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A deconstructive analysis of Plato's Phaedrus

Marlene Evangeline Anderson

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A DECONSTRUCTIVE ANALYSIS OF PLATO'S PHAEDRUS

———

A Thesis

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San Bernardino

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in

English Composition

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by

Marlene Evangeline Anderson

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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,

hence 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

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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

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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 preceeds 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 preceeding 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

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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 imaginarie 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 singuarility 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

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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'etre,

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 wisked 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" (<u>Dissemination</u> 90), as well as the moment of conception.

Thus, it is Oreithyia's rape, the violent usurption 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 childs 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 <u>Phaedrus</u>; 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

(<u>Phaedrus</u> 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 usurption 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

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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 exhurberant 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).

CHAPTER 5: RE-MEMBERING

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 disobeys
>
> 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
differance 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

(and other rhetors and sophists before and after him)
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 prohetic

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" (<u>The Pursuit of Signs</u> 183). The dialogue of the <u>Phaedrus</u> 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 <u>Phaedrus</u> 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" (<u>Dissemination</u> 76), simply does not exist. This deconstructive reading of the <u>Phaedrus</u> 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 <u>Phaedrus</u>, 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/memory 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 (<u>Freud, Moses and Monothesism</u>
cited in Culler, <u>On Destruction</u> 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: <u>On Deconstruction</u> 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-

membrance 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 phallogecentric 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 phallogecentric 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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