A deconstructive analysis of Plato's Phaedrus

Marlene Evangeline Anderson

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A DECONSTRUCTIVE ANALYSIS OF PLATO'S PHAEDRUS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Marlene Evangeline Anderson
December 1991
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CHAPTER 1:  FOREPLAY

What does love have to do with it, do with it?
Isn’t love just a second hand emotion?

Troy Britten and Gordon Lyle (1984)

"The subject of the *Phaedrus* is Rhetoric and Love," according to J.A. Stewart. Many scholars share this interpretation of implicit intention in Plato’s text. The *Phaedrus* is not only a journey into the heart of rhetoric: it is the cornerstone of the rhetorical canon itself. Richard Weaver, whose commitment to Platonic idealism has influenced the rhetorical canon, explains that the "explicit topics of the dialogue are, in order; love, the soul, speechmaking and the spoken and written word, or what is generally termed by us composition" (Bizzell 1054). Thus there are many variant interpretations that assume implicit intention.

And indeed, a look at the topical structure of the *Phaedrus* will support the assumptions of Weaver and Stewart, who state that the subject of the text is love. The topics of the speeches are centered around the discussion of love; however, the subject of the *Phaedrus* is not written in the text’s surface structure, nor is it simply a presentation on the value of Rhetoric submitted artfully by the author. The subject of the *Phaedrus* will reveal itself during my deconstructive reading, but first I should like to consider the important topical structure. This structure may be
examined through the conventions of discourse analysis and exists in its own potent form. However, the topical structure creates clues and traces of thought that exact a rhythm, a rhythm that escapes its boundaries and modulates its own intoxicating music. Musical variations arise from the ardent beat of the text and reverberate in their own potent climate. The text and topical structure of the Phaedrus only suggest rules and intentions:

A canon true to its name is a puzzle, as are, for example the fourteen enigmatic circle canons recently discovered on the inside back cover of a copy of the Goldberg Variations annotated by the composer (Bach); written in Bach's own hand, they are based on the first eight notes of the ground of the aria on which the preceding thirty variations were composed. They are not, however, written out in their entirety. Instead, clues are provided to indicate the kind of canonic treatment required in each case—the number of voices, the point at which these voices should enter. Yet a great deal is still left to the ingenuity of the reader, in particular the manner in which the later voices imitate the first; though they are all rigorous copies of the subject, they may well be inverted, reversed, and/or begin at a different pitch (indeed,
at least two of these new additions to the Bach
canon can be solved in more than one way) (Runyon
xi).

It is with this type of variation in mind, a variation that
seeks a primary rule only to disallow it, that I explore a
precise topical analysis of the speech of Lysias. Keep in
mind that a canon is a puzzle and that the cornerstone of a
canon by virtue of its primary position is deceptive, hence
the infinite realm of variation.

The Speech of Lysias is presented to the
reader/listener in the first pages of Plato’s Phaedrus; it
is retold to Socrates by Phaedrus after he alludes to it in
the opening speeches of the dialogue. The discourse topic
of the speech, the topic of love is also introduced in this
dialogue, which foregrounds Lysias’s speech and its topic.
Moreover, the dialogue foregrounds the "ingenious" point
that makes the speech of Lysias so interesting to Phaedrus,
therefore worth re-telling to Socrates. It is a cataphoric
reference that looks forward in the text for its
interpretation. The "ingenious" point is a lexical
selection that intrigues the reader/listener. From this
small bit of information, it might be assumed that the
reader/listener will indeed listen to the forthcoming
speech.
Phaedrus

Socrates. Where do you hail from, Phaedrus, and where are you bound?

Phaedrus. From Lysias, Socrates, the son of Cephalus; and I’m going to take a walk outside the walls. You see, I’ve spent quite a lot of time indoors there, sitting still since daybreak. And I’m under orders from our mutual friend Acumenus to take my walks on the country roads: he says they’re more refreshing than those in cloisters.

Socr. He is perfectly right, my friend. So it seems that Lysias is in town.

Phaedr. Yes, at Epicrates’ house; you know, next the temple of Zeus, the one that used to be Morychus’.

Socr. And what was going on there? I’m sure that Lysias gave you a feast of eloquence.

Phaedr. I’ll tell you if you have the leisure to come along and listen.

Socr. What? Don’t you think that hearing how you and Lysias spent your time would be to me, as Pindar puts it, "a matter of loftier import than even the most instant task"?

Phaedr. Lead on then.

Socr. Tell me all.
Phaedr. Yes, Socrates, the talk was very much of your sort: the topic that engaged us was, in a way love. Lysias, you must know, has put in writing the attempted seduction of a handsome boy, but not by a lover of his! That was, in fact, what made it so ingenious, the point being that one should rather surrender to a non-lover than to a lover.

Thus, Plato has introduced his discourse topic through the characters in his dialogue. He has explicitly said through the character of Phaedrus that the discourse topic is, "in a way love." Plato writes that what is being talked about in this dialogue is love, and he forecasts an "ingenious" point that will be the topic of The Speech of Lysias. This staging is important, not only to The Speech of Lysias, but to the complete text of the Phaedrus. It is important to the speech of Lysias because it engages the attention of the reader/listener by the selection of "ingenious" as a referent to the nature of the speech. The staging is verbally explicit as to topic and the nature (ingenious) of the topic.

Later in the dialogue, Phaedrus exclaims: "As far as the main points are concerned--practically everything Lysias said about the differences between the lover and non-lover--I can summarize for you, topic by topic, beginning right at the start." The reader/listener learns, then, that the
speech is not only about love, but about the differences between the lover and the non-lover. Phaedrus complements the previous staging by announcing that he will summarize these differences, topic by topic. The differences are the main points of the speech and Phaedrus has this knowledge in his memory; he will impart the new information to Socrates and the reader at the same moment. The staging has given the text a point of departure: The Speech of Lysias. It is my inference that the opening dialogue is a topical framework; this dialogue points to love as a pretheoretical notion of the 'topic' that Plato wishes to present to his reader. Thus, this information becomes the aspect of the content that is "explicitly reflected in the text as the formal record of the utterance" (Brown and Yule 75).

With this knowledge the reader comes to The Speech of Lysias. Scholars have assumed that the speeches on love and their placement indicate a principle of stability within the text, and that that stability may be derived from the topical structure (what the words themselves say), as well as the structure of the text itself (in particular the rhetorical examples and the sequence in which they are presented in the speeches). However, I believe that Plato's topical intention is not explicitly presented in the textual qualities of the Phaedrus; therefore, my analysis of the speech will include the textual aspects of the topical
structure as well as my interpretation of Plato’s use of the topical structure. To accomplish this task, I refer to the thematic organization of the speech itself and what appears to be the structural framework that Plato utilizes for this text. The topical structure of the first paragraph of The Speech of Lysias immediately engages the reader/listener:

(1) What my circumstances are, you know; and you have heard how I believe they should be settled to our best advantage. (2) I claim that I should not fail to obtain what I asked merely because I am not a lover of yours. (3) As soon as their passion abates lovers always feel that their favors have been wasted, but non-lovers never have reason for regrets. (4) It is not under constraint, but as free agents, taking careful thought for what is within their power to control, that they regulate favors in proportion to their means.

The writer engages his reader/listener immediately with what appears to be an exophoric reference: What my circumstances are, you know. Plato has written a speech within a speech within a text. The speaker is Phaedrus, who is speaking as Lysias, but both speakers are the voice of Plato, who has created the circumstances of which we are, as readers/listeners, supposedly aware. This reference is evoked within the text itself; it is an anaphoric reference.
Lexical interest is achieved in an unusual way in the first two sentences. The speaker engages the reader/listener (by addressing Socrates) with the reference to you in the first sentence and yours in the second. Plato engages the reader/listener by the direct reference that becomes a double referent: one that addresses Socrates and one that addresses the reader/listener. The writer immediately establishes an I-thou rhetorical relationship between the speaker and the listener/reader. This rhetorical relationship includes the reader/listener within the action of the dialogue, that is the reader/listener is part of the textual encounter. Moreover, she becomes the reason for the textual encounter by being included as a double referent: the reader and Socrates. Plato also engages the reader/listener as a non-lover: because I am not a lover of yours. The first two sentences of this speech form a bond between the reader and the text; this lexical strategy engages the reader/listener as topic and part of the "ingenious" point of the speech the reader is about to hear. The reader/listener becomes part of the textual integrity of the text itself. The metalingual comment of the first sentence, how I believe they should be settled to our best advantage has instructed this non-lover, the reader/listener, that our best advantage is inherent in the speaker’s intent.
In the third sentence, *lovers* become the topic; this is a sequential progression since *not a lover of yours* was a comment in the second sentence. In the third sentence, *non-lovers* is part of the comment. This, too, refers to the comment of the second sentence *not a lover of yours* (*non-lover*). Thus, both parts of this sentence, the topic and the comment, refer back to the previous comment in an unusual and cohesive way. The cohesion is almost illusive because of the lexical choice of the phrase *not a lover of yours*: This refers to a non-lover, but the immediate response is to the word *lover*. The information in the third sentence is not only new, but it also introduces the main discourse topic, *non-lovers never have reason for regrets*. Although non-lovers have been referred to in the dialogue, the discourse topic is clarified in this sentence. This is what the speech is about. The sequence of phrases that precedes the subject and topic in the fourth sentence empowers the topic and subject, *they (non-lovers)* with the attributes of *free agents*, that take *careful thought to regulate favors*. These positive attributes reflect new information which is presented as a logical progression from the previous thought.

Plato engages his reader’s attention in the dialogue by presenting the topic of the discourse as *love*. The topic of *love* engages the reader/listener on an emotional level.
because a universal presupposition pool is attached to the word love. It is a lexical and topical choice charged with emotional content. In the speech, however, the first information about lovers is negative information. The same sentence (the third) introduces the term non-lover, a lexical choice that needs definition. The structure of this sentence presents negative information about lovers which is followed by positive information about non-lovers. This structure recurs (again and again) developing throughout the speech a rhythmic pattern that the reader/listener comes to expect; the pattern repeats itself like old information, thus, lulling the reader to accept its conclusions: non-lovers never have reasons for regrets.

The last sentence of the opening paragraph is another sequential progression of second sentence: they refers back to the comment of the previous sentence, non-lovers never have reason for regrets. The information in the first sentence is old information, the speaker explicitly tells the reader/listener (Socrates) that this is so. There is new information in the comment of the second sentence: I should not fail to obtain what I asked merely because I am not a lover of yours; however, the reader/listener has partial knowledge about this new information (the speaker is not a lover of yours).
In the second paragraph information is presented with the strong introductory theme, again. The theme of the topical structure being that which comes first in the sentence:

(1) Again, lovers reckon losses incurred in their affairs because of their love, and also the favors they have bestowed, and even add the trouble they have taken: then they make up their mind that they have long since given ample satisfaction to the beloved. (2) But non-lovers cannot adduce neglect of their property because of their passion or reckon in past exertions, or blame the beloved for their quarrels with relatives. (3) The result of this is that, since so many evils have been removed, nothing remains but to perform with eagerness such actions as they believe will gratify.

The lexical choice, again, engages the readers interest in that he will be hearing something one more time; the repetition enforces the importance of the knowledge and brings it to a prominent position in the reader’s mind. The information, lovers reckon losses and also the favors they have bestowed refers back to the last sentence in the first paragraph. This, again, is a sequential progression. The old information in this sentence is slightly different; thus, this sentence is cohesive because of elegant
variation. The second sentence in this paragraph is also a form of elegant variation: non-lovers cannot adduce neglect of their property because of their passion. The topic and subject of this sentence is non-lovers, but the comment refers back to the first paragraph and is a form of extended parallel progression. The last sentence is a sequential progression that leads the reader to the conclusion, the result of this is that, since so many evils have been removed, nothing remains but to perform with eagerness such actions as they believe will gratify. Again, Plato uses the end of his paragraph to leave the reader/listener with a positive image of the non-lover.

In the third paragraph, the strong theme, again, is repeated and the reader/listener is aware that the information he is about to read/hear is old information:

(1) Again, if it is right for lovers to be highly valued because they profess to have particular affection for those they love, and are ready, both in word and deed, to give pleasure to the beloved at the cost of being detested by everyone else, it is easy to recognize (if they speak the truth) that when later on they fall in love with someone else, they will value the new love more highly than the old: consequently it is obvious that they will do
evil to the former beloved if it so please the new one.

In the second and third paragraph, the author selects the same theme, again. The repeated pattern evokes a type of parallel thematic progression in the larger context of the paragraphs; in more words, the writer is using the paragraphs progressively to achieve cohesion within the context of the speech by merging the themes of the first sentences of the two paragraphs. This double lexical choice is a forceful cohesive device; the repetition binds the reader to the text by promising old and given information. I assume that the given information is presented to seduce the reader/listener into a false sense of security; the given information is old information and less threatening than new information. The double seduction is that Plato has already introduced an "ingenious" point, yet, he urges the reader/listener to accept this point by introducing it as "ingenious" and then repeatedly referring to it as old information.

Again, in this paragraph, Plato evokes the problems of the lover. The paragraph, moreover, is interesting because it is one complex sentence and exhibits the forcefulness of lexical choice and arrangement. The information about lovers is presented in a series of dependent clauses: if it is right for lovers and because they profess to have
particular affection, and are ready, both in word and deed, to give pleasure to the beloved at the cost of being detested by everyone else. This information is subordinate to the main part of the sentence: it is easy to recognize (if they speak the truth) that when later on they fall in love with someone else, they will value the new love more highly than the old: consequently it is obvious that they will do evil to the former beloved if it so please the new one.

The information the reader is left with in this paragraph is that the lover will value new love more highly than the old. It is negative information about lovers; the writer has dedicated this sequence to undermine the intentions of a lover. Moreover, this sequence gives credence to my previous assumptions about old information; old information (old love?) is not only less threatening but it also is more appropriate because it does no evil. In this paragraph/sentence the reader/listener is left with the idea that it is obvious that they will do evil to the former beloved if it so please the new one: lovers do evil.

The sentence/paragraph that informs the reader/listener that lovers do evil is ninety seven words long. This sentence/paragraph is constructed of three long independent clauses, the main idea, another dependent clause, and a conclusion drawn from the series of clauses that are
introduced with the lexical choice, again, if it is right. This opening phrase gets lost by the end of this complex sentence. The reader/listener is unlikely to remember if it is right after ninety seven words. However, the end focus of the paragraph is strong and introduces the new information that lovers do evil. It is important to note that this is the longest and the most convoluted sentence in Lysias' speech. The new information about lovers is powerful. Plato keeps the focus of the sentence/paragraph on negative information about lovers; he does not dilute the negative information about lovers with information about non-lovers as he does in the first and second paragraphs. The idea that lovers do evil is important to Plato's text, and the syntax of this sentence dramatizes the manner in which information units may be used to trace the course of a thought. The lexical choices and the presentation of information is structured to overcome the positive presupposition pool that people have about lovers.

The theme of the next sentence and the beginning of the fourth paragraph is yet and the writer continues to undermine the intentions of the lover with more information (elegant variation) about lovers. The information is exophoric because it refers to lovers (the speaker, Phaedrus, speaking as Lysias who is not a lover of yours) and is part of a presupposition pool (given information).
about how lovers think about themselves: it is a fact that lovers themselves acknowledge that they are not sound, but sick; they know that they are incapable of good judgment, but cannot control themselves. The reader/listener is left with a question that undermines the stability of a lover's intention; this paragraph leaves the reader/listener with the inference that love is an abnormal condition.

The fifth paragraph begins with the theme moreover: this is a lexical indication of new information. The writer returns to the I-thou rhetorical relationship in the first sentence by using you as the topic and the subject; he repeats this emphasis in the second part of this sentence by again using you as a topic and subject. Again, this engages the reader/listener as part of the textual quality of the speech; the I-thou posture returns emphasis to the rhetorical relationship established in the first paragraph. It reminds the reader that she is an integral element in the action of the dialogue. This is a very effective cohesive device. The second and last sentence of the paragraph indicates a result inferred from the previous information; this lexical choice links the reader/listener to the writer's conclusion: there is a far greater expectation of hitting on a man worthy of your affections in the vast crowd of non-lovers.
The sixth paragraph is much like the third in that ninety words construct the extended sentence. Theoretically, it could be two sentences since it is separated by a semi-colon and has two subjects. However, the writer chose to make one sentence; Plato chose to link the information about the lover and flattery to the information about the non-lover who will choose what is really best. This second long and convoluted sentence introduces another sin, the sin of vanity.

Another aspect of this sentence/paragraph is that it engages the reader/listener in the I-thou relationship much like the preceding paragraph by the them now if you. The lexical device in the theme of the previous paragraph is moreover, if you which indicates new information; it refers to something that has not yet been said. The lexical device of now if you, brings the reader/listener to the instant of the utterance, now. The theme of the next paragraph is again, which indicates old information and the importance of the old information. It is the third time the lexical device again is used to begin a sentence.

The next three paragraphs begin with moreover: the first topic is fear, the second is desire and the third evokes the I-thou relationship. The repetition of moreover binds the reader/listener to the new information presented in the first two moreover paragraphs (10 & 11), yet the
third paragraph binds the reader/listener to the text. This third paragraph indicates to the reader/listener that it is for your own improvement to be persuaded by me. This co-reference is cataphoric because it looks forward in the text: the reader/listener will be persuaded. The third paragraph ends with the notion that we put no great value on our sons and our fathers and our mothers. It is a masterful stroke in undermining the reader/listener. Who, of any value, puts no value on sons, fathers, and mothers?

The eleventh paragraph repeats the theme again. Plato is drawing his argument to a close. He uses elegant variation, again, in this paragraph to undermine the lover and elevate the non-lover.

Remember, then is the theme of the twelfth paragraph and perhaps of the thirteenth. The strong themes of the paragraphs are powerful lexical devices that keep the reader/listener bound to the text.

The last theme, as for me, stops the dialogue of the speaker: I think I have said enough. The next and last sentence invites the reader/listener to question the speaker. The last three paragraphs are short and strong; this is a powerful rhetorical strategy. This last paragraph is composed of two sentences; but the reader/listener is left with a choice that creates the illusion that the reader/listener is in control of the argument you have only
to question me. The reader/listener appears to be in a prominent position; it is an effective illusion.

The title of the speech, The Speech of Lysias, is introduced in the text as a title even though it has been foregrounded in the dialogue. The title functions as a staging device for the speech, in this way setting the speech off from the rest of the dialogue; moreover, the title helps to create a framework around the speech itself. This strategical device is important in the larger context of the Phaedrus. Plato stages the other two speeches in this manner as well: Socrates' First Speech and Socrates' Second Speech. This structural framework emphasizes the importance of the speeches to what may be interpreted as writer's intention; it also provides a thematic framework.

The discourse themes that are introduced in the speeches are structured to mislead the reader. Plato's intention is not thematic; it is an example of the infinite variation of the thinking process itself. In presenting a masterful allegory on Love, he leads his reader through thought, and that thought is linked to the process of writing that exhibits multiple voices in the dialogue he creates. Furthermore, the voices Plato reveals through the Phaedrus, the cornerstone of the rhetorical canon, create crescendos that interrupt and penetrate his own thresholds of thought: "A Canon...is a imaginary rule, drawing that part of the Song
which is not set downe out of that part which is set downe. Or it is a Rule, which doth wittily discover the secret of a Song" (Runyon, xii).

The first speech, The Speech of Lysias, employs the art of persuasion; it is sophistic in nature (persuasion without conscience). The second speech uses persuasion in conjunction with a certain cunning fellow; it employs deception within the context of the speech. This speech indicates that the end justifies the means. The third speech employs persuasion in conjunction with ancient prophecies and the art of thinking as a way to discover the memory of the divine. The last speech is the good speech; it is the speech that Plato wants the reader/listener to remember. This speech investigates, in mythical terms, the inherent struggle between good and evil within each soul.

In the earlier speeches, he presents, by example, the illusions that logic deployed by rhetoric is capable of producing; in the last speech, he clarifies through myth the false conclusions of the two previous rhetorical speeches.

Thus Plato presents false logic in the earlier speeches and uses repetition (a component of myth) and eloquence (a component of rhetoric) to establish false conclusions. He uses the pleasurable arrangement of words to seduce the reader; this seduction is an essential component of the textual encounter, but it is not absolute. One idea,
eloquently expressed, is interrupted and displaced by another, which in turn is displaced, creating new thresholds of experience to intoxicate the reader. Hence, the reader becomes suspended in the text, displaced as well by the ideas and words within her own context of knowing and experience. This suspension accents a primary bound with the mythos that creates a sense of magic and mystery; this dizzying fusion of words, ideas, and experience converge with notions of memory and remembrance birthing images potent and disturbing.

The disturbing images are displaced by the structure of the speeches themselves. The speeches create cohesion within the framework of the *Phaedrus* by creating texture, yet they dissociate themselves as referents to each other by virtue of their rhetorical nature. Moreover, the speeches create endorphoric relationships within the text by looking forward and backwards. Thus the speeches act as foils to each other, creating vast realms of disarticulation that serve the endorphoric posture they create. These endorphoric relationships are explicitly bound to the conflict exhibited between logos and mythos. As well, the conflict resides in the shifting focus of attention that Plato uses to engage and distance the speakers/readers/listeners from each other.
Socrates’ First Speech is presented as a narration, once upon a time there was a boy; thus, Socrates’ distances himself in two ways from what is being said in this first speech: he tells the tale as a storyteller, and he tells it with his head covered. In these two ways he distances himself from the words that he speaks. In essence, he blinds himself (by covering his head) to what he says and distinctly places the responsibility of the speech of Phaedrus. The symbolism indicates that a speech without an explicit internal commitment of responsibility to the content of the words is a speech that is seeded in self-deception. The irony of the second speech is magnified by the fact that the spoken word is the realm of Socrates. Plato uses his mentor as a vehicle to undermine and devalue the spoken word in the rhetorical situation; the dialectic is bound to the intent of the speaker. Hence rhetorical intention becomes a source of Plato’s concern. This concern is explicit in the movement of the text and the variety of subjects Plato explores; this concern circumvents meaning and dashes scholarly assumptions about stability into the realm of the improbable.

Socrates’ First Speech is a rhetorical example that illustrates the problem of intention; it is not a speech that Socrates wishes to orate, but when he starts to speak, eloquence overcomes him and he gains control of the
situation, thus using the illusion of the spoken word to create a false message. The reader becomes a listener along with Phaedrus; moreover, the reader/listener becomes like Phaedrus a child/student, there is only one way, my child, to begin deliberations auspiciously. In contrast to the Speech of Lysias which does not define love, but makes the assumption that the reader/listener knows of love, Socrates first Speech defines love and makes a distinction between pleasure and what is best. He pleasurably uses his words to invoke a diatribe against pleasure that he must in the end declare false.

Again, however, Plato engages the reader/listener in the second paragraph, but as for you and me, and then leads the reader/listener/child to the question of whether one should consort with a non-lover rather than a lover, let us see in the fourth sentence of this paragraph and let us agree in the fifth. Plato has distanced the audience and then recaptured it in the I/thou relationship he establishes in the second paragraph.

In the third paragraph, everyone knows quite well engages the reader/listener with his ideologies once again with the word everyone, and in the fourth paragraph he uses a similar technique in the reason for this preamble must be fairly obvious. Plato is not content to let his narrators narrate; he continually engages the reader/listener in the
story that he tells. The readers must continually re-establish their relationship to the text: a listener, a child, a collaborator. This engagement is particularly important to the function of the entire dialogue. By the time the third speech comes into focus, the reader/listener is suspended in the action of the text and, as well, comes to the text with a critical eye. The reader/listener is confronted with the responsibility of questioning what is said and why. The important speech on the myth of the souls is positioned at the most critical and tenuous spot in the text: the place where it will not only be remembered (because it remains last in the reader/listener's mind), but, as well, the place where it will be questioned and challenged the most.

In the text, however, the first two speeches concentrate on the negative aspects of love and the fact that lovers do evil. It is not until the last speech where the "mythic hymn" (Ferrari 113) reveals itself that the true nature of love, or what Plato believes to be the true nature of love is expressed. This last speech is again presented by Socrates the narrator, speaking for Plato, and done so in the voice of Steischorus, son of Euphemus, from Himera. In each speech, a calliope of voices blends to express the rhetorical intent. The voices blend to create a context that engages the reader/listener as well in the harmony of
the text. The mythic hymn is the strongest chorus because the reader by then is not only engaged, but critically engaged, suspended on each new threshold of utterance. Such a reader will follow the music, the movement and rhythm, but will do so with an ear for discord. Plato has seduced the reader/listener/child/student into an intoxicating rhyme that urges a lingering notion, a dalliance with the images brought to life in the reading. The reader is now left, like Plato, in the realm of thought: the reader’s own private myth and mythic hymnal, the song Plato has been singing all along, the song that reverberates throughout antiquity in the Delphian inscription: know thyself. It is the song that appears in the first pages of the text "resounding with the summer chirping of the cicada chorus."
CHAPTER 2: THE RHETORICAL QUEST

The text of the Phaedrus seems to be an allegory about traditional love, the lover and the beloved. These speeches on love, however, only hide the real game in which Plato engages his reader. And it is the reader who Plato wishes first and foremost to enchant. Plato has written into consciousness a conversation embedded with a kaleidoscope of nuance that refracts and illuminates visions on thought, love, rhetoric, passion, madness, magic, desire and writing. In order to play the game, the reader must bring to the text an inherent respect for the written words; this respect, in turn, is charged with intellectual, emotional and imaginative content. The reader loves her text just as the text loves the reader; this symbiotic relationship is intricate, delicate and sustaining.

What is the reader to gain from Plato’s text? Is meaning bound to the words Plato has written to life, the words that refer specifically to the topic of love that form the topical structure of the text? Or is the moment of inscription, utterance, and experience the moment of true meaning: the instant where reader and text conjoin, mingling word and thought in an explosion of expression. One must remember that as a person writes, "he is in a structure that needs his absence as its necessary condition (writing is defined as that which can necessarily be read in the writer’s absence)” (Crowley 34). As well, the structure
demands the presence of the reader to define the activity of reading. What are the rules of this game and where will they take us?

The rules of the game are rhetorical: the game is played one move at a time (each move compromises speeches in opposition), each example dismissing the value of the previous arrangement and conclusion. The first move belongs to the voice of Phaedrus, the second to the voice of Socrates: the dialectic is rhetorical, it is meant to create pleasure, yet it distracts and distorts evoking persistent tension, an intoxicating tension that sustains the reader within the experience itself. Each threshold is pulsional, releasing itself only to the next ardent interruption. And each new direction is intoxicating, desirable. Thus the text of the Phaedrus evokes the pursuit, the rhetorical quest, but the rhetorical experience is not an end in itself as some scholars might suggest:

...we should perceive surely enough that it is consistently, and from beginning to end, about one thing, which is the nature of rhetoric. Again, that point may have been missed because most readers conceive rhetoric to be a system of artifice rather than an idea, for all its apparent divagation, keeps very close to a single idea. A study of its rhetorical structure, especially, may give us the
insight which has been withheld, while making us feel anew that Plato possessed the deepest divining rod among the ancients (Weaver 1055).

To suggest that love and rhetoric are the subjects of the Phaedrus is to assume that Plato himself has vested the text with specific meaning, but this assumption collides with the vigorous possibilities the text exhibits. Bound by specific interpretations of the text, meaning depicts a static existence without possibility. In fact, to suggest implied meaning is a leap of faith that can only be concluded from only one aspect of an interpretive reading: the aspect of logos. And while logos forms the skin of thought, the thought that it forms is one particular reader’s thought about the arrangement of words. Thus it does not, in truth, come from the reader’s experience of reading the text but becomes a metalingual assumption about the arrangement of words. Scholars assume that the underlying structure of the speeches on love forms the cornerstones of the text itself and from that this structure, the one that changes and slips away as the words stir the text to its conclusion, a stable meaning may be inferred. However, the subject of the Phaedrus emerges from the clash between the mythos and the logos of the text; this contradiction empowers the images that arise from this discord with indeterminate
associations, associations that strike new chords and reverberate with their own splendid melody.

The language of mythos is bound to the world of events. It is language that reflects universal knowledge in a historical perspective, one that embodies the power and vitality of antiquity to clarify the present. By accentuating the primal archetypes of natural phenomena and human events, mythos embodies mystery, magic and memory. The language of logos on the other hand is fused with the world of ideas; it is language that builds itself sequentially by linking and chaining elements that rise above their own essential components to create concepts. It is a mode of thought that does not exist before the arrangement of words. Logos is dependent, in turn, upon itself for articulation; mythos is dependent instead on the inevitability of its own vital and imaginative historical perspective. The assumption is that the seemingly disjointed speeches work against each other to establish the importance of rhetoric and dialectic: that rhetorical example equals meaning. The myths that Plato refers to within the text are often bypassed for the more "important" topical features of the rhetorical situation and the topic and subject of true "Love."

I believe that these myths reveal an important structural component that undermines the subjects of
rhetoric and love. The stories Plato uses to weave his text refer to a past and historical significance that are closer, quite naturally, to Plato’s own audience than our own. "The typical myths...arise in the earlier stages of social development, just before the verbal controls of logic and evidence are firmly established" (Frye, Words With Power 30). However, this propinquity did not place the Platonic reader closer to the text than today’s reader. The text and all texts exist at the moment of inscription, the context in which they come to life: the first inscription is given to the text by the writer at the instant of origination; the active inscription, once a text is created, is the action of being read by the reader. In this text, Plato uses the language of logos in conflict with the language of mythos; the conflict itself creates a simple rhetorical state, an example of rhetoric which must be regarded as distinct from what the text is about. The way in which the language of the text emerges and the way the myths about language are combined give vitality to the textual climate.

Thus it is the juxtaposition between a logocentric and mythological interpretation that breeds interest in the textual experience. This is the game that Plato presents to the reader. To succeed is not to find implicit meaning in the words of the text, it is to find an indeterminate struggle between mythos and logos where two contradictory
principles confront one another. This confrontation builds into the text of the *Phaedrus* the elements of a deconstructive theme; Plato himself has created a deconstructive model that forces the reader into the contradictions of the text. This converging of reader and text captures minuscule increments of thought that reverberate within the invigorating textual climate; this climate builds from the freshness of the pastoral banks of the Ilissus to the cloud of Boreas and then dissolves in the stormy rape of Oreithyia. This dissipation scatters the seed of thought within The Speech of Lysias and Socrates’ First Speech and, then re-members itself in the mythic hymn of Socrates’ Second Speech. The everlastingness of the *Phaedrus* exists in its ardent song of probability: the celebration of the clear articulation of the Orphic voice and the cicada chorus.

The text of the *Phaedrus* is not a treatise on rhetoric and love. It is a treatise that plays logos against mythos to highlight the subtle yet explosive topic of the expressive probabilities of the written word, words that generate life moving both forward (logos) and backwards (mythos) in time. The verbal gestures and the arrangement of Plato’s language become an allegory for the soul of the philosopher who fights against the two aspects of himself: the troublesome dark horse and the handsome horse of good
breeding. The myth exists in the language as well as the
mythic hymn, Socrates' Second Speech. The images that arise
from the collision of language replicate the transcendent
soul that escapes from his earthly struggles (the struggle
that exists in the language of the text). To create the
image of the text (the image that transcends the words on
the page), the writer has inscribed the page with symbols of
thought; to transcend the good and bad notions inherent in
the individual's inner life, the writer has evoked for the
reader a dialogue for the soul, a dialogue to replicate
transcendence itself. In doing this, he imbues his audience
with the capability of thought sustained within the
probability of their own imminent language, language that
opens to possibilities of existence and throws wide the
doors of perception.

The rhetorical quest is an interpretive struggle with
the signs of the text and, as well, a voyage into the
movement of the text and the seductive pursuit of the
rhetorical questions that Plato's voice poses. Plato uses
the universal context of love to immerse the reader in both
the action of the text as well as the experience of bringing
the reader's own knowledge (the universal knowledge about
love) into play. Thus reading becomes a form of action, an
action that captures the reader within the realm of the
experience. Including the reader in the action of the text
is much like the embracing of the audience in the theatre; the sustained intoxicating movement, the intimate, playful, conjoining of reader and text leads to catharsis: reader and text become one. Hence the action, the play between reader and text, becomes its own reason for existence; the action has no inherent meaning other than its own pleasure of itself; it is only the interpretation of an action, the metalingual assumption, that assigns the meaning to an act.

Hence the rhetorical quest takes the form of the questions that the reader/listener must pose of the vitality and action about the verbal gestures. It is the pursuit, the dalliance with language, the play of the intellect that brings pleasure, not the implicit answers or the agreement within the context of the written word. This is aptly presented in the text of the Phaedrus by the apparent disunity of the text. The logos is built in leaps and bounds, because the quest of logos demands leaps of faith; the mythos is integrated into the structure subtly. It turns back upon itself, like memory demanding rethinking and remembering for interpretation. Plato plays logos against mythos giving birth to an "undecidability" arising from the disunity and the multiple nature of the topics. It is this undecidability that intrigues scholars and attracts the different interpretations that seek to attach specific meaning. The desire of logos to find meaning creates a
presence that implies a future; the desire of mythos to return and repeat the past implies a presence created in relationship to its historical context. The dialectic engages the reader at the moment of utterance (the act of reading), but it leaves its residue, the traces of its meaning in the present past, the memory of the reader.

Moreover, the words repeat myths that are familiar to Plato's audience. He uses the myths as symbols and the myths signify as much as the words imply; Jean-Jacques Rousseau comments that "in the most vigorous language, everything is said symbolically, before one actually speaks" (On Origins of Language 7). The first myth presented to the readers is the myth of Boreas; Plato then creates another myth, the myth of the cicada and then reveals a private myth, the Myth of the Souls, his own mythic hymn. But he also uses the three speeches of love to clarify his purpose. Plato sets the answers to his riddles, symbolically, within the pastoral setting on the banks of the Ilissus and entices the reader to set them aside. He walks the reader away from the pillars of semi-knowledge, the knowledge of sobriety and rationality (logos), that lives behind city walls, to the clear and pure waters of the Ilissus (mythos). He then intoxicates his reader dialectically and purposely leads her away from the myths he has already presented.
The storm that builds on the banks of the pastoral Ilissus is a replication of most pastoral sensibilities in that it imbues the simple with the complex. And in so doing it accents the complexity of mythos and its signification for Plato. Complexity is replicated in simplicity to enhance and to emphasize: the refreshing quality of mythos as symbolized in the pure and clear waters of the Ilissus, the refreshing air, the country manner all enunciate the singularity of the soul's relationship to Plato's own particular philosophic nature. Socrates is barefooted, directly connected to the earth, and it is he who is the first listener, hearing the cicada chorus. Yet Socrates declares, "Trees and countryside have no desire to teach me anything; it's only the men in the city that do. You, (Phaedrus), however seem to have found the remedy to draw me out. Just as men can lead hungry beasts by shaking a bait of fruit or leaves in front of them, so you brandish before me words in books..." Consequently, Phaedrus answers, "Then listen."

The implicit irony in the palinode is that the words misspeak the speaker, yet the word is the way in which the writer seduces the reader/listener into fusing with the text. This irony doubles the potency of the words that invigorate the textual climate. The simplicity is overt, hiding the content and the powerful fecundity of myth that
generates its own vitality. This mysterious transmutation of a simple motion to a more complex movement is an indivisible component of the text's articulation. Moreover, this movement is built of repetition, one ardent beat intruding upon the next until a crescendo or catharsis is culminated between the two consentors: the reader and her text. The crescendo scatters the rhythm everlasting in the ardent song of probability.
CHAPTER 3: THE RAPE OF OREITHYIA

The journey begins on the breath of the North Wind: The Boreal wind whose breath came from Thoth, represented in the text as Theuth, the Egyptian god who created the world and the world of writing in the same breath. According to legend, Thoth is not only the God of Writing, he is the God of creative speech as well. Of the many ironies in this legend, one is that Thoth is a magician who uses the power of speech and incantation and has indeed created the world through his voice. Thoth creates with his breath, this wind alone causes all things to be born:

...one comes to recognise that the situation he occupies, the content of his speeches and operations, and the relations among the themes, concepts, and signifiers in which his interventions are engaged, all organize the features of a strongly marked figure. The structural analogy that relates these features to other gods of writing, and mainly to the Egyptian Thoth, can be the effect neither of a partial or total borrowing, nor of chance or Plato’s imagination. And in the simultaneous insertion, so rigorous and closely fit, of these traits into the systematic arrangement of Plato’s philosophemes, this meshing of the mythological and the philosophical points to some more deeply buried necessity (Dissemination 86).
It is this myth on the banks of the Ilissus that we seek; Plato creates the myth with the inscription of his words, while at the same time dueling with the notion of speech that his mentor has laid before him. The North Wind leads straight to the cave of Plato's reason, his raison d'être, so let us follow him there.

The North Wind is the Boreal wind that sweeps across a sylvan plain along the banks of the Ilissus. Boreas has ravaged the maiden Oreithyia. Oreithyia is playing with Pharmacia when she disappears on the banks of the river and the North Wind is blamed for her disappearance. Oreithyia is whisked away by Boreas and ravaged in a dark cloud of his own making. But Boreas has always wanted Oreithyia, he has longed for her and pleaded to her father for her hand. In a moment of passion, more apt of the North Wind than his lament of words, Boreas claims he has wasted too much time in words; he captures Oreithyia, rapes her, and keeps her for his wife. Sometimes presented in the disguise of a dark maned stallion, this fertile wind is the breath of life; it is the moment of conception that is symbolized. The song of the cicada lingers in the sweet fresh air as we follow the wind to its destination; the beginning of its own journey in time, the path that leads backwards to its first memory, to Mnemosyne, the mother of the Muses.
The loss of Oreithyia is a violent act. Her presence is usurped by Boreas in a dark cloud. The maiden Oreithyia disappears forever as a child and appears later as the wife of Boreas and the mother of Zetes and Calais, the winged warriors. Oreithyia is playing on the banks of the Ilissus with Pharmacia when she disappears; she is playing with life's illusions when the reality of the wind inscribes her with life. The inscription is the moment of death, "For it goes without saying that the god of writing must also be the god of death" (Dissemination 90), as well as the moment of conception.

Thus, it is Oreithyia's rape, the violent usurpation of the maiden, that becomes the sign, the signifier, the representative of conception, the word and the message (of the messengers, the cicada). The maiden becomes her other, the mother, the movement of life that continues itself. She is the motion that repeats and conforms to her role, the role of the creator. It is she who creates the father and the son. The subversive movement of Boreas to usurp the maiden replaces her as the generative power behind himself and his winged sons.

Here in Plato's theatre of the absurd Oreithyia disappears at the point of inception. This is the moment of conception and this is where true knowledge lives; it is the reality beyond heaven or earth and to travel there is the
only option. Thus the moment of conception is as well the loss of innocence; this loss, this absence, symbolizes penetration by the world. It becomes the setting for the struggle with the troublesome dark horse. The pastoral setting, the child's play, the loss of innocence, the rape of Oreithyia all entice new thresholds of consciousness. The discord at the moment of conception is absolute, it is utter destruction and its only resolution is freshness of thought. The wanton desire of life to continue itself dissolves desolation and generates strength and vivid power within new and intoxicating realms of existence. It is the only path a charioteer may ride no matter where he thinks he's going. How do we get there? Where do we ride? Where is the moment of conception and why is it important to our means?
CHAPTER 4: THE CONCEPTION

The Boreal wind is the beginning of the journey; it represents the gratification each soul must feel for the moment of conception, because it is the moment of conception, the beginning of its very own memory, its own journey into time. This Platonic text is painted dialectically to turn and devour the very moment of its own conception, its own memory of itself. In doing so, however, the text does not silence itself, but thrusts to life the inscription of the word, symbolically, within the inscription of the wind upon the maiden’s play. It is the instant of conception that remains the absolute reality in the text. Even pitted against the father, the son and the good soul, the maiden at the moment of inscription and her stormy rape by the north wind is the moment that defies reason and illuminates the text. The North Wind is the movement of life that is represented in the text of the Phaedrus; its persistent expression rustles endlessly in its own blustery climate, yet the wind represents more than life. This wind also represents the language and the words that supplement life, the language that permits the exchange of truth between souls: the message that explodes tenderly in the song of the cicada. To trail the North Wind is to pursue universal knowledge which may be rewarded through the diligent quest of the good soul. This quest is Plato’s one and only reality.
The text embraces the son, the loving son of writing, the son whose presence is always present to its own pure thought, as a way to get past the father and the son. The father and the son and the soul can only know this moment in an instant of remembrance:

This process is a remembering of what our soul once saw as it made its journey with a god, looking down upon what we now assert to be real and gazing upwards at what is Reality itself. This is clearly the reason why it is right for only the philosopher's mind to have wings; for he remains always, so far as he can, through memory in the field of precisely those entities in whose presence, as though he were a god, he is himself divine. And if a man makes a right use of such entities as memoranda, always being perfectly initiated into perfect mysteries, he alone becomes truly perfected. He separates himself from the busy interest of men and approaches the divine. He is rebuked by the vulgar as insane, for they cannot know that he is possessed by divinity.

This, then, is the summation and completion of our discourse on the fourth sort of madness: when a man sees beauty in this world and has a
remembrance of true beauty, he begins to grow wings (Phaedrus 32).

It is memory, the memory of the self, that the chorus of the cicada celebrate; overcome with the pleasure of song, the cicada chirp to the memory of the muse's mother, Mnemosyne. It is this same memory, this Reality, that is remembered in the mythic hymn in the Myth of the Souls. The rhythm of the cicada chanting their melodious chorus in the background of the text symbolizes the rhythm that Plato himself vests in his words; the primal rhythm (the divine madness) of the dithyramb reverberates everlastingly. The cicada, the raptured race of primal men now relinquished to the job of the messengers (singing the only song they know, the ethereal rhythm of creation), are symbolic celebrations of the words that Plato writes. The words lovingly carry his symbols (messages) to the audience that he has created for himself: primarily an audience that would relinquish the knowledge it has attained for the knowledge it might remember: the song, the mythic hymn, that has always been available to itself, the Myth of the Souls.

Plato explores replacement and usurpation on several dynamic levels to get to the love of conception which is a conscious veneration for the Earth Mother: the mother we all remember. This is Plato's seamy side of love; its incestuous nature pursues the son to his own mother that is
reflected in Platonic terms as reality, the one and only absolute. The love between the father and son, the love of the son for the father, is the love that must be violently relinquished and usurped in order for the son to gain his hold on the mother. The Platonic reality here is Oedipal in nature: it is time for the father, the mentor and the teacher to step aside. It is important to remember that Plato's family was not biologically bound; his view of transcendence usurped biological ties and bound the intellect to the eternal presence of his own specific reality.

Thus, it is not only eternity that blows in the North Wind but immortality as well. This immortality is reflected in the very myth that Plato creates for himself, the Myth of the Souls is the myth that implicates his very own soul. The modulation of his words drives the text along, but it is love that is directed at what exists: love excludes possibilities and moves into the reality of the absolute. And what is that absolute? To travel backwards in time (mythos) is to travel the path of the soul that leads to the one and only pilot. The pilot herself is the symbolic moment of conception, the soul's first memory of itself. The soul pilot is one of the few references to "she" in Plato's male dominated the text: "reality lives, without shape or color, intangible, visible only to reason, the
soul's pilot, and all true knowledge is knowledge of her" (Phaedrus 30). She is the she of creation and the she of creative thought, ideas and the spirit. She is Plato's own true love. The mother is the pilot of the soul (its first memory of itself): it is she who reins the horses, she is the pilot light, the flicker of life that hurls itself through time (backwards and forwards) regardless of man's frail destiny.

This, too, is Plato's moment of transcendence, the moment where he remembers himself. Yet this moment of transcendence is more than a veneration for the Earth Mother and the moment of conception. The moment of conception cannot be Absolute and again this is where Plato's text misspeaks him. The moment of conception declares a stormy unsettling and troublesome mystery as well as the presence of the primordial movement: the beginning of all goodness and creation. This instant of conception represents the first two intoxicating beats in time: it is the primordial and exhuberant beat of the heart, it is rhythm at its most dynamic, and it is the primary beat of a passionate drum. This ecstatic rhythm itself is life's song. The ardent beat of the heart is the same heart that pounds within each soul with love, with hope, with desolation. This love, this attachment of each soul to itself, is the crescendo that reverberates in each human heart and the heart of Plato's
Phaedrus. This moment of conception reveals a forward motion (logos); it is the beginning motion of language, as well it travels backwards in time (mythos) because it embodies the mystery, the magic, the desire of everlasting timelessness itself.

This forward motion usurps the idea of transcendence because it embodies movement and movement is not Absolute: movement is indeterminate. Thus this pulsional motion irrevocably inscribes Plato’s Absolute with the primary movement of language, thought, speech and writing: they cannot be separated, for they are bound by the mystery of conception. Each ardent pulse is interrupted by the next beat in time, each accent estatic, recurring and of indeterminate duration. The motion of the metonymic language (logos), then, becomes a supplement to the motion of the metaphorical language, the language of the soul (mythos), just as the motion of the soul (intent on remembrance) is a supplement to the motion of its language. Plato’s text celebrates this eternal recurrence in reference to the soul: "For everybody that is moved from without is soulless; and everybody that drives its motion from within itself has a soul, since that is indeed the soul’s nature. But if this is so, that what really moves itself is not the body and is nothing else but the soul, then the soul must necessarily be uncreated and immortal" (Phaedrus 28).
Thus the *Phaedrus* is about neither rhetoric nor love. However Plato does use rhetoric as a tool of re-membering. He employs rhetoric to the ends that it would seek itself, the pleasurable seeking of knowledge; he employs it as well in a dialectical sense, a useful tool in the seeking of knowledge. He uses rhetoric to "...re-create the subject in the (readers) students mind, and his strategy in doing this is first of all to get the (reader) student to recognize what he already potentially knows, which includes breaking up the powers of repression in his mind that keep him from knowing what he knows" (Frye, *The Great Code* xv). However, Plato creates his text from bits and pieces of myth and memory. He re-members the fragments of myth-making and consolidates them into a new dialogue. Plato invents new mythologies and utilizes the members and limbs of his previous thought to encourage readers to come to their own point of discovery. The historical presence behind the *Phaedrus*, the myths Plato proposes to leave on the banks of the Ilissus gradually shift to the foreground. They re-create themselves in the mind of the readers. These words eventually bring the readers to the words that celebrate mania where subject and object are linked by a common energy and "...the articulating of words may bring this common power into being; hence a magic develops in which verbal
elements, "spell" and "charm" and the like, play a central role. A corollary of this principle is that there may be a potential magic in any use of words. Words in such a context are words of power or dynamic forces" (Frye, The Great Code 6).

This primary sense of language where a sense of magical power is empowered in both subject and object is common to the focus of mental activity that is bound by a plurality of gods. Moreover, Plato’s Socrates is in full command of this magical energy. The Socrates that speaks with his head covered is no less than an incarnation of Orpheus whose song quells wild beasts: "In Orpheus music, poetry and rhetoric are composite, virtually indistinguishable parts of the power of art. "Rhetoric and music are his pursuits..." (Segal 2). Orpheus is a poetic and magical singer able to move all of nature with his song:

The most familiar version of the myth is that of Virgil and Ovid. Eurydice, the bride of Orpheus, is fatally bitten by a snake; the singer, relying on the power of his art, descends to Hades to win her back, persuades the gods of the underworld to relinquish her, but loses her again when he disobedies their command not to look back. Renouncing women (and in one version turning to homosexual love), he is torn apart by a bank of angry Maenads. The head
and Lyre, still singing, float down the Hebrus river to the island of Lesbos, where Apollo protects the head from a snake and endows it with prophetic power" (Segal 2).

Here "there is often assumed to be a corresponding plurality of psychic forces that disintegrate or separate at death" (Frye, Words With Power 19). In this mythological time the expression of metaphor is the vehicle that identifies a form of personality with an aspect of nature. Yet Plato's Orphic Socrates is an example of the simple pastoral appearance that is saturated with complexity: "Socrates' magic rests on the obstinate destruction of all illusions. It is the magic of implacable truth..." (deRomilly 36). And Plato's use of Socrates within the dialogue embellishes the character with a dual and profound nature, the nature of the pastoral poet (the pastoral being birthed in the words of the text) as well as the nature of a metaphysical voyeur intent on the Absolute. Thus to destroy illusions, Plato brings the reader to an intoxicating sense of existence where the illusion and the image become the vigorous thresholds that entice the anxious reader to the next inevitable referent where textual illusion and fleshy reality consummate the reading experience.

With Plato we enter a different phase of language, one that is "hieratic," partly in the sense of being
produced by an intellectual elite. I am speaking here not of ordinary language but of the culturally ascendent language, a language that, at the time or later, is accorded a special authority by its society. In this second phase, language is more individualized, and words become primarily the outward expression of inner thoughts or ideas. Subject and object are becoming more consistently separated, and "reflection," with its overtones of looking into a mirror, move into the verbal foreground (Frye, The Great Code 7).

Plato uses the metaphorical language of myth as well as the reflective language of logos to build a text that must necessarily lead the reader into both realities, the worlds of mythos and logos. An intoxicating reverberation survives the clash of these two worlds, and it is this pulsional articulation that we are to re-member, not the worlds themselves. The text of the Phaedrus is not a collection of words restrained by the tethers of implied meaning; it is a journey into an intellectual experience where the words themselves release the thought that built them. Because the release is instigated by the catalyst of the reader, it is indeterminate and undecidable. The release comes from the multiplicity of worlds that readers bring to the texts they read. The meanings of words are not bound by intention;
they are merely built by it. The building process survives its own image of itself by leaving the written words in a state of stasis, words seemingly dead. This state of stasis, however, is converged within the mythological world that revels in the recurrence of the rituals of death and renewal. The words, like trees absent of leaf in the cold of winter, only await the next breath for renewal. The words of the text are left to be revived by the reader reading. Thus the reader penetrates the text with her own delicate sensibilities, enjoying each intricacy, the texture now freshened with fragrant thought. This process births new images, images intent on their own sense of existence. Thus, to read the text is to join into its own song about itself: the vibrant melody whose contradictions have formed its pulsional existence.

Implicit in the words of the text is the power of the mythical language and as well the power of the soon to be more acceptable way of using language, the metonymic language: the language that Plato himself brings into existence with his view of transcendence. This language transcends the metaphorical and creates an abstract reality that is not bound by the concrete images of metaphorical relationships. However, this language is textured by both the mythical images and the images of transcendence and the difference that these two modes of languages conceive is the
primary motion that brings thought and language into existence.

The passion of this existence and the tension of which it is born mounts as the text unfolds. This tension releases itself as the text moves from one independent unit (the speeches) to the next. It is sustained by the distinction it creates in its own opposition. The first tension is revealed in The Speech of Lysias where the lover is accused of doing evil. This statement is naturally suspect by the reader/listener because it lives in opposition to a larger presupposition pool about how people feel about lovers. Rhetorically, The Speech of Lysias is built to establish the tone of discomfort within the dialogue itself. But, in the second speech, Socrates' First Speech, the tension is not created in the speech, but announced before its delivery. Socrates feels forced into this speech by Phaedrus: so compromised is Socrates that he covers his head. Socrates First Speech is a lie from the beginning and even for its apparent use (the end justifies the means) Socrates himself cannot complete it. Plato uses the entire dialogue in the tradition of Socrates' first speech. The end justifies the means only if the end is truth itself.

The aggravation the reader/listener finds in the speeches and the early part of the dialogue culminate in the
Second Speech of Socrates. The graphic description of the troublesome dark horse is an unsettling vision: "...a great jumble of a creature, with a short thick neck, a flat nose, dark color, grey bloodshot eyes, the mate of insolence and knavery, shaggy-eared and deaf, hardly heeding ship or spur" (Phaedrus 38). As well, the irritation is fostered when he tells of the discomfort of growing wings: "...just as there is irritation and pain of the gums felt at the time of cutting teeth, so the soul of one beginning to sprout wings feels ferment and painful irritation" (Phaedrus 35). Plato certainly intends to create disharmony: by doing so he establishes tension between the opposition of mythos and logos as well as tension about the topics of love, rhetoric and writing. He forces the reader/listener to assess and rethink her own value system about these topics, in forcing the reader/listener to rethink and remember her own preconceived conclusions about the topic’s presented in the Phaedrus Plato serves another purpose. The purpose of involving the reader/listener as a part of the textual qualities of the text. The reader, "a virtual site" (Culler) becomes the respository of the words of the text. To establish herself in the context she must re-member herself in relationship to the text’s words consumed as she reads. In fact, her involvement will conceive new worlds. New thoughts and ideas will converge to give this reading a
specific reality within the realm of her own thought, the one bound to her explicit memory. Furthermore, the experience of reading creates a mimetic response which captures the reader in the rhythmic and mythic movement of the text: the image of motion that is begot of the textual conflict. This mimetic response is a holistic entity; it is a response that must belay the elements of the topical structure to reach new heights.

To remember, however, is an act of forgetting: "As the critics of the god Thoth, the inventor of writing remark in Plato’s *Phaedrus*, the ability to record has a lot more to do with forgetting than with remembering; with keeping the past in the past, instead of continuously recreating it in the present" (Frye, *Words With Power* 22). I must argue Frye’s statement. Forgetting must necessarily be part of the process of remembering--it is only in remembering that we distinguish the past from the present and at the same time we are enabled to return to it at will--the full implications of both forgetting and remembering is that the past must be posited against the present, the present that continually exists on the edge of its own future. This future deals with its own past by surrendering parts of itself already imagined.

Thus we are bound to Plato’s text by an intoxicating web of language, the words which we read in the context of
the Phaedrus, as well as by our infinite desire as readers which "lies outside the code of language" (Barthes 24). The reader loves her text like the text loves the reader. One does not exist without the other. The words themselves have no life except when written, spoken or when read: all activities embody a vitality that in the text of the Phaedrus Socrates gives only to speech. The only death to which a sign might succumb, its own entombment of itself, a static existence. Death is known only through the absence of the living and the words themselves live within all their embodiments at the instant voice or writing give them life, their own moment of conception. Speech is only one form of discourse. As a writer writes she gives voice to her thought in signs, and as a reader reads she gives voice to the signs by virtue of her reading. All activities link thought to language, the language of the user whether it is symbolic, logocentric, or mythological.

Plato has exhibited this process of using written language in the Phaedrus: he has given his words the vehicle of movement. The dis-unity of the text functions as a vehicle that integrates the reader/listener with the text. By doing so the reader/listener becomes self-moving like the written text, and replicating the self-movement that Plato sees as being an integral part of the soul. To interpret the text within the context of a fixed and literal meaning
is to defy all that Plato expects his words to do. A fixed and literal interpretation of the text strikes a certain death blow to the language that Plato has given its first breath. The Boreal wind must seek its own point of origination and in doing so this breath lives as it goes, as words breathe life into the signs and symbols they form. Thus, form and content—like subject and object—spill over the sides of the text; they cannot be bound within the words, but contrarily they must move as the words do with life and with motion. This movement that the words create, the movement that Plato replicates in the text of the Phaedrus implies an organic reality that encompasses both logos and mythos. The movement is not harmonious (the harmony is in the background, the song of the cicada), and in presenting the text in this context—one that is organically imperfect—he brings to light the nature of his reality, his one and only absolute that is fraught with a path of difficulty and differance, but it is a path that mirrors an attitude of mind that will renew itself through its own present and the presence of ages to come, its own future.

Banality is the reward of words that are translated with inherent agreement and specific meaning. It is the conception of the words, the thoughts that give rise to the signs of language itself, that Plato is celebrating. To do
this his text persuades with examples of rhetorical speeches that engage a reader in the enjoyment of the words. However, the words entice the reader to false conclusions, so the reader must continue her thought within the context of the text and conceive new thoughts as she leaves behind the parts of the text that have proven to have no value. These textual fragments are the parts of the rhetorical experience that Plato builds to produce the images of thought: they become excess baggage, vehicles that have provided a function but turn useless once the destination is reached. The first two speeches on love provide a climate of chaos; it is the storm into which the reader is lead. Then, towards the end of Socrates First Speech, the reader is left to witness a metamorphosis: the interruption of thought begins at the end of this speech where Socrates has beheaded and devalued his own voice by covering it. This dis-membered vision, the voice of Socrates speaking in a self imposed disguise, is an implicit exaggeration of the self-deception that the speaking rhetorical voice may suggest. However, this dis-membered vision is more than Plato’s own headless horseman. This dis-membered image is Orphic in nature, making music, poetry and rhetoric indistinguishable parts of Plato’s Socrates. Here self-deception is apparent and self-imposed, yet it becomes capable of transcending its own deceptive features by
refusing them. Moreover, the features are not explicitly self-deceptive, they are gestures of humanity and her struggle with herself. Socrates, speaking as Orpheus, cannot continue his diatribe against Love although the rhetorical nature of his own words would seduce him to do so. Moreover, the act theatrically and imaginatively distances Socrates once again from the reader/listener/audience. Socrates says, "...when I was about to cross the river, there came to me the divine familiar sign which always hold me back from something I’m about to do" (Phaedrus 22). The river suggests the boundary of the underworld and an endless voyage into oblivion: the utterance of a lie that betrays the souls of the rhetor/poet, Socrates. The dialogue barely covers Plato’s skin of thought, the passion and power of mythical remembrance erupts from the words creating fissures and eruptions of the stormy turbulent mythos that haunts this textual sea.

The essence of Plato’s text is not to be found in subjects or topics, it is to be found in the delicate arrangement of the intoxicating word, words that generate themselves into a melodious and ardent recurring conversation. It is this accent of everlasting recurrence that Plato wishes to extend and to re-member. In so doing, his discourse is repeatedly mimetic, it recants and
celebrates. Indeed, the discourse includes invention, organization, style, memory and delivery: the five classical offices of rhetoric. But to what end? A rhetorical end that justifies the means?

The rhetorician Cicero summarized rhetorical categories. The five cannons of rhetoric for composing a speech are:

"Step one is invention, when heuristics are used to generate arguments; step two is arrangement, when the best arguments are selected and placed in effective order; step three is style, when the best words are chosen to convey the arguments; step four is memory, where mnemonic devices are used to learn a written speech by heart; and step five is delivery of the speech, when the effective use of the voice, gesture, costume, and so on are treated" (Bizzel 32).

Plato’s rhetorical journey is not classical in nature, in fact, it defies the five classifical offices of rhetoric by subverting the way the categories might be conceived. Delivery is dealt with in the first speech, Phaedrus has walked outside the city walls "--to practice" (the delivery) of The Speech of Lysias when he meets Socrates. Delivery, by classical standards, is the final office of rhetoric not the first. Socrates praises the delivery of the speech and
the enthusiasm with which Phaedrus delivers the speech. However, the delivery is read from a "book" a manuscript: Socrates refuses to let Phaedrus summarize the speech. The irony is that Socrates does not trust the memory of Phaedrus to create the living speech of which Socrates thinks so highly. He commands Phaedrus to read the text of Lysias' manuscript, "I'd guess that you're clutching the very speech. If that's the case, please realize that though I'm very fond of you, when we have Lysias right here, I have no intention of lending you my ears to practice on" (Phaedrus 5).

The next category of the offices of Plato's rhetoric is memory. The memory exhibited in the first speech is much like a recitation; it is a culmination of marks that repeat themselves. This speech does not answer the needs of true memory (the memory of Phaedrus), but it does recall the memory of Lysias. Socrates First Speech, however, invokes the Muses to aid his speech, but Socrates does so with a covered head. This speech is a masquerade that poses as a living and spoken experience that might conform to the expectations of what "...ought to submit to the laws of life just as a living discourse does" (Derrida, Dissemination 79). Thus the second speech conforms to the dysfunctional aspect that Derrida describes in Dissemination as an aspect of written discourse, what Derrida interprets as Plato's
description of the "cadaverous rigidity of writing" (79).
This memory is not the memory that Plato celebrates; it is a
memory that is bound to speech without thought. This
represents a point in the text not only where speech is
subverted because it talks without thinking, but also where
speech talks without seeing.
Style is subverted within the speeches themselves
because they contain no true sincerity: "What it is
essential to see it that the quest for "sincerity" lead not
to an examination of feelings but to an examination of
words. Sincerity begins not in feelings but in sentences"
(Lanham 177). The real style belongs to the mythos of the
text, the interludes that give birth, with the exception of
the Socrates' Second Speech, to the myths themselves:
"Style adds to a thought all the circumstances needed to
produce the whole effect which that thought ought to
produce" (Lanham 65). Thus Plato's style is embodied and
allegorized in the "mythic hymn," the myth he creates for
himself about himself.
Arrangement, usurped from its classical position of the
second office of rhetoric, is tenuous at best. The topics
of love and the beloved turn to rhetoric. The variety of
topics that Plato explores gives rise to the fact that the
subjects of the text are not its essential components. The
topics do not live with their limbs (members) intact like the living speech of Socrates. The topics are dis-unified; the arrangement of the text is conceived to leave its parts behind and move on to the next presence that presents itself, it is not organized at the beginning to lead the reader to a fixed and unyielding position. The movement of the text replicates the movement of the soul, and movement is not arranged. It exists for and as itself: it moves forward and backwards in time.

Invention in the Phaedrus is apparent again in mythos, in particular the Myth of the Souls and the Myth of the Cicada. The inventive way the imagination is employed serves Plato's allegorical ends. Again, note that invention, the first office of rhetoric, is celebrated at the end of the dialogue in the Myth of the Souls, though it is apparent throughout the discourse in the myth of the cicada and the legend of Theuth. Plato has distinctly reversed the logocentric order of Rhetoric. The Phaedrus lends itself to rhetoric by example, but an example exists as a form, not a meaning. It is a touchstone that is used to sooth the mimetic encounter of the reader. Thus invention dissolves into the world of discovery, and the signifier of the process that relinquishes itself to the reader is the estatic recurrence of the souls ardent journey. A journey that cannot resolve itself in the realm
of absolute meaning because of its vibrant attachment to its own music, the melodious and intoxicating orphic song.

The text, as well, employs writing by example and presents philosophical inquiry by the same rhetoric. The rhetorical presence of signs that create the image of a living speech turns the assumptions of implied meaning in the text to a living irony. This irony exists as a living animated creature, a creature written into existence. Thus the notion that the Phaedrus is about Rhetoric turns against itself by virtue of the rhetorical example. This rhetorical example dispels accusations of implied meaning by using rhetorical form to disintegrate rhetorical form and its conventions. The text reverses the classical rhetorical conventions: it dis-unifies by clashing a logocentric way of thinking against its organic whole: the mythos that surrounds and invades the logocentricity of the text.
CHAPTER 6: THE METAPHYSICAL QUESTION

In Plato’s theatre, illusion expresses itself not only on the banks of the Ilissus but also behind the city walls. The illusion behind the city walls is the illusion of deception; it is the illusion of the father and the son (a logocentric interpretation) and it is to be avoided. But the illusion on the banks of the Ilissus is child’s play. It is part of the natural progression of life, representing the play between mother and the child. However, it is apparent in the speeches of love that we have set aside (all illusions must be dealt with) and they may, indeed, be addressed through dialect.

The potential of all souls is hidden in civilization and civilization is bound to its language and its words; thus, the gift of the word is the illusion that carries thought to its destination. Moreover, it is the written word that is the messenger of immortality: it is another dimension of the orphic voice murmuring its songfulness in the cicada chorus while mortals pursue rhetorical quests. These words are part of life’s primal movement, they not only give thought to language but language to thought. The Platonic theatre celebrates the thinking mind within and without its community. By creating the Myth of the Souls within the allegory on love, Plato has subsidized the metaphysics of presence and the absence of presence as well. The absence is the supplement that inscribes the Earth
Mother in her rightful place and she is supplemented there by her children, the father and the son. The philosophical difference between mythos and logos encapsulates gender that is rarely referred to in its proper context. Mythos and memory are aspects of the Earth and the Mother and logos can only supplement the primary source of creation.

What then, are the pertinent traits for someone who is trying to reconstitute the structural resemblance between the Platonic and the other mythological figures of the origin of writing? The bringing out of these traits should not merely serve to determine each of the significations within the play of thematic oppositions as they have been listed here, whether in Plato's discourse or in a general configuration of mythologies. It must open mythemes and the philosophemes that lie at the origin of western logos. That is to say, of a history—or rather, of History—which has been produced in its entirety in the philosophical difference between mythos and logos, blindly sinking down into that difference as the natural obviousness of its own element (Derrida, Dissemination 86).

The metaphysics of presence is a term that reflects an ideology that favors speech over writing (Derrida, Dissemination viii); to say it is Platonic is to mis-speak
the notion. It is this tradition, viewed by the modern world as Platonic, that Plato undoes symbolically, without the virtue of oration. The river and the tree exist before Phaedrus and Socrates wander to its banks; Plato presents to us the myth and then asks us to set it aside while Socrates and Phaedrus enter into a lengthy oral dialogue of love and its unseemly nature. At the end of the written text, the dialect meets with the simplicity of the first prophetic utterances of existence when people were content to hear an oak or a rock speak, provided it only spoke the truth (the universal truths of mythos). The dialectic in the end purifies the seamier sides of incestual love and brings them back to the moment of conception, the beginning of the text.

What is more, Derrida continues, "the reading must always aim at a certain relationship, unperceived by the writer, between what he commands and what he does not command of the patterns of language that he uses" (Crowley 7). In this context, both Derrida and Plato undo what they have done. Plato distinctly uses the voice of Socrates to condemn writing, and Derrida uses the metaphysics of presence to condemn Plato. Derrida does this to explain a differance that Plato himself has already exposed through the play of mythical language. Johnathan Culler claims "A deconstruction involves the demonstration that a hierarchical opposition, in which one term is said to be
dependent on another conceived as prior is in fact a rhetorical or metaphysical imposition that the hierarchy could well be reversed" (*The Pursuit of Signs* 183). The dialogue of the *Phaedrus* is constructed as a series of rhetorical impositions and these impositions create a metaphysical posture. However, Plato exposes that very posture in the action of the text. The *Phaedrus* is a dialogue whose very language is deconstructive, and it is the philosopher Plato who gives birth to this avenue of thought by erasing the metonymic language he creates at the moment of its inscription.

The irony is that the Platonic schema "that assigns the origin and power of speech, precisely of logos, to paternal position" (*Dissemination* 76), simply does not exist. This deconstructive reading of the *Phaedrus* not only usurps the father and the son but the metaphysics of presence as well. Paternal inscription (logos) can be of no value without the presence of the mother (mythos and memory). The mother herself is inscribed by the wind, the breath she creates through her children, the supplements to herself.

In the last section of the *Phaedrus*, Plato’s Socrates likens writing to painting and points to the fact that these arts only copy intelligence since one cannot ask written words a question. A written word, he suggests cannot answer the question as can a lively animated and living
intelligence. The intelligent word, says Socrates, is written with intelligence in the mind of the learner and is able to defend itself and knows when to speak and when to be silent; the written word, however will plant itself anywhere. The wayward seed of the written word has no character, it sows its wild oats in any wind. The words themselves are incestuous, they rely on Plato’s moment of conception where ideas and thoughts are inscribed in language itself. The words are the metaphors of imagination and creative thought, they are signs of the reality that lives Plato’s world. The word is the world of motion: the motion of the soul (mythos) and the motion of language (logos) that are inseparable and bound by conception.

The text of the Phaedrus replicates itself by presenting itself to us by the written word. It has life, breath, motion. This movement is within the text itself, unfurling, one fragment at a time through the cunningness of the language and its fragmented arrangement. This language reveals through the voice of Socrates that the written word is less than what it seems. But in reality it is more and less at the same moment. It is Plato’s left-handed gift to his mentor that his words celebrate a truth that would have evaporated without the false presence of the letter. The clear and concise evidence for the existence and nobility of pure thought and intelligence are described and presented to
us in the shroud of the malleable and infectious word. The
text, then, wraps around the words as the earth wraps around
her sons: both creatures providing texture and substance in
which her sons may grow, explore and create once again. The
text replicates itself by presenting itself to us as the
written word, as the mother replicates herself by offering
her own inscriptions to the world, the father and the son.

Thus Plato deconstructs the metaphysics of presence
(his own presentation of metonymic language), a presence
that has been issued by the modern world to Plato himself.
He does so at the moment he inscribes his text: the moment
of conception. This exquisitely ironical gesture creates a
new mode of language, a language that extends the
metaphorical expressions of classical thought. The moment
this new language inscribes itself, it removes itself as
well from its own presence by virtue of the volcanic
pressure of the words that stir the temperamental textual
climate and engender the primordial sense of mythos that
prevails throughout the Phaedrus. Plato has removed the
idea of speech as a privileged concept and replaced it with
writing; he has done this by attacking the very issue,
writing, that he exalts. Plato unthinks the Socratic notion
of dialectic as the true "father" of writing, he does this
symbolically through myth and language. He redoubles his
ideas to enhance their significance. The myth acts as a
supplement to the words of his text as the words act as a supplement to the thought that creates them, these thoughts are the re-creation of Plato and his reader, this reader.
CHAPTER 7: META-METAPHYSICS

...there was the idea that our thought as such is logocentric (although Derrida now speaks of phallologocentrism)—that is, it always (emphasis mine) values speech over writing because speech is "closer" to truth and presence. And then that speech itself is a form of "writing": although speech presumably has the closest potention relation to truth and presence, the fact that is (emphasis Bass) made of signs implies the "preexistence" of representation, of the potentially untrue and nonpresent, a radical possibility of otherness, the otherness that makes speech, truth, and presence possible, simultaneously driving them from any purely vocal, true, or present origin. This is Derrida’s expanded notion of writing and textuality (Smith/Kerrigan 69).

The notion that all thought is phallogocentric is an intellectual rape that centers once again around the egocentric idea that it is the father and the son whose relationship duplicates the speech/writing value. It also refers to the Oedipal hypothesis of Freud and supports the notions that the Oedipus myth, too, is about the father and the son. Derrida’s obsessive dialogue about the father and the son clearly bias his own singular approach to the text of the Phaedrus. By focusing his arguments on paternity,
masturbation and the "blinding source of logos" (Derrida, Dissemination 82) he omits the possibility of the omnipotent other, the Earth and the Mother, the source and the virtual site of creativity and true (Truth) conception.

To return to some of my previous thoughts on the Phaedrus the mythos of the text "...was not inventing a myth so much as releasing it..." (Frye, Words With Power 37). In releasing mythos into the life of reason Plato again gives it validity and substance and, in fact, primary importance. Reason needs the "Other" part of itself to develop into an organic whole: in celebrating the myth of the souls Plato elevates the function of the Mother (Mnemosyne/Memory) as the primary source of movement of the soul. In seeking the Absolute, he abolishes the concept and again gives mystery to life and life to mystery. In so doing, he reestablishes the importance of writing, the sign that is bound to remembering and memory, the virtual site of creativity. Thus, the implication of a divine and paternal logos that is inherent in the myth of reason is usurped by its own boorish attempt of control. This attention to mythos/memorv overturns the advance that supports intellectuality as the realm of the father. To clarify this misconcept let us consider a reading from Freud:

An advance in intellectuality consists in deciding against direct sense-perception in favour of what
are known as the higher intellectual processes—that is, memories, reflections, and inferences. It consists, for instance, in deciding that paternity is more important than maternity, although it cannot, like the later, be established by the evidence of the senses, and that for that reason the child should bear his father’s name and be his heir. Or it declares that our God is the greatest and mightiest, although he is invisible like a gale of wind or like the soul (Freud, Moses and Monotheism cited in Culler, On Destruction 59).

What is of interest here is that higher intellectual processes, "that is, memories, reflections, and inferences," are certainly realms of the Mother/Mnemosyne/Memory, which as well belong to the Muses, the source of creativity. Culler adds a seed of doubt to Freud’s hypothesis as well "...we may well wonder whether, on the contrary, the promotion of the invisible over the visible and of thought and inference over sense perception is not a consequence or effect of the establishment of paternal authority: a consequence of the fact that the paternal relation is invisible" (Culler: On Deconstruction 59).

Here we must bring the issue of desire into consideration, for it is desire that Plato deals with in the speeches: the desire for love, for pleasure, for re-
membrane and the desire for truth that might transcend all other desires. Plato's family was not biologically bound, his view of transcendence usurped biological ties and bound the intellect to the eternal presence of his own specific reality. But his reality sprang from memory, the mother of time, the issue of her own pure thought and the mother of creation. The invisibility of the father to all except his own specific Memory is the issue that favors the position of the Mother as the text in which all language exists. The text itself protects the words that inscribe it, the father and the son, the supplements to itself. Logos can only supplement the primary source of creation.

The inscription of the word, symbolized by the rape of Oreithyia and the moment of conception, also exalts the Maiden/Muse as the source of creativity and Motherhood. The word is the flesh of thought, and thought is consummated in the world of illusion. It becomes its own reality within one small releasing act: a desire to know and an impulsion to co-respond. The word exists only in its own context, supplementing language and thought, it therefore supplements itself. Its existence depends on itself and the context in which it is conceived. The mysterious movement of conception exists in words as they are bourne in the process of being written and in words brought to life as they are being read. Thus, the text gives to its own issue, the
words it creates, the motion inherent in the soul herself, the primary motion of life. The relationship between the Mother/Maiden and Memory/Muse is recursive and self-perpetuating. The Mother/Memory figure protects and nurtures the Maiden/Muse, encouraging thought, intellectuality, and creativity.

Thus the Mother rejoices in the father and the son and the maiden. The mother, the text and the context, exists as the protector, the nourisher, the provider: it is she who gives thought to language and language to thought—through her own Memory of herself. In protecting her supplements, the father and the son, she provides their environment through the loss of herself, the text that disappears at the same instant it is read. Thus the supplements disappear as well, consumed by Other realities, Other memories intent on existence: the reader of the text, the virtual site.

The illusion is the illusion created by the father and the son: that the phallogcentric relationship is generative. Because the father is indeed invisible, he retreats to the world that does not conform to memory. The world of illusion is the remedy, the poison, the pigment of nature; it is all things mixed in their own ambiguous cauldron. This illusion exists in the text and in the marginality of the text as well. It exists in the essential opposition between logos and mythos. It exists as its own
absence to itself, supporting the life of the flesh and the
life of the divine.

The Oedipal inferences in the phallogocentric
interpretation also are misapplied. The Oedipal myth of
Jocasta, the mother, who, in the last desperate attempt to
protect her son from his own knowledge (memory) of himself,
takes her own life, erasing her very own memory, is a myth
of the mother and the child whose invisible father casts
away the issue of his own seed to save his own position of
favor in relationship to the mother. Once the seeds have
been cast, the plant jeopardizes its own existence. Only
man in his civilized state would try to usurp the laws of
nature; only a phallogocentric illusion erases itself. It
is the Earth Mother whose memory lives in the environment of
re-generation that protects the seed, extending the memory
of herself and her children.

Thus, the reign of the Earth Mother, also, is planted
in violence, the violence she is willing to inflict upon
herself to protect and extend the issue and memory of
herself. However, her own generative nature is visible in
the process of conception, the words she creates to give
value to herself. In her desire to conceive and protect,
she repeats the motion of herself, the motion of her very
own memory, the memory that is conceived at the moment of
conception. It is the moment of conception that creates
dis-illusion, consequently forcing the absence of illusion itself. Consequently, this movement from illusion to dis-
illusion, inscribes in her rightful realm the Earth
Mother/Memory. The mother as text is willing to destroy
herself so that the issue she begets (the words as they are
written) will find their own memory; it is a memory that
will live in the mind of the reader, a memory that leaves
behind its own context to create its own journey in time.

The text as mother becomes visible at the moment of
conception, otherwise it is an illusion, words invisible to
their own thought. Yet, the text is willing to become
either visible or invisible depending upon the context which
it gives to its very own presence. The natural environment
of the text is an inclusive part of the intellectual and
linguistic experience that lives within itself. The
structure exhibits a recursive motion that includes movement
and action. The structure is not rigid; it is a living cell
that moves and divides, that is saturated with its own sense
existence. If both the words and the text are available
within each other, they are available because they create
each other, which promotes an indeterminacy of the words
that present themselves. This indeterminacy is both
logocentric and erratic; it is logical in the sense that it
is created by its own structure, while it is erratic because
of its underlying existence that expresses itself through
the mythos of the text, the text’s own mystery, which is the inner speech of text. Thus the text appropriates itself from its own environment and also reinforms itself in the process of re-establishing the bond with that environment as it is read.

Moreover, this tension releases as the text moves from one unit of significance to the next. It is sustained by the distinction it creates in its own opposition. Thus the dialectic proceeds in the present but leaves its residue, the traces of its meaning in the past, in the memory of the reader. In the same linguistic space, the context of the text, the pressure releases, accepting its own penetration. The blocks of words that leave traces in the text sacrifice themselves at the moment of conception and the text dissolves to perpetuate the meaning of the linguistic moment. It is a process created by the incessant pressure that demands surrender of the self as way of creating the voice it needs to hear with. The voice is celebrated by the messengers, the chorus of the cicada, whose song is created and remembered at each instant of utterance, each instant that creates and remembers itself.

The freshening winds that gust along the pastoral banks of the Ilissus build to a storm that persists today. The powerful enchantment of textual climate rustles from a mythological heritage and, as well, the enchantment erupts
in musical harmony and rhetorical splendor. These components are everlastingly fused in a magical embrace of indeterminate bearing despite the attempts to dis-member the elements, commit them to meaning, and sacrifice the voice of the Phaedrus. The textual climate is fecund like the Earth herself, seasonal renewal churns her delicately woven temperament into a tempest. The text in her infinite wisdom awaits her reader. The enchanting power of the written words fall to death playingly, momentarily, knowing that renewal is an aspect of her existence. She listens for the tiny sound of one hollow reed, falling, accidently upon the next....
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