

Canon-fodder: Nietzsche, Jarry, Derrida (The Play of Discourse and the Discourse of Play)

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I use the word "discourse" not by any means to call attention to the apocryphal distinction between that of the imagination and that of science, but to juxtapose them in a word, as do Nietzsche in *The Gay Science*, Alfred Jarry in his concept of "*Pataphysics*," and Derrida in the grammatology of "*dissemination*," particularly as laid out in his *Eperons*. I want to play briefly across these texts, on the idea Hugh Kenner proposes in "The Modernist Canon," that "a canon is not a list but a narrative" (373) eschewing, after having created *out of necessity*, its own inversion. Canonicity itself consists of this play of outside and inside, of the creation of an outside by which the inside is protected but which must always be threatening; and of an outside that must threaten even while it depends on its own exclusion and therefore on the canonical counterstate. Canonicity in discourse involves the play of the aleatory and the static, of paradigms of changeless essentiality, as the inclusive must see itself, opposed to the very heart of danger, the radical opening at the chance of timeless displacement. The point here is that, as exclusive of one another as the aleatory and the static seem to be, they are mutually interdependent to a degree only to be understood if they are taken as discursive traces. And

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discourse as I want to use it here is not poetry, prose, catalogue, nor formula, but the play that, with the protogrammatology of Nietzsche, is to be seen as the texture and textuality of linguistic play.

This kind of play is always either an invasion by force or a civil rebellion. Canonicity creates a sphere of influence, and thereby invites insinuation, since its "circle of inclusion" is always vulnerable to the wedge with which it is re-opened. This susceptibility takes many guises. In a sophisticated and intelligent manifestation of the most predictable matrix for a *social* treatment of canonicity, Richard Terdman, in his Marxian *Discourse/Counter-discourse*, claims that

the power of the dominant discourse lies in the codes by which it regulates understanding of the social world. Counter-discourses seek to detect and map such naturalized protocols and to project their subversion. At stake in this discursive struggle are the paradigms of social representation themselves. (149)

These paradigms, then, become the function not of the revelation of Truth, of a hidden structural presence of essential structuration, but of a struggle for power that is by no means merely, as it were, social. But if one changes the matrix of questions one asks, one can come up with J. Hillis Miller's assertion that inversion or deviation from the canon is impossible to avoid, since this deviation's

violence has been incorporated into the structures intended to keep it out. However logical man tries to make the hierarchical system of concepts within which he lives, cutting everything neatly, like the sharp corners of a die, numbering everything and fitting each thing into its proper pigeonhole, like coffins in a Roman columbarium, this cutting and fitting reverses itself . . . the cutter is cut. ("Dis-membering" 43)

What is "at stake" in this validation of canonicity is "considerable," as David Allison points out in his introduction to *The New Nietzsche*: it is in fact "the viability of conventional thought itself, its own prospects of limitation, decline, future" (xi). For the canon to function as it desires, it must be seen to be grounded in a reality outside of language and discourse, in a space of solid, objective singularity; thus it sees itself. Acceptance, therefore, that "canon" is a function of discourse is itself a radical re-reading of canonicity that gives the extra-canonical a dialectical equivalence, indeed a privileging, and that thereby disturbs or destroys the grounding on which the power of the canon is based. In this way, despite itself, canonicity is always to be caught "in play." The origin of this perception is quite recent: Camus, commenting on Nietzsche in a piece entitled "Metaphysical Rebellion," declares that it is in

Nietzsche that one first perceives that the law itself *frees*: "Damocles," says Camus, "never danced better than beneath the sword" (63). Collapsed together in the Nietzschean formulation and in the current (post-Camus) theoretical discourse in which canon is re-opened for treatment, are the themes of philosophy, art (the dance *and* narration), and danger, the threat and energy of invasion/insertion/incision as the *topoi* through which the questions of canon formation, deformation, and information can be traced.

But though the discussion of this prying open of the themes of canonicity is a recent phenomenon, its gestation has been long. The discourse of play as narrative strategy and as struggle, which along with laughter and the dance are the three requisites of Nietzsche's Overman in *The Gay Science* (that is, play as I mean it here) is genealogically rooted in Lucretius' *On the Nature of Things*. Its inception occurs at that *carrefour* in which Lucretius' text, in its eagerness to allay with his "atoms" man's fears for his place in the physical universe, slips suddenly out of the discourse of comforting science and becomes narrative play: his explanation of the origin of the (atomic) will, which glides almost perfunctorily into one of human will, begins in the institution of his quasi-scientific language, but must simultaneously leap out of that paradigm across a chasm with which he can do nothing, and which occurs only as a fold in the text: "For surely not by planning did prime bodies find rank and place, nor by intelligence" (I.1021-22). How then?

Though atoms fall straight downward through the void
by their own weight, yet at uncertain times
and at uncertain points, they swerve a bit--
enough that one may say they changed direction.
And if they did not swerve, they all would fall
downward like raindrops through the boundless void;
no clashes would occur, no blows befall the
atoms . . .

(II.217-24)

Whence rises, I say, that will torn free from fate,
through which we follow wherever pleasure leads
and likewise swerve aside at times and places
not foreordained.

(II.257-60)

By this veiled force, man must acknowledge that atoms possess

besides their weights and impacts, one more cause
of movement--the one whence comes this Power we own,
. . . .

no internal power

controls the mind in every move it makes.
 a helpless captive bound by what must be:
 this comes from the tiny swerving of the atoms
 at no fixed place and no fixed point in time.

(II.285-86, 289-93)

This emergence of the will, for Lucretius, the precise equivalence of the *topos* of narrative for Nietzsche, is a function of the *klinós*, the chanceborn swerve or turn of atoms, manifesting as we read it in his account that *moment of discourse* in which his own text of the origin of will and clinamen can be inscribed. This is because in Lucretius, as can be clearly seen from the leap he too must make, this very moment of rational inclusion is a function of the discourse in which it is couched but in which it will not be contained, which denies it. The clinamen is, in Lucretius as in Nietzsche, the opening of discourse itself. This clinamen is for Nietzsche, for Jarry, for Derrida, and for the conception of the play of canonicity, what Jarry calls "*la bête imprévue*" (*Faustroll* VI, 34; OC 714), the declaration of the *anticanonical* within the canon, couched at its very heart, the unexpected beast of which, out of the circle of rational inclusivity, creation is made, over which logic has no control, which must insert itself, as it does in Lucretius, as the opening of difference and of play. Clinamen exists precisely as the discursive necessity of play in the canon, the "explanation" of that which must be acknowledged and neutralized but which must also, even while it is privileged, be tamed.

But once the nature of the canonical dialectic is established, it can be seen that the extra-canonical, particularly as evidenced in Nietzsche, will not allow the Lucretian transference to take place. With the advent of the *narrative* of clinamen, in chance and displacement, that is as a transference, a passage from one space to another, comes the advent of the notion of play in a number of guises or disguises. Because of the nature of canonicity, all have to do, in a perfectly Lucretian way, with the problematic (even chimaerical) transfer of plenitude. One of the most obvious of these elements of play occurs at the level of ontology-in-metaphor itself. When Nietzsche posits, in "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," that "between two absolutely different spheres, as between subject and object, there is no causality, no correctness, and no expression; there is, at most, an *aesthetic* relation," a "suggestive transference" (86), he declares that metaphor, instead of being understood by the reader as the discursive manifestation of the veiled relationship of appearance to reality, must instead be seen as a suggestive transference *without transfer*, that in the economy of the metaphor no essential exchange takes place. The world, and the self, are radically *not* revealed in the process of metaphor, according to Nietzsche. This is "the gay science" itself:

the juxtaposition of discourses that defy logical consequence and mock their inclusivity. The 1882 edition of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, The Gay Science* (which is, incidentally, parenthetically subtitled, in Italian, "*la gaya scienza*" precisely so that it will not be mis-named "The Joyful Wisdom") has as its epigraph a quotation from Nietzsche's beloved Emerson, which he has translated into German:

Dem Dichter und Weisen sind alle Dinge befreundet und geweiht,
alle Erlebnisse nützlich, alle Tage heilig, alle Menchen göttlich.
[To the poet and sage, all things are friendly and hallowed, all ex-
periences useful, all days holy, all men divine.]

This suggestion of the kind of play of discourses to come, and indeed Emerson serves as a model in this respect, is replaced in the second edition five years later (years that saw the production of *Zarathustra, Beyond Good and Evil*, and *On the Genealogy of Morals*) by an epigraph from Nietzsche himself:

Ich wohne in meinem eignen Haus;
Hab Niemandem nie nichts nachgemacht
Und--lachte noch jeden Meister aus,
Der nicht sich selber ausgelacht.
--Ueber meiner Hausthür
[I live in my own house,
Have imitated no one nor nothing
And--laugh at the master
Who cannot laugh at himself.
--Over my doorway]

The message on the lintel, that boundary between the sanctuary of inclusion/identification and exclusion, between inner and outer, has metamorphosed from the tendentious poetic cheer of Emerson's formulation to the insular, separating, and challenging formulation of Nietzsche's defiant, mocking laughter. Not to be translated from Nietzsche's poetry above, but very much a part of the sense of the epigraph, is the *aus* ('out') that concludes the penultimate line: indeed, the laughter might be seen here as laughing the rigid pseudo-Master *out* of the house. The sense is one of rejection of any false mastery. Such a position must not only be rejected but thrust away and, appropriately, excluded.

It is in this atmosphere of laughter, viewed as a vital sign of good judgement, that for Nietzsche human consciousness becomes a superfluity in an extra-canonical way, not as a mere function of the fullness and serenity of existence as a design, but as a *supplément*, meaningless because finding (creating) meaning only in its laughter, and therefore able to operate independent of the mesmerism Lucretius predicates, that of an automatic

inclusion which grounds and neutralizes play. For Nietzsche, this neutralization is the pure arrogance of language and must be, as we have seen, laughed out by being laughed at. The fable with which Nietzsche's "On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense," written in 1873, begins exhibits just this narrative laughter:

In irgend einem abgelegenen Winkel des in zahllosen Sonnensystemen flimmernd ausgegossenen Weltalls gab es einmal ein Gestirn, auf dem kluge Thiere das Erkennen erfanden. Es war die hochmüthigste und verlogenste Minute der 'Weltgeschichte': aber doch nur eine Minute. Nach wenigen Athemzügen der Natur erstarrte das Gestirn, und die klugen Thiere mussten sterben.-- (370)

[Once upon a time, in some out of the way corner of that universe which is dispersed into numberless twinkling solar systems, there was a star upon which clever beasts invented knowing. That was the most arrogant and mendacious minute of "world history," but nevertheless, it was only a minute. After nature had taken a few breaths, the star cooled and congealed, and the clever beasts had to die.] (79)

In that final, mock-logical surprise, "the clever beasts had to die," lies the laughter of clinamen; Nietzsche's narrative takes up precisely that Lucretian structure of concealed power. That is, this *narrative* of the advent of Nietzschean self-consciousness and knowing seems to consist of, to be told in, conventional metaphor. But here also the metaphoric narrative does not enact a transference which would permit it to manifest a clearing-away of its problematic message. It consists of veiled, mocked metaphor. Acknowledging this, Nietzsche places a kind of membrane or margin, a doorway, between it and the essay, an interpretive membrane: "the clever beasts had to die"--dash--

--One might invent such a fable, and yet he still would not have adequately illustrated how miserable, how shadowy and transient, how aimless and arbitrary the human intellect looks within nature. (79)

The explanation, like the narrative, has expressed its own lack; pursuit of *any* truth, Nietzsche goes on to tell us, must end in *impasse*, in *displacement*, since the drive for "Truth" is, as he claims a few pages later in the essay, "the duty to lie according to a fixed convention, to lie with the herd and in a manner binding upon everyone" (84). Thus, mocked by its sexual connotations ("to lie with the herd"), the supplementarity of consciousness, taken up at length in *The Gay Science*, notably in the fragment marked "On the 'genius of the species,'" (V.354) shows itself as a reflection of the truncated metaphorical

or aesthetic process we have just read and participated in, a tendentious process that produces no transfer, and one that continues to deny its own teleology. Nietzsche plays here as well with the polarity of *lügen/liegen*: to lie with the herd is to engage in its false assumptions, to participate in the group deception that enables the herd to identify itself.

In Nietzsche's commentary on the herd-lie, consciousness is ontologically re-laid out as a displaced reflection of the invention of signs convenient for herd communication, signs seen within that alternative or shadow of signs: conventional metaphor has laughed itself out. In the narrative, the clever and arrogant beast on his planet invents "knowing," an impossible genesis for which, according to Nietzsche, "we simply lack any organ." Ontology reveals itself, now, in aphorism (read *aporism*) that J. Hillis Miller calls "disarticulation": the ontic system of forces "inhabiting a single body may produce in its interactions the illusion not just of one selfhood, but of many": "Each man is the locus of a set of warring interpretations" ("Disarticulation" 259). This play of metaphor, as Allen Thiher corroborates, "offers the possibility of wrestling rules of the game from the welter of competing discourses, truncated languages, and totalitarian codes" (157) of which the "little world" is made. Thiher here suggests that in this play "the fall can be overcome." Nietzsche's world is measured out by what David Allison calls "*alogia*," a world of "proximate surfaces, of cathected intensities and forces" ("Nietzsche Knows No Noumenon" 308). As *The Gay Science* progresses, mocking progression, in just the same way, from its initial "Jokes, Cunning, and Revenge" through the play of aphorism to its concluding Songs, we see its strategy of unveiling the veils of canonicity.

This Nietzschean theme is taken up by Alfred Jarry in his fascination with the mechanisms of the aleatory relative to what might pass for intelligence, and by the way they operate across the notion of system. Jarry, like Nietzsche, has written over his doorway, with the same idea in mind: to discover the masters who cannot laugh at themselves. In the "Linteau" (lintel) to "Les minutes de sable mémorial" Jarry claims that one must read, indeed devour, the philosophers because one will then learn

1° l'absurdité de répéter leurs doctrines, qui, récentes, traînent aux cafés et brasseries, plus vieilles, aux cahiers des potaches;

2° et surtout, la double absurdité de citer l'étai du nom d'un philosophe, quand chacune de ses idées, prise hors de l'ensemble du système, bave des lèvres d'un gâteux.

[1st, the absurdity of repeating their doctrines, that recently has been dragged out of cafes and bars, more recently, out of the notebooks of schoolboys;

2nd and above all, the double absurdity of citing the prop of the philosopher's name, when each of his ideas, removed from the system, dribbles from the lips of a feeble dotard.] (OC 171)

The sense of enervation Jarry ascribes to the philosophers results from their dogmatic refusal to heed Lucretius' clinamen, Jarry's principle of creativity. This etiolation reaches its absurd climax in Père Ubu's famous de-braining machine, the device with which, in the Ubu plays, Père Ubu's administrators, the Palotins, the most horrifyingly comical instruments of canonicity in literature, objectively but with great relish de-brain all seditious elements in the community--anyone, that is, who is not one of them. Jarry was castigated, when the play was first produced in 1896, for (among many other things) giving this machine a status in the production equal to any of the players: it is listed, in *Ubu Roi*, in the cast of characters. Initially seeming the *simple* metaphor for canonicity, the debraining machine--to which all of Ubu's enemies are subjected to make them examples of good Christian citizenry--only works on Sunday, like the priest de-braining the congregation. But we rapidly see that the machine operates *arbitrarily*, that the Palotins themselves are not exempt from it, and that the metaphor is not as simple as we had supposed; Jarry's is a world of "l'altérité ontologique," as Linda Stillman shows (*Théâtralité* 5), in which a "semioclastic prose" asks the Nietzschean question "Who are you, Man?" and then instantly answers "I am both God and Machine" (Hassan 50). This claim itself is a manifestation of play, of clinamen. The de-braining machine becomes the inverted metaphor of creative/imaginative writing. Jarry's texts, and not just the *Ubu* cycle but even more importantly Jarry's so-called novels such as *Gestes et opinions du docteur Faustroll, pataphysicien*, are written in what Stillman calls "the interstices of a subverted doxa":

At the same time titillating and insulting the doxa, Jarry's novels are traps, tempting to disengage but dangerously grating nonetheless, like the gaping and biting jaws that predominate in the novelist's metaphors. ("Narrative Techniques" 73)

Jarry's text is a self-devouring metaphoric machine, created out of a pervasive theatricalization within the reserve of what Michel Arrivé calls "un immense réseau de jeux de mots" ["an immense network of puns"] ("*Langage et Métaphysique*" 11), the anti-system of which, equivalent to Nietzsche's gay science, is 'Pataphysics.

'Pataphysics, preceded by its apostrophe (which would be silent even in the Greek but which Jarry insists upon in order "à prévenir le jeu de mots simple," to prevent the simple pun--or play--on "patte à physique," physical paws), 'pataphysics is, of course, a "jeu de mots" on metaphysics, on paraphysics (always remembering that "physique" is physics and physical), but it is also, by a process of *dissemination* Jarry starts but does not complete and which cannot be completed, 'paterphysics," or the properties and nature of authority, *pataleophysics*," the study of the nature of the noisy, and

"*patassophysics*," the science of vanquishing, killing, or beating Nature. These are my improvisations on the "root" of 'pataphysics, but apocryphal as it is and they are, they indicate the kind of play in which Jarry operates: the play of *clinamen*, a swerving aside from meaning to the creation of new self-justificatory meaning on which the edifice of logic can rest. The prefix 'pata,' it seems, comes from the colloquial Greek *patati-patata*, a meaningless patter of words. Using it in the way he does, Jarry, like Nietzsche (and other early Postmoderns like Lautréamont), radically displaces the notion of science while still using, admiring, and desiring its "click" of closure. 'Pataphysics, referred to throughout Jarry's works but finally defined in *Faustroll* as, paradoxically, "the laws governing exceptions," brings the arbitrary element of chance back into play: it is, as Hassan declares with appropriate irony, "the science of Nonsense," "a parodic myth" (51). Like Nietzsche's gay science, 'pataphysics is not only *not* a final position; 'pataphysics presents a "system of deviation," a *clinamen*, "suggérer au lieu de dire, faire dans la route des phrases un carrefour de tous les mots" ["to suggest in place of stating, to make, in the road of the phrase, a crossroads of all words"] (OC 171). Michel Arrivé, in his commentary in the *Collected Works*, cautions that

il faut entendre cette métaphore au pied de la lettre: chaque mot d'un texte littéraire ouvre une voie perpendiculaire à la ligne de manifestation du discours.

[it is necessary to understand this metaphor literally: each word of a literary text opens out a way perpendicular to the overt line of the discourse.] (OC 1098)

The opening out of a voice is equivalent to the opening out of a way; indeed being heard and understood (as does, we remember, Nietzsche's herd) in a certain manner *is* "la ligne de manifestation du discours." This perpendicularity of meaning or sense is the force of the figurative *clinamen*, turning discourse aside and re-opening it. 'Pataphysics is not a system beyond systems, but always a "shadow" of system, a force acting upon a system. One must think here of the equivalent in *Faustroll* of Zarathustra's shadow, the *double* interpreters of the text from within. The first is Faustroll's babboon, Bosse de Nage, whose blue buttocks have been surgically transferred to his face. He is indeed "la bête imprévue," Nietzschean laughter personified; indeed, as if to clarify this, his only words are "ha ha."

The other shadow interpreter of *Faustroll* is the narrator of the story, the bailiff Panmuphle, from whose point of view the story unfolds but who tells his story in order to reach Faustroll's own writing, his elaborate text, which Panmuphle is reading throughout. Although at first another of those avatars of the canon itself (he *is* a bailiff), Panmuphle reveals himself as just the sort of commentator on Faustroll's story that Jarry is on the culture around him. The reading of Faustroll's manuscript by Panmuphle takes place in the most

elaborate of metaphoric questionings, and lays the foundation of the 'pataphysical inquiry in which the reader is participating. In the chapter immediately preceding his bald definition of 'pataphysics, and which sets up the *need* for such a definition, a chapter with the Nietzschean title "Concerning the Chosen Few," Jarry concludes

Cependant, René-Isidore Panmuphle, huissier, commençait de lire le manuscrit de Faustroll dans une obscurité profonde, évoquant l'encre inapparente de sulfate de quinine aux invisibles rayons infrarouges d'un spectre enfermé quant à ses autres couleurs dans une boîte opaque.

[Meanwhile, René-Isidore Panmuphle, bailiff, began to read Faustroll's manuscript in a deep darkness, evoking the unseen quinine sulfate ink of invisible infrared rays in a spectrum shut off from its other colors in an opaque well.] (OC 667)

Thus the universal interpreter and devourer (Panmuphle = "pan-mufle" = "All-muzzle or mouth"; it is also argot for "a low trick") receives the text we are reading just as we do, through his own problematic powers of interpretation, always subject to and engaged in revision and reopening.

Panmuphle's (and our) trajectory through the text is mockingly analogized by the journey of Faustroll himself: as he sets off from Paris (on a circular journey back to Paris) aboard his text/sieve, the boat made up of a "loose weave" through which water will not pass, he engages in the "transcoding" Joseph Riddel, after Derrida, calls "paleonymics," the re-institution of the nomenclature, here of mathematics but of any discipline, in new circumstances and for subversive or suspicious reasons. Even when quoted by Panmuphle, the words of the old discourse take on a perpendicular signification through 'pataphysics' radical ambiguity. This comes about through the reification of the 'pataphysical world as supplementary, like the world of "the gay science." Jarry's images for this reification are suitably solipsistic: *Faustroll's* Chapter 34, "Clinamen," begins:

. . . Cependant, après qu'il n'y eut plus personne au monde, la Machine à Peindre, animée à l'intérieur d'un système de ressorts sans masse, tournait en azimut dans le hall de fer du Palais des Machines, seul monument debout de Paris désert et ras, et comme une toupie, se heurtant aux piliers, elle s'inclina et déclina en directions indéfiniment variées, soufflant à son gré sur la toile des murailles la succession des couleurs fondamentales étagées selon les tubes de son ventre, comme dans un bar un *pousse-l'amour*, les plus claires, plus proches de l'issue. Dans le palais scellé hérissant seul la polissure morte, moderne déluge de la Seine universelle, la

bête imprévue *Clinamen* éjacula aux parois de son univers: (OC 714)

[. . . Meanwhile, after no one was left in the world, the Painting Machine, animated from within by a system of weightless springs, revolved in azimuth in the iron hall of the Palace of Machines, the only monument standing in a deserted and razed Paris, and like a top, toppling against the pillars, it tipped and swerved in infinitely varied directions, spewing at whim onto the canvas-covered walls the succession of primary colors arrayed in the tubes of its stomach, like a *pousse-l'amour* in a bar, the lightest ones nearest the opening. In the sealed palace, alone breaking the dead glassiness, modern deluge of the universal Seine, the unforeseen beast *Clinamen* ejaculated onto the walls of its universe:]

(And there follows a series of short "sub-chapters," the ejaculations of the machine of imagination, whose thirteen sections track the mocking of a Christian apotheosis.) The organized and mechanistic chaos of the artful machine, whose technique is very much like that which Jackson Pollack claims to adopt for his work, throwing paint from random cans from the top of a stepladder, or like the "foundness" of "found" poetry, seemingly composed without premeditation, co-mingles here with the highly-ordered mechanical operation of chance to present precisely the *carrefour*, the crossroads, the perpendicularity of 'pataphysics. That is, the aleatory in art, the moment or inception of creation, is always protected as being previous to or outside the "process" of mechanical representation which art so often manifests, as indeed does Jarry's book, but that very aleatory nature is only manifest when mechanical reproduction gives it form and substance. Thus, the mechanical is inherently implicated, along with the aleatory, in the nature of art. The painting machine here, then, symbolizes that merging of the original effusion and the working out of that energy that forms another permutation of the inner and the outer, though for Jarry the inner is seen as being *excluded* from the exterior, public sphere.

It is in light of art as "ejaculation" onto the walls of death that one can clearly see the opening of *dissémination*, the Derridean rift. The effort of Derrida's deconstruction is, as Edward Said claims, "to reveal the *entame*--the tear, or perhaps the incision--in every one of the solid structures put up by philosophy--an *entame* already inscribed in written language itself" (696). Derrida's is the pure play of the canon, in which "*jouer*" slips into "*jouir*" into "*jouissance*"--play as joy as ejaculation, for the Painting Machine, as we have seen in Jarry, (more generally--*attention aux femmes!*) an orgasm of poetry. To see *dissémination* as the "hermeneutic of the death of God" (Taylor 6) is to make Derrida's "il n'y a pas de hors-texte!" an echo of Jarry's explosive, jarring "Merdre!," the radical first word of *Ubu Roi*, itself commenting on the nature of language as a manifestation of acceptability: *merdre* can be said, as

merde cannot, and so *merdre* stands as a kind of monument erroneous and canonically *active*. Derrida and Jarry here reflect Nietzsche's "Gott ist tot!," at once denying the very definition of God and, by its formulation, formed by the supplement of copula, reflecting across its space the transference that denies death.

Words may now, in these spotlights of Nietzsche, Jarry, and Derrida, be read relationally and provisionally, but never representationally. They may not stand for something concealed or hidden or essential, and they must be told that they are always trying to do so. Derrida's approach is an unsettling, a suspicion, a corrosion. Derrida works through non-concepts like *dissémination* as non-parts of a '*pata-canon*, as those who want to make Derrida "de ris Dieu," out of God's laughter, would say, *always already marginal*. Derrida's is a "technique of trouble" (Said 683).

In *Éperons*, or *Spurs*, his analysis of Nietzsche's styles, and particularly the style of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, Derrida shows style to be, as it is for Nietzsche and Jarry, a sharp intrusion, made with pen or stylo, but possibly with "stylet" (stiletto) or even rapier (36); for Derrida, the clinamen's swerving depends upon, veers from, plays with, and stabs at the notion of Truth. Style must be seen as rebellion against the letter, a manifestation of inclusion and the declaration of exclusion, always a distancing, a *déplacement*, a veiled protection in the midst of attack. At the level of the power of writing to protect by veiling, Derrida sees the inception of the canon's insidious incursion. And it is at this point that the deconstructive writer becomes the *chair à canon*, the "flesh of the cannon" or, cannon-fodder, with all of its overtones of sexuality and violence. In his treatment of woman as style in *The Gay Science's* Book II, Derrida depends heavily upon Section 60, "Women and their action at a distance," then allowing "distance" to slip to the German, "Distanz," then to the Heideggerian "Dis-tanz," then to the seductive play of "dies tanz," this dance. His claim is that language forces the writer and the reader to accommodate this slippage, since as Richard Rorty points out, "crosstalk is all that we are going to get; . . . no gimmick like 'the new science of grammatology' is going to end or *aufheben* it" (159). Derrida's is a world of discourse in endless play, "le jeu du monde." Part of this play, for Derrida, is that canonical inversion is already there--it cannot be kept out, since there is, finally, no in and out but only co-generative forces of inclusion and exclusion acting simultaneously on and within any and every text. J. Hillis Miller points out that "these fearful forces" are already in "the sage's hut, the scientist's tower, and the artist's fabrications" ("Dismembering" 43). For Derrida, as for Nietzsche, that impossible *spur* to inclusion-in-exclusion is metaphor itself, and finds its symbol in the metaphor of woman, that which writing can never become. Derrida concludes *Éperons* with the conjecture that

c'est peut-être ce que Nietzsche nommait
le style, le simulacre, la femme.

Mais il devient assez manifeste, d'un gai
savoir, que pour cette raison même il n'y a
jamais eu *le style*, *le simulacre*, *la femme*.
Ni *la* différence sexuelle.

Pour que le simulacre advienne, il faut
écrire dans l'écart entre plusieurs styles.
S'il y a du style, voilà ce que nous insinue
la femme (de) Nietzsche, il doit y en avoir
plus d'un.

Deux éperons au moins, telle est l'échéance.
Entre eux l'abyme où lancer, risquer, perdre
peut-être l'ancre.

[Perhaps this is what Nietzsche named
style, simulacrum, woman.

But it becomes sufficiently manifested, in a gay
science, that for this reason alone there has never
been *the style*, *the simulacrum*, *the woman*.

Nor *the* sexual difference.

For the simulacrum to occur, it must
be written in the gap between several styles.

If there is style, that is where we insinuate
the woman (of) Nietzsche, there must be
more than one.

Two spurs at least, that is the obligation.

Between them the abyss where one throws, risks, loses,
maybe, the anchor.] (138)

It is in this respect that "play" takes on the secondary, disseminal weight of "*spielen*," to gamble, to play the game with the possibility of slipping through it, of becoming lost. The "obligation" of which Derrida speaks, for the writer, is the realization that *a* grammatology need not exist for the performance of the questioning of the canon, that the very notion of meaning can only result in a decentering of meaning that must always result in deviation: *déplacement* is never having arrived. Meaning is always a function of change, of its own participial formulation; it is nothing but the swerve it names. This is the source of Derrida's danger (to the canon and the canonical community) beyond that of Nietzsche's final joy or Jarry's hilarity: Derrida takes the notion of meaning, *clinamen*, "au pied de la lettre." Denotation must always, for Derrida, be traced to *designation*, the opening and constant re-opening of the sign, and to Nietzsche's favorite *bezeichnen*, to mark or call, and its subsequent *die Bezeichnung*, the mark, sign, or symbol, and to his much-used *verschieben*, to shift or postpone, which leads us directly back, by that Nietzschean genealogy in which Derrida writes, to the shift and postponement of *différance*. Derrida's exercise of *clinamen*, in *Éperons*, the turning of the

discursive symbol on discourse itself, traces as its pattern Jarry's favorite "symbol," the spiral or vortex. Thus Derrida draws with him, in the way in which the writer re-invents his predecessors, all the metaphors of Nietzsche and Jarry, along with the density of text, into the abyss with the anchor that he has thrown, risked, and lost.

The canon as an edifice of exclusion simply cannot withstand such insinuation. On the other hand, the forces acting upon it, from Nietzsche, from Jarry, from Derrida, are themselves confessedly in a dialectical engagement with that very structuration. They must live with each other in the most uneasy of tensions and in an acknowledgement of *mutual* need. When Nietzsche discusses in the opening section of *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* the fact that "the fundamental faith of the metaphysician is *the faith in opposite values*" (1.2) and "*de omnibus dubitandum*," all is to be doubted, here a quotation of, most interestingly, Descartes, he sets up not only the nature of doubt and of questioning, *per se*, but a radically new ground, within the canon, for his great question, "have I been understood?" Only across those membranes and through those doorways of canonicity can this question be--not answered, but posed, infinitely. Nietzsche provides the germ, Jarry and Derrida some of the produce that becomes the *fouflage*, and the *chair*, on which the canon feeds.

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A Note on Translation in the Text

I have relied on the standard translations of Jarry, Nietzsche, and others here, when such translations exist. These are listed in the "Works Cited" pages. I have slightly altered some translations, without so indicating, where I felt the translation diverged too far from the original. Where no translation for the material in question exists, as in the case with many passages of Jarry, the translations are my own.

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