, active on the dead man's behalf, is perpetually enslaved/appropriated to fulfill the debt incurred by the name without her consent. After all, the dead man can choose not to write, and we not to read, but once either

propriative process is invoked, *la vivante* must respond in this economy. And even from life does the name take credit.

The name allows therefore for the propriative process of style. It acts on the dead man's behalf in the bartering of *la vivante* between him and us. In other words it continues the process of appropriation on the dead man's behalf, and accepts our payment for what we receive from its framing of that life.

Not unlike the differancing sign of Derrida's *écriture*, the name refers not to one dead man but to the myriad of identities/meanings/references he and we have invested in that name. But more than the simple sign, the name incurs with the dead man the cloying, perpetual debt against *la vivante* of its propriative gestures.

Even though the subject, the sense of originary self, has been deconstructed in Derrida's version of writing, leaving the text without presence, writing still proceeds and proceeds to attempt to *say* something, despite our intellectual understanding that it cannot say anything. How do we confront the contradictions of a compulsion to write, to set down, to inscribe and an awareness that a quest for meaning in that inscription is futile? Dissemination creates a sense of space that allows for, marks out, "an irreducible and generative multiplicity" (Positions, 34) which deflects the need for that question. Once a space is available for play between the dichotomies of word and word, it becomes impossible to fall back into a dialectics. The disseminated space pushes forward the play of the sign with meaning that difference creates. It becomes a new name for the interval marked by differance. Ideologically, it exploits the violent opposition that exists in the dialectical pair, like Man and Woman. And yet, dissemination never creates a third term, only an action mid-space, since "the hierarchy of dual oppositions always re-establishes itself" (Positions, 43). But it does so right at the point where dissemination "explodes the semantic horizon" (Positions, 45). The effect of differance, dissemination, resists the desire for seizure of meaning but never overcomes, once and for all, the appropriative gesture.

Through his discussions of other writers writing about writing (such as Mallarmé and Plato) in Dissemination, Derrida swings the focus away from what these writers state to how they deliberately undercut their own stability, their own sense of meaning without trying to resolve the contradictions such an action may have. Derrida demonstrates Mallarmé's writing as dealing with its own inability to penetrate or lodge itself reflects the sign's inability to represent anything. Mallarmé bounces off the signs of his own text, and it is this that Derrida commends: a writing deliberately showing itself to be in crisis. In this way, Derrida can turn from a discussion of writing as an issue to writing as a process, a

gesture, a continuing act of missed appropriations. This style of writing which Derrida showcases in the text reflects in the writer's gestures as a willingness to encounter difference without the demand for a resolved subject.

The action of dissemination is referred to in the text as play, a very serious play around which Derrida avoids setting a limit. Limits reflect too much the laws and purposes of the game and that is not what he is about. Rather, this play takes place at the limits of the game itself, threatening its borders with unlegislated free play, just as the difference of the sign threatens the possibility of a subject in a text. In "Plato's Pharmakon," Derrida exemplifies the effect of this threat actualized in his discussion of Plato's myth of writing's creation.

Like the ancient myths of the son challenging the father to be king in his place and consort to the queen (much like its crippled version in Oedipus), in Plato's writing myth the son, the bearer of writing, overthrows the originary, phallic, subject, difference-denying father. But he does so without any need or effort to unite with the mother. In fact, woman is nowhere present in this scene. In the man's (Plato's, Derrida's) myth, Woman is present perhaps as absence, unidentified receiver instead of active locus of desire. Thus, it is not because the son wants union with the mother that he challenges the father. He is instead moving further away from the Woman than even his father. His father, the believer in subjecthood and the law, would use woman as the conduit for the gestation of his ideas until they were conceived as a child, a brain child, stable, a son. The son, however, denies his connexion to the father, refusing to be his. And so, he becomes not only the bearer of writing to the father who rejects that writing, but the bearer of Plato's pharmakon: writing and poison. He administers poison to the stability of the father/subject.

The son chooses to align himself with writing despite all the problems the father sees in it, problems such as a dependency on writing that would weaken memory, and thus

weaken an intimate knowledge of the Truth, the Law, the Origin. In other words, the father rejects writing as a threat to the stability of the game and his rule. For the son, the same faults mean a liberation. He writes and so disseminates play to some, pharmakon to others.

Dissemination, then, far from being a disinheritor of the phallus and its primacy, gives it new status not as law giver or origin but as disseminator. The pen-is/phallus ejaculates joyfully for the sake of its own pleasure and need without centering on the father's concern of offspring. The disseminator needs no offspring, only the playful satisfaction of repeating over and over again the deferring gesture of appropriation. Woman is still the greatest locus for the pen/ phallus in Dissemination. Penetration, especially of the hymen, fulfills the act of taking; moving from idea to idea, spewing signs everywhere. The gestation of that seed is no longer necessary. Care of the woman also falls away as justification for rape, for willful taking for penetration without the Woman's consent comes dangerously close to being justified/mirrored here. Woman's role, though always that of servant, becomes more and more removed, dehumanized. The hymen in Dissemination is disconnected from the Woman. Quite incredible that her metaphorical role here should disappear when so much of the text is anthropomorphised in terms of son/father. As Gayatri Spivak writes, referring to Derrida's presentation of the hymen's or writings readiness to receive the seminal jet:

In terms of the custodianship of meaning, the philosopher no longer wishes to engender sons but recognizes that, at the limit, the text's semes are scattered irretrievably abroad. But, by a double displacement of the vagina, dissemination remains on the ascendent and the hymen remains reactive. It is "dissemination which *affirms* the always already divided generation of meaning" (Dissemination,300). Textual operation is back to position one and fireworks on the lawn with a now "feminized" phallus: "Dissemination in the fold (repli -- also withdrawal) of hymen" (Dissemination, 303).

The fold/withdrawal of hymen becomes an enforced altering of the penetrating/appropriating gesture. Hymen in the old law of the father implied marriage, a

lawful taking of the woman to own and use her and whatever else was hers. The folded hymen still present/withdrawn must still receive the right of the son to penetrate, to take, to be moved upon without the gesture being final, sealed for once since nothing can ever be taken. The taking itself is the pleasure of the inscription. Dissemination, the style of writing in the mode of the son(s) instead of the father is Derrida's celebration of his own liberation in the propriative act.

Differance politicizes the acts of both writing and reading into acts of appropriation by force. It creates language as a perpetual thrust against/into the Other in order to obtain the Other who is Woman, leaving us to confront our own complicity in this economy of appropriation. But differance also leaves Woman on the dangerous horns of a new dialectical position: if Woman resists being Other, and so rejects her alleged embodiment of differance, of "only surfaces," she is then assumed to be re-essentializing herself, or of conceiving of herself as a third term, a representum.

So while differance provides a space in which Woman can problematize that new dialectic, it is equally determined against giving her a voice to do so. How can Woman touch/communicate her self other than always and only being conceived of as bearing witness to the Man's inscription? Does differance itself become our language, or does that not amount to the same thing and the other?

For Plato, the anti-sophist, the most real was not to be seen in the tangible world but was to be equated with the most perfect, or the idea. (For a very thorough explanation of the Platonic value and concept of the Idea, see Heidegger's vol. 4 of his Nietzsche). To Nietzsche, this flight into the Ideal is not praiseworthy, but is rather the act of a coward who cannot deal with reality (TI, 107). In order, then, to debunk the glorification and acceptance of the Platonic world view, Nietzsche applies its most degenerate construct--the woman, the one construct Nietzsche obviously accepts as a given--against its most valued commodity. Sabina Lovebond, in an unpublished paper shows one famous instance of how Nietzsche accomplishes this. In the Twilight of the Idols in the section entitled "How The 'Real World' At Last Became a Myth" (a section on which Heidegger and Derrida have both spent quite a bit of ink), Nietzsche, through "the Progress of the Idea" demonstrates how through the ages starting with Plato, the truth has become transmogrified from Plato's esoteric "virtue," attainable through intellectual effort; to the Christian transformation of it into an afterlife reward for those worthy of it; to its being problematized even further by its Kantian and positivistic treatments, becoming ever more elusive as it here "becomes woman" (TI 110); to finally, the point at which, with Nietzsche, woman is even outreached as the barrier between appearance and reality collapses. "We have abolished the real world: what world is left? the apparent world perhaps?...But no! with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world!" (TI 110) What is left to the thinker at this stage is merely the beautiful surfaces of the world, and in this state of awareness, Nietzsche can say "truth is a woman," or for that matter, "life is a woman" (GS 339) where there is nothing but a series of veils and appearances, behind which nothing is concealed (even though everything appears to remain hidden) like rows of clothes on clotheslines.

From this point of only-the-veil, the philosopher, in order to stay in business, must return to that pre-Platonic tradition that instead of castigating the senses, subordinated them

to a commanding will. Nietzsche demonstrates this commanding will through his Grand Style, his ability to maintain a variety of perspectives in tension and without resolution. For Nietzsche, a multiplicity of "eyes" is, in this anti-Platonic world, the way to a superior wisdom and objectivity. These eyes, of course, derive from a multiplicity of appetites. For him, then, tension becomes essential to maintaining a vital, non-Platonic view of life. Resolution of conflicts, unification, leads to wimping out, to taking sanctuary in an illusion.

This, as Lovebond puts it, is Nietzsche's very phallic Dionysian epistemology, and, as she states, it is only a slight variation on its phallic predecessor. The chief distinction between these phallogocentric variations is where the phallic energy ends up consummating itself. In Nietzsche's version there is a constant need to keep both feet on the ground even while flying intellectually. Consequently, Nietzsche reinscribes the male value of expressing desire not by Platonically subordinating it to reason but by Sophistically appropriating via the phallus as a symbolic and spiritual act, denoting the validity and cosmic greatness of the real (as in real world=tangible experiences) man. We can see that far from refuting the ascriptions of the above Pythagorean table of opposites, Nietzsche reinscribes them in the world of his experience, defrocking Plato and his ideal world simply by ascribing to it, in Lovebond's words, the negative sexual term.

One of the most interesting things about Nietzsche after being embroiled in the argument of "which woman are we talking about" is that he rarely speaks of woman in any other way than as women -- plural, actual, women. His views on them are in large part reflected through his daily encounters of them. Misogynist though he be, he is at least straight forward about his views on everything from feminism to women's mis-education. He only gets philosophical about these women when he expresses a deliberate fantasy -- from which he always comes crashing down, ending with a resounding "alas, 'tis not so" - - or when he is making parables, and usually those parables deal with how poorly men have understood their own shaping influence on women, how badly they have handled a delicate creature, and if they're in a mess it's their own fault.

Most of the readings here are snatches, but a more direct taste and reference of what Nietzsche has to say to and about women. Actually, he rarely speaks to women in his writings.

Other than the writings on women, there are selections on writing and its relation to the will to power. Nietzsche stays on topic quite consistently in his aphorisms, so for those who may wish to pursue the ideas apparent here in his thoughts, you need rarely look further than the aphorisms numbered quite closely to the ones given.

Recommended reading of Nietzsche on Women

GS, 64, p.125

On old women

**On old woman, who Nietzsche fears, consider the superficiality of existence its essence, and all virtue and profundity is to them merely a veil over this truth...a matter of decency and shame and no more than that.**

GS, 67, p 126.

**Simulating Oneself: Alas! What bewitched him was precisely that she seemed utterly changeable and unfathomable. Of steady weather he found too much in himself.**

GS 68 p.126

**Will and willingness: For it is man who creates for himself the image of woman, and woman forms herself according to this image.**

GS 70 127

**Women who master the masters: After hearing a great voice in the theater, it makes one believe momentarily that there could be in the world women ...capable and ready for rule over men because in them the best elements of man apart from his sex have become an incarnate ideal.**

GS 74 130

Failures: ...For what seduces men most surely is a certain secretive and phlegmatic tenderness.

GS 75 130

The third sex: "A small man is a paradox but still a man; but small females seem to me to belong to another sex than tall women," said an old dancing master. A small woman is never beautiful -- said old Aristotle.

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Readings on art, writing, and the will

GS 80 & 85

These two passages deal with Nietzsche's preference for art over nature, as well as his struggle against this impulse in his desire to deal with the dirty truths of reality. BGE, 230

Referring to the "basic will of the spirit", Nietzsche states:

**That commanding something which people call "the spirit" wants to be master in and around its own house and wants to feel that it is master; it has the will from multiplicity to simplicity, a will that ties up, tames, and is domineering and truly masterful. Its needs and capacities are so far the same as those which physiologists posit for everything that lives, grows, and multiplies. The spirit's power to appropriate the foreign stands revealed in its inclination to assimilate the new to the old, to simplify the manifold, and to overlook and repulse whatever is totally contradictory--just as it involuntarily emphasises certain features and lines in what is foreign, in every piece of the "external world," retouching and falsifying the whole to suit itself. Its intent in all this is to incorporate new "experiences," to file new things in old files--growth, in a word--or, more precisely, the *feeling* of growth, the feeling of increased power.**

**An apparently opposite drive serves the same will: a suddenly erupting decision in favor of ignorance, of deliberate exclusion, a shutting of one's windows, an internal No to this or that thing, a refusal to let things approach, a kind of state of defense against much that is knowable, a satisfaction with the dark, with the limiting horizon, a Yea or Amen to ignorance -- all of which is necessary in proportion to the spirit's power to appropriate, its "digestive capacity," to speak metaphorically--and actually, "the spirit" is relatively most similar to a stomach.**

The passage goes on to speak of the spirit's consequent desire to allow itself to be deceived as an expression of power, and similarly, the spirit's desire to deceive, to dissimulate for the power and security this affords. The spirit as master of the Protean arts.

She is allowed to be like man as artist and dionysiac only in so far as she uses the veils that men give her, force on her. Pleasure can only be derived here, not from the truth seeking? Anti-feminism scourged woman not as truth/fake but as treading on toes and chucking veils--as perhaps not giving man that completion of himself he saw in her. This position, though, does. As a known quantity, not messing around in the boys' world and only messing with herself, everything is cool.

In Nietzsche BGE, 232:

re seeking enlightenment about herself,

**Unless a woman seeks anew adornment for herself that way -- I do think adorning herself is part of the Eternal-Feminine?--she surely wants to**

inspire fear of herself -- perhaps she seeks mastery. But she does not *want* truth: what is truth to a woman? From the beginning, nothing has been more alien, repugnant or hostile to woman than the truth--her great art is the lie, her highest concern is mere appearance and beauty. Let us men confess it: we honor and love precisely this art and *this* instinct in woman--we who have a hard time for our relief like to associate with beings under whose hands, eyes, and tender follies our seriousness, our gravity and profundity almost appear to us like folly...We men wish that women would not go on compromising herself through enlightenment...And I think it is a real friend of women who counsels them today: *mulier taceat de muliere*.

BGE, 230

After speaking about the various aspects of the spirit: to deceive, to be deceived, to appropriate the foreign, to say Amen to ignorance, to master the new into the old, Nietzsche says this will to deception is countered by that sublime inclination of the speaker after knowledge who insists on profundity, multiplicity, and thoroughness, with a *will* which is a kind of cruelty of the intellectual conscience and taste. Every courageous thinker will recognize this in himself, assuming only that, as fit, he has hardened and sharpened his eye for himself long enough and that he is used to severe discipline, as well as severe words. He will say: "there is something cruel in the inclination of my spirit"; let the virtuous and kindly talk him out of that!

Just prior to this, Nietzsche spent a great deal of time on the drawing power of cruelty that all humans seek, a will to hurt the spirit whose inclination is for the surface, the apparent. And then about a paragraph further on, Nietzsche gives a sort of dream approach of his best philosopher spirit:

To translate man back into nature; to become master over the many vain and overly enthusiastic interpretations and connotations that have so far been scrawled and painted over that eternal basic text of *homo natura*; to see to it that man henceforth stands before man as even today, hardened [coated, armed] in the discipline of science, he stands before the *rest* of nature, with intrepid Oedipus eyes and sealed Odysseus ears, deaf to the siren songs of old metaphysical bird catchers who have been piping at him all too long, "you are more, you are higher, you are of a different origin!"- -that may be a strange and insane task, but it is a *task*--who would deny that? Why did we choose this insane task? or putting it differently: "why have knowledge at all?"

BGE, 231

Learning changes us; it does what all nourishment does which also does not merely "preserve" -- as physiologists know. But at the bottom of us, really "deep down," there is, of course, something unteachable, some granite of spiritual *fatum*, of predetermined decision and answer to predetermined selected questions. Whenever a cardinal problem is at stake, there speaks an unchangeable "this is I"; about man and woman, for example, a thinker cannot relearn but only finish learning--only discover ultimately how this is "settled in him." At times we find certain solutions of problems that inspire strong faith in *us*; some call them henceforth *their* "convictions." Later--we see them only as steps to self knowledge, signposts to the problem we *are*--

rather, to the great stupidity we are, to our spiritual *fatum*, to what is *unteachable* very "deep down."

After this abundant civility that I have just evidenced in relation to myself I shall perhaps be permitted more readily to state a few truths about "woman as such"--assuming that it is known from the outset how very much these are after all only--*my* truths.

Here, Nietzsche seems to say that there are some things we just can't get past -- our convictions -- our stupidity (our blind spots) that leaves us stuck in a position and only viewing from there. Out of this comes Nietzsche's "truths" on women, a rock that just can't change.

To see to it that man henceforth stands before man as even today, hardened [coated, armed] in the discipline of science, he stands before the *rest of nature*, with intrepid Oedipus eyes and sealed Odysseus ears, deaf to the siren songs of old metaphysical bird catchers.

Is this not though, just the casting off of one armour for another? Indeed, "man" will never stand before himself or the other except behind an armour [even if it is only a veil].

Language, by its very nature as interloper, demands it. There is no innocence, no final can opener or stiletto to cut through. Only layers upon layers. Such a quest, if it ever sought conclusion is doomed. To which Nietzsche:

that may be a strange and insane task, but it is a *task*--who would deny that? Why did we choose this insane task? or putting it differently: "why have knowledge at all?"

Everybody will ask that. And we, pressed this way, we who have put the same question to ourselves a hundred times, we have found and find no better answer--

Thus, even though the conclusion is impossible, the striving continues.

It is men, said [the sage] that corrupt women; and all the failings of women should be atoned by and improved in men. For it is man who creates for himself the image of woman, and woman forms herself according to this image...Will is the manner of men; willingness that of women. That is the law of the sexes--truly a hard law for women. When a youth responds that women need to be better educated, the sage of the parable says, no, it's men who need the education, but apparently the youth didn't go along with this. GS, II, 68, p. 126.

In this yearning for plurality, in its establishment in "my truths" we see there are not "truths" here at all. This is the pathos of the style:

Ecce Homo, 721

To communicate a state, an inward tension of pathos, by means of signs, including the tempo of these signs--that is the meaning of every .

Does the concept grand style ultimately stand in contradiction to the soul of music -- to the "woman" in our music?--[WP 444]

On the grand style:

...To become master of the chaos that one is; to compel one's chaos to become form: logical, simple, unequivocal; to become mathematics, *law* -- that is the ambition here.--

Artists then, as Shelley would have it, are the legislators, law of the structure for the will to power.

---

720 ecce homo

**When I imagine a perfect reader, he always turns into a monster of courage and curiosity; moreover, supple, cunning, cautious; a born adventurer and discoverer.**

723 EH

**Love--in its means, war; at bottom, the deadly hatred of the sexes.**

In EH, idealism = antinature, and yet this is Nietzsche's conflict -- the perpetual struggle against the romantic and the ideal.

---

The following references are taken from Heidegger's four volumes of lectures on Nietzsche. They are perhaps the easiest Heidegger to read because they are set out as introductory philosophy lectures to what would be the equivalent of our freshman undergraduate university students. To get a glimpse of Heidegger's sensitivity and interpretation towards Nietzsche is the reason for this presentation. Though he is supplemental to the discourse of this thesis, Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche has largely informed Derrida's own. Acquainting myself therefore with Heidegger's lectures on Nietzsche was, I feel, most important to my own work.

7 I/4

**Power is the uppermost value because ...only power posits values, validates them.** The basic character of beings --what relates them to Being--is the will to power. "Becoming" is the perpetual overpowering of power.

125. I/17

**The grand style is the highest feeling of power.**

126 I/17

**Art in the grand style is the simple tranquility resulting from the protective mastery of the supreme plentude of life.**

Nietzsche is thus aligned with the slow elegance of the Grand Style, but how does this mesh with power over? Like a rolling stone, that's how.

137. I/17

**Will to power is properly there where power no longer needs the accoutrements of battle, in the sense of being merely reactive; its superiority binds all things, in that the will releases all things to their essence and their bounds.**

5 IV/1

**The fact that earlier aims now disappear and former values are devalued is no longer experienced as sheer annihilation and deplored as wasteful and wrong, but is rather greeted as liberation, touted as an irrevocable gain, and perceived as a *fulfillment*...**

**"Nihilism" is the increasingly dominant truth that all prior aims of being have become superfluous.**

**Nihilism, thought now in its classic sense, calls for a freedom *from* the values as freedom *for* a *revaluation* of all (such) values.**

7 IV/1

**"Will to power" does not mean simply the "romantic" yearning and quest for power by those who have no power; rather "will to power" means the accruing of power by power for its own overpowering.**

**Thus one annihilates the other in a perfect appropriation, like a rolling snowball.**

52 IV/9

The genealogy of morals is construed as nihilism as history.

85 IV/13

If everything in Nietzsche breaks down to the value of power over then there is a validation of power over as the essence of human nature.

148 IV/22

Heidegger also sees Nietzsche's "end of metaphysics" as a reversal:

**It means the historical moment in which the *essential possibilities* of metaphysics are exhausted. The last of these possibilities must be that form of metaphysics in which its *essence* is reversed. Such a reversal is performed not only in actuality, but also *consciously*...And Nietzsche very early describes his philosophy as the reversal of "Platonism."**

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Table One: The Pythagorean table of Opposites:

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Limit	Unlimited
Odd	Even
One	Many
Right	Left
Male	Female
Resting	Moving
Straight	Curved
Light	Darkness
Good	Bad
Square	Oblong

Table Two: Derrida's oppositions as defined in conjunction with Derrida by Irene E. Harvey in Derrida and the Economy of Difference (113-114).

<u>intelligible</u>	<u>sensible</u>
interior	exterior
good	evil
essence	appearance
form	content
origin	copy
proper	improper
univocity	polysemy
presence	absence
mind	body
nature	culture
nature	history
presentation	representation
life	death
infinite	finite
conscious	non-conscious
general	particular
ideal	empirical
meaning	nonsense
signified	signifier
philosophy	mythology
being	non-being
identity	difference
truth	falsity
visible	invisible
speech	silence
reason	madness
<i>epistème</i>	<i>doxa</i>
God	man[??]
speech	writing
philosophy	non-philosophy

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ELLE-MEME: THE PLACE OF WOMAN IN THE DISCOURSE OF JACQUES  
DERRIDA

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