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LABYRINTHS, LEGENDS, LEGIONS: AN ALLEGORY OF READING

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation grapples with the activity of critical production. It answers not to an interpretation which would constitute the writer within the institutionalised category of effect and object of knowledge, but rather to an explosion, a proliferation of critical paths at the limit of the doxa: a veritable labyrinth.

The terms of my title open up a methodological field within which I enact the play of associations, contiguities, relations among four texts: *The Name of the Rose, Lost in the Funhouse, The Naked Lunch* and 'The Library of Babel'. The terms themselves disseminate across the text of argument in citations, references, echoes. The labyrinth is used throughout as a trope which deconstructs its own performance within the text. Legends are myths, inscriptions on maps, *legenda* or "things for reading" (through an etymological supplement), "lesser libraries." Barthes cites the biblical words of the man possessed by demons: "My name is Legion for we are many" and demonstrates how the demoniacal plural brings with it fundamental changes in reading strategies.

The notion of the demoniacal plural is used to problematise the debates around subjectivity. The belief in unitary, rational selfhood is debunked and the subject is seen to be plural, irreducible, heterogenous. Subjectivity is further problematised by demonstrating the slippage among the labyrinthine multiplicity of discursive positions occupied by readers: the monological models of meaning developed from each reading position constantly shift. The discursive position recuperated and sanctioned by the Law or the institution is impossible to maintain as subjects are seduced by language into confrontation with other positions through their continuous renamings of each other. Subjectivity and discursive positioning form their own labyrinthine intentionality.

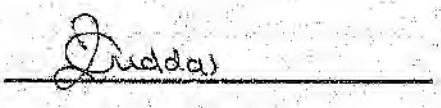
The argument then moves towards an exploration of the current calculation of the subject for the writer. (Distinctions between author and critic begin to collapse here since meaning is shown to be governed by neither). The reading\writing subject strolls in a vast labyrinth of text - a postmodern *flâneur* who frustrates the work of exegesis by enacting the play of the signifier. The line traced by this hypothetical traveller does not engender a definitive theoretical or discursive map of the domain but rather a contingent and highly provisional, backward turning path.

The demoniacal plural is also used to problematise notions of an original and innovative critical voice which "speaks" the dissertation. The logic regulating the argument is the already-written. The dissertation plays with each text (both critical texts and fictions) looking for a practice which reproduces them but in another place.

My imagined (ideal?) reader will treat the argument as that which it was not simply meant to be, will follow the argument and be seduced by it: an echoing structure with dead ends, wrong turns, false entrances, fictitious exits, misleading threads and deceptive lines.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts in English at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.



(Leora Anne Cruddas)

On this 29 day of March, 1996.

To all lost sisters and brothers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is dedicated to a small community of acolytes to (mis)reading, especially those whose cryptonyms are Tiresius and Chatterton. Theirs are the other voices at the transgressed limit of the dialogic context. The argument plays off my blindness against their acts of insight.

A special thanks must go to my supervisor, Hazel Cohen, who persevered with my doubts, questions and enthusiasm; and who also assisted enormously with patient friendship and professional advice during some very dark times. Without her commitment and encouragement, this dissertation would still be a draft.

A separate acknowledgement and debt of gratitude goes to my mother, Carol Cruddas, who continues to provide a unique model of learning through living, and who succeeded against the odds of living through the writing with me.

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Abbreviations

Throughout the dissertation, the following abbreviations will be used:

NR	*The Name of the Rose*
LF	*Lost in the Funhouse*
NL	*The Naked Lunch*
LB	'The Library of Babel'

... there came from Crete for the third time the collectors of the tribute. Now as to this tribute, most writers agree that because Androgeos was thought to have been treacherously killed within the confines of Attica, not only did Minos harass the inhabitants of that county greatly in war, but heaven also laid it waste for barrenness and pestilence smote it sorely, and its rivers dried up; also that their god assured them in his commands that if they appeased Minos and became reconciled to him, the wrath of heaven would abate and there would be an end of their miseries, they sent heralds and made their supplication and entered into an agreement to send him every nine years a tribute of seven youths and as many maidens. And the most dramatic version of the story declares that these young men and women, on being brought to Crete, were destroyed by the Minotaur [which Pasiphae had born to Poseidon's white bull, after conceiving a terrible lust for him which Daedalus was able to satisfy by turning Pasiphae into a cow; to dispose of this creature, Daedalus made a labyrinth, in the centre of which it was placed], or else wandered about at their own will in the Labyrinth and being unable to find an exit, perished there; and the Minotaur, as Euripides says, was a mingled form and hybrid birth of monstrous shape and that two different natures, man and bull, were joined in him.

Philochorus, however, says that the Cretans did not admit this, but declare that the labyrinth was a dungeon, with no other inconvenience than that its prisoners could not escape; and that Minos instituted funeral games in honour of Androgeos, and as prizes for the victors, gave these Athenian youth, who were in the mean time imprisoned in the Labyrinth.... And Aristotle himself clearly does not think that these youths were put to death by Minos, but that they spent the rest of their lives as slaves in Crete...

Accordingly, when the time came for the third tribute, and it was necessary for the fathers who had youthful sons to present them for the lot, fresh accusations against Aegeus arose among the people, who were full of sorrow and vexation that he who was the cause of all their trouble alone had no share in the punishment, but devoted the kingdom upon a bastard and foreign son, and suffered them to be left destitute and bereft of their legitimate children. These things troubled Theseus, who, thinking it right not to disregard but to share in the fortune of his fellow-citizens, came forward and offered himself independently of the lot. The citizens admired his noble courage and were delighted with his public spirit, and Aegeus, when he saw that his son was not to be won over or turned from his purpose by prayers and entreaties, cast the lots for the rest of the youths.

Hellanicus, however, says that the city did not send its young men and maidens by lot, but that Minos himself used to come and pick them out, and now he pitched on Theseus first of all, following the terms agreed upon. And he says the agreement was that the Athenians should furnish the ship, and that the youths should embark and sail with him carrying no warlike weapon and that if the Minotaur was killed, the penalty should cease....

When the lot was cast, Theseus took those upon whom it fell from Prytaneium and went to the Delphinium, where he dedicated to Apollo in

their behalf his suppliant's badge.... And it is reported that the god at Delphi commanded him in an oracle to make Aphrodite his guide, and invite her to attend him on his journey, and that as he sacrificed the usual she-goat to her by the sea-shore, it became a he-goat all at once, for which reason the goddess has the surname Epitragia.

When he reached Crete on his voyage, most historians and poets tell us that he got from Ariadne, who had fallen in love with him, the famous thread, and that having been instructed by her how to make his way through the intricacies of the Labyrinth, he slew the Minotaur and sailed off with Ariadne and the youths. And Pherecydes says that Theseus also staved in the bottoms of the Cretan ships, thus depriving them of the power to pursue....

Cleidemus, however, gives a rather peculiar and ambitious account of these matters, beginning a great way back. There was, he says, a general Hellenic decree that no trireme should sail from any port with a larger crew than five men, and the only exception was Jason, the commander of the Argo, who sailed about scouring the sea of pirates. Now when Daedalus fled from Crete in a merchant vessel to Athens, Minos, contrary to the decrees, pursued him with his ships of war, and was driven from his course by a tempest to Sicily, where he ended his life. And when Deucalion, his son, who was on hostile terms with the Athenians, sent to them a demand that they deliver up Daedalus to him, and threatened, if they refused, to put to death the youth whom Minos had received from them as hostages, Theseus made him a gentle reply, declining to surrender Daedalus who was his kinsman and cousin.... But privately, he set himself to building a fleet.... When his ships were ready, he set sail, taking Daedalus and exiles from Crete as his guides, and since none of the Cretans knew his design, but thought the approaching ships to be friendly, Theseus made himself master of the harbour, disembarked his men and got to Gnossus before his enemies were aware of his approach. Then joining battle with them at the gate of the Labyrinth, he slew Deucalion and his body-guard. And since Ariadne was now at the head of affairs, he made a truce with her, received back the youthful hostages, and established friendship between the Athenians and Crete, who took oath never to begin hostilities.

There are many other stories about these matters, and also about Ariadne, but they do not agree at all. (Derrin, *Plutarch's Lives* 29 - 41)

"How beautiful the world is, and how ugly labyrinths are," I said, relieved.
"How beautiful the world would be if there were a procedure for moving through labyrinths, " my master replied. (*NR* 178)

For every sensible line of straightforward statement, there are leagues of senseless cacophonies, verbal jumbles and incoherences. (`LB' 80)

My name is Legion, for we are many. (Barthes, `From Work to Text' 160)

INTRODUCTION

TWO-HEADED AXES, TWO-HEADED MONSTERS

This dissertation is the curious product of the academic imperative to write an argument which is orderly, readable and contained by an underlying *logos* versus the deconstructive desire to frustrate this ordering, to divide it against itself. This tension is represented in ancient fragments of a poem by Parmenides of Elea who was a contemporary of Socrates.[1] Parmenides describes how he is led upon a horse-drawn chariot into the presence of a goddess. The goddess distinguishes between two routes of inquiry, but only one of these attends upon truth:

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[1] The poem has been interpreted historically as Parmenides's reaction to the Ionian philosphers who had proposed a diluted monism: reality is one but has become many. For Parmenides, "what is" is changeless and "what is not" cannot exist at all. Therefore, the world of change, motion and multiplicity must be an illusion, for true reality is changeless and unitary. However, Parmenides's language vacillates between the promise of philosophical meaning and the subversion of that promise. In Paul de Man's words, "the wisdom of the text is self-destructive ... this self-destruction is infinitely displaced in a series of successive rhetorical reversals which, by the endless repetition of the same figure, keep it suspended between truth and the death of this truth" (*Allegories of Reading* 115).

> Come, I shall tell you and do you listen and convey the story,
> What routes of inquiry alone there are for thinking:
> The one - that *is* and that *cannot not be*,
> Is the path of Persuasion (for it attends upon truth);
> The other - that *is not* and that *needs must not be*,
> That I point out to you to be a path wholly unlearnable.
> ...
> [I restrain you] then also from this one [route of inquiry], on which mortals knowing nothing
> Wander two-headed; for helplessness in their
> Breasts guides their distracted minds and they are carried
> Deaf and Blind alike, dazed, uncritical tribes,
> By who being and not-being have been thought both the same
> And not the same; and the path of all is backward turning. (Gallop Fragments 2 and 6, italics in original)

Parmenides' translator, David Gallop, points to the numerous paradoxes of self-refutation in the poem. He isolates the paradox of pointing out what cannot be pointed out, in the fragments cited above. Gallop argues that this is a deliberate irony: the goddess is not only conscious that her prohibition is self-refuting, but is actually flaunting it (31). Fragment two presents a choice between two ways: the way of truth or the *logos*; and the non-way, in which the *logos* is lost. In the sixth fragment, the goddess equivocates, naming the backward turning path as both the way of the *logos* and the non-way. This third way breaks with the binary as the goddess dismisses (but is simultaneously implicated in) a mode of critical enquiry that is both a gesture towards meaning and an emptying out of meaning. The metaphysical binary which is set up and within which the poem attempts to

operate, therefore cannot be sustained. The poem itself can be read as an *aporia*: an impossible path, a self-generating paradox, an irresolvable alternation. Backward turning, it undermines itself and disseminates in conflict and tension.

It is this third way which is chosen as a mode of critical enquiry in this dissertation. If deconstruction is the *undoing* of the threads of a univocal line, or the pointing out of self-generating paradoxes in choosing the path of the *logos*, then the deconstructive project is itself backward turning and typically labyrinthine. The critic who practices deconstruction is the two-headed monster wandering, like some grotesque permutation of the Minotaur, in an illimitable labyrinth of text.

Thus I arrived at the idea of using the labyrinth as a trope to represent my experience of reading as labyrinthine. The legends which run across the argument are not simply the disseminating traces of myths or the logic of *mythos*. The argument attempts to collapse the philosophical opposition of *mythos* and *logos* by refusing to privilege either term, but by working within the *aporia* of the third way which opens up in the interstices, the abyss, between them.

Reading is signed in the shifting etymologies of 'legend': a middle English word from the Old French *legende*, or 'what is to be read'. Further, *legenda* is the neuter, plural gerundive of the Latin *legere*, 'read'.[2] In the slippage of the gerund between the properties of verb and noun, the legend of reading uncovers, confronts and repeats the configurations of the text. Critical writing is therefore the narration of (mis)reading.

The allegory of (mis)reading is written in the demoniacal plural - the legions of the title. This other (*allos*) speaking (*-agoria*) is enacted within the text of the dissertation both as allegorical figure and seditious ventriloquism of the (male) canon. Demoniacal textuality is multivocal and polysemic, breaking with the legend of critical filiation by stealing citations, cutting them up and reproducing them, in acts of critical insurgency.

The texts I have chosen to read (or rather misread) are *The Name of the Rose, Lost in the Funhouse, The Naked Lunch* and 'The Library of Babel'.

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[2] The etymologies traced in this dissertation always fail to restitute a true *etymon*. Hillis Miller argues that etymologies "serve rather to indicate the lack of enclosure of a word. Each word inheres in a labyrinth of branching interverbal relationships.... Moreover, one often encounters for a given word not a single root but forks in the etymological line.... The effect of etymological retracing is not to ground the word solidly but to render it unstable, equivocal, wavering, abysmal" ('Ariadne's Thread' 70).

The reading of *Lost in the Funhouse* will focus on the fictions of Ambrose: 'Ambrose His Mark', 'Water Message' and 'Lost in the Funhouse'. As stories, the texts themselves rely on the figure of the labyrinth. My mode of critical writing is the plotting of the paths of the figure(s) and legend(s) of the labyrinth in these texts. This project incurs an endless repetition of the same figure which makes it, in De Man's sense, allegorical:

> The rhetorical mode of critical writing, a textual plot of another text's tale, a figure of a figure, is *allegory*. In De Man's view, 'the allegorical mode is accounted for in the description of all languages as figural and in the necessarily diachronic structure of the reflection that reveals this insight' (*Blindness and Insight* 135). To the extent that critical narrative is diachronic and figural (fictitious), it is allegorical. (Leitch, *Deconstructive Criticism* 184, italics in original)

This figural repetition is narrated sequentially, but what it narrates is itself mere figure. The *logos* or ground of my argument is the figure of the labyrinth: figure and ground hopelessly reverse their roles to infinity.

This figural repetition is not so much metaphor as *palintrope*: the figure of eternal return. *Palintrope* is a Derridean neologism which juxtaposes the Greek *palin* meaning 'again', with *trope*: 'to turn' or 'the way'. In 'Cogito and the History of Madness' Derrida proposes that:

> ... the crisis [the danger threatening reason] is also decision ... the choice and division between the two ways separated by Parmenides

> in his poem, the way of logos and the non-way, the labyrinth, the *palintrope* in which logos is lost; the way of meaning and the way of non-meaning, of Being and of non-Being. A division on whose basis, after which, logos, in the necessary violence of its irruption, is separated from itself as madness, is exiled from itself, forgetting its origin and its own possibility. (62)

In the extract cited above, Derrida identifies only two paths and implicates the *palintrope* in one side of the binary: the non-way. However, he demonstrates that it is on the basis of this division that *logos* is separated from itself, and the third way emerges from the compressions of the chiasmus held within the *palintrope*.

Working within the constraints of the metaphysical language system, *palintrope* involves the usage of philosophical (and critical) language in its entirety. In justifying my use of figural language, I am not attempting to posit the figurative over the literal, which would be to participate in the debates under the aegis of metaphor/metonymy. In *Pursuit of Signs*, Culler outlines the argument of the relationship between the figurative and literal use of language through tracing the opposition metaphor and metonymy (188-209). He suggests that to privilege metaphor over metonymy (as Jakobson does) is to treat language as a device for the expression of thought, perception, truth; and to privilege metonymy (as Eco does) is to treat what language expresses as the effect of contingent relations. He concludes with

a discussion of how the distinctions between metaphor and metonymy, and the literal and figurative use of language behave in similar ways as binary oppositions in which one term is privileged. In other words, Culler arrives just short of the Derridean position that language is within metaphor.

For Derrida, philosophy is incapable of creating a general tropology or metaphorics because it would be derivative of the discourse it wants to dominate - metaphor is itself a *philosopheme*. He argues that the oppositions literal and figurative are themselves philosophical and there is no philosophical category to qualify the tropes that have conditioned this opposition ('White Mythology' 219-229). *Palintrope*, however, runs between the turns of metaphor - the literal and the figurative - transforming and reinscribing the conversions in a chiasmic play of unstable and unmasterable differences. For the purposes of my argument therefore, I wish to speculate on *palintrope* as a heterogeneous term, less simple in its differential relationship to the binary opposition.

Palintrope is a kind of metaphor or trope *en abyme*. Alan Bass, the editor of Derrida's essay 'White Mythology', explains that Derrida, following Nietzsche, is playing on the old sense of the word *abyme* with its connotation of infinite reflection; and the modern sense: to ruin or the abyss,

chaos, difference, division. Thus, he continues, "We might think of what Derrida calls `the logic of the *abyme*' as the figural ruination of logic as we know it, as for example, when the distinction between the reflected and the reflecting falls apart" (262).[3] The *palintrope* radically suspends logic and opens up myriad possibilities of referential aberration.

The *palintropic* labyrinth therefore contests the laws of reference, form, classification and boundary legitimized by forces external to the text or residing outside the realm of discursive formations. In *After the New Criticism*, Lentricchia argues that Northrop Frye's image of the endless labyrinth without an outlet is the perfect figure for what Derrida means by decentred structure. Lentricchia continues. "The effect of Derrida's critique of centred structure is to urge us to stay inside the labyrinth of discourse and to be comfortable with the idea that all outlets are illusions" (166). But the *palintropic* labyrinth resists such easy codifications of meaning by signifying many different things at once, expressing the excesses and creative possibilities, not falsifications, of reading.

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[3] In this connection, it is interesting to note that one of the more popular, contemporary revisitations of the labyrinth is the hall of mirrors, as in 'Lost in the Funhouse'.

In a very important sense, the labyrinth is a spatial dramatisation of the *palintrope*. By using this spatial dramatisation, I am re-asserting the importance of a spatialization of the critical enterprise. This is not merely a shift from time to space in figural preference, it is rather a challenge to historico-temporal master-narratives with their concomitant critical silences and absences with regard to spatial organisation, and the implicit subordination of space to time. Foucault refers to this privileging of time in the essay 'Questions on Geography': "Did it start with Bergson or before? Space was treated as the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectic" (70).

This space\time opposition is not simply a reversal of the privileged term in every binary opposition, nor is it the projection of spatialization as anti-history. To the very extent that it resists historicism, the argument turns out to be the history of our labyrinthine wanderings amid figural turns and returns, and the labyrinth becomes a spatial dramatisation of the temporal aspects of the legends which narrate it.

I do not share Fredric Jameson's nostalgia for 'pre-capitalist enclaves' in which space was mappable, spatial co-ordinates were fixed and critical distance was possible; nor do I share his desire to re-establish

Archimedean footholds for critical and revolutionary effectivity. Jameson calls for a social cartography or cognitive map which would be one possible form of a new radical, cultural politics:

> ...the new political art - if it is indeed possible at all - will have to hold to the truth of postmodernism, that is to say to its fundamental object - the world space of multinational capital - at the same time at which it achieves a breakthrough to some yet unimaginable new mode of representing this last, in which we may again begin to grasp our positioning as individual and collective subjects and regain a capacity to act and struggle which is at present neutralized by our spatial as well as social confusion. The political form of postmodernism, if there ever is any, will have as its vocation the invention and projection of a global cognitive mapping, on a social as well as spatial scale. ('Postmodernism' 92)

The texts I have chosen for study invent and project the figure of the labyrinth not merely as a naive, mimetic conception of mapping but as a practical deconstruction, installing the figure(s) and legend(s) of the labyrinth and then operating against this hermeneutic model.

It remains for me to account for what I mean by 'labyrinth'. The labyrinth has existed from classical to contemporary literature as a strong and persistent image associated not only with the organisation of space, but also, as I intend to demonstrate, in thought and in writing. As a literary image, it will serve an increasingly meta-literary function in this dissertation, although these distinctions collapse and end in ruin of\in the argument.

In *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* and again in *Reflections on The Name of the Rose*, Eco identifies three types of labyrinths: the Greek labyrinth, the Mannerist or Baroque labyrinth and the rhizome labyrinth (80-84; 57-58).[4] Since Eco must have been aware of the multiplicity of available labyrinths (he claims to have had "Santarcongeli's excellent study at hand" (*Reflections* 28)), I suspect he is using a heavily ironic voice in thus ordering so narrowly the labyrinths of the world. Eco's ironic voice is close to both Borges' and Foucault's: he writes in the postscript that he wanted a blind man to guard the library and a library plus a blind man can only equal Borges (*Reflections* 28); and as a semiotician, he would certainly be familiar with Foucault's laughter at the examination of ordering in the Preface to *The Order of Things*:

> This book first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, the familiar landmarks of my thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography - breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other... the exotic charm of another system of thought is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*. (xv, italics in original)

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[4] The doubling of Eco-critic on Eco-author is an effect of the logic of *abyme*. The distinction between the reflected and reflecting images of critic and author falls apart.

As Eco is close to Foucault in his ironic laughter, so I am close to Eco in mine: my argument follows Eco's ironic and playful misreading of labyrinths.

The re-writings or recordings of the Cretan labyrinth are textual traces of a lost, originary legend. Borges suggests that the Greek myth of the minotaur is a late and clumsy version of far older legends, the shadow of other dreams still more full of horror (*Book of Imaginary Beings* 100). The worship of the bull and the two-headed axe whose name is *labrys* may be the etymology of the word labyrinth and trace of incipient legends. The legends are testimony to the play of traces: a constant displacement, transformation, reinscription within systems of signification, and conflicting and contradictory ideological positions. The legends, like their labyrinths and the textual traces, circulate in contested cultural spaces; not least of all, my own.

But the Cretan labyrinth is not *palintropic* because it is centred. Following Eco: "This kind does not allow anyone to get lost: you go in, arrive at the centre, and then from the centre you reach the exit. This is why in the centre there is the Minotaur..." (*Reflections* 57). The Cretan labyrinth is therefore unicursive: it is the Ariadne's thread of itself.

Eco's mannerist maze is also not very useful, however:

> ...if you unravel it, you find in your hands a kind of tree, a structure with roots, with many blind alleys. There is only one exit but you can get it wrong.... This labyrinth is the model of the trial-and-error process. (*Reflections* 57)

Although multicursive, this labyrinth is still centred, in the Derridean sense: there is still an origin, a starting point, a place beyond or outside. The debate opposing intrinsic to extrinsic criticism under the aegis of an inside\outside metaphor is not questioned. The philosophical oppositions are thoroughly entrenched.

Thus Eco arrives at the rhizome labyrinth of Deleuze and Guattari:

> The rhizome is so constructed that every path can be connected with every other one. It has no centre, no periphery, no exit, because it is potentially infinite. The space of conjecture is a rhizome space... that can be structured but is never structured definitively. (*Reflections* 58)

The rhizome labyrinth has striking similarities with Borges' intriguing sighting/siting of 'The Aleph': this is the place where all places are, a limitless space of simultaneity and paradox. [5] Thus the Cretan myth and

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[5] The Aleph is the first letter of the Hebrew Alphabet. For *Kabbalah* (Jewish mysticism), the letter stands for *En Soph*, the pure and boundless godhead and is indistinguishable from the first vessel of the *sefirot*, called *Keter*, which channels it. Borges uses it to name a point in space which contains all other points: the limitless microcosm of the alchemists and Kabbalists, who, according to Leitch, might have been incipient

mannerist mazes are reinscribed in the rhizome labyrinth. The figure is multi-layered, meanings begin to proliferate and disseminate across the different structures. Kristeva writes of the Aleph:

> The Aleph is exorbitant to the extent that, within the narrative, nothing could tap its power other than the narration of infamy [and all the narratives of this dissertation are narratives of infamy]. That is of rampancy, boundlessness, the unthinkable, the untenable, the unsymbolizable. (*Powers* 23)

The Aleph or Rhizome is the backward turning path, the *palintropic* labyrinth that the goddess identifies in Parmenides' poem: boundless, unthinkable, unlearnable.[6]

Eco outlines the characteristics of the rhizomatic structure in *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language*: "...the rhizome is multidimensionally

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deconstructionists in their rejection of hermeneutics as a model of interpretation (246).

The Aleph, as the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, is also connected with 'a', the letter that insinuates itself into the writing of the word *differance*, disclosing a crevice and tenaciously working to disrupt the laws which regulate writing.

[6] Like the Aleph, it may be argued that some postmodern fiction is transgressive or liminal in that it ceaselessly tries to cross the limits of spatially, morally, ethically, legally, grammatically (a string of adjectives could fill the spaces which interminably open up here) 'correct' discursive fields. But, in a Foucauldian sense, transgression is not related to the limit as a line which delimits outside from inside, but ceaselessly undoes that line and affirms the limitlessness of the Alephic or Rhizomatic labyrinth.

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deconstructionists in their rejection of hermeneutics as a model of interpretation (246).

The Aleph, as the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, is also connected with `a', the letter that insinuates itself into the writing of the word *differance*, disclosing a crevice and tenaciously working to disrupt the laws which regulate writing.

[6] Like the Aleph, it may be argued that some postmodern fiction is transgressive or liminal in that it ceaselessly tries to cross the limits of spatially, morally, ethically, legally, grammatically (a string of adjectives could fill the spaces which interminably open up here) `correct' discursive fields. But, in a Foucauldian sense, transgression is not related to the limit as a line which delimits outside from inside, but ceaselessly undoes that line and affirms the limitlessness of the Alephic or Rhizomatic labyrinth.

complicated ... in a structure in which every node can be connected with every node, there is also the possibility of contradictory inferences" (83). Fundamentally important for the purposes of this dissertation, Eco compares the universe of semiosis to this rhizomatic labyrinth:

> It is structured according to a network of interpretants.[7] It is virtually infinite because it takes into account multiple interpretations.... Such a notion ... does not deny the existence of structured knowledge, it only suggests that such a knowledge cannot be recognised and organised as a global system; it provides only 'local' cultural organisations; every attempt to recognise these local organisations as unique and 'global'- ignoring their partiality - produces an ideological bias. (*Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* 84)

The dissertation is about this potentially infinite space of conjecture outside of which one can never step. My project is thus itself *palintropic*. The *palintrope* does not afford access to truth or meaning: it is both a provisional loss of meaning (because of its dissemination within syntax, its passing through a supplement of syntactic resistance), and a history with its sights set on the reappropriation of literal meaning. So too, the labyrinth as *palintrope* governs the production and retrieval of meaning, or rather elides the two. It is therefore the backward turning third way which may be seen to

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[7] Charles Pierce, who with Nietzsche and Saussure, laid the philosophical foundations for modern semiotics, insists on the necessary presence of a third element of the sign, called the interpretant. The interpretation of the sign is not a meaning but another sign, which is interpreted by another sign, *ad infinitum*. This third element can be linked to the third way chosen as the mode of critical enquiry in the dissertation.

confound positions of reader and writer, critic and author: it belongs to none and is unable to coordinate the trope with the production of truth. The *palintrope* does not return to the major transcendental signifieds, God or the Sun.[8] The *palintrope* celebrates the Nietzschean relative status of truth: in this sense using it amounts to anamnesis: recalling to memory that truth is a mobile army of metaphors...

It is therefore not only the universe of semiosis, but also the universe of criticism to which this applies. As has been demonstrated, the desire to restitute definitive meaning and global significance is thwarted. My use of the labyrinth as *palintrope* therefore problematises and compromises my own critical activity. It is an analytic process which includes itself. My position is to repeat the *palintropic* labyrinth with total critical self-consciousness. In its translation (or transformation) from myth to fiction to criticism, the trope is placed *en-abyme*: it becomes an infinitely self-conscious figure about self-consciousness. My position, therefore, is already self-reflexively doubled back upon itself. This is what Barbara Johnson calls "the asymmetrical, abyssal structure" of analysing the act of analysis (*The Critical Difference* 110).

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[8] I refer here to two of the transcendental signifieds refuted by Derrida in 'White Mythology'.

I will explore the operation of the labyrinth as a condition of subjectivity, as a dismantling of the *logocentric* body, in chapter one. The condition of subjectivity is shown to be precisely what the goddess of Parmenides' poem refutes: being and non-being are thought both the same. While subjects strive for integration and cohesion, they experience themselves as fragmented, fractured, dislocated. The demoniacal plural thus operates within the problematics of subjectivity. Chapter two analyses the sites of the construction of subjectivity. These discursive sites are irreducibly labyrinthine and the subject is shown to be bound up with the rhizomatics of desire, signification and power. Where chapter two examines the readers *in* the texts, chapter three deals with the readers *of* the texts. The labyrinth is explored as a condition of reading and critical production.

The first chapter contains a discussion of subjectivity with regard to subjects in each text. I will explore the legends of naming and argue that subjectivity exists in the interstices between the classical *cogito* and demoniacal inassimilable elements of "self" which are constantly reinscribed within the Law in order to constrain their wandering. These miscreant selves appear as wandering strays, *flâneurs*,[9] in an illimitable labyrinth of "self." These

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[9] Originally, the *flâneur*, or aimless wanderer, was tied to a specific time and place: Paris during the nineteenth century, as it was represented by

flâneurs are not free agents, unified and coherent, but rather inured to the conditioned and enclosed spaces of the labyrinth.

The argument celebrates the ambiguity of the *flâneur*, whose respectable identity as the man-about-town is haunted by the marginalised spectres of other street-walkers: detective, journalist, prostitute, criminal, phantom. It is from these spectres or ironic doubles that it is possible to reread the *flâneur* as a subversive figure: an other, an anonym, a reader of traces, a chronicler, a two-headed monster capable of sustaining antithetical and conflicting world views. These *flâneurs* do not merely observe: they record, analyse, document and narrate. David Frisby claims: "*flânerie* as activity must therefore explore the activities of observation (including listening), recording (of metropolitan life and of texts) and producing texts" ('The *Flâneur*' 82). Robin Winks suggests in 'The Historian as Detective', that the historian as archivist is an exemplary form of detective:

> the routine must be pursued or the clue may be missed; the apparently false trail must be followed in order to be certain that it is false; the mute witness must be asked the reasons for their silence, for the piece of evidence that is missing from where one might reasonably expect to find it is, after all, a form of evidence itself. (245)

Walter Benjamin in his study of Charles Baudelaire. The location of this activity was the labyrinthine space of the city - indeed, the city is the modern realisation of the ancient dream of the labyrinth. However, the figure and the activity of *flânerie* have been reclaimed, more recently, by social and cultural critics as a way of experiencing postmodernity (Faris, 'The *Flâneur*).

Thus, according to Frisby, Walter Benjamin, in his historical explorations, is also a *flâneur* (91). The *flâneur*, therefore, can engage in intellectual *flânerie* in an archive or library, itself a *speculum mundi*, sign of the labyrinth of the world.

The unnamed narrator of *The Name of the Rose*, as well as Adso the chronicler-narrator and William the reader of traces and incipient detective-semiologist; the librarian and archivist of 'The Library of Babel'; the chronicler Ambrose in *Lost in the Funhouse* and the ambiguous series of anonyms who are both criminals and addicts in *The Naked Lunch* participate in the activity of *flânerie*, besieged in the various microcosmic and semiotic labyrinths of their own worlds, which function, aleph-like, as points in space which contain all other points.

Among other legionary critical voices, the argument of the first chapter is indebted to Hillis Miller's *Ariadne's Thread: Story Lines*. Hillis Miller uses the metaphor of Ariadne's thread to discuss subjectivity. He analyses images of the line in narrative terminology encoded in words like lineage, lineaments, filiation and life line, arguing that this terminology defines subjectivity in linear terms. He proposes that the image of the line is essential both to the

fiction of the self (enacted in naming practices in my argument) and its undoing. If linearity is encoded in the naming of the *cogito*, it is also constantly *undone* by the transversing action of the philosophical *threads* which constitute it. Postmodern fiction is a constant process of undoing the lines of "character". Subjectivity is not only a condition of being-in-the-labyrinth (sign of social space within the postmodern world) but itself legionary and labyrinthine (as opposed to the indivisibility and singularity of the humanist self). Bachelard's discussion of dream labyrinths becomes important here:

> ... in our dreams, we are sometimes a labyrinthine substance, a substance that lives by stretching itself, by losing itself in its own turnings.... The being in the labyrinth is at once subject and object combined as lost being. (qtd. in Faris, `Labyrinth as Sign' 37)

The labyrinth runs through the argument of the first chapter, like some Ariadne's thread, as an often unstated figure and finally returns in the second section of the chapter in an overturned narrative: the Cretan legend is re-read and re-told with reference to *The Naked Lunch* from the position of the disenfranchised minotaur.[10]

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[10] It is worth noting here that Borges pens a similar re-writing of the legend in `The House of Asterion'. The disenfranchised minotaur is the saddened, lonely monster in "a house that is the same size as the world; or

In chapter two, readers in the text are shown to occupy labyrinthine discursive positions. Wendy Faris argues that the complex interdependence of spatial and textual construction suggests that the calembour of *architexture* is taken seriously ('Labyrinth as Sign' 37). The texts of this dissertation not only describe a labyrinthine trajectory through the respective spaces of their worlds, but constitute labyrinthine discourses. Reading and interpretative positions developed from within each discursive position are shown to constantly shift and readers within the texts interminably stray on tangential, inferential and intertextual paths. The chapter examines those readers who seek to protect the *logocentricism* and monologism against demoniacal plurality and those who celebrate it.

The desire to interpret, to orientate oneself within the labyrinth of signifiers, is represented within an erotic paradigm in chapter two. Faris recalls the early uses of labyrinths in rituals of sexual initiation and claims that this suggests that literary labyrinths can be read as structures of desire:

> The convolutions of the discourse remove the quester\lover\reader from the object of his [or her!] desire; they complicate penetration and definitive union leading to a climax of comprehension in the possession of meaning. On the other hand, if we continue with the metaphor of desire, in a labyrinthine narrative mode the erotic paradigm of penetration and satisfaction shifts ... to the act of

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rather, it is the world" (171). Asterion, desiring death as his only deliverance from difference, waits in the hope of his redeemer.

> reading, locates itself in the realm of discourse rather than in that of story. (39-40)

The gratification of this desire embodied in the search for linguistic meaning is, however, always frustrated and deferred.

Chapter three transforms the Derridean neologism *mise-en-crypte* into an axiom for the activity of writing: an accompanying labyrinth of interpretation. It attempts to bring the labyrinth to bear on the hermeneutical project in order to decentre its didacticism and authority. The figure of the *flâneur* is revisited, this time in terms of the reader or critic. The *flâneur*, as critical allegorist, becomes the aimless wanderer who frustrates the work of exegesis by enacting the play of the signifier.

Parmenides' poem is revisited in 'Post-scrypte' and re-read in two columns, inspired by 'Tympan'[11]. A multiplicity of reading possibilities emerges and a model of textual understanding linked to a specific mode of figuration is proposed. The allegory of reading which is staged, turns back in on itself and disseminates in demoniacal textuality. The post-scrypte plays the

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[11] In the essay 'Tympan', Derrida plays on the archaic French verb *tympaniser*, which means to criticise or ridicule, as well as the more common meanings and functions of the word.

complicit goddess off against a recalcitrant and monstrous demon critic who collapses the practice of research into the space of writing.

CHAPTER ONE: THE *FLANEUR*-SUBJECT BESIEGED

1. WHO?

> "Can't you speak more plainly? Who am I?"
> [illegible] (Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse* 158)

> In the text, there is, I wouldn't say a place (and this is a whole question, this topology of a certain locatable non-place, at once necessary and undiscoverable), but an instance (without stance, a "without" without negativity) for the "who," a "who" besieged by the problematic of the trace and *differance*, of affirmation, of signature and of the so-called proper name ... as *destinerring* of missive. (Derrida, 'Eating Well' 99 - 100)

Who is it that answers the question "who?" Who comes to occupy the place of the subject? Is there a "who" before being able to ask the question about it? Following from these Derridean questions ('Eating Well' 98-100), I subtitle this section "Who?" because the questions open up the field for discussion; they inscribe an interrogation. A proleptic analysis of the unitary 'I' of contemporary humanist selfhood is important with respect to these inceptive questions.

Humanism, which resurfaced in Italy in the fourteenth century, constructed a theory of the subject in terms of the revivified Classicism of Plato and

Epicurus which foregrounded freedom, autonomy and the pursuit of pleasure. The humanists energetically opposed the idea of the rational mind of Aristotelian scholasticism in favour of Platonic imaginative intelligence. However, the idea of the rational mind returned to humanist thought via Descartes in the seventeenth century. Descartes articulated the epochal defining statement of humanist selfhood. By proceeding from doubt, Descartes concluded that the fact of his own doubting was the one thing that could be known. The indubitable existence of the *cogito* became the first principle of knowledge, an incipient modern selfhood which begins by articulating a separate, self-defining, coherent and rational thinking subject.

A suspicion of the humanist self has been present in different ways throughout the history of western metaphysics. As stated in the introduction, I am most interested in that version of such which has come to be called deconstruction. The Cartesian *cogito* is shown by Derrida to be constantly undone. The belief in unitary, rational selfhood is an effect of the humanist misreading of Descartes. Derrida proceeds by interrogating the historical meaning assigned to the *cogito* as *rational* subject. He argues that *cogito ergo sum* is valid even if the thinking subject is mad. During radical doubt, Descartes neither rejects nor interns madness

which is only excluded during what Derrida refers to as "the nonhyperbolical moment of natural doubt" (`Cogito' 56). From this moment, the *cogito* is inscribed within "a system of deductions and protections that ... constrain the wandering that is proper to it" (`Cogito' 59). Derrida calls this propensity of the subject and the sign (and the subject as sign) to wander, *destinerrance*. The neologism "*destinerring*" also suggests that the besieged "who" is constitutive of the text and that it (for want of a better pronoun) `directs' the text in the manner of a director but also gives the text its direction in the circumlocuting labyrinth. The "who?" of the interrogative mood de-homogenises and transgresses the closed singularity of the personal pronoun. It is the demoniacal, inassimilable element which disrupts the unity of the *logocentric* subject. It is a version of `self' which appears as the wandering stray, a *flâneur*. The territory inhabited by this stray is that necessary "locatable non-place" to which Derrida refers: the illimitable labyrinth of self, of text, or of space.

I will argue that the fictional subjects who are called to answer the question "who?" in this dissertation exist in the interstices between the classical *cogito* and egological forms of subjectivity on the one hand, and the "who?" besieged by the problematic of the trace and diabolical difference on the other hand. This critical, though highly provisional, *aporia* interrogates all

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notion of consensus and homogeneity with reference to the problematic of the subject. In this sense, it is possible to argue that postmodern fiction puts the subject under erasure: installing forms of subjectivity then subverting them. This installing and subverting is a function of the *palintrope*, the backward turning path which advocates both the way of truth and the way which is not, the way of being and non-being.

The texts situate discourses on the subject by going through a deconstruction: they do not restitute an illegitimately delimited subjectivity or discount political agency, but ceaselessly analyse the difference which is always already within. This difference from self, *destinerrance*, alterity, takes two narrative forms which problematise the entire notion of subjectivity: narrators become overtly controlling or disconcertingly hard to locate (Hutcheon, *Poetics* 160). This chapter will analyze the implications of these two narrative forms, identified by Hutcheon, with reference to the selected texts. I will explore the operation of the overtly controlling narrators of *The Name of the Rose*, three fictions from *Lost in the Funhouse*: 'Ambrose His Mark', 'Water-Message' and 'Lost in the Funhouse'; and 'The Library of Babel' before examining the unnameable and unlocatable narrators of *The Naked Lunch*. These texts enact a

deconstruction of the representation of subjectivity in so-called classical realist fiction.

It is first of all the anonymous Italian who is installed as the controlling *autos* or *cogito* of *The Name of the Rose*. Significantly, (s)he is unnamed and ungendered. The absence of the proper name, or scholarly nominal signature, subverts the controlling *cogito* since the proper name is the guarantor of selfhood. The signature inscribes itself as an act with all the connotations of identity, self presence and intentionality encoded in this word. Derrida has proposed somewhere else and in the presence (or absence) of a different signatory:

> He advances behind a plurality of masks or names that, like any mask ... can propose and produce themselves only by returning a constant yield of protection, a surplus value in which one may still recognise the ruse of life. (*The Ear of the Other* 7)

The Name of the Rose starts incurring losses as soon as the surplus value does not return to the proper name which is absent, but rather to a community of masks.[12] All the affiliated threads of the name are lead astray

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[12] The examination of the economic status of the name, here and later in the argument, follows Derrida's argument in 'The Ear of the Other' (7) and 'White Mythology' (209-210), and Barthes' discussion of the name 'Sarrasine' in *S/Z* (94-95).

in a labyrinth.[13] However, the exergue is dated: January 5, 1980. If to date is to sign, the signatory or the controlling *autos* is both installed and subverted.

Since writing exists under the sign of the intentions of the signatory, it is interesting that the anonymous Italian articulates a complete lack of intention and even of validity:

> In short, I am full of doubts and really don't know why I have decided to pluck up my courage and present , as if it were authentic, the manuscript of Adso of Melk. Let us say it is an act of love, or if you like, a way of ridding myself of numerous, persistent obsessions. (*NR* 5)

The *corpus* of the text and the body of the Italian are inextricably tied up. The anonymous Italian provides autobiographical detail which is carefully linked to the motivation for writing, but the biographical is not inscribed within the biological so the body is purely textual. However, the fragments of narrative out of which *The Name of the Rose* is constructed, also relate to

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[13] Derrida names this labyrinth as the labyrinth of the ear: the outer edges, the inner walls, the secret passages. It is the ear of the other that signs, or that reinscribes the signed text within political regimens. The text is signed only much later by the other. This signature does not befall a text but actively constructs it (*The Ear of the Other*). The text to be examined (both the texts examined in this dissertation and the dissertation as examinable text) are constructed as effect and object of power-knowledge within a labyrinth of placement.

the body, Barthes' text of desire. Adso's last page and his dream make this analogy with reference to "amputated stumps of books". The body is implicated in the movements of desire as there is no outside to the labyrinth. The amputated generative structure is a loss of filiation, a castration. By drawing the fragmentary body into the economy of desire, the *cogito's* position as one constituted solidly 'outside' is contested.

There is no trace of an identifiable, gendered 'author' behind the anonym.[14] Two arguments can be made: either the anonymous Italian is the (male) figure of Eco presiding behind the mask or, since the only other unnamed person in the text is female, the anonymous Italian is female. However, arguments around the gender of the anonymous Italian create an *aporia.* Since identity and selfhood are constituted in and by gender, this *aporia* collapses the fragile limit of a male or female scripted self. The imaginary continuum of Male and Female is exposed as a catachresis and the line disseminates into an androgynous labyrinth.[15]

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[14] The Italian edition connects the anonymous Italian more closely with Eco than the English translation. Kristeva, in her reading of Antoine de la Sale's novel, *Jehan de Saintre*, comments that the writer is both actor and author (*Desire* 45). This unveils the writer as an actor and binds together two modes of the novelistic utterance into the single speech of he who is both the subject of the book and object of the spectacle, further undermining the author's 'right' to determine and control meaning.

[15] Androgyny is inextricably bound up in the Cretan legend. In one version of the legend, Theseus deceives Minos by replacing two of the

Adso is the anonymous Italian's invocation of the male *cogito* who attempts to postulate himself as the origin of meaning. However if Adso is installed as the controlling voice at the centre of the text, he is also the *flâneur* inured to the condition of the labyrinth. His manipulating voice is the *logos* or *phallogos* which is subverted in many ways in *The Name of the Rose*.

Firstly, the amputated generative structure proceeding through legions of numerous and oblique references, editors, translators and scholars, is a loss of filiation, a castration. Secondly, Adso is himself doubled as the eighteen year old novice and the eighty year old monk. As the eighty year old narrator, he is constantly battling against the failure of his mind to be present to itself, thereby invalidating his own authority as controlling *cogito*. The liturgical ordering also serves to parody the modes of individual consciousness as linear and temporal. The ordering mimics experiential time, the *cogito*'s passage through events. This is undercut by the transversing action of the text: the dialogue running across Adso's perceptions. Lastly, the use of intertexts suggests a refusal to 'express' singular subjectivity because there is no pristine, authentic, creative voice

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maidens destined to be devoured by the Minotaur with a pair of effeminate youths. Theseus then sacrifices a she-goat to Aphrodite, on the advice of the Delphic oracle, and in its death-throes, the she-goat becomes a he-goat (Graves 337-338).

which is privileged as the origin and source of all meaning. There are only the legions of the (inter)text and the writing of demoniacal textuality. *The Name of the Rose* is thus a constant *undoing* of the line of character, of linearity encoded in the controlling narrator's voice. Adso is besieged in the elaborate labyrinth of his own text, invalidating his authority as centralising Cartesian consciousness.

Adso's actions also subvert his belief in his own consistency and opacity. As a novice of the Benedictine order, he has made a vow of chastity which he subsequently breaks. His anxiety is related to this inconsistency. Hillis Miller writes: "Choosing, intending, promising are performatives that depend on the mind's continuity and on the mind's constant presence to itself for their efficacy" (*Ariadne's Thread* 116). Adso insists on the clarity of his mind and its presence to itself:

> The problem is, rather, of telling what happened not as I see it now and remember it ... but as I saw it and felt it then. And I can do so with the fidelity of a chronicler, for if I close my eyes I can repeat not only everything I did but also what I thought in those moments, as if I were copying a parchment written at the time. (*NR* 243)

Adso is unaware of how his narrative continuity is an effect of willed memory rather than self-present self expression.

Adso's stated opacity is subverted by the language of the 'Song of Songs' which speaks Adso. The irony, of course, is that Adso really is "copying a parchment". The intertexts foreground absent control rather than present self expression. Adso later agonizes over his description of the unnamed woman when he recalls that he used the same words to describe the fire that burned the body of the Fraticello Michael. Adso writes of his experience of this agony:

> At that moment the watchful sense of difference was annihilated in me. And this, it seems to me, is precisely the sign of rapture in the abysses of identity. (*NR* 245)

Adso's agony is fundamentally related to his perception of his own unified and consistent selfhood since promises presuppose the temporal continuity of the self and its consistency. Adso's transgression is not only a violation of Benedictine codes but also the disruption of the *logocentric* subject. His transgression demonstrates the propensity of the self to wander from itself, the diabolical difference which is always already within. Significantly, Adso reconciles himself to himself by attributing this inconsistency to the diabolical opposite of the *Logos*, projecting difference, alterity, inconsistency onto exteriority and reinscribing himself within classical inside\outside oppositions.

Perhaps the most radical way in which the myth of unitary selfhood and fixed character is exposed in *The Name of the Rose* is through a careful analysis of the position of the unnamed woman.[16] It is significant that the woman is unnamed. If the proper name functions to establish consistency and responsibility before the law, the fact that she is unnamed leaves her vulnerable to conflicting interpellations: she is named as the black and comely virgin by Adso and as the diabolical witch and whore by Gui. From

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[16] Coletti points out that Adso's desire for the unnamed woman is particularly acute since he has no name for speaking its absent object (*Naming The Rose* 71). This nominal lack can be interestingly juxtaposed against the question of nominalism referred to in the ambiguous last line which every reader of the novel seems to provide a different transformation of: "The rose remains in its given name, but do we understand the name?" (Braswell 4); "The rose stands as a primitive name, we have only names" (Reichenbach 40); "The primeval rose exists as a name, we only possess mere names" (Solotorevsky 90); and "The Rose remains in name alone, we only possess mere names" (Coletti 183). This is, of course, a final intertextual transposition from a poem by Bernard of Morlay; however, it is also a reference to Abelard who used the sentence 'Nulla rosa est' to demonstrate how language can speak of both the non-existent and the destroyed as well as carrying the weight of centuries of meaning so that it hardly has any meaning left (Eco, *Reflections* 1-3). Capozzi writes that the last line is a "mise-en-abyme of intertextual echoes on the theme and overcoded symbol of the rose, which naturally sends the reader back to the title of the novel and a possible re-reading of the text" (427).

According to Kellner, nomination in *The Name of the Rose* is itself a labyrinth: the characters in the novel are not named by chance or nature but by referential conventions. Kellner provides an extensive analysis of naming practices in the novel (Inge 3-30). This surplus naming grows in stature and threatens to overthrow the body of the text.

Like Adso, we have no 'name' for fixing the meaning of the girl, the rose, the novel. The nominalism and instances of nominal lack defer the reader's desire to uproot the presence of meaning.

the moment that the proper name is erased, the woman is implicated in writing and the production of difference (Derrida, 'The Violence of the Letter' 108).

Hillis Miller argues that the assumption that subjectivity is fixed and prediscursive cannot be separated from the assumptions about gender that underlie it (*Ariadne's Thread* 113). Gui and Adso name improperly what has no proper name. The unnamed woman functions as a male identified product who is interpellated by the call of the inquisitor to ethical and juridical responsibility. What is interesting is that something remains non-reappropriable. The unnamed woman is not identical to either construction of her 'self'. The subject positions that she is inscribed into by Gui and Adso are not hermetically sealed. Her subjectivity is exposed quite literally as the product of male readings which are not univocal.

Gui is finally the character who plays the role of *logos* or *phallogos* who is the source of all derivative meanings and configurations of (her)self: "Now the case seems clear to me. A monk seduced, a witch, and some ritual, which fortunately did not take place" (*NR* 329). Gui literally restitutes an unified, substantial subjectivity under the sign of intentionality but in so doing, foregrounds its illegitimacy, its non-coincidence with any self, which

Adso, in his despair, recognises: "... the girl was not even a Fraticello, seduced by Ubertino's mystical vision, but a peasant paying for something that did not concern her" (*NR* 406).

Gui thus self-consciously cultivates and creates the belief in unitary selfhood while at the same time exposing it as a fiction; he therefore manufactures a fiction of self and its undoing. It is precisely his attempt to reach consensus and conclusion that paradoxically establishes the construction of the woman's subjectivity as highly provisional and thoroughly political. Hillis Miller claims: "Belief in the myth of the unified subject is by no means a benign or politically innocent error" (*Ariadne's Thread* 34). Gui manipulates suspicion around any dispute to further his own vested interests and gain the political upper hand. The body of the condemned woman is caught up in a system of subjection and becomes a political instrument which is meticulously prepared, calculated and used by Gui.

At this point it is interesting to revisit Nietzsche's expression of how subjects are made legally and ethically calculable and consistent through torture, mutilation, flaying, castration and a horde of other violent practices. Consistency has literally "been tortured into him or her, burned into the flesh" (Hillis Miller, *Ariadne's Thread* 135).

Gui deals with Salvatore and Remigio in a similar way: by burning or torturing consistency into their bodies. The *legenda* of truth, governed by Remigio's confession which will be written on his body through torture, is congruous with Gui's politically motivated reading of it: Remigio, who has confessed to the crimes of heresy but claims that he has had nothing to do with the crimes in the abbey, is threatened with torture by Gui if he will not confess to the murders:

> For three days, let him remain in a cell, with his hands and feet in irons. Then have the instruments shown him. Only shown. And then, on the fourth day, proceed. Justice is not inspired by haste, as the Pseudo Apostles believe, and the justice of God has centuries at its disposal. Proceed slowly and by degrees. And, above all remember what has been said again and again: avoid mutilations and the risk of death. One of the benefits this procedure grants the criminal is precisely that death be savoured and expected, but it must not come before confession is full, and voluntary, and purifying. (*NR* 385-386)

At this point, Remigio 'confesses' to having perpetrated all the crimes in the abbey. Unified and consistent subjectivity is therefore paradoxically installed and subverted.

Significantly, Gui reaches consensus and conclusion by speaking for the woman, while allowing Remigio the right to speak for himself. This can be accounted for in Nietzsche's terms.

> In Nietzsche's case, the beginning is a male figure, equipped with a will, the symbol of which is his possession of a penis. The mutilating cruelty necessary to make him moral involves always his castration. The sovereign individual must then give himself a new will, simulacrum of the old, a prosthetic phallus that will serve a new *logos*. (Hillis Miller, *Ariadne's Thread* 140)

Remigio's disarticulation functions in these (male) terms. If torture, or the threat of it, is a displaced figure of castration, Remigio formulates a new will which enacts a new *logos*: "Today you have given me strength, Lord Bernard ... you have given me the courage to confess what I believe in my soul, as my body falls away from it" (*NR* 387). This *logos* (or *phallogos* since heresy is significantly associated with worship of the diabolical phallus which both is and is not a prosthesis) operates within Christian Binarism: Heaven and Hell, God and Satan, Good and Evil. Remigio's need to confess is a type of Logorrhoea: a compulsion to speak consistently and coherently *in the true*. But this compulsion and consistency are subverted by what is left unsaid, as well as the surplus of Remigio's speech - his admission of guilt to murders he never committed. This supplementarity undermines classical binarisms as well as the logic of identity.

The philosophical notion of identity - that we know and recognise ourselves because identity is continuous through time - is contested in a space which is typically labyrinthine in *Lost in the Funhouse*, a volume of short fiction,

"which is neither a collection nor a selection, but a series ... meant to be received `all at once'" (*LF* 7). The larger structure, the smaller fictions and the erratic and incongruous characters, turn the experience of reading into a funhouse, a labyrinth, a hall of mirrors. The reader (re-)creates the architecture or structure by choosing and controlling the direction of the plot. I will consider the character of Ambrose who appears in three fictions: 'Ambrose His Mark', 'Water-Message' and 'Lost in the Funhouse.'

Ambrose is the overtly controlling narrator in 'Ambrose His Mark'. He recounts the legend of his naming which is a function of the coincidence of a nickname, "honig," a birthmark that resembles a bee and an extraordinary swarming which is read as a naming-sign:

> Saint Ambrose had the same thing happen when he was a baby. All these bees swarmed on his mouth while he was asleep in his father's yard, and everybody said he'd grow up to be a great speaker. (*LF* 41)

The legend of the life of the saint, the name and the event it signifies, are due to return in the child's proclivity to be a great speaker. Therefore, the swarming functions as *anamnesis*: "the future as a past present due to return" (Derrida, `The First Session' 139). The name aspires to truth and is taken as the perfect naming *sign* of the nameless child.

The name both marks and goes back over the birthmark with an undecidable stroke. The name is thus, in Derrida's terms, the re-mark which adds itself in the manner of a remainder that is both quasi-transcendental and supplementary. However, this double mark "escapes the pertinence or authority of truth: it does not overturn it but rather inscribes it within its play" (Derrida, 'The First Session' 143). The name of Ambrose, the mark or re-mark of his identity, is therefore both installed and subverted, doubled in our sight: "I and my sign are neither one nor quite two" (*LF* 42).

Significantly, Ambrose's name appears as a blank on his birth certificate. The ambiguous blank instates and undermines the logic of identity, as the anonymous narrator of 'Lost in the Funhouse' points out:

> Initials, blanks, or both were often substituted for proper names in nineteenth century fiction to enhance the illusion of reality. It is as if the author felt it necessary to delete the names for reasons of tact or legal liability. Interestingly, as with other aspects of realism, it is an *illusion* that is being enhanced by purely fictional means. (*LF* 77, italics in original)

The duplicitous blank both hinders the unveiling of the referent by substituting it with a *line*, and works in the service of truth to enhance the illusion of reality. The blank functions as one more *line* of character that is interminably undone.

If Ambrose narrates the story of his naming, the two other fictions (re)marked by the name Ambrose, are narrated by an anonymous *autos* who both is and is not Ambrose: "Now and then he fell into his habit of rehearsing to himself the unadventurous story of his life, narrated from the third-person point of view" (*LF* 100). But this third person is also a first person who may or may not be Ambrose. If Ambrose narrates `Lost in the Funhouse' in the third-person, then he decentres our reading by installing and subverting his own authority as controlling Cartesian consciousness and stable perspective. The third person *omniscient* point of view is a convention in literature which guarantees a stable perspective exterior to any representational notion, including the Cartesian subject. This is undercut by the radical undecidability of the speaking subject: "We haven't even reached Ocean City yet; we will never get out of the funhouse" (*LF* 2). To whom does the inclusive pronoun, the legionary `we', refer? Perhaps to the intrusive narrator and the readers, perhaps to Ambrose and his family, perhaps to all.

Nomination is raised yet again in `Lost in the Funhouse' through the motif of the name-coin. Inscription on coinage is often related to the intersection between the linguistic and the economic - nomination functions both in terms of signification and value. Significantly, Ambrose tries to give the

"witchlike" ticket-woman his name-coin instead of a half-dollar, introducing his name into the economy of exchange and making the point that he has no fixed identity except in the exteriority of his name as a signifier in the economy of social exchange. The name-coin also serves to foreground the legendary *usure* of his unfortunate nomination: the name 'Ambrose' acquires too much interest and, in the sense that it promises more than Ambrose can live up to, it is also an irreducible loss.[17]

Once Ambrose loses his name-coin, his name is effaced and he is divested of the Cartesian consciousness of himself as rational (he begins to contemplate madness and suicide) and unified. This is suggested by two important things that happen to him in the funhouse: he recovers his name-coin but does not identify it as his; and he recognises, in the mirror-maze, that he has deceived himself into supposing he was a person.

> First, our hero found a name-coin someone else had lost or discarded: AMBROSE, suggestive of the famous lightship and of his grandfather's favourite dessert, which his mother used to prepare on special occasions out of coconut, oranges, grapes and what else. Second, as he wondered at the endless replication of his image in the mirrors, second, as he *lost himself in the reflection* that the necessity for an observer makes perfect observation impossible.... (*LF* 98, italics in original)

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[17] Derrida uses the term 'usure' in 'White Mythology.' The editor, Alan Bass, points out that 'usure' means both the acquisition of too much interest and deterioration through usage. It is an economic term that inscribes an irreducible effect of both profit and loss.

The legends of his over-encoded name exist as a floating signifier inscribed on a coin; signifier (the name) and signified (the named) are destabilised. Language and identity begin to break down into diabolical textuality as Ambrose no longer recognises himself as a subject who can performatively narrate the story. This is perhaps why an interiorized first-person point of view is sacrificed. The relationship between interiority and exteriority is left undecidable.

In *The Space of Literature*, Blanchot describes the condition of the written:

> The writer belongs to a language which no one speaks, which is addressed to no one, which has no centre and which reveals nothing. He may believe that he affirms himself in his language, but what he affirms is altogether deprived of self. (26)

Significantly, one of the possible endings of 'Lost in the Funhouse' is to have Ambrose die of starvation telling stories to himself in the dark which are secretly transcribed by a young woman. 'Lost in the Funhouse' is therefore both the affirmation and deprivation of the subject.

The anonymous letter in the bottle which Ambrose finds in 'Water-Message' also functions to install the writing subject while depriving him\her of a 'self':

> On a top line was penned in deep red ink:

> TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN
>
> On the next-to-bottom:
>
> YOURS TRULY
>
> The lines between were blank, as was the space beneath the complimentary close. In a number of places, owing to the coarseness of the paper, the ink spread from the lines in fibrous blots. (*LF* 62-63)

The paper absorbs the signature, the proper name, as if to retain it; but by absorbing it, the signature is lost. Thus, the water-message marks what Derrida calls the double band of signature: "There has to be a signature so that it can remain-to-disappear. It is lacking which is why there has to be one, but it is necessary that it be lacking which is why there does not have to be one" ('Signsponge' 363-364). In this sense, the (absent) signature of the water-message is the signature of signature:

> ...after the manner of signature in the current sense, the work of writing designates, describes and inscribes itself as *act* (action and archive), signs itself before the end by affording us the opportunity to read. ('Signsponge' 363, italics in original).

The (absent) signature, as act, splits immediately into event and legend; and is countersigned by Ambrose who obliges the water-message to sign itself, to signify itself, in the epiphanic moment of his reading: "Ambrose's spirit bore new and subtle burdens" (*LF* 63). Derrida argues that from the countersignature "comes the infinite monumentalization of the signature,

and also its dissipation without return, the signature no longer being tied to a single proper name but to the ... multiplicity of a new *signatura rerum*" ('Signsponge' 360).

Within the polysemy of the reading\writing subject who is installed and subverted, affirmed and denied, is the demoniacal plural, the multiple selves in which Ambrose loses himself in the funhouse mirror maze.

The motif of mirror-maze is also found in *The Name of the Rose* and 'The Library of Babel'.

> Yes, my bold warrior. You flung yourself so courageously on a real enemy a short while ago in the scriptorium, and now you are frightened by your own image. A mirror that reflects your image enlarged and distorted. (*NR* 172)
>
> In the hallway there is a mirror which faithfully duplicates all appearances.... ('LB' 78)

The mirror-maze of 'Lost in the Funhouse', the distorting surface of the mirror in *The Name of the Rose*, and the polished surfaces which represent and promise the infinite in 'The Library of Babel' are all manifestations of legions and permutations of the *palintropic* labyrinth. The mirror functions as a loss of presence and an addition, more than presence, *plupresence*. By adding to something that is already present, the mirror's effect is

supplementary: the 'I' watches that which presents itself and is therefore unable to see presence as such. Each 'I' takes over or possesses the other and excludes itself from itself. Thus the reader encounters Ambrose watching Ambrose watching:

> Second, as he wondered at the endless replication of his image in the mirrors, second as he *lost himself in the reflection* that the necessity for an observer makes perfect observation impossible, better make him eighteen at least, yet that would render other things unlikely.... (*LF* 98)[18]

This is perhaps one of the more obvious places (or places), an instance of the "who" besieged by the problematics of the traces of subjectivity. The radical (demoniacal) plurality makes it impossible to answer the question because the versions of 'self' that appear as wandering\wondering strays, disrupt the unity of the *logocentric* subject.

The mirror, however, is not merely the presence of the present, but also a diabolical deformation irreducible to any form, and hence to a present. It is a transformation based on no original form. In *The Name of the Rose*, William reveals the ingenious effect of the mirror in the library:

> He took me by the hand and led me up to the wall facing the entrance to the room. On a corrugated sheet of glass, now that the

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[18] This backward turning sentence equivocates and dissimulates among several reflected, refracted and distorted meanings in which the reader is lost in the *palintropic* funhouse of language. The demoniacal texture of the funhouse brings about fundamental changes in reading strategies.

> light illuminated it more closely, I saw our two images, grotesquely misshapen, changing form and height as we moved closer or stepped back. (172)

The deformation comprehends some other 'I'. What has become of presence here? 'You?' 'Me?' 'Who?' The mirror re-forms, in the indefiniteness of the *plupresent*, all possible deformations. The mirror thus employs egological subjectivity which is then besieged by the trace of legions of disseminating reflections.

Adso and the unnamed narrator of 'The Library of Babel' have much in common. They both establish themselves as controlling Cartesian subjects, loci of "an interiorized subjectivity on which a Cartesian hermeneutics is established" (Rapaport 145). They are both old and preparing to die, their eyes are poor, they attempt to prepare a record of their lives which will also serve as a record of their respective worlds. Both perceive their worlds to be labyrinths which function as signs of social space, both recount their wandering in the labyrinth, but seem to be blissfully unaware of their internment within the labyrinth. Each posits a surplus of insight over a lack of sight. They are unmindful and unobservant of the logic of deconstruction as the manner in which the perceiving I\eye is blinded by the text.

The logic of identity and the illusion of self-presence in 'The Library of Babel' are installed and subverted through a subtle resistance to the classical oppositions speech\writing, where speech is privileged as self-presence. Indeed, the *Logos* in\of this text is no longer the spoken word but a cyclical book ('LB' 79). The generic figure of the imperfect librarian is, however, double-edged. (S)He is literally installed as the controlling *cogito* but signifies figuratively in a very different way. The *palintropic* figures of library and librarian indicate that their very relation to 'reality' already functions like a text.

In all the texts discussed thus far, identity is therefore a process of textual work, a strategy of writing. Being as presence is undermined. If the narrators of *The Name of the Rose*, *Lost in the Funhouse* and 'The Library of Babel' are overtly controlling, the narrators of *The Naked Lunch* are disconcertingly hard to locate. *The Naked Lunch* can be read as a sustained attack on the epic and tragic unity of the humanist subject. The novel, like the demoniacal Latah within it, "imitates all expression and mannerisms and simply sucks all the persona right out..." (*NL* 116). The characters speak like some "sinister ventriloquist's dummy" but do not speak for themselves "having no self left" (*NL* 116).

The subjects of *The Naked Lunch* can never be reduced to a homogeneity. The legions of 'I's assume presence, stasis, substance; but effect a radical non-coincidence with any 'self'. The narrating subjects are almost always unnameable and it is impossible to locate the exact textual position at which the narrators change. The narrative is a seamless intersection of textual surfaces which do not delimit character zones (to borrow a Bakhtinian word) but rather describe an ambiguous series of anonyms. The compactness and clear-cut contours of discourse and character are erased. Burroughs substitutes for the closed 'I' a 'who' without answer by steadfastly refusing to answer the question ceaselessly asked by the reader: who speaks?

Lydenberg calls the polyphonic legions of voices in *The Naked Lunch*, "disembodied voices" (*Word Cultures* 136). She claims:

> The logocentric system based on the belief in an epistemological and moral supremacy of voice, presence, identity and truth, is challenged here by Burroughs' insistence that there is always someone else there when you speak, that you never *own* a voice.... Burroughs perceives the disembodied voice of language as a strategy of *absent* control rather than *present* self expression. (*Word Cultures* 136-7)

This slippage installs and then subverts the grammatical function of the subject. In Derridean terms, *The Naked Lunch* submits the subject to the test of questioning the predicates of which all subjects are the subject ('Eating Well' 109). While these predicates are ordered around being-

present, the authority of being-present is ceaselessly questioned. The verbs often do not agree in number with their subjects: "Johnny scream like a mandrake, black out as his sperm spurt, slump against Mark's body an angel on the nod. Mark pat Johnny's shoulder absently..." (*NL* 84). The problem of concord arises here unless we read the subject as plural and heterogenous: the subject is (re-)written as a demoniacal legion.[19]

The *presence* of the subject becomes a problem when the subject is an addict. The addict-subjects of *The Naked Lunch* do not answer to the question `who': they do not hear the call that originates responsibility or makes friendship with an `other' possible, they do not gather themselves together in answer to the call of the `other', for this call only the singularity of an `I' can answer:

> If a friend came to visit - and they rarely did since who or what was left to visit - I sat there not caring that he had entered my field of vision - a grey screen always blanker and fainter - and not caring when he walked out of it. If he had died on the spot I would have sat there looking at my shoe waiting to go through his pockets. (*NL* 10)

In the use of the `I' above, identity to `self' is disturbed by the addict-subject's use of hallucinogens; personality, ego, consciousness are

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[19] It is interesting to note that the pronouns of the quotation: "My name is Legion, for we are many", also do no agree. Unified, indivisible selfhood is exposed as a (humanist) myth.

extinguished. The 'fix' or 'high' is the state of being 'other', different from 'self'; but it is also a *jouissance* and in both instances, 'I' is experienced as heterogenous.[20] At the thresholds of physiological and psychological response, the 'I' is experienced as liminal. The 'I' is thus kept under suspicion by law, religion, morality and indeed the reader because it threatens with collapse the precarious limit upon which subjectivity is founded.

The Naked Lunch is not and does not suggest a neo-Marxist revolutionary overthrowing of the humanist subject by the drug addict; it merely disrupts the unity of *logocentricism* and puts forward alternative knowledges, alternative subject positions and interrogates the reciprocal effects of power and knowledge these ensure. The addict-subjects of *The Naked Lunch* are strays or transgressors who wander in the fluid, unstable and labyrinthine territories of Interzone. But this transgressed limit is the line of Ariadne's thread and is incessantly crossed and recrossed. In the circuitous and repetitious paths of the illimitable labyrinth, besieged by the legions of disseminating selves, the limit opens violently onto the limitless:

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[20] *Jouissance* is a Barthesian word which disseminates across *The Pleasure of the Text*. The subject undergoes a quasi-sexual loss of self. The addict-subject's ecstasy can be likened to the reader's, who perceives and delights in discordant and irreconcilable contradictions and the play of signification in the text.

> Transgression then is not related to the limit as black to white, the prohibited to the lawful, the outside to the inside, or as the open area of a building to its enclosed spaces.... Transgression is neither violence in a divided world (in an ethical world) nor a victory over limits (in a dialectical and revolutionary world); and exactly for this reason its role is to measure the excessive distance that it opens at the heart of the limit and to trace the flashing line that causes limit to arise. Transgression ... affirms the limitlessness into which it leaps as it opens the [inter]zone to existence for the first time. (Foucault, 'A Preface to Transgression' 35)

Transgression is the 'hird way, the way of being and non-being, held within the chiasmus of the *palintrope*.

This section has considered a new textuality, an *anti-body* to images of power and presence. The legend of self has been shown to be constantly undone by inassimilable elements which disrupt that unity. These legionary spectres or *flâneurs* wander in labyrinths of self and space. In the next section, the argument turns or re-turns to the legend of the minotaur and to *The Naked Lunch*: to a practice which attempts to delimit subjectivity by controlling eating practices.

2. "EATING WELL," OR CALCULATING THE SUBJECTS OF *THE NAKED LUNCH*.

> The title means exactly what the words say: NAKED Lunch - a frozen moment when everyone sees what is on the end of every fork. (*NL* 7)

Derrida examines how classical discourses on the subject are determined by the rigid distinction between the human and the animal, as in Heidegger's delimitation of *Dasein* which is denied, and indeed defined in opposition, to the animal ('Eating Well' 111). This motif is already implicit in the Cretan legend: the minotaur, half man, half bull, leads a forfeited existence, straying on the physical limits between man and beast, the progeny of an awful and 'illegal' sexual liaison, doomed to wander, idle and aimless, in Daedalus' labyrinth and cannibalize young men and women.

> In answer to the prayer of Minos, Poseidon sent him up a beautiful bull from the sea, which so delighted him that he would not sacrifice it ...the god, in revenge, made Pasiphae conceive an unnatural lust for the bull .... She bore a horrible monster, half bull, half man, known as the Minotaur, or Minos' bull. To dispose of this creature, Daidalos [sic] made a maze, the Labyrinth, in the centre of which it was placed. (Rose, *Handbook of Greek Mythology* 183)

The minotaur is the excluded 'other' who strays on the territory of the animal. His relation to self is both human and not-human. The minotaur is perceived as dangerous precisely because his identity cannot be legitimately delimited; hence his incarceration.

Deleuze and Guattari, in their re-readings of the subject in *A Thousand Plateaus*, argue that "becomings" of various kinds, are an essential

remaking of the subject. They propose that becoming-animal means transgressing identity and the closed singularity of the humanist subject. The minotaur is the archetypal, legendary becoming-animal. In that becoming-animal fragments and multiplies identity, it is the demoniacal plural, a path of radical alterity, enacted self-reflexively w a spatial labyrinth.

But the position of the minotaur is ambiguous, more complex than this schema allows for. The minotaur is also a terrible parody of the virile male, the eater of flesh, what Derrida calls in the essay 'Eating Well, or Calculating the Subject', "carnivorous virility" (113). Derrida shows how the injunction not to kill really means thou shalt not kill the other who is human. This is never (and can never be without a radical revision of the concept of subjectivity) extended to the killing and eating of animals. Indeed, from this position, the killing and ingestion of the animal determines the human (and humanity of the) subject.

The eating habits of the humanist subject construct a subjectivity which is undone, however, by what is left uneaten, the sur-plus, the supplement, the ambiguous and uncertain status of the human corpse as flesh in the economy of consumption. What makes the minotaur so horrifying,

unclassifiable and monstrous, is that the injunction not to kill or eat the (human) other is disregarded. The minotaur "eats well" off human flesh. The arbitrary distinction between man and animal necessary to all humanisms, collapses.

The Cretan legends are full of references to the "sacrificial structure" of the discourse to which I am referring. Derrida alludes to the place left open for non-criminal, sacrificial putting to death: "Such are the executions of ingestion, incorporation, introjection of the corpse.... An operation as real as it is symbolic when the corpse is animal, a symbolic operation when the corpse is human" ('Eating Well' 112). The white bull should have been the sacrificial victim to Poseidon, Theseus sacrifices a goat to Aphrodite, and he must seize the minotaur by the hair and sacrifice it to Poseidon if he wants to break the cycle of human sacrifice. Theseus belongs to the schema that dominates the concept of *Dasein*. He is the figure of mastery whose mythical task and responsibility it is to restore the tenuous position of the humanist subject, defined in opposition to the animal. Theseus protects the *logocentric* subject against the cannibalism, disruption and difference of the minotaur.

In *The Naked Lunch*, Dr Schafer's de-anxietized man, like the minotaur, transgresses the physical limit between man and animal:

> "I give you my Master Work: *The Complete All American De-anxietized Man...*"
> Blast of trumpets: The Man is carried in naked by two Negro Bearers who drop him on the platform with bestial, sneering brutality.... The Man wriggles .... His flesh turns to viscid, transparent jelly that drifts away in green mist, unveiling a monster black centipede. (*NL* 89-90)

What causes the doctors' horror is this straying on the limit of the animal. Clarence Cowie, the capitalized `Man', is the figure of authority: Adam, a christ, a pusher. His name is an inclusive and generic proper noun which inscribes the whole human race under the sign of the subject of humanism, a transcendental (male) subject who then ungraciously transgresses the physical limit of the very subjectivity he is called to represent. But the transgressed limit here is recrossed and re-examined as Dr Schafer is identified as the "Great Beast" (*NL* 90) who has wantonly `murdered' Clarence Cowie, the all-American Man, presumably by turning him into a centipede (who is denied subjectivity and denounced as "an Un-American Crittah") who is very much alive and *hungry*.

The subjects of *The Naked Lunch* "eat well" in the manner of the minotaur. Here is no Theseus (if we disallow Burroughs' severest critics) to destroy the minotaur in an act of necessary violence to fix the proper eating habits

of the humanist subject. Rather, it is the humanist subject who is besieged in the labyrinth and provides the anthropophagic and coprophagic feasts of the NAKED Lunch.

Like the minotaur, what makes *The Naked Lunch* so horrifying to some, is that the injunction not to kill or eat the (human) 'other' is disregarded. This anthropophagy is a gruesome parody of capital punishment, the symbolic ingestion of sacrifice (the eating of flesh), and the eating of the Host:

> If civilised countries were to return to Druid Hanging Rites in the Sacred Grove or to drink blood with the Aztecs and feed their Gods with blood of human sacrifice, let them see what they actually eat and drink. Let them see what is on the edge of that long newspaper spoon. (*NL* 12)

Ingesting the corpse or flesh, therefore, both *is* and *is not* a trait of the humanist subject and it is in the *aporia* of the third way which opens up here, that Burroughs writes. The injunction not to kill is neither given up nor assumed; it is turned aside, misled, taken advantage of, corrupted, in order to expose the fragile limit upon which identity and selfhood are erected. The arbitrary distinction between man and animal necessary to all humanisms, collapses.

Derrida writes:

> The moral question is thus not, nor has it ever been: should one eat or not eat, eat this and not that, the living or the non-living, man or animal, but since *one must* eat in any case and since it is and tastes good to eat, and since there is no other definition of the good (*du bien*), *how* for goodness sake, should one eat *well (bien manger)*? And what does this imply? What is eating? How is this metonymy of introjection to be regulated .... In what respect is the question, if you will, carnivorous? ('Eating Well' 115, italics in original)

Burroughs' characters eat well `*Chez Robert*' off coprophagic delights, dine with the cannibals Brad and Jim, with blood running down to their chins, eating "Lucy Bradshinkel's cunt saignant cooked in colex papillon" (*NL* 109); or contemplate Bradley the Buyer:

> The Buyer stands up looking at the D.S. dreamily. His body begins to dip like a dowser's wand. He flows forward...
> "No! No!" screams the D.S.
> Schlup ... schlup, schlup." (*NL* 28)

The Court rules that Bradley has "*lost his human citizenship*" (*NL* 29, my emphasis), making the point that he has traversed the strict limit between human and animal. (It is interesting to note here that the animal imagery is often used to describe the subjects of the novel, especially monkeys, baboons, apes.) Through perversions of eating, sex and death (of which animals are the imagined representatives), Bradley (like Clarence Cowie) forfeits his humanity, his subjectivity.

The cannibalism of the above-mentioned extracts is related to "carnivorous virility": Burroughs parodically installs the virile male at the centre of subjectivity. According to Derrida, authority and autonomy are attributed to men rather than women, to women rather than animals, to adults rather than children ('Eating Well' 114). Burroughs' infamy as a misogynist can be re-read in these terms. The presentation of male virility, authority and autonomy is a complicit critique of humanist discourses on the subject which incessantly privilege one term (in this case, the male) of the binary opposition over the other (female, animal etc.).

However, it is not only men who cannibalize human corpses in *The Naked Lunch*. It becomes necessary to account for the events at A.J.'s Annual Party during which Mary cannibalizes Johnny:

> She bites away Johnny's lips and nose and sucks out his eyes with a pop ... she tears off great hunks of cheek.... Now she lunches on his prick.... (*NL* 85)

Mary literally ingests the phallus in a grotesque demonstration of *carno-phallogocentricism* translated by Derrida as the becoming-subject of substance passing through a speculative 'Good Friday' and taking quite seriously the idealizing interiorization of the phallus and the necessity of its passage through the mouth ('Eating Well' 113). This is satire at its most

macabre: the phallus literally becomes a detachable organ in the circuit of culinary exchange. The woman not only has (or seizes) the phallus, but eats it too![21]

This section of the text (which is most shocking and has caused vitriolic debate) brings together three recurrent motifs: sex, death-by-hanging, cannibalism. These three terms work to dismantle the *logocentric* body. Lydenberg argues that the *logocentric* body is primarily defined by borders which establish its autonomous, organic unity (*Word Cultures* 140). Following Kristeva, she contends that matter issuing from the orifices traverses the boundaries of the body in a transgressive passage from inside to outside. This emetic movement of marginal matter disturbs the boundaries of the unified body. Semen, urine, faeces, blood and milk abound in this chapter. This is not just a function of excremental culture, but a "rite of defilement" (Kristeva, *Powers* 17), a rite of passage that marks a change of status in the problematic of the subject: "It is no longer 'I' who expel, 'I' is expelled" (Kristeva, *Powers* 4).

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[21] Hillis Miller points out that the names of Ariadne and Arachne are conflated in Ruskin's image of the labyrinth's victim eaten by the "monster in midweb". The conflation of these two names is also present in Shakespeare's portmanteau, "Ariachne", in *Troilus and Cressida* (*Ariadne's Thread* 14). The devouring phallic mother is thus already present in this homonymy.

Furthermore, Kristeva claims:

> These body fluids, this defilement, this *hit* are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death.... Such wastes drop so that I might live, until, from loss to loss, nothing remains in me and my entire body falls beyond the limit - *cadere*, cadaver. (*Powers* 3)

Kristeva puts the words 'corpse', 'cadaver', '*cadere*'('to fall') into a relationship of etymological equivalence. It becomes interesting at this point to revisit Heidegger's *verfallen*, the passage between the thrown and the falling-into-being, in terms of Burroughs' macabre and ghastly gallows.[22] Burroughs reclaims the literal over the figurative to devastating effect. In *The Naked Lunch*, 'throwness' and 'falling' do not simply describe a state but a manner of being thrown. Rather than a primordial 'being-thrown', there is the determination of a subject that would come to be thrown. This subject is, in Kristeva's terms, an 'I' overcome by the corpse.

> It [the virus] can exhibit living qualities only in a host, but using the life of another - the renunciation of life itself, a falling towards inorganic inflexible machine, towards dead matter. (*NL* 112)

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[22] Heidegger proposes that authentic Being is an inarticulable presence which exists prior to signification. However, since there is no authentic Being from which emetic matter does not drop, Being-present is always already shot through with absence. The wastes that drop, in a vulgar but real sense, always already constitute deterioration. (*Verfallen* has the connotation of deterioration and collapse.) There is no authentic Being prior to its falling or (in)to signification.

The metaphor of the virus cannot be understood as a direct correlation between tenor and vehicle; rather the tenor is composite. For the purposes of this discussion, the virus is that which causes the dehiscence of the unified self. Hanging is the perfect metaphor here since defecation and orgasm are the inevitable physical responses of the hanged body: the wastes that drop, the body that falls beyond the limit, the `I' overcome by the corpse. Significantly, Mary and Johnny do not remain dead but undergo a resurrection that has gone through death of the egotistical or egological `I'.[23]

The subject that has come to be thrown, hanged and cannibalized is transformed by death and takes on a new, postdeconstructive significance:

> I am thinking of those today who would try to reconstruct a discourse around the subject that would not be predeconstructive, around a subject that would no longer include the figure of mastery of self, of adequation to self, centre and origin of the world... but which would define the subject rather as the finite experience of nonidentity to self, as the underivable interpellation inasmuch as it comes from the other, from the trace of the other, with all the paradoxes and *aporia* of being-before-the-law. (Derrida, `Eating Well' 103-4)

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[23] Heidegger's Being-towards-death is also parodied in the hanging rituals. Dying is literally *perverted* into an event of public occurence which `they' encounter with horror. *The Naked Lunch* turns aside everyday Being-towards-death as falling; it is turned into a public spectacle. The fact of death, which cannot evade Being-certain, is exposed. Death (and Capital Punishment) cannot be deferred until some time later or evoked as a matter of general opinion. However, this Being-towards-death does not re-turn to a transcendental (signified and authentic) Being, but rather re-marks a nonidentity to egological subjectivity.

The Naked Lunch and the other texts which I have considered in section one of this chapter, are rebellious towards the traditional category of the subject and restructure a discourse which tries to *situate* the subject in another way. The "figure of mastery of self" is exposed as a fiction and a demoniacal legion emerges, besieged in a *palintropic* hall of mirrors with the spectres of other selves, interpellated by and acting before the Law. It is towards the discursive positions which the subjects of each text occupy, that the argument turns in chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO: *ARCHITEXTURE*

Faris argues that fictional labyrinths reproduce the experience of space as diachronic wandering and synchronic mapping ('Labyrinth as Sign' 38). The texts which the dissertation examines exploit the iconic qualities, symbolic and mythic resonances, and *palintropic* properties of the labyrinth. The shape of their rhetoric corresponds to the illusory grammar of spatial organisations, or conversely, the cognitive maps of the *flâneur* resemble the decoding strategies of the reader: both are strategies for the traversal of spatial and textual construction, an *architexture*.

This chapter will analyse the *architextual* discursive sites of the construction of subjectivity and the subjects' diachronic wandering within these sites. The subjects, as readers (and writers) in the texts, are discursive products (*legenda*) of their own and others' readings and mappings. Subjectivity is shown to be bound up with the rhizomatics of desire, signification and

power. Subjects are positioned in various culturally established canons, norms and sites.

Section one looks at the discursive positions of the reading/writing subjects within the texts and their desire to collapse their labyrinths of signifiers into a prediscursive adyturn in which the veil of meaning is drawn aside. These innermost sanctuaries of transparent meaning are, however, impenetrable and any attempt to reach them results in a confrontation with the labyrinth. Section two analyses the rhizomatics of interpretation from a discursive point of view with specific reference to *The Name of the Rose*. It examines those readers who seek to protect the *logos* against the demoniacal plural of textuality and those who celebrate it. Section three examines how the bodies of the subjects of *The Naked Lunch* are written on by regimes of discursive power, how they are made calculable through the discursive positions which they occupy, how their bodies are produced as texts, how this writing signifies the *legenda* of truth, and how the law functions in the production of subjects. In other words, this section examines the attempt to reinscribe bodies within the limits of *logocentricism* and protect it from demoniacal plurality. The legends of the texts are repeatedly told as the production of discursive positions.

1. ADYTUMS OF DESIRE

It is necessary to distinguish between two types of readers: the readers of the texts (or critics, who will be examined more fully in chapter three) and the readers in the texts; both are involved in the acts of mapping, decoding and speculating. The labyrinth of books in and of the texts (the hyper- and intertexts), however, undoes the binary opposition of readers (and writers) in and of the texts. The distinction between readers and writers also begins to collapse as readers actively construct the text through a real or imagined re-writing of it. The reader\writer's efforts to make sense of, and seek the meaning hermetically sealed or hidden in the texts are paralleled by the reader\writers in the text who are also readers of competing and contradictory systems of signification.

Both types of reader\writers are constituted by the theoretical trope of desire. The argument plays the poststructuralist desire which is defined by lack and generated by the text, against the reader\writer's *logocentric* desire for mastery, consummation, centre, meaning. The desire to restitute definitive meaning, outside of the play of differences, spells the death of poststructuralist desire, which, by its very nature, precludes the restitution of a signified. The reader\writers seek the presence of meaning and continually try to uproot the presence of meaning from the play of

differences; but every attempt to uproot meaning results in a confrontation with the rhizomatics of diabolical textuality.

Thus the text imposes a state of loss, deferral or unfulfilment on the eroticized reading described above. Coletti writes:

> The experience of reading ... is preeminently one of deferral; for the metonymic logic of its 'associations, contiguities and cross references' directs attention not to the meaning of the work but to the very process by which meanings are constituted. (*Naming the Rose* 183)

The erotic paradigm of penetration and satisfaction (the desire to map the labyrinth) locates itself in the realm of reading. This desire is always deferred by the *palintropic* labyrinth of signifiers which traps the reader into taking interminable inferential, intertextual, associative and tangential walks.

In the preface to his narrative, Adso connects speculation or conjecture with the idea of the mirror:

> But we see through a glass darkly, and the truth before it is revealed to all, face to face, we see in fragments (alas, how illegible) in the error of the world, so we must spell out its faithful signals even when they seem obscure to us and as if amalgamated with a will wholly bent on evil. (*NR* 11)

Later, Alinardo claims that the library labyrinth is a *speculum mundi* (mirror of the world); but William recognises that in order for the abbey to be a *speculum mundi* it is necessary that the world has a form. Speculation involves imagining this form. It is from the same latin root as *speculum* or mirror. If the mirror is, as Borges would have us believe in 'The Library of Babel' (78-86), the promise of the infinite, then the act of speculating, the space of conjecture, is potentially infinite. "The labyrinth, like the text, is an abstract [and potentially infinite] model of inference or conjecture" (De Lauretis 21). More importantly, speculation is always already *en abyme*, always an effect of the desire to interpret, to orient ourselves in the labyrinth of signifiers, always already deferred.

Into the labyrinth, then, where the imperfect readers or *flâneurs*, wander.

In *Naming the Rose: Eco, Medieval Signs and Modern Language Theory*, Coletti proposes that the three major narratives of love, politics and laughter get in each other's way and speak in dialogic chorus. My contention is that *The Name of the Rose* contains a dialogic chorus of readers occupying conflicting ideological positions and competing for the status of centre. My reading is therefore indebted to Coletti, but departs from her emphasis on narrative. The readers in the text constantly engage in contestatory

dialogues, citing readings of readings until the reader of the text gets lost among vanishing points of diabolical textuality. Like Adso, the readers of the text realise that books do not speak of things, human or divine, that lie outside of themselves, but that books speak of other books:

> Until then, I had thought each book spoke of things, human or divine, that lie outside books. Now I realised that not infrequently books speak of books: it is as if they spoke among themselves. In the light of this reflection, the library seemed all the more disturbing to me. It was then the place of a long, centuries-old murmuring, an imperceptible dialogue between one parchment and another, a living thing, a receptacle of powers not to be ruled by the human mind, a treasure of secrets emanated by many minds, surviving the death of those who had produced them or had been their conveyers. (*NR* 286).

The murmuring of textual legions extends the dialogic context into a boundless past and future.

As has been pointed out in chapter one, the first reader we encounter as readers, is the anonymous Italian (Eco?) who is given a copy of a manuscript by Adso (or Adson) of Melk, edited by Dom Mabillon and translated by Abbè Vallet. The text is literally transformed, displaced and reinscribed by the manipulations of these legions. The anonymous Italian transforms the text (rather than translates it as he, like Vallet before him, takes some liberties with the text), out of "an act of love" after having lost it to his unnamed lover in the abrupt and untidy end to their relationship. The

act of reading and writing is here carefully connected with sexual desire and the state of loss or absence of the beloved, the object of desire.

The framing device used in *The Name of the Rose*, introduced in chapter one, creates a systematic play of textual traces combining in a linear, syntactic and metonymic chain which creates the discourse of desire: desire for recognition by the (absent) other; the deferred, ultimately frustrated, desire to find the missing manuscript; and the desire to narrate for sheer narrative pleasure.[24] (The manuscript is never traced by the anonymous Italian who finds only copious quotations from it in a book by Milo Temesvar, *On The Use of Mirrors in the Game of Chess*, in an antiquarian bookshop in Buenos Aires - the allusion to Borges cannot be overlooked. This book is an Italian translation of the Castilian version of the Georgian 'original'.) The text (or act of reading and writing) serves as a metonym for the object of desire.[25] Thus the text, written both out of desire and a maze

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[24] There is also the desire of 'sodomite' monks, the lust for women, the desire for knowledge or power or riches, Ubertino's mystical lust, the martyr's desire to testify, then his or her desire for death, the lust for truth, and the act of seduction between Jorge and Eco.

[25] The gaze of desire is also implicated in these proceedings through a series of lenses through which we look back on the *Rose* from the anonymous Italian to Abbe Vallet to Dom Mabillon to Adso. The telescope then reverses within the text to survey the playing off of the bespectacled William against the blind Jorge. As was demonstrated in chapter one, the

of erotic texts which is transposed onto the textual rhizome of *The Name of the Rose*, stages its own performance of desire.

Similarly, the funhouse is a structure of desire. 'Lost in the Funhouse' re-writes the early use of labyrinths in rituals of sexual initiation. "For whom is the funhouse fun?" the narrator asks. "Perhaps for lovers" (*LF* 77). When Ambrose, Magda and Peter ente tumbling barrel just inside the devil's mouth entrance to the funhouse, Magda is upended and Ambrose realises that this is the whole point of the funhouse:

> If you looked around, you noticed that almost all the people on the boardwalk were paired off into couples except the small children; in a way, that was the whole point of Ocean City! (*LF* 93)

Significantly, as the convolutions of the funhouse remove Ambrose from Magda, the object of his passion, his desire is re-written in terms of the successful penetration of the funhouse:

> In the perfect funhouse you'd be able to go only one way, ... getting lost would be impossible; the doors and halls would work like minnow traps or the valves in veins. (*LF* 90)

He becomes a reader of the funhouse who longs for a structure which is centred.

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gaze of the cogito, supposedly outside the object of its perception, is then constantly undone by language.

Since this erotic paradigm of penetration and satisfaction is deferred, he imagines a centred structure:

> He envisions a truly astonishing funhouse, incredibly complex yet utterly controlled from a great central switchboard like the console of a pipe organ. Nobody had enough imagination. He could design such a place himself, wiring and all, and he's only thirteen years old. He would be its operator: panel lights would show what was up in every cranny of its cunning of its multifarious vastness; a switch-flick would ease this fellow's way, complicate that's, to balance things out; if anyone seemed lost or frightened, all the operator had to do was. (*LF* 101)

The funhouse here is both structure and text, and Ambrose, the funhouse operator-god, desires to be an infinite creative subjectivity who would control the elaborate game and limit the play. However, the language of the open-ended last sentence begins to break down, undoing his desire, dispersing control and affirming play.

Thus the funhouse is a structure of *deferred* desire, a narrative doubled up, a *palintrope*: Ambrose's desire for Magda and his desire to discover the structure of the funhouse; the narrator's desire to find structure within the text - to get on with and finish the story. The underlying structure, thus doubled up, is divided against itself and returns upon itself. Each path is further doubled by the radical undecidability in\of the funhouse of language and the legends of Ambrose's life which begin to emerge: does Ambrose escape heroically or in humiliation, come across another person in the dark

(whose possible identities proliferate), befriend the operator, die a cold and lonely death, tell stories in the dark which are transcribed by a beautiful woman ...?

In the telling of stories, Ambrose and the reader participate in creating the legend(s) of Ambrose's life, endlessly (re-)constructing other, larger funhouses. The funhouse is thus the *palintropa* through which the text stages the possibilities for play, participating in the infinite combinations and recombinations of language in the labyrinths of discourse.

Similarly, the infinite combinations and recombinations of the manuscript in\of *The Name of the Rose* move the reader through a labyrinth of encased narratives to encounter Adso's prologue, which begins, ironically, with the words: "*In the beginning* was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (11, my italics). This removes the sense of a beginning even further back and fixes its ontological moorings in the mythical origins of historical and religious time.

Significantly, these words also locate Adso, the writer, as a reader within *logocentric* thought: the *Logos* is the Word is the Divine Mind, the transcendental signified. The end of Adso's narrative, according to the

Prologue, is also located in this specific construction of time as linear, progressive, the fulfilment of God's plan in history: the apocalyptic imminence of the Antichrist.

These ironic moorings reinstate textual authority by privileging the Bible as the source of that authority. By returning to this origin, Adso locates his narrative in Genesis (by which I mean the text and an origin). He therefore attempts to participate in the eternal and universal writing to which he also paradoxically *opposes* his own 'fallen' writing.[26] But the use of a biblical intertext ironically serves to displace all notions of "originality". Adso's words are therefore ambiguous and uncertain. His Biblical citation and his narrative participate in the belief that writing takes place at some historical moment which postdates and is tacked on to the full presence of the phoneme, outside the mediation of consciousness. Adso believes that he can, paradoxically, restitute this presence through writing. Thus he believes he hears a voice "mighty as a trumpet" that urges him to "write in a book what you now see" (*NR* 45). The writing of his narrative is therefore related to the *Logos* of the creator God, even inspired by it. To use a Derridean term, Adso believes his narrative to be *pneumatological* rather than

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[26] Derrida discusses the philosophical and theological opposition between universal, divine, nontemporal writing and fallen or human writing in 'The End of the Book and the Beginning of Writing'.

grammatological, inspired by the "full and truthful presence of the divine voice to our inner sense" ('The End of the Book' 17). As such, it merges with divine inscription and prescription and attempts to efface the signifier. Adso claims to have experienced the primary signified producing itself spontaneously. This is perceived by him as the very condition for the 'truth' of his narrative.

Adso oscillates between believing that he is "repeating verbatim all [he] saw and heard without venturing to seek a design" (*NR* 11), and understanding that his reading and narrating will be compromised by his position as Benedictine novice, his youthful perceptions, other narratives that circulated after the events and his fallible memory:

> Perhaps, to make more comprehensible the events in which I found myself involved, I should recall what was happening in those last years of the century, as I understood it then, living through it, and as I remember it now, complemented by other stories I heard afterward - if my memory still proves capable of connecting the threads of happenings so many and confused. (*NR* 12)

Thus, his desire to express his narrative in the purity of consciousness present to him outside any mediation, differs from and is deferred by the play of signifiers in the act of writing, viewed by him as both supplementary and essential:

> I prepare to leave on this parchment my testimony as to the wondrous and terrible events that I happened to observe in my youth, now repeating verbatim all I saw and heard without venturing to seek a design, as if to leave to those who will come after (if the Antichrist has not come first) signs of signs, so that the prayer of deciphering may be exercised on them. (*NR* 11)

With this hermeneutic invitation, Adso summons the imperfect reader of the novel to penetrate the labyrinth of signifiers that constitute his narrative.

Like Adso, the anonymous narrator of 'The Library of Babel' tries to reinscribe his writing within *logocentricism* through prayer or invocation:

> I pray to the unknown gods that a man - just one, even though it were thousands of years ago! - may have examined and read it [the total book]. If honour and wisdom and happiness are not for me, let them be for others. Let heaven exist, though my place be in hell. Let me be outraged and annihilated, but for one instant, in one being, let Your enormous Library be justified. ('LB' 84)

The total book is also named as "the catalogue of catalogues" ('LB' 78) and the circular or cyclical book which the narrator believes is God:

> The mystics claim that their ecstasy reveals to them a circular chamber, containing a great circular book whose spine is continuous and which follows the complete circle of the walls; but their testimony is suspect; their words, obscure. This cyclical book is God. ('LB' 79)

This idea of the complete, indubitable Book constituted in and by the absolute *Logos* who is an infinite creative subjectivity, participates in a belief that perfect writing is eternal and universal. However, the *Logos* as Word

and Divine Mind, the Transcendental Signified, is located within the system of signification, which it cannot escape. Thus, this supposedly irreducible Signified cannot be more originary than the system in which it participates.

Again like Adso, the narrator compares this totality to his own fallen writing:

> To perceive the distance between the divine and the human, it is enough to compare these crude wavering symbols which my fallible hand scrawls on the cover of a book, with the organic letters inside: punctual, delicate, perfectly black, inimitably symmetrical. ('LB' 79-80)

However, the narrator does not attempt to participate in the eternal and universal writing. There is no sense in 'The Library of Babel' that the text is *pneumatological*. There are no guarantees that the narrator's interpretative gestures will cause the labyrinth of signifiers to collapse into a prediscursive adytum, the circular room, in which the meaning of the library will be revealed. There is only the "elegant hope" of divine Order offered by the narrator:

> I venture to suggest this solution to the ancient problem: *The library is unlimited and cyclical*. If an eternal traveller were to cross it in any direction, after centuries he would see that the same volumes were repeated in the same disorder (which, thus repeated, would be an order: the Order). My solitude is gladdened by this elegant hope. ('LB' 85-86, italics in original)

O'Sullivan points out that the line traced by this hypothetical eternal traveller (an ageless and immortal *flâneur*) "does not engender a sovereign theoretical position that encloses the discursive domain. Rather the line doubles back, intersecting the library and creating a contingent, but seemingly eternal, `Order'" (`The Library is on Fire' 113).

Reality in `The Library of Babel' is coupled with writing rather than stable referents external to discourse, and the single, circular book, "formula and perfect compendium of *all the rest*" (`LB' 83, italics in original), is a textual rhizome, offered not as the "encyclopedic protection of theology and *logocentricism*" (Derrida, `The End of the Book' 18), but proffered for active interpretation.

2. RHIZOMATICS

Following Montaigne, readers "need to interpret interpretations more than to interpret things" (qtd. in Derrida, `Structure, Sign and Play' 278). Derrida writes that there are two interpretations of interpretation, two spaces of conjecture:

> One seeks to decipher, dreams of deciphering, a truth or an origin which escapes play and the order of the sign and which lives the necessity of interpretation as an exile. The other, which is no longer turned toward the origin, affirms play and tries to pass beyond man and humanism, the name of man being the name of that being who ... throughout his entire history has dreamed of full presence, the

> reassuring foundation, the origin and the end of play. ('Structure, Sign and Play' 292)

There is a third position, a third way, in the interstices between these two which it is possible to occupy. The readers in *The Name of the Rose* can be positioned in relation to these three. Most of the characters, albeit in different ways, are readers or interpreters of the first type. These include Abo, Ubertino, Jorge, Gui and Alinardo. William is the ironic, Nietzschean reader who affirms a world of signs without truth and without origin which is offered to active interpretation ('Structure, Sign and Play' 292). (William, as the disciple of Bacon and Occam, is convincing because, between them, we find a developed theory of signs which, in Eco's opinion, helps the reader to understand semiotics "where Saussure is still obscure" (*Reflections* 18).) As Coletti points out, William delights in paradox and irony: "[He] laughs when he is most serious and sounds most doubtful when most sure of himself" (53). Adso likes these two interpretations of interpretation simultaneously and attempts to reconcile them in interesting but obscure ways.

Before I discuss the three interpretative strategies or positions outlined by Derrida, looking specifically at the readers in *The Name of the Rose* who occupy them, I would like to mention other positions situated at the very

margins of interpretation, occupied by Salvatore and the unnamed woman. (This constitutes a re-turn to a discussion begun in chapter one).

The woman is denied a position as reader. Instead her body is read as a text and she is inscribed by Adso, Gui, William and Ubertino in their conflicting interpretations of interpretation. Her peasant tongue renders her incapable of meaningful speech, of interpreting her own situation. She is therefore rendered silent:

> But neither Bernard nor the archers nor I myself could understand what she was saying in her peasant tongue. For all her shouting, she was as if mute. There are words that give power, others that make us all the more derelict, and to this latter category belong the vulgar words of the simple, to whom the Lord has not granted the boon of self expression in the universal tongue of knowledge and power. (*NR* 330)

However the "boon of self expression" does not proceed from a natural or legitimate *Logos*, but rather from positions of discursive power to which the woman has been historically denied access. These regimes of discursive power function in the production of a subjectivity and position which effectively silence her.

Salvatore speaks a language in dialogue with all prior discourses and those to come:

> I realised Salvatore spoke all languages, and no language. Or, rather, he had invented for himself a language which used the

> sinews of the languages to which he had been exposed.... I realized that he was not so much inventing his own sentences as using the disecta membra of other sentences, heard some time in the past.... Salvatore seemed to me, because of both his face and his way of speaking, a creature not unlike the hairy and hoofed hybrids I had just seen under the portal. (*NR* 46-47)

His language is thus dialogic: it represents the centrifugal forces within discourse, a heteroglossic diversity of voices, the demoniacal plural. (Significantly, Salvatore is even described in terms of "hairy and hoofed hybrids".) He is therefore a threat to those who try to consolidate, delimit and control the centrifugal and demoniacal forces within discourse since this would force a recognition that all discourse discloses itself in a disseminating space of play. Although Salvatore's language affirms play, it is anachronistic: it is the anachrony of\within interpretation and therefore anachronizes interpretation. It cannot leave anything other than its non-sensical demoniacal mark on the powerful, institutional interpretations of interpretation.

The two prominent institutional interpretative positions in *The Name of the Rose* are Benedictine and Franciscan. The great conflicts between William the Franciscan and Jorge the Benedictine are related to interpretations of interpretation - the institutionalization of interpretation. Crudely, Benedictines attempt to limit or escape play and Franciscans appear to

affirm it. However, these institutional positions do not account for all the readers in the text. Coletti's concern to demonstrate that the readers in the text support reading and interpretative positions based on their membership of these two groups is generally useful; but problems arise in accounting for the fact that Bernard Gui, the inquisitor, is a Dominican and Ubertino is a Franciscan, yet both appear to support monastic attempts to determine, limit and contain interpretation. The institutional positions cannot accommodate all the readers in the text because position can never be accounted for by membership of one discourse. It is in the incongruities, the interstices, the lacunae between and among discourses that interpretations are formed.

However, it is useful to employ Derrida's idea of the book in order to examine the monastic attempts to institutionalise interpretation:

> The idea of the book is the idea of a totality... of the signifier.... It is the encyclopedic protection of theology and of logocentricism against the disruption of writing, against its aphoristic energy and ... against difference in general. ('The End of the Book' 18)

Coletti uses this idea playfully in that books inundate *The Name of the Rose*: The Revelation, Canticles, Aristotle's Book of the Poetics, The Coena Cypriani etc. However, her point is to identify the actual books that articulate the medieval totalizing impulses and confidence in absolute meaning. I am interested not so much in the actual books as in how they

are interpreted by the readers who try to protect a 'truth' which escapes the diabolical 'aphoristic energy' of writing, those readers who attempt to circumscribe knowledge and try to define the proper use of language in monastic terms.

Jorge, in his first conversation about laughter with William, outlines the Benedictine *Rule's* codification of proper language which involves the daily recitation of the liturgy and vows of silence:

> And as the psalmist says, if the monk must refrain from good speech because of his vow of silence, all the more reason why he should avoid bad speech. (*NR* 79)

Limiting access to the books in the library and the censorship of many of those books are also ways of controlling and delimiting the proper use of language.

Ambivalence, however, insinuates itself even into the proper use of language. A good example of this attempt to contain ambivalence is Abo's discussion of the language of gems:

> The language of gems is multiform; each expresses several truths, according to the sense of the selected interpretation, according to the context in which they appear. And who decides what is the level of interpretation and what is the proper context? You know, my boy, for they have taught you: it is authority, the most reliable commentator of all and the most invested with prestige, and therefore with sanctity. Otherwise how to interpret the multiple signs that the world sets

> before our sinner's eyes, how to avoid the misunderstandings into which the Devil lures us? (*NR* 448)

Abo is here invoking historical determination and bodies of knowledge as detours for the purpose of the reappropriation of an authoritative presence outside of 'multiformity'. Readers like Abo can permit a play which is contained within an infinite creative subjectivity as long as that privileged subjectivity (God) supervises all its inscriptions - as long as "the intelligible face of the sign remains turned toward ... the face of God" (Derrida, 'The End of the Book' 13). Abo, in seeking to contain ambivalence within the limits of a privileged system, desires a return to an original Author-ity, which is always deferred. The authorities he invokes are always secondary, fallen, inscribed within the very systems of signification he seeks to limit. The locus of 'Truth' itself becomes a textual trace since there is no signified that can escape the legions of signifying references.

The same could be shown of the other readers who dream that writing is preceded by truth and who interpret according to a system of signified truth: Gui's aggressive reading of the signs of heresy; Alinardo's interpretation of the murders in terms of the Book of the Revelation; Ubertino's mystical reading of the same book; Jorge's jealous attempt to protect the library with its many 'testaments to error', first among these being Aristotle's book, his

belligerent anathemas against laughter and his citing of many authorities in the four discussions of the licitness of laughter with William, his constant citation of the Benedictine *Rule*, his interpretation of the imminence of the apocalypse and his reading of himself as an instrument in the apocalyptic pattern according to the book of John.

The idea of the book is also present in Adso's simile:

> ...just as the whole universe is surely like a book written by the finger of God, in which everything speaks to us of the immense goodness of its Creator, in which every creature is description and mirror of life and death, in which the humblest rose becomes the gloss of our terrestrial progress.... (*NR* 279)

In this assertion of meaning, Adso ascribes to the philosophy of presence: the co-presence of the privileged subjectivity is present to him. Derrida writes that the favourite medieval metaphor, the book of nature and God's writing, confirms the privilege of the *logos* and simulates immediacy, plenitude, presence ('The End of the Book' 15). This is conspicuously different from William's reading of the snow as parchment in the Brunellus episode (*NR* 23-24) and again during the investigation into Venantius' death (*NR* 105). William uses the metaphor to open up the field of writing rather than as the closure of the idea of the book. This metaphor is not preceded

by a transcendental signified; the parchment is a field of signs offered to active interpretation.

The first pages of Adso's manuscript introduce the reader of the novel to the two interpretations of interpretation outlined by Derrida, in Adso's interpretation of the Aedificium and in William's interpretation of "the great book of nature" and "the way monks read the books of scripture" (*NR* 25).

Adso interprets the architecture of the Aedificium as a structure with universal, transcendent significance:

> [The Aedificium] was an octagonal construction that from a distance seemed a tetragon (a perfect form, which expresses the sturdiness and impregnability of the City of God), whose southern sides stood on the plateau of the abbey, while the northern ones seemed to grow from the steep sides of the mountain.... Three rows of windows proclaimed the triune rhythm of its elevation so that what was physically squared on the earth was spiritually triangular in the sky. As we came closer, we realised that the quadrangular form included, at each of its corners, a heptagonal tower, five sides of which were visible from the outside - four of the eight sides, then, of the greater octagon producing four minor heptagons, which from the outside appeared as pentagons. And thus anyone can see the admirable concord of so many holy numbers, each revealing a subtle spiritual significance. Eight, the number of perfection for every tetragon; four, the number of the Gospels; five, the number of the zones of the world; seven, the number of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. (*NR* 21-22)

Everything in Adso's interpretation begins with structure, configuration and relationship. He believes that his interpretation bespeaks a single truth in relation to the ground, the centre, the transcendental signified. However, he

simultaneously describes and is blind to the ways in which the perceiving eye\I is deceived or beguiled by the structure\text. Adso's desire is embodied both in his longing for univocal significance and in his eroticized reading\writing.

Adso repeats this interpretative strategy in his reading of the tympanum which he subsequently claims depicts the events which are to take place in the abbey: "The silent speech of the carved stone, accessible as it immediately was to the gaze and the imagination of anyone, dazzled my eyes..." (*NR* 41). Adso's faith in the univocal significance of the tympanum is undone by the description which follows. He reads the events in the abbey in terms of his vision, in terms of the tympanum, in terms of apocalyptic literature:

> It was at this point that I realised that the vision was speaking precisely of what was happening in the abbey, of what we had learned from the abbot's reticent lips - and how many times in the following days did I return to contemplate the doorway, convinced I was experiencing the very events that it narrated. (*NR* 45)

Just as he employs this recursive series of interpretations of interpretation to explain the events in the abbey, so he later reads his own wandering and his future depicted in the labyrinthine marginalia of the parchment in the library: he reads the labyrinthine marginalia in terms of the library labyrinth, itself a sign of the labyrinth of the world, which in turn depicts his own life

and the events in the abbey. His blissful ignorance of the demoniacal plural at work in his text and his codification of meaning are based on a view of interpretation which has its foundation in a fixed truth; not in this series of textual and interpretative displacements. This belief is an attempt at what Coletti calls "semiotic containment," but in the error and excesses of interpretation, it actually opens up the unlimited semiotic possibilities of demoniacal textuality for yet other interpretations.

Adso's faith in the transcendental signified is constantly betrayed by his elaborately designed text. His desire is perhaps embodied in the erotic *frisson* with which he writes. Hence the Barthian relish with which he describes the baroque tympanum, William and the textual\sexual encounter with the unnamed woman. His willing entry into the labyrinth (both within the story and as a writer) embodies his desire and deconstructs his stated principles.

William's reading of the Brunellus episode reveals an acute understanding of this dream of univocal significance and incontrovertible truth. According to Adso, William "not only knew how to read the great book of nature, but also knew the way monks read the books of scripture, and how they thought through them" (*NR* 24-25). Thus he is able to describe and name the

abbot's horse using the very structures or instruments of 'truth' while exposing their limits. "The only truths that are useful," he argues after the apocalyptic conflagration of the abbey, "are instruments to be thrown away" (*NR* 492). He exploits the efficacy of these instruments while employing them to impress (and later contest) the discourses to which they belong. This irony is lost on Adso who proclaims enthusiastically: "Such is the power of truth that, like good, it is its own propagator" (*NR* 25).

William's reading is, therefore, playful and ironic. He explains to Adso after the burning of the abbey:

> Perhaps the mission of those who love mankind is to make people laugh at the truth, *to make truth laugh*, because the only truth lies in learning to free ourselves from insane passion for the truth. (*NR* 491, italics in original)

The interpretative play of the Brunellus episode is performed in a field of heterogenous interpretation, through the infinite substitutions of the presence\absence of the horse.

William's interpretations, however, cannot all be accounted for on the basis of the affirmation of play. He is a reader in many senses of the word. He is involved in interpreting the debates on poverty and heresy for Adso, he is also the interpreter of Adso's dream, he participates in interpreting the

debate on the licitness of laughter, and he is commissioned by the abbot to interpret the series of murders that have taken place.

His reading does, however, always involve the interpretation of interpretation - the citation and explanation of other texts: to contest Ubertino's reading of heresy, he cites Michael Psellus; he uses the *Aeropagite* and Hugh of St. Victor to refute Jorge's execration of Adelmo's marginalia; St Ambrose, John of Salisbury, Hildebertus, St. Ephraim, Ausonius, Emperor Hadrian, Pliny the Younger and Quintilian on laughter; Isidore of Seville on comedy; he reconstructs Aristotle's second book from the first book of the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*; he deciphers Venantius' manuscript by reading other books and he refers the question of earthly and divine law during the fraternal debate to a consideration of the book of Genesis. In each case, his interpretation is in conflict with those who dream of incontrovertible truth and try to protect the *logos* against the demoniacal plural. William's space of interpretation or conjecture, is therefore usually a rhizome space: local, contiguous, taking into account multiple interpretations and inferences, potentially infinite. However, his need to quote an authority in order to buttress his own movements of resistance is also a case of power\knowledge. William's need to quote suggests that the

relations of the labyrinth do accrue very real consequences: a labyrinth of placement.

In a conversation with Adso about the murders, William explains that he imagines many errors so that he becomes the slave of none. This leads Adso to comment that he believes William to be not at all interested in the truth, but rather in amusing himself by imagining how many possibilities are possible (*NR* 306). Speaking of Gui and the inquisition, William says:

> Madmen and children always speak the truth, Adso.... And I, on the contrary, find the most joyful delight in unravelling a nice, complicated knot. And it must also be because at a time when as a philosopher, I doubt the world has an order, I am consoled to discover, if not an order, at least a series of connections in small areas of the world's affairs. (*NR* 394)

Interpretative play is inscribed within a demoniacal system of contiguity and difference which cannot be coordinated with the production of truth. Using the logic of the ambiguous and the equivocal, the movement of play comes to supplement the lack of a transcendental Order or Truth.

However there is a point at which William stops imagining errors, possibilities and contradictory inferences. William 'forgets' that the space of conjecture is a rhizome labyrinth. In his desire to unravel the complicated

knot of murders, he returns to a centre through listening to the confused babble of Alinardo about an apocalyptic pattern. Delfattore writes:

> William recognises that the effect of all this apocalyptic imagery [in the library] is organisational rather than merely cumulative.... Having determined that the Apocalypse is the controlling metaphor or principle of ordering in the labyrinth, William gradually becomes convinced that it bears a similar relationship to the deaths. ('Eco's Conflation' 84)

William literally invokes the idea of the book of Revelation, stubbornly imposing an order and a 'plot' where none exists:

> I have never doubted the truth of signs, Adso; they are the only things man has with which to orient himself in the world. What I did not understand was the relation among signs. I arrived at Jorge through an apocalyptic pattern that seemed to underlie all the crimes, and yet it was accidental.... Where is all my wisdom, then? I behaved stubbornly, pursuing a semblance of order, when I should have known well that there is no order in the universe. (*NR* 492)

William rediscovers that the very criterion for this order is lacking and can then reaffirm a world of signs, of discourse, in which people can laugh at truth; nevertheless, William is not the joyous Nietzschean reader here but the Rousseauistic, saddened, nostalgic and guilty reader because, however

much he endorses a noncentre philosophically, he too has desired or dreamed of structure.[27]

In discovering that the criterion for order is lacking, William does not seek to demonstrate that there is no transcendental signified.[28] Derrida argues that every de(co.i)structive proposition necessarily slips into the form of the very thing it seeks to contest:

> The metaphysics of presence is shaken with the help of the sign. But as soon as one seeks to demonstrate in this way that there is no transcendental or privileged signified and that the domain or play of signification has no limit, one must reject even the concept and word `sign' itself - which is precisely what cannot be done. (`Structure, Sign and Play' 280-281)

William imagines an order based on propositional logic and mathematical laws, while perceiving the paradox that if universal laws existed, God would be their prisoner. To advocate that there is no order in the universe means to reject the signs with which we orient ourselves in the world; to advocate

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[27] Derrida makes this distinction between the `Rousseauistic' reader and the `Nietzschean' reader in `Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences'(292).

[28] Rubino argues that for William, chaos and disorder have no meaning on the basis of the Latin quotation: "Non in commotione, non in commitione Dominus" (*NR* 493). He translates this as `God will not be found, he does not exist in confusion, disorder, chaos' (`The Poisoned Worm' 61). My proposition, following Delfattore (`Eco's Conflation' 88), is that William is, in the final analysis, unable to deal with the unlimited connections he has previously endorsed.

the 'truth' of signs is to pursue a semblance of order. As Delfattore points out: "William is in the paradoxical position of acting on a fundamental belief in assumptions whose philosophical validity he denies" ('Eco's Conflation' 82).

William states enigmatically at the end of Adso's narrative:

> It's hard to accept the idea that there cannot be an order in the universe because it would offend the free will of God and his omnipotence. The freedom of God is our condemnation, or at least the condemnation of our pride. (*NR* 492-493)

William recognises that any attempt to break free of the existing social order would be futile. As Coletti acknowledges (*Naming the Rose* 153), he has strong ties with the machinery he criticizes: educated at Oxford, friend and emissary of Emperor Louis, a former inquisitor and a monk, William still speaks 'in the true', he is inscribed within an order: the order of St. Francis and the hierarchy ordained by the church. If he was not, he would not speak at all - something which he acknowledges in his response to Adso's question about the omnipotence and freedom of God in relation to His existence: "How could a learned man go on communicating his learning if he answered yes to your question?" (*NR* 493).

William recognises this critical complicity in his reading of the Franciscan *Rule*. He explains to Adso that, although the Franciscans are located on the margins of official culture, they are complicit in it because they necessarily seek Papal sanction:

> To recover the outcasts he [Francis] had to act within the church, to act within the church he had to obtain the recognition of his rule, from which an order would emerge, and this order, as it emerged, would recompense the image of a circle, at whose margin the outcasts remain. (*NR* 202)

There are, therefore, no complete epistemological or epistemic breaks because every break is necessarily reinscribed in what it seeks to destroy. William's lenses can perhaps be interpreted as revealing the limits of his epistemic perceptions. The lenses reveal how even the enlightened William cannot "see" beyond his position in the labyrinth. Every desire to break out or break free of existing order is deferred.

Hence the ironic ordering of *The Name of the Rose*: the organising principle is the liturgy or canonical hours. This ordering is attributed to Adso who strives to limit play and to structure definitively. This attempt is undone by his copious and elaborate designs, by demoniacal textuality and by the 'silent' or banished figure of Eco behind the series of textual displacements. Thus the reader of the text recognises that this organising principle is

specious and that it does not deserve its referential privilege; but that it is imagined, like the order imagined by William, to subvert the order to which it belongs through ironic and playful revisitation.

Adso's process of structuring his narrative, of referring it to the liturgy which fixes the only proper or sanctioned use of language, is also undermined when he begins to perceive that the concept of centred structure is contradictory. Derrida argues that this perception is made at the moment when language invades the universal problematic ('Structure, Sign and Play' 280). Indeed, it is when Adso begins to perceive ambivalence in the sign, that words have no fixed point of reference, that his belief in a fixed truth and origin is shaken.

On the first day in the abbey, towards noon, Adso's assumptions about language are challenged by Salvatore:

> Nor for that matter could I call Salvatore's speech a language, because in every human language there are rules and every term signifies ad placitum a thing, according to a law that does not change.... (*NR* 47)

The conversations with the abbot, Ubertino and Jorge on the same day during which William contests their respective beliefs in the univocality of heresy and the illicitness of laughter and in which Venantius reminds Jorge

of a previous discussion about metaphors, puns and riddles, all cause Adso to examine his contention that every term signifies *ad placitum* a thing. Thus he opens his narrative of the second day with an example of ambivalence; the first of many, it also presents the demoniacal plural: "Symbol sometimes of the devil, sometimes of the Risen Christ, no animal is more untrustworthy than the cock" (*NR* 101).

However, Adso persistently tries to reinscribe this ambivalence within institutionally sanctioned ways of thinking and speaking. Hence he lives in the necessity of interpretation as an exile from those who dream of fixed truth and *from* those, like William, who desire to "make truth laugh," to free themselves from the "insane passion for the truth" (*NR* 491).

Adso's narrative is then, a discourse of desire: desire to re-turn to a reassuring truth which escapes the play of differences;[29] but this desire is deferred by the absence of an *auctoritas* to which he can refer and he is left burning in doubt. Agonizing over what is similar in the Fratecelli Michael's desire for death and his own desire for the girl, Adso asks:

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[29] Adso claims to be "tormented by the problem of difference itself" (*NR* 196). Coletti points out that in the Italian edition, Adso is using the Derridean neologism `differance' (164-165). The English translation is only suggestive of this. Both the French verb `differer' and the Italian 'differire' carry the double meaning of `to differ' and to 'defer.'

> Is it possible that things so equivocal can be said in such a univocal way? And this, it seems is the teaching left us by Saint Thomas, the greatest of all doctors: the more openly it remains a figure of speech the more it is a dissimilar similitude and not literal, the more metaphor reveals its truth. But if love of the flame and of the abyss are the metaphor for the love of God, can they be the metaphor for love of death and love of sin? Yes, as the lion and the serpent stand both for Christ and the Devil. The fact is that correct interpretation can be established only on the authority of the fathers, and in the case that torments me, I have no auctoritas to which my obedient mind can refer, and I burn in doubt (and again the image of fire appears to define the void of the truth and the fullness of the error that annihilate me!) (*NR* 248)

For Adso, everything has become discourse in the absence of this central *auctoritas*.

Thus, at the end of his narrative, after the apocalyptic conflagration in which fire literally defines the void of truth for him, Adso dares to express a theological conclusion:

> But how can a necessary being exist totally polluted with the possible? What difference is there, then, between God and primigenial chaos? Isn't affirming God's absolute omnipotence and His absolute freedom with regard to His own choices tantamount to demonstrating that God does not exist? (*NR* 493)

The eighteen year old Adso, in this moment, is the diabolical reader who affirms a world of signs in which the transcendental signified is never present outside a system of differences.

Accordingly, Adso, who has tried to contain or limit semiosis, at this point extends the play of signification infinitely. He recognises that the attempt to structure knowledge definitively produces an ideological bias but that this is not generally communicable because those who attempt to organise this knowledge into a global system which is universally valid, would not allow it. Adso recognises that this space of conjecture or speculation is a rhizome labyrinth. However, Adso is still the subject of the text of *logocentricism* since this enunciation is inscribed in the narrative of the eighty-year old monk. Adso's desire thus runs between his logic and his text; and his writing of surplus undoes his announcements of truth.

The apocalyptic conflagration can perhaps be read as the historical closure of the civilization of the book and the beginning of writing, in the Derridean sense. The destruction specifically of Aristotle's book is a necessary violence which denudes the surface of the text.

There is some satisfaction in the resolution or *denouement*; but it is undercut by the `plotlessness' which William articulates at the end of Adso's narrative: "There was no plot and I discovered it by accident (*NR* 491)." Eco therefore has it both ways through this creative sleight of hand: there is both

a sense of closure and a sense in which this apparent closure is undone, folded back and recontained.[30]

3. *IN-SCRIPTION*

In chapter one, I argued that *The Naked Lunch* can be read as a sustained attack on the epic and tragic unity of the humanist subject, a dismantling of the *logocentric* body. However, the body is paradoxically also the site of the *construction* of subjectivity. Benway in *The Naked Lunch*, like Gui in *The Name of the Rose*, is engaged in the policing of bodies in order to immobilise any transgression. They both write the materiality of the *logos* on the flesh through torture, confession, mutilation, and, in Benway's case,

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[30] Stephano Tani argues William is the 'doomed detective' in the sense that he imposes his professional logic on facts which are only causal. The murderer is not directly responsible for all the deaths and conceives the plot only after it has been suggested to him by the detective. According to Tani, *The Name of the Rose* is an anti-detective novel: a high parodic form that stimulates and tantalizes its readers by disappointing common detective novel expectations.

Veeser also argues that *The Name of the Rose* is an anti-detective novel ('Holmes goes to Carnival' 101-115). He claims that the novel belongs to Bakhtin's tradition of laughter rather than Doyle's genre of logic. Veeser summarizes Moretti's politicized thesis: the detective novel is an archly reactionary genre in which the detective must dispel entropy and reinstate univocal ties between signifier and signified, undone by the criminal who creates a situation of semantic ambiguity. Detective fiction therefore belongs to the discourse of the law which serves to confine a disciplinary society. Eco's detective, however, reverses these terms and counters the criminal's deadly allegiance to the letter, official language and the discourse of the law. The policing role here falls to the criminal.

nefarious medical practices. They dream of deciphering a true discourse on\of the body which would fix it in a lawful discursive position. Both read bodies as text and attempt to reinscribe them within the limits of *logocentricism* and protect them from demoniacal plurality.

The fictions, the fabrications, the references to something like a subject *re-found* a discourse on the subject which analyses the conceptual machinery of the subject's relation to religious, moral, legal, political and medical practices.[31] All these practices are unceasingly reinscribed in and redefined by bodies of knowledge since there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge. These practices and fields of knowledge are constituted around personal spaces and larger topographical spaces. Notions of free agency are continually displaced by conditioned paths within the labyrinths of urban space: the street mazes of Annexia and Interzone, the hospital corridors of the Reconditioning Centre or the

[31] The argument now moves from Derrida's gesture at "that which will hold the place (or replace the place) of the subject (of law, of morality, of politics)" ('Eating Well' 107) into a Foucauldian paradigm which interrogates power\knowledge. This is signalled by the neologism '*re-found*' which suggests that the fragmented image of the subject is reconstructed (or put back together in the manner of Picasso) in order to analyse how the subject is situated within conceptual frameworks. This double writing is a *re-mark*, a *dis-location* which re-writes by going back over what is already written, a palimpsest or *palimp-text*. It escapes the pertinence or authority of truth not by overturning it, but by re-inscribing it.

Sanatorium, the court house ruins of Pigeon Hole, the multilayered networks of the Market and Plaza. Within these labyrinthine spaces, surveillance is shown constantly to delimit or structure the possible field of individual actions:

> Every citizen of Annexia was required to apply for and carry on his person at all times a whole portfolio of documents. Citizens were subject to be stopped in the street at any time.... Searchlights played over the town all night (no one was permitted to use shades, curtains, shutters or blinds).... No one was permitted to bolt his door, and the police had pass keys to every room in the city. Accompanied by a Mentalist they rush into someone's quarters and start "looking for it". (*NL* 32-3)

This is a parody of the `free' subject situated within a panoptic[32], disciplinary society with the power to observe. The text in fact interrogates the irony of the conditioned operation of the `free self'.

Thus Carl Peterson does not fail to appear for his appointment with Dr Benway even though it would entail no penalty: he acts or re-acts upon the sole possibility of a conditioned path. The examination is another type of surveillance - the normalising gaze that makes it possible to qualify and

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[32] Foucault uses Bentham's principle of the panopticon: a structure at whose periphery is an annular building which is divided into cells; and at the centre, a windowed tower in which a supervisor is placed. Each actor in the cells is "perfectly individualized and constantly visible" (*Discipline and Punish* 200). Panopticism is the condition of permanent visibility which assures the automatic functioning of power.

classify. The paths within "the steel enamel labyrinth of the Ministry" (*NL* 149), sign of social space generally, only apparently offer choices, alternative paths of action, which would actually constitute deviations; in Carl's case, sexual deviations.

For Foucault, power is exercised only over free subjects since the exercise of power is an action upon an acting subject - the subject is 'free' to act but must submit to the resulting, disciplinary (re-)action. Thus a field of possible actions is structured. Benway observes: "A *functioning* police state needs no police. Homosexuality does not occur to anyone as a conceivable behaviour" (*NL* 41, italics in original).

It becomes important to analyse Benway's examination of Carl in the Foucauldian terms of a ritual of discourse which unfolds within a power relationship in order to flesh out the implications for the subjects straying on 'deviant' (sexual and legal) paths. The medical examination is the point of intersection between procedures of confession and scientific discourse. Significantly, Benway is constantly proclaiming his own status as a *scientist*, rather than a doctor. Benway adapts the ancient procedure of confession to the rules of scientific discourse in a ritual in which Carl as the speaking (or confessing) subject is also the subject of his statements which collectively

govern the production of the true discourse on\of his sexuality and sexual behaviour. He is *subjected to* the examination and *by* his own statements which reconstruct around the act of sex, the thoughts that recapitulated it, the obsessions that accompanied it, the images, desires and the quality of pleasure that animated it (*The History of Sexuality* 63).

> "And so Carl you will please oblige to tell me how many times and under what circumstances you have uh indulged in homosexual acts???"....
> A green flare exploded in Carl's brain. He saw Hans' lean brown body - twisting towards him, quivering shoulder. The flare went out. Some huge insect was squashed. (*NL* 156)

The confession is also governed by what Nietzsche calls the will to remember. Whereas Gui brands the law on the bodies of the unnamed woman, Remigio and Salvatore through a mnemonics of pain and creates a memory fashioned out of the suffering and pain of their bodies, Benway inscribes the law with instruments less violent, but no less coercive.

The examination situates the subject in a network of writing, a mass of documents which captures and fixes him\her. Thus the citizens of Annexia are issued documents in vanishing ink which fade into old porn tickets: "New documents were constantly required. The citizens rushed from one bureau to another in a frenzied attempt to meet impossible deadlines" (*NL* 32). Dr Benway's file on Carl is six inches thick. In fact, Carl notices how it

thickens enormously since he entered the room (*NL* 156). This accretion of documents fixes the subject under a gaze of a permanent *corpus* of knowledge. The subject is fabricated, written *on*, ritualized, this time not through torture, mutilation and flaying, but through the production of disciplinary and bureaucratic writing. This constitution of domains of knowledge is parodied in the appendix which reproduces an article from *The British Journal of Addiction* which functions as a travestied field of documentation, an incongruous archive, a parodic piece of cumulative , disciplinary and classificatory writing.

Benway, like Gui in *The Name of the Rose*, is not the figure of domination or the monolithic (male) oppressor, but the representation in the text of the people through whom power passes or who are important in the field of power relations. His is a complex position. His function in this context is not to punish or suppress sexual 'deviancy' but ceaselessly and comprehensively to analyse it. Since sexuality is a medicalizable object, he must try to detect it. He therefore sets out contacting bodies, literally "caressing them with his eyes" (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 45). The medical examination has the overall apparent object of saying no to all unproductive sexualities but inscribes both subjects in a relation which functions in terms of pleasure; in fact, the incitement to discourse is also an

incitement to pleasure: "These attractions, these evasions, these circular incitements have traced around bodies and sexes, not boundaries to be c ssed, but *perpetual spirals of power and pleasure*" (*The History of Sexuality* 45, italics in original). Similarly, the body is the site of both pleasure and power-knowledge in *The Naked Lunch*: it is manipulated, controlled, corrected, transformed, catalogued, cropped and coerced. It is to these operations on the body that attention must now be turned.

The disciplines that grip the body in vice-like powers and impose on it constraints, prohibitions and regulations are parodied as violent and gruesome *operations*, which correct, amputate and often destroy the body. Cropping and amputation constantly inscribe and fragment the bodies undergoing surgery:

> "The human body is filled up vit unnecessitated parts. You can get by vit von kidney. Vy have two? Yes dot is a kidney ... The inside parts sh. ild not be so close in together crowded. They need Lebensraum like the Vaterland." (*NL* 145-6)

During a conversation between Benway and Schafer, Schafer argues:

> "The Human Body is scandalously inefficient. Instead of a mouth and an anus to get out of order why not have one all-purpose hole to eat and eliminate? We could seal up nose and mouth, fill in the stomach, make an air hole direct into the lungs where it should have been in the first place...." (*NL* 109-110)

These conversations might be (mis)read in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's description of the "Body without Organs" (abbreviated as BwO). They distinguish between two kinds of bodies without organs: the emptied BwO of the drug addict and the full BwO which resists the inscriptions of identity and subjectivity. However, Deleuze and Guattari do not explore the BwO in the grip of discursive power: they do not consider how the BwO can be used both as a technique for subverting the inscriptions of identity and subjectivity; but also as a means for the control and production of subjectivity. Without examining the issues of power and discursive production, they recognise that there are several ways of botching the BwO: "either one fails to produce it, or one produces it more or less, but nothing is produced on it, intensities do not pass or are blocked" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 160-61). Benway and Schafer both "botch" the BwO because they are the agents that attempt to inscribe and control the body. They have considerable investments in the field of power\knowledge.

It is during the conversation about bodies that could be disinvested of organs, that Benway recounts the story of the man who taught his asshole to talk.[33] This section parodically exposes the machinery of power that

[33] Wayne Pounds argues that the talking asshole routine is also parody as carnival laughter. Robin Lydenberg contests Pounds' reduction of the

explores, re-arranges, reduces and controls the body, and therefore functions as a parody of pure and disinterested science, behaviourism and human engineering, but also as the topsy-turvy parody of society's investments in some parts and functions of the body: the anus represents the site of marginality and disinvestment.

Schafer and Benway are both conducting experiments in human engineering. Schafer's 'Drones' live in great warehouses, reduced to idiocy by forced lobotomies; Benway's INDs have reflexes but nothing else and constitute a powerful assault on identity:

> I walk over and stand in front of a man who is sitting on his bed. I look at the man's eyes. Nobody, nothing looks back.
> "INDs," says Benway, "Irreversible Neural Damage. Overliberated, you may say ... a drag on the industry."
> ... Doctor Benway pauses at the door and looks back at the INDs. "Our failure," he says, "Well, it's all in the day's work." (*NL* 39)

Benway's sardonic remark that the INDs are "overliberated" suggests that the assault on identity through irreversible neural damage is not a method for subverting the inscriptions of identity and subjectivity; but rather a

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carny man to a Rabelaisian joke. She proposes that it is an "ominous tale of control and domination" (57) and that all that "remains is the anus's grotesque parody of human identity" (58). However, the tale of control and the parody of identity *is* the Rabelaisian joke - a parody which is also a social and political protest. The talking ass parodies and relativizes itself, repudiating the language of self-expression and ventriloquising from below.

nefarious means of experimenting with the body as the object of vested interest.

The operations in the toilet and the auditorium (*NL* 58-59) expose the body as the object of investments: the body is imbued with the mechanics of health codes, practices and institutions which take charge of life. Rituals and practices designed to cleanse or purify the body are also processes of cultural inscription and homogeneity:

> The lavatory has been locked for three hours solid.... I think they are using it as an operating room....
> Dr Benway washes the suction cup by swishing it around in the toilet bowl....
> NURSE: "Shouldn't it be sterilised, doctor?"
> DR BENWAY: "Very likely, but there is no time... Did I ever tell you about the time I performed an appendectomy with a rusty sardine can? And once I was caught short without instrument one and removed a uterine tumour with my teeth...." (*NL* 58-59, ellipses in original)

Burroughs gives us the unclean, the unsanitary which disturbs the systems and mechanisms of Bio-power around which the organisation of power over life is deployed.[34]

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[34] Bio-power means power over life or the right of the social body to ensure, maintain and develop life; but also to subject it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations, including health regulations. Bodies are inserted into a public health system and a new aseptic morality arises.

The operation in the auditorium sets up a tension between the right to take life and the power to foster life. The operation is turned into a ritual of medical control over life and responsibility for life at the point of immanent death, power's limit:

> Dr Benway is operating in an auditorium filled with students:
> "Now Boys, you won't see this operation performed very often and there's a reason for that .... You see it has absolutely no medical value. No one knows what the purpose of it originally was or if it had a purpose at all. Personally I think it was a pure artistic creation from the beginning.
> "Just as a bull fighter with his skill and knowledge extricates himself from danger he has himself invoked, so in this operation the surgeon deliberately endangers his patient and then with incredible speed and celerity, rescues him from death at the last possible split second." (*NL* 59)

This purely aesthetic operation demonstrates the power over life applied at the limit of life itself.

The operations of surveillance and the medical examination make the body intelligible, analyzable; while Benway and Schafer's gruesome series of operations expose a manipulable and inscribed body. Both types of 'operations' disclose the disciplinary coercion of *docile* bodies.

If Benway and Schafer's botched Bodies without Organs are attempts to inscribe and control the body, the BwO of the drug addict, according to

Deleuze and Guattari, is also empty. They quote from *The Naked Lunch* to support this belief:

> [A junkie] wants The Cold inside like he wants his Junk - Not OUTSIDE where it does him no good but INSIDE - he can sit around with a spine like a frozen hydraulic jack ... his metabolism approaching Absolute Zero. (qtd. in *A Thousand Plateaus* 153-4)

The addict-subjects of *The Naked Lunch* have emptied themselves too quickly. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the dissolution of their identities is not radical because they are stuck in repetition, unable to transform the body's intensities and desires:

> Instead of making a body without organs sufficiently rich or full for the passage of intensities, drug addicts erect a vitrified and emptied body, or a cancerous one: the causal line, creative line or line of flight immediately turns into a line of death and abolition. (*A Thousand Plateaus* 285)

However, the addict-subjects of *The Naked Lunch* refuse or disrupt the relation of docility-utility. They threaten the machinery of power by which they are made subjects. Hence the conditioned hysterical reaction to drugs:

> When I say "the junk virus is public health problem number one of the world today," I refer not just to the actual ill effects of opiates upon the individual's health (which, in cases of controlled dosage may be minimal), but also to the hysteria that drug use often occasions in populaces who are prepared by the media and narcotics officials for a hysterical reaction.... Anti-drug hysteria is now world-wide, and it poses a deadly threat to personal freedoms and due-process protections of the law everywhere. (*NL* 15)

In typical Burroughs fashion, this 'afterthought' is deliberately ambiguous and paradoxical. It seems both to promote and discourage the taking of drugs. This afterthought comes after a deposition in which Burroughs queries how and why the junk pyramid is sustained. Whose interests are served? Why has the apomorphine cure not been researched? Why is the junk pyramid *tolerated*? Is it not that the failure of the attempt to control or prohibit the use of drugs is part of the function?

Addicts are only *apparently* never useful in economic terms nor obedient in political terms. The obvious failure to control drugs is deliberate in that it gives rise to a particular form of illegality, irreducible and secretly useful: delinquency. In a Foucauldian sense, delinquency is tolerated, penetrated, organised, and enclosed in a definite milieu and given an instrumental role in relation to other illegalities. Thus the section named 'Hauser and O'Brien' (*NL* 166-172) can be read as a matrix of transformation within a power-knowledge relation. William Lee, the addict, offers to 'set up' the dealer Marty Steel for Hauser and O'Brien. This institutional vested interest in the drug sub-cultures must be masked by manufacturing anti-drug hysteria. Thus the drug sub-culture is both an instrument and effect of this power relation; it is a point of resistance but also reinforces the law.

Perhaps it is, ironically, only the Johnnys, Marks and Marys of *The Naked Lunch* (discussed in chapter one), who are truly able to disinvest in the constructions and inscriptions outlined above, and participate in full BwO. It is through the intensification of desire - the passions, flows and transgressions - that they are able to resist inscription and situate the subject in another way by playing around with gender roles, by transgressing the fragile limits of "the great binary aggregates": man\woman; human\animal.

> If we consider the great binary aggregates, such as the sexes or classes, it is evident that they also cross over into molecular assemblages of a different nature, and that there is a double, reciprocal dependency between them. For the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman, and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal.... (Deleuze and Guatarri, *A Thousand Plateaus* 213)

The full irony of their transgression, their resistance to the inscriptions of identity and subjectivity, is that they are merely actors, the entertainment at A.J.'s annual party.

The three sections of this chapter should themselves be read as a rhizomatics (of desire, interpretation and inscription) erected on the site of the construction of subjectivity, an *architexture* which could perhaps be rewritten more productively as *arche-texture*. This would foreground how

the subject is always already inscribed in the supplementarity of diabolical *arche-ecriture*.

Whereas in this chapter I have been concerned with readers in the texts, the next chapter will focus on readers of the text and attempt to bring the rhizomatics of the labyrinth to bear on the hermeneutical project.

CHAPTER THREE: MISE-EN-[S]CRYPTE[35]

> These phrases, at first glance incoherent, can no doubt be justified in a cryptographical or allegorical manner. (`LB' 84)

> ...the pleasure presupposes not the disappearance pure and simple, but the neutralization, not simply the putting to death but the *mise en crypte* of all that exists in as much as it exists. This pleasure is purely subjective: in the aesthetic judgement it does not designate anything about the object. But its subjectivity is not an existence or even a relation to existence. It is an inexistent or anexistent subjectivity arising on the crypt of the empirical subject and its whole world. (Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* 46)

1. CRYPTANALYSIS

The text has traditionally been considered to hide the codes of its composition and the rules of its game from the reader (Derrida, `Plato's

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[35] *Mise en crypte* is a Derridean neologism which I have appropriated, transformed and forged into an axiom for the activity of critical production.

It is significant for the purposes of this dissertation that the labyrinth is thought by some to be merely an underground vault or crypt, a well-guarded prison where Athenian youths were kept in readiness for Androgeus's funeral games.

It is also interesting to see how the crypt passes from edifice to analysis through a supplement of writing (like the *palintrope* of the labyrinth): crypt, cryptograph, cryptography or cryptanalysis. *Mise en [s]crypte* simultaneously traces the hidden memory of this transformation and puts it under erasure, debunking the concern to decipher the secret code, reveal what is secretly (cryptically?) hidden.

Pharmacy' 63). The pleasure of reading has been understood as the search for this meaning hermetically sealed or encrypted within the text. In this way, criticism has proceeded by being caught up in the process of filiation: meaning is governed by the institutionalised privilege of the author and executed by the critic[36]. In this chapter, I will attempt to find a way of bringing the labyrinth to bear on this hermeneutical project in order to decentre its didacticism and authority. I have perhaps, by chance, located a way if I play on the etymological trace of eisegesis and exegesis and indicate their double meaning: *eis* from Greek which signifies "into" and *ex*, "out of"; as well as *hegeisthai*, "to lead". These words together license critics, Theseus-like, to *show us the way*, presumably the way that attends upon truth, the way of the *logos*. The critics' path is the path of persuasion which follows the threads of a univocal (in every sense of the word) *line* which leads to the centre of the text and reveals the secret meaning there. But which (discursive) line should the critic follow? And once she is inured to the conditions in the labyrinth, how should she proceed, having no

[36] It was pointed out to me that my use of the word 'critic' inscribes a practice attempting to access the signified, which is quite distinct from the practice of reading. I refer here to the institutionalised function of the critic whose practice does indeed attempt to restitute and govern meaning through the production of critical texts. My argument attempts to show how this activity is undone by what Barthes calls "the adventure of the signifier" ('Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers' 198).

transcendent exteriority from which to find her way? To what extent is critical analysis *misleading*?

In this way, elsegetical and exegetical licence is besieged in a critical impasse called *aporia*:

> ...the end point of critical reading and writing is *aporia*. To the Greeks this meant "no way out". Unable to get beyond signs, locked in language (*ecriture*), the interpreter confronts the irreducible free play of difference and figure. (Leitch, *Deconstructive Criticism* 250)

In the impasse of *aporia*, the critic runs the risk of being definitively lost.

Another way of bringing the labyrinth to bear on the hermeneutical project in order to abolish the legacy of the author and the privilege of the critic to execute the meaning, is to consider the citations, references, allusions, echoes and repetitions which form an intertextual labyrinth and bring about fundamental changes in reading strategies. Distinctions between author and critic begin to collapse here since the writings of both are "texts-between" of other texts. It should be noted at the outset that I will not attempt to locate the "sources" of the texts as this would be to fall back into the myth of filiation; as Barthes claims: "the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet *already read*" ('From Work to Text' 160).

A third way might be to look at how the labyrinth functions as *palintrope* within the texts: to collapse my critical discourse on the text back into the text in order to debunk my meta-language, my position "outside" as decoder, analyst, arbitrator of meaning - to collapse the practice of research into the space of writing.[37]

This section will attempt to follow up these three paths: it will analyse how criticism has functioned under the aegis of an inside\outside metaphor and collapse this metaphor into a rhizome of (dis)continuous routes and paths; it will then explore the rhizomatics of intertextuality which trans-figures critical practice and finally it will attempt to use William's *cryptanalysis* as an allegory of critical practice.

It becomes important to provide examples of the exegetical and eisegetical analyses which function under the aforementioned aegis. The many analyses (including this one) that the texts have generated are governed by distinct discursive positions. Each reading attempts to follow the path conditioned by that particular *logos*, but finds that the path is backward

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[37] Barthes examines how the practice of research "moves on the side of writing" in 'Writers, Intellectuals, Teachers' (197-198).

turning. Criticism thus provides what Braswell calls "an ever-shifting battle between one combatant critical signifier and another" ('Eco's Meta-psychomachia' 2).

The appropriation of *The Name of the Rose* by Christian discourses provides a good example of exegetical analyses. The novel was awarded the Book of the Year Award at the Conference on Christianity and Literature for the work that "has contributed most to the dialogue between literature and the Christian faith" (qtd. in Coletti, *Naming the Rose* 1).

However, in a paper published in *Christianity and Literature*, Reichenbach offers an inimical, opposing reading. He repeats the question, in the title of his paper, which Adso asks in his 'Last Page': "*Est Ubi Gloria Nunc Babylonia?*" (*NR* 501; Reichenbach 25). Reichenbach argues that the crises of truth, reality and meaning constitute the "fundamental message of the novel" (25). The paper sets up an opposition between Aristotelian and Tertullian conceptions of truth but claims that both these conceptions are under threat in the novel. The paper, however, privileges the Aristotelian over the Tertullian by commenting in a footnote that the deduction of truth from first principles is the concern "which lies at the heart of Eco's novel" (Reichenbach 41), and also at the heart of Reichenbach's paper since his

mode of argument is syllogistic reasoning, which turns his experience of reading into knowledge of the true discourse on\of the novel. He concludes that the novel 's nihilistic and that its final message is that there is no truth, no glorious Babylonic structure or meaning to be found. However, this conclusion is subverted by the hierarchical relation of the terms of the binary which the paper tries to interrogate, but within which it operates.

Reichenbach's attempt to follow the path of an Aristotelian religio-philosophical *logos* in order to uproot the presence of the meaning of the rose from philosophical oppositions results in a confrontation with the *rhizome*. The critical attempt to `show us the way' is lost in the production of *undecidables*.[38]

The attempts to "show us the (moral) way" become more urgent in criticism of *The Naked Lunch*. The novel was banned in England until 1964 and was the last literary work in the United States to be censored by the academy, post-office, customs, and state and local government (Skerl et al, 4). Significantly, the critical issues of coherence, unity and structure became

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[38] Leitch proposes that deconstruction produces *undecidables* through systematically and tenaciously inverting the opposition, displacement or reversal in a textual chain and steadfastly disallowing any reconstitution of these dichotomous terms (*Deconstructive Criticism* 180).

important in the Massachusetts censorship trial in deciding whether its moral or "socially redeeming" significance justified the insertion of pornographic passages about sex and violence (Skerl et al. 5). The cut-up or montage structure became important in deciding the moral intention. Critics saw themselves as the eisegetical or exegetical gatekeepers who could determine not only ways in and out of text, but also the moral guardianship of those ways.

This kind of critical reception can be summed up by the title of the *Times Literary Supplement* review which provoked the longest exchange of letters in the publication's history: 'UGH!' The anonymous reviewer (later acknowledged as John Willet) asks: "Is there a moral message? And how about if the moral message is itself disgusting?" (42). Leslie Fiedler writes that the critic's job is to "legislate limits to literature - legitimizing certain of its functions and disavowing others" (505). Fiedler accuses Burroughs of leading the young into an anti-male and anti-humanist dead end. Thus eisegetical or exegetical criticism which provides a way in or way out of *The Naked Lunch* becomes little more than a meta-critical scorching of the morally reprehensible, a position 'outside' the text which cannot be sustained except in its own sanctimonious terms.

The moral value of literature also features in the critical reception of *Lost in the Funhouse.* In her criticism of the text, Woolley offers Irving Howe's criterion against which literature must be judged: "how much of our life does it illuminate? how ample a moral vision does it suggest?" (480). She attempts to show how the self-reflexive fictions of *Lost in the Funhouse* are not immune from such considerations. The critical reception of Barth's fiction often attempts to position his writing within the philosophical tradition of existentialism. Thus Woolley argues that by expressing the narrative problem as an existential one, a way out of the labyrinth (it is unclear which labyrinth, but presumably that of self-reflexivity) is initiated (472). In attempting to provide this exegetical way out, she argues that the "fecund voices" of *Lost in the Funhouse* are anchored in persons and the personal even at the height of self-reflexivity:

> Any tendency of postmodern fiction to collapse into linguistic freeplay or mere 'text' is counterbalanced by narrative's irrepressible evocation, through voice, of a narrative presence characterised by certain acts, qualities and intentions - which may even be an intention to purify voice of self. (481)

However, the voices necessarily exist only in writing, therefore writing inhabits the seemingly unsupplemented "fecund voices" as the very condition and possibility of their existence. Thus there is no exegetical route, no way out of the labyrinth.

It is (not surprisingly) the labyrinth which has received most critical attention in Borges' work. According to Rodriquez-Monegal, the labyrinth

> fixes symbolically a movement from the exterior to the interior, from form to contemplation, from multiplicity to unity.... It also represents the opposite movement: from within to without, according to a symbolic progression. (332)

For Rodriquez-Monegal, the labyrinth thus represents not only the trajectory of action in the fictions, but also the eisegetical and exegetical critical movements in and out of the text. However, the labyrinth, as symbolic structure, is derivative of the discourse it seeks to dominate: it is paradoxically both inside and outside at the same time.[39]

There is, therefore, no transcendent moral or critical position "outside" from which to write: the binary opposition of inside\outside is collapsed into the space of writing. Hence there are no eisegetical or exegetical points of ingress or egress that are not always already backward turning. Furthermore, ironic entrances and exits confound the work of eisegesis or exegesis by *traversing* the storyline: the reader can no longer depend on the sequential, straight-forward march of plot towards a critical centre and then an inevitable *denouement*. Perhaps it is wilful or arrogant to persist in

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[39] Derrida makes this point about the "structurality of structure" in 'Structure, Sign and Play': "That it has always been thought that the centre, which is by definition unique, constituted the very thing within a structure which while governing the structure, escapes structurality" (279).

cross-examining or examining across the traversed margins of these four texts. Perhaps I should work nearer the centre. But finding the centre is a Theseus task so difficult, unmanageable and primitive that one is always already lost, seduced by the paths which are not.

And yet the labyrinth would appear to be at the *centre* of *The Name of the Rose*. This centre is recomposed at the margins of the text as a parodic map which marks the limits of the text. Following Derrida, "the centre is therefore paradoxically *within* the structure and *outside* it.... The centre is not the centre" ('Structure, Sign and Play 279), and, as we shall see, this decentred structure provides only highly provisional and ironic points of ingress or egress.

The map of the abbey is provided on the inside covers in the Harcourt Brace Jovanovich edition of 1983. The map only appears before the inscription in the Picador edition. The endplate in the former edition lends irony to the parodic map since the abbey has been consumed by fire - the only trace thereof is a frustratingly incomplete map which mocks our attempts to "see" the abbey. This map follows a first presence and attempts to restore a final presence.

The map would contain the narrative and provide a point of entry into the text. The map represents the desire for/of presence. The abbey signified in all its transparent brilliance and glory. It attempts to restore the presence of the abbey and efface itself as representation. Thus the writing of the text passes through a supplement of pictography to orientate a reader before he or she enters the labyrinth of signifiers. The map also attempts to restore a final presence since it returns at the end of the novel - it (re-)marks the history of the abbey.

However, this attempt is undone by an initial doubling which marks the supplement of/at the origin: letters appear on the map - writing already takes place within the space of "pure representation". But there is a double consequence: the letters on the map do not correspond to the legend explaining the symbols. The map begins with A and ends with Z but only a few of the letters on the map concur with the legend, some letters are barely discernible and others are marked or missing. Shulz proposes that the curious alpha-to-omega totalization of the abbey's buildings suggests that the alphabet, the system of ordering and labelling, existed before the abbey or at least before the plan of the abbey and that the latter was designed to correspond to the former (96). I suggest that the use of the letters of the alphabet introduces a supplementary degree of representation. The

alphabet functions to foreground the supplement of at the origin: the 'presence' of the abbey is always repeated within another presence, in this case, the map or pictogram which is in turn repeated in the legend, which is in turn repeated within the text. If presence must always be repeated within another presence, then representation does not encroach upon presence, it inhabits it as the very condition of its existence. The letters are therefore signifiers that are nonsignifying and purely arbitrary. It is ultimately not the *presence* of the abbey that is facilitated but rather the circulation of letters, and variations and combinations of those letters. The abbey exists in language and any attempts to fix it become dispersed across the play of signifiers.

The Name of the Rose moves through three embedded beginnings after the incongruous map: the introduction and note by the anonymous Italian, Adso's prologue and the beginning of Adso's narrative. These legionary and legendary beginnings are encased in the narratives of Vallet and Mabillon. This series puts authorship into question. The reader can never be sure to what extent the anonymous Italian of the frontispiece copies, translates or writes the text. Part of this difficulty arises from the opposition between reading and writing, author and critic. This opposition is undone in *The Name of the Rose* by making the anonymous writer first and foremost a

reader, who becomes the figure of the textual property of (un)readability. Following De Man, the writer is similar to the reader in his or her inability to read the text:

> It is impossible to distinguish between reader and author in terms of epistemological certainty. It follows that we can reverse the priority which makes us think of reading as the natural consequence of writing. It now appears that writing can just as will be considered the linguistic correlative of the inability to read. (*Allegories of Reading* 203)

Distinctions between author and critic begin to collapse in an ambiguous, dialectical space of reading\writing.

If the novel transgresses its beginning, it also transgresses its end by including Adso's 'Last Page'. In her reading of Melville's *Billy Budd*, Barbara Johnson claims:

> The story in fact begins to repeat itself - retelling itself ... in reverse.... The ending not only lacks special authority, it problematises the very idea of authority.... To end is to repeat, and to repeat is to ungovernably open to revision, displacement and reversal. The sense of Melville's ending [like the sense of Eco's beginnings and endings] is to empty the ending of any privileged control over sense. (*The Critical Difference* 81)

This is applicable to *The Rose's* textual displacements. The novel retells itself by having both the anonymous Italian and Adso purport to construct their narratives out of fragments, both doubt the validity of their narratives

and both proclaim their narratives to be testaments of desire in the absence of an object of desire. Beginnings and endings are therefore deprived of their authority to govern meaning or sense through this repetition and reversal.

This series of beginnings and endings would appear to be constituted outside the *ergon*[40] but actually forms incongruous *hinges* upon which are hung the frames of ingress or egress.[41] These frames open into a play of eisegetical routes or paths which are not structurally homogeneous with the text. However, the frames maintain a structural link with the most inner or central aspect of the work: the secret centre of the abbey, the plot, the book, folds back on the work, incorporating the external position from which to interpret the whole in which it also *figures*.

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[40] *Ergon* translates from the Greek as 'work,' in the sense of energy or force. Derrida equivocates between the use of the word as verb (in the Greek sense) and noun. It is the energy, the force working between the work (*ergon*) and frame (*parergon*) that rivets and divides them (*The Truth in Painting* 53-67)

[41] *Hinge* translates Derrida's double edged *brisure*, which carries the connotations of breaking and joining as well as crack, fracture, fault, split and fragment. The hinge functions like the *supplement* or the *parergon*: not outside the work but acting alongside, right up against the work. "on (the) bo(a)rd(er)" (*The Truth in Painting* 54).

A framing device is used in *Lost in the Funhouse* to similar effect: the Author's Note, the Seven Additional Author's Notes and the Frame Tale. The author's notes appear to be a metatextual commentary which provide a point of entry into the series and divide the external metalanguage from the work it describes. However, the author's notes ironically examine their own interpretative and authoritative discourse by folding themselves in as *part of the story*: "On with the story. On with the story" (*LF* 7). They are also contained within the three-dimensional Moebius strip of the frame tale: "Once upon a time there was a story that began once upon a time there was a story that began once upon a time..." (*LF* 11-12).[42]

What is at the centre of *Lost in the Funhouse*? At the centre of the text is the funhouse of 'Lost in the Funhouse'. Like the library-labyrinth in *The Name of the Rose*, the funhouse would appear to centre the text and govern its structure; but like the library-labyrinth of *The Name of the Rose*, it is within the text and paradoxically outside of it: structurality collapses into play.

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[42] The Moebius strip with its infinite unitary thread, two sided and yet one-sided, backward turning in an irresolvable alternation, perhaps best represents the incongruous labyrinth of a single line.

Furthermore, at the centre of the funhouse, the reader finds Ambrose whose name no longer signs (him)self, indefinitely creating a fiction of self. Ambrose's riddling play of language and his attempt to discover the structure of the funhouse relocate the concept of structure according to rules of a game which are constantly transgressed:

> Where she had written in shorthand *Where she had written in shorthand* Where she had written in shorthand *Where she* et cetera. A long time ago we should have passed the apex of Freitag's triangle and made brief work of the *denouement*; the plot doesn't rise by meaningful steps but winds upon itself, digresses, retreats, hesitates, sighs, collapses, expires. The climax of the story must be its protagonist's discovery of a way to get through the funhouse. But he has found none, may have ceased to search. (*LF* 100, italics in original)

Edwards proposes that the text deconstructs itself in the process of its construction, "creating its reader, a 'dogged, uninsultable, print-orientated bastard' as one who will join in the play for the possibilities it offers, for the game itself, not the end since there is none" ('Deconstructing the Artist' 285).

The Naked Lunch is also framed, this time by an authorial deposition: "testimony concerning a sickness" (7). This *hinge* of language is once again doubled and discontinuous: it is literally *put aside* (if we allow the word to pass through an etymological supplement) and acts up alongside the work. The deposition constitutes the frame and ruins it: between the two

meanings of depose (expel, unseat, dethrone and declare, disclose, confess) the frame is dislocated, cracked. The dissemination of the meanings of sickness further undoes the frame at its hinges and joints: is the sickness drug addiction, withdrawal, poisoning by "what is on the end of that long newspaper spoon" (*NL* 12), or the conditioned hysteria to drugs?

The ironic return of the author who provides structures of ingress and egress in *The Name of the Rose*, *Lost in the Funhouse* and *The Naked Lunch* through prefaces, notes, depositions and centres, therefore paradoxically abolishes his legacy:

> "He is inscribed in the novel like one of his characters, figured in the carpet; no longer privileged, paternal, aletheological, his inscription is ludic ... his life is no longer the origin of his fictions but a fiction contributing to his work." (Barthes, R. `From Work to Text' 161)

Author-ity is displaced by editorial comment in `The Library of Babel'. It is with a contemplation of the variation of letters that the text begins: "By this art you may contemplate the variation of the twenty-three letters" (`LB' 78). This quotation is *supplemented* by a series of editor's notes which appear also to attempt to provide a metatextual commentary - an eisegetical "way in" - which orientates the reader through authoritative or specialist comment to the extent that the inside is lacking. However the editor is nowhere

named. Between the editor's notes and the lack of his or her signature, the proper, authoritative commentary is twisted out of shape. This is further problematized because the labour of the frame is split between two unknown editors. The notes appear to work against the operation of free play, seeking to contain it, but in so doing, foreground the impossibility of arresting play by infinitely extending it.

Rather than eisegetical or exegetical comment then, the critic (whom we may re-name as crytic) is occupied with tentative and provisional - cryptanalysis: analysing and deciphering the ciphers, codes, signifiers or secret writing of the text. Following Derrida's graphic intervention in the word 'difference', the 'y' that insinuates itself into the writing of the word 'critic' marks a lapse in the institutional discipline and law which regulates (critical) writing. This infraction allows lines of meaning to go off in different directions and lets us anticipate the delineation of a site, a certain locatable non-place, a crypt, in which everything is strategic and adventurous:

> Strategic because no transcendent truth present outside the field of writing can govern theologically the totality of the field. Adventurous because this strategy is not a simple strategy in the sense that strategy orientates tactics to a final goal, a *telos* or theme of domination, a mastery and ultimate reappropriation of the development of the field. (Derrida, '*Differance*' 7)

Derrida goes on to describe this strategy as blind tactics or empirical *wandering*. If there is a certain wandering of the crytical trace, it does not follow a line which encloses a homogenous space.

The decisions of each reading are a labyrinth that envelop the crypt, following the paths, reconstituting the labyrinth, indefinitely generating crytical texts behind the text. Significantly, the crytic is not speaking definitively for\of the text: the pleasure is purely subjective. The disentombing, disentangling, dissimulation can take centuries: these supplements of crytical reading and writing are rigorously governed, but by the logic of play, rather than the traditional rigour of the academy.

The logic of play at work in this dissertation, as a function of the demoniacal (inter)text, subverts the critical practice of finding the hidden meaning which is awaiting liberation by hermeneutical strategies. The excesses of intertextuality overtake such organising and totalising centres as the work, the author and the critic. In the figure of the labyrinth, intertextual dispersion undermines the seamless oeuvre, the inspired work of genius, the acclaimed critical centre and we are left in a space of seemingly infinite self-referentiality.

As has been noted earlier, the intertext has nothing to do with literary influence; rather, it is a trans-discursive rhizome in which various systems of signs are transposed: a *palimp-text* which is a rude mixing of the already-spoken. Salvatore in *The Name of the Rose* represents this redistributive function within language. His speech is the product of anterior or synchronic language. Adso writes:

> I realised Salvatore spoke all languages and no language. Or rather he had invented for himself a language which used the sinews of the languages to which he had been exposed ... I realised that he was not so much inventing his own sentences as using the disecta membra of other sentences , heard some time in the past. (*NR* 47)

To the extent that Adso needs to protect monological discourse, he is initially unable to recognise that dialogism (or demoniacal textuality) is within all language. He is, however, forced to recognise the "texts between" of his writing - that his monologic description and narration are in fact a field onto which various texts have been transposed. In his agony over the language used to describe the burning of Michael (discussed in chapter two), and again in his dream or vision, Adso begins to understand how the intertexts which "speak" him have been censored by a prohibition, such that discourse is prevented from turning back on itself and entering into dialogue with itself. It is therefore not so much the *pneuma* which possesses Adso, as the demoniacal plural of other texts.

Burroughs' experimental `cut-up' technique (developed by Brion Gysin) is also a function of the intertext: *The Naked Lunch* is a mosaic of stolen fragments from pulp fiction, the popular press, pornography, scientific papers, philosophy, and literature all spliced up. However, there are also many other ways to do cut-ups which bring about radical changes in reading\writing practices:

> 1. Take a page of text and draw a line down the middle and cross the middle. You now have four blocks of text 1 2 3 4. Now cut along the lines and put block 1 with block 4 and block 2 with block 3. Read the rearranged page. 2. Fold a page of text down the middle lengthwise and lay it on another page of text. Now read across half one text and half the other. 3. Arrange your texts in three or more columns and read cross column. 4. Take any page of text and number the lines. Now permutate order of lines.... There are of course many other possibilities. (Burroughs, `The Literary Techniques of Lady Sutton Smith' 87)

Burroughs in fact claims that he has no memory of writing the manuscripts of *The Naked Lunch* - that these were found in his room, 'cut-up' and bound by Allan Ginsberg. Thus the legions of *The Naked Lunch* write in the demoniacal plural.

The trans-discursive rhizomes of the fiction of Borges and Barth are born out of hybrid, misbegotten, corrupted myths.[43] The fictions put into play a logic of *mythos*:

> Thus myth puts into play a form of logic which could be called - in contrast to the logic of noncontradiction of the philosophers - a logic of the ambiguous, of the equivocal.... How can one formulate or even formalise these see-saw operations, which flip any term into its opposite while at the same time keeping them both apart, from another point of view? (qtd. in Derrida, 'Khora' 88)

The fictions (and the dissertation) are caught in the legend of reading\writing, in the crypt of the immense history of interpretations, appropriations, and transformations. Fiction and criticism alike are held in the crypt of "texts-between".

It is interesting to follow how the crypt (both the underground chamber and hidden intertexts) of Adso's dream opens into William's crypt-analysis, and produces a trans-figuring of reading strategies. William de-ciphers the dream by reminding Adso of the system of secret writing, the *Coena Cypriani*, which he had read at Melk:

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[43] *Lost in the Funhouse* re-writes the myths (among others) of St. Ambrose's naming, Echo, Phoebus and Procne, Meneleus and Helen. Borges's *Labyrinths* endlessly extends the myth of the labyrinth: in 'The Library of Babel', 'The Garden of Forking Paths' and 'Death and the Compass' and then re-writes it from the position of the disenfranchised minotaur in 'The House of Asterion'.

> But do you know that to a great extent what you tell me has already been written? You have added people and events of these past few days to a picture that is already familiar to you, because you have read the story of your dream somewhere, or it was told you as a boy, in school, in the convent. It is the *Coena Cypriani.* (*NR* 437)

This text was indeed censored by a monastic prohibition, and William points out how Adso's discourse re-turned to it as dream-dialogism.

The belief in a pure monological (critical) voice is trans-figured by the rhizomatics of intertexutuality in which "writing reads another writing, reads itself and constructs itself through a process of de[con]structive genesis" (Kristeva, *Desire in Language* 77). There is no writing outside of dialogism, of diabolical *ecriture.*

William's cryptanalysis is not limited to Adso's dream. He also de-ciphers the acrostic of the library-labyrinth and Venantius' cryptograph. William as a reader and crytic of the physical and textual labyrinths of his world, has important implications for the textual labyrinths through which the crytic wanders.

Lost in the library-labyrinth, William suggests to Adso that a system of marks, signs and returns is the only way to find one's way out of a labyrinth. It reads like a description of crytical practice, providing a method for

knowing which *line* to follow. This method of mapping a (physical or textual) labyrinth is backward turning, *palintropic*. But the method is misleading and one runs the risk of being definitively lost: Adso asks if this rule gets you out and William responds, "Almost never, as far as I know. But we will try it all the same" (*NR* 176). The crytic is left in an *aporia* - in the impasse of interpretation from which there is no way out.

William seeks the solution to the murders at the centre of the labyrinth. Having discovered what he thinks is the authentic line to follow, he enters the *finis Africae*, in the hopes of finding the meaning sealed or encrypted there. Instead, he finds Jorge armed with the *pharmakon* of writing[44]. Caught up with Jorge in the process of filiation, he discovers rather that the centre is not the crypt of meaning but rather a null point. At the centre, he finds solution which is also ironically dissolution and death.

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[44] Derrida uses the word '*pharmakon*' as both poison and remedy. He writes that the *pharmakon* exerts the power of fascination: as *substance* (with its connotations of cryptic depths which refuse to submit their ambivalence to analysis), it has both beneficent or maleficent charm (*Plato's Pharmacy* 70). He connects *biblia* and *pharmaka* through the myth of Theuth (73). Thus Aristotle's book, a poisoned present, is a *pharmakon* of writing which poisons and remedies the unfortunate monks' academic fascinations. For Jorge, the father of *logos*, the *pharmakeus* (a magician, sorcerer and poisoner) the question of writing opens up as a question of morality: "Already: writing, the *pharmakon*, the going or leading astray" (*Plato's Pharmacy* 71). Jorge and William thus enact the *pharmakos*: evil and death, repetition and exclusion.

William discovers that his reading of the signs constitutes a systematic narrative of error. Chapter two analyses William's method of arriving at the probable through a series of hypothetical errors, conceiving of many, so that he becomes the slave of none (*NR* 306). But William is not only a saddened and guilty reader; he *needs* to find the solution to the murders to buttress his own power and position within his world. His interpretation is engaged in mortal conflict with the other narratives of error: Gui's, Adso's (because writing is interpretation that exists in the mode of error) and finally, in the *finis Africae*, Jorge's:

> I realised, with a shudder, that at this moment, these two men, arrayed in a mortal conflict, were admiring each other, as if each had acted only to win the other's applause. (*NR* 472)

Jorge and William's interpretations engage each other in an act of seduction and combat for the one reading is precisely the error denounced by the other and is deconstructed by it.

Blackmur proposes that every critic is a casuist (qtd. in Leitch, *Deconstructive Criticism* 264), a celebrant of misreading whose narratives of error buttress their institutional privilege and power. A good misreading will produce other readings, other two-headed combatants within the labyrinth of (academic) placement, eager to seduce and assail each other.

Like William, all the critic can do is imagine an order, in my case, the *palintropic* labyrinth. However this order is not unique nor can it be coordinated with the production of truth. It should not be imbued with a significance or meaning it does not have; rather, as William explains to Adso, the Wittgensteinian ladder must be thrown away:

> The order that our mind imagines is like a net, or a ladder, built to attain something. But afterward you must throw the ladder away because you discover that, even if it was useful, it was meaningless. (492)

As critics, we can choose to dream of univocal significance and try to contain the idea of these texts within the limits of any one interpretative strategy, we can mourn the loss of this structuralist thematic, or we can participate in Nietzschean laughter.

This is not the laughter of the carnival which, as Eco points out, validates the law it transgresses. The carnival is "authorised transgression" ('The Frames of Comic Freedom' 6). The Nietzschean laughter which we are invited to participate in "reminds us of the presence of a law we no longer have reason to obey" ('The Frames of Comic Freedom' 8), a system of ordering which is exposed as arbitrary. This is why Jorge wants to destroy

Aristotle's book: because it threatens to depose official culture and displace the margin; it threatens to blur distinctions between margin and centre. Aristotle's text is (appropriated as) the subversive voice of social cryticism which insinuates itself into the dominant culture and threatens it with collapse.[45] It threatens to legitimate all that is `other'.

By participating in this laughter, we contest the monologic tendency of institutionalised forms, structures and enunciations; we cast those forms in doubt. This is a strange critique bound up with its complicity in institutional power. We write within the institution and have to obtain its recognition. The alternatives are gibberish or silence. Our desire to break out is always already deferred. In order to participate in this laughter, we engage in contestatory dialogue, we refuse to obfuscate the context of crytical enunciation, we challenge critical impulses to totalize, we attempt to break the critical text up into paronomasial play, we attempt to make truth laugh. This is the pleasure of the text, the textual *jouissance*:

> ...the labyrinth standing in for those texts that according to Barthes ... are able to produce the jouissance of unexhausted virtuality of their expressive plane ... because they have been planned to invite their

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[45] Veeser argues that the novel restores the medieval meaning of *fundament* - that is, `excrement' - the fundamental moves of the novel conclude when the villain eats the text and somber officialdom literally dies laughing (114).

> reader to reproduce their own processes of deconstruction by a plurality of interpretative choices. (Eco, *Role of the Reader* 40)

Thus these texts will manifest themselves in legions through a convulsive and labyrinthine proliferation in and of libraries, founded on the crypt of analysis.

2. THE CRYTICAL ALLEGORIST

> What is a critic? *Criticus* reads and writes; [s]he constructs texts. What are texts? Nightmares of figural networking. Garble. Separate in difference. Hypocrisy. Impenetrable cultural palimpsests. Carnage. Arguments with history. Recriminations and carrion. Is *Criticus* maestro of Meaning? Medium of Madness! What, finally, does [s]he discern and evaluate? What is a critic? (Leitch, *Deconstructive Criticism* 266)

Section one has indicated how the institutional privilege of the author and critic is the product of invested error. Author and critic, reader and writer, are encrypted in the rhizome of reading\writing. Having thus executed the author and critic and thrown their bodies into an unmarked grave so that exhumation will not be able to tell the difference between them, I would like to consider the *anexistent* subject arising from their crypt.

With this spectre we return to the ambiguous figure of the *flâneur* engaged in the intellectual *flânerie* of reading\writing. Frisby points out that the

flâneur as reader\writer of texts, is a "critical allegorist" ('The *Flâneur*' 82), who goes on the small journeys of discovery of the fortuitous, something like the imperfect librarian in 'The Library of Babel'.

Encrypted in the labyrinth of signifiers, seduced by the play of figural paths, the crytical allegorist imagines a transcendent exteriority, a superposition, from which to find the way. This supplementary figural eisegetical or exegetical superposition plots a path through the labyrinth. But since this path is both figured in the text and supposedly outside of it, it is divided against itself in a crytical impasse, an *aporia*. In the impasse of interpretation, unable to get beyond the irreducible free play of difference and figure, crytical *flânerie* frustrates the w of exegesis (or is frustrated by it!) by enacting the play of the signifier. This *aporia* is the backward turning path that the goddess describes in Parmenides' poem which undermines itself:

> [I restrain you] then also from this one [route of inquiry], on which mortals knowing nothing
> Wander two-headed; for helplessness in their
> Breasts guides their distracted minds and they are carried
> Deaf and Blind alike, dazed, uncritical tribes,
> By who being and not-being have been thought both the same
> And not the same; and the path of all is backward turning. (Gallop Fragment 6)

Thus the restraining order ordained by the goddess is meaningless. The route of inquiry is always already the backward turning path; and the crytic, the two-headed monster of the labyrinth. The goddess' injunction to keep to the Path of Persuasion constructs a (humanist) reading\writing position that must be protected by a Thesean figure of critical mastery, whose legendary task and responsibility it is to cut a path which would lead to the centre of the text and destroy the two-headed monster of bungling ineptitude who feeds off the *corpus* of "theory." The mythical scene: the two figures arrayed in mortal combat.

The discourse of criticism has always proclaimed this mastery over\at the limit. It professes to borrow its categories and delimit its production from the *logos* of the Other of literature. The passage quoted below, however, puts criticism into an endless confrontation with philosophical concepts; it writes (Derrida otherwise) without reserve:

> Philosophy [read: criticism] has always insisted upon thinking this: thinking its other. Its other: that which limits it, and from which it derives its essence, its definition, its production. To think its other: does this amount solely to *relever* [lift up, relay, relieve] that from which it derives, to head the procession of its method only by passing the limit? Or indeed does the limit, obliquely, by surprise, always reserve one more blow for philosophical [read: critical] knowledge? Limit\passage. (Derrida, 'Tympan' x-xi)

What might the affliction of the limit\passage be? The figure of mastery internalizes every limit as Being. (This is the specific resistance of critical

discourse to deconstruction.) But something exceeds it, (sur)passes it: a specular deformation, seemingly irreducible to any form. Straying in figural turns and re-turns, the Thesean figure of mastery is slowly dis-figured: transformed into the two-headed monster of\by the text's labyrinthine aberrations. The epiphany - I am the monster that I seek - constitutes a recognition that the monster in the labyrinth is a specular double. There is no univocal line which leads to the centre of the text: the line of argument disseminates in conflict and tension. The affliction of the limit\passage: all reading is *misleading* or *misreading* to the extent that it narrates the unreadability of prior narratives.

As distinguished from narrative (de)centered by figures, such crytical narratives to the second (or *nth*) degree are *allegories*:

> Allegory does not erase the figure. Allegories are always allegories of metaphor and, as such, they are always allegories of the impossibility of reading. (De Man, *Allegories of Reading* 205).

It should be noted that allegory does not reinscribe the difference between author and critic: the figure of a text is the allegory of another text's figure, by way of an infinite, regressive textuality.[46]

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[46] For example, the figure of the library-labyrinth in *The Name of the Rose* is the allegory of reading Borges's labyrinths. Borges's labyrinths might, in turn be the allegory of any number of myths and legends. The

The discourse of praxis in this dissertation emerges as an allegory of reading: the story of a story told in figurative language about figurative language. This chiasmic figural repetition is the *palintrope*: the figural ruination of the logic of crytical paths of persuasion. The *palintropic* discourse of praxis is therefore the allegorical narrative of its own deconstruction, the ruined figure of the (crytical) text divided against itself in an abyss of interpretative possibilities. But this endless repetition keeps the argument suspended between truth and the death of this truth, opening up myriad possibilities of crytical aberration. The next section considers and enacts crytical aberration, writing the labyrinth otherwise, as legend and as praxis.

3. THE ERA OF THE LIBIDINOUS CRYTICAL TEXT

> Our interpretations will not be readings of a hermeneutic or exegetic sort, but rather political interventions in the political rewriting of the text and its destination. (Derrida, *The Ear of the Other* 32)

Leitch proposes that a new deconstructive space is emerging: the "Era of the Libidinous Critical Text" (*Deconstructive Criticism* 262). He claims that

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excesses of intertextual dispersion debunk the differences between fiction and criticism, author and critic.

the quest for meaning, as a function of desire, is becoming a *desiring analytics*:

> Up till now the textual surface of the *critical* work has been largely undisturbed. However free and speculative, the critical text comes to us nicely coherent, carefully developed and altogether unified. Invariably it unfolds along an orderly temporal line, which is to say it plies the narrative path.... This undisturbed state of affairs cannot or may not continue long. The critical text is beginning to break up. (262)

What might this desiring analytics mean? The text itself, its *corpus*, can reveal itself in a series of erotic sites. The text is drawn into the economy of desire. According to Barthes, "Figuration is the way in which the erotic body appears ... in the profile of a text" (*The Pleasure of the Text* 55-56) Thus the figure of the text initiates the reader into a desiring analytics: the reader\crytic\lover is instated into the erotics of textual practice. This ritual of sexual initiation occurs in the space of a labyrinth.

But this body of bliss is also my crytical subjectivity:

> I write myself as a subject at present out of place, arriving too soon or too late (this *too* designating neither regret, fault nor bad luck, but merely calling for a *non-site*): anachronic subject, adrift." (Barthes. *The Pleasure of the Text* 63)

Who (as opposed to what) is the crytic? It is necessary to return to the incipient questions of chapter one: who is it that answers to the question who? Is there a "who" before being able to answer questions about it? The

crytic is the an anachronic subject (of humanism) out of harmony with his or her period; someone who wanders in the Derridean "necessary locatable non-place," who is besieged by the problematic of the trace, inscribed within a system of deductions and protections: a fragmentary subject drawn into the labyrinth of desire.

The dialogue of crytical legions running across my text of desire suggests a refusal to 'express' singular critical subjectivity. It is a political intervention in the political rewriting of/in (inter)texts. What can "my own unaided work" mean? This position, constituted solidly outside, is always already undone. I am anxious about this inconsistency, this promise which I cannot keep, that depends on the mind's continuity and presence to itself. The transversing action of the legions which speak this argument cut across self-present self expression. My (crytical) "self" wanders from itself. I suffer from Logorrhoea, compelled to speak "in the true" of the institution. But this compulsion and consistency are subverted by what is left unsaid, as well as my writing of surplus. I wander on the backward turning path, no longer recognising myself as a subject who can performatively narrate the text. This radical undecidability of the writing subject moves towards an opening to a crytical language which is provisionally deconstructive.

There is only my name, my signature which functions to establish consistency and responsibility before the law. But something remains non-reappropriable: I am not identical with this institutional interpellation which manufactures a highly provisional and thoroughly political belief in the coherent and responsible "self" who is made calculable through meritocracy. The mark of my (crytical) self is written on my body-text by regimes of institutional and discursive power. It coagulates into a corporeal signifier, producing all the effects of meaning, being, death.

But the body-text is not passive or inert. In the circuitous and repetitious paths of this argument, I find my libidinous text, my writing of bliss. In the returns, the repetitions, the reiterations, the void of bliss is affirmed. Here is no truth:

> To repeat excessively is to enter into loss, into the zero of the signified. But in order for repetition to be erotic, it must be formal, literal, and in out culture, this flaunted (excessive) repetition reverts to eccentricity, thrust towards various marginal regions.... (Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* 41)

Criticism has believed that it controls the margin of its text (how else defend itself under the aegis of the inside\outside?), but the text begins to repeat itself - retelling itself in reverse. We have seen that to repeat is to open ungovernably to displacement and reversal (and hence to further deconstruction).

Thrust toward the margins, the text begins to break up, the margins start to proliferate, to insinuate themselves into the centre of the text. This is enacted as split writing, that which Leitch calls the "*double science*" of deconstruction: the strategic inversion of dichotomous terms which produces the play of undecidables in the gap between the terms. Split writing is monumentalised in two columns. The margin inscribes itself into the centre of the text, and the columns are written in the margin of the margins. This splitting, repetition, reversal is the *palintropic* violence at the limit of the text, "a lock opened to a double understanding no longer forming a single system" (Derrida, 'Tympan' xxiv). The narrative or theoretical line no longer encloses a homogenous space. This *limitrophic*[47] violence is written otherwise, as\with desire, according to new types.

But with what do I *authorize* myself in the last analysis, if not with(in) the institution, with critical discourse? The value of this author-ity, like the dissertation, remains most naive. I write my libidinous text out of the desire for (im)pertinence, but cannot, within discourse, make it understand the

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[47] The neologism *limitrophic* refers to the transgression of the borders of the enclosed, homogeneous space of writing. The limits of the text turn on the preservation of the margins which are ravaged in the violence of split writing.

pertinence of the limit\passage. Is it possible to pass (through) this limit\passage? What form could this play of limit\passage have? This dissertation offers no conclusion.

POST-SCRYPTE: TYMPANISING THE GODDESS[48]

If I write two texts at once, you cannot castrate me. However much I delinearize, I erect. At the same time, I divide my act and my desire. I-show off the division and always escape you, I sham without intermission and come nowhere ... I hold myself thus - and I play at coming.
Well, almost...

Checked, then, twice.

For if my text is (were) impregnable, it will (would) not be taken, nor held. Who would be punished in this economy of the undecidable? But if I lineate, if I set going a line and believe - nonsense - I am writing only one text at a time, it amounts to the same thing and it is still necessary to reckon with the cost of the

[48] In French, *tympaniser* is an archaic verb meaning to criticize. In the essay 'Tympan,' in which Derrida initiates split writing, he plays on all the different meanings of the French *tympan*. The essay unbalances the pressures that correspond to each other on either side of the *tympan*: membrane, margin. In other words, the essay enacts two routes of enquiry, in flagrant disregard of the goddess's injunction in Parmenides' poem, refusing to harmonise them, and the path of all is backward turning. This ending is thus a re-turn to the beginning.

margin. I gain and lose in each case my forked tongue.

> double posture. Double postulation. Contradiction in-itself of two irreconcilable desires. I present it here, imputed in my language, the style of DOUBLE BAND, actually putting it (them) into form and into play. (Derrida, *Glas*, 77)

What might it mean to take issue with the goddess, mouthpiece of *phallogocentricism*, abused oracle of *Logos*, who speaks the *pneuma* of deity? What wrath might this transgression incur? Will I conceive a hideous lust for the beast? Will I mutate, transgress the limit between human and animal so that my proper name is transformed into a cryptonym which names the unnamable, two-headed monster: not Asterion, but Chimera? Is this a risk worth taking? Does it matter?

What matter(s)? The goddess blithely ventriloquising the male voice which speaks her. But isn't this a (hypo)crytical double postulation since the demoniacal plural of the male canon speaks the dissertation? Do I lose and gain in each case my forked tongue? No. The heteroglossic diversity of voices forces a recognition that all discourse discloses itself in the disseminating space of play. Demoniacal textuality is anachronistic: the anachrony of\within interpretation; and therefore anachronises interpretation. It cannot leave anything

other than its non-sensical mark on the powerful, institutional interpretations of interpretation.

Imputed in the language is a castration (in the act of intellectual masturbation): stolen citations are cut up and re-produced; an ingesting of *phallogocentricism*, an eating of the margin of exclusion, a *destinerring* of (my) dissertation.

"It [the argument] cannot be contained within any precise territorial limits or within the framework of any one system of classification.

However it is approached, it spreads out like a nebula, without ever bringing together in any lasting or systematic way the sum total of the elements from which it blindly derives its substance.... It follows that as the nebula gradually spreads, its nucleus condenses and becomes more organised. Loose threads join up with one another, gaps are closed, connections are established, and something resembling order is seen to be emerging from the chaos.

Sequences arranged in transformation groups, as if around a germinal molecule, join up with the initial group and reproduce its structure and determinative tendencies. Thus is brought into being a multi-dimensional body, whose central parts disclose a structure, while uncertainty and confusion continue to prevail along its

It is here that the discourse on labyrinths (but is it possible to speak "on" any text? Read: "in" labyrinths, then), reflects on itself and cryticises itself. It enters into a desperate plagiarism with legions of crytical (inter)texts. These entropic paths of (dis)order court unreadability, in an interminable game of seduction and ruin. The paths of the labyrinth are so constructed that it has no centre, no periphery, no exit - the

periphery....
Therefore, if my enquiry proceeds in the way I hope, it will develop not along a linear axis but...will go back over previous findings....
In order to draw my map, I have been obliged to work outward from the centre: first I establish the semantic field surrounding a given myth ... and then I repeat the operation in the case of each of these myths. In this way the arbitrarily chosen central zone can be crisscrossed by various intersecting lines.... In order to make the grid or mesh even, one would have to repeat the process several times, by drawing more circles around points situated at the periphery. But at the same time, this would increase the size of the original area. And so we see that the analysis of myths is an endless task....
The study of myths raises a methodological problem, in that it cannot be carried out according to the Cartesian principle of breaking down the difficulty into as many parts as may be necessary for finding the solution.

paths are all backward turning and the ordering is doubled up, divided against itself. This double writing is a (dis)organising structural force and a re-mark: going back over what is already written, it changes ground, disfigures. But even the labyrinthine structure does not deserve its referential privilege.
The title is specious and the use of the myth improper. The argument is a systematic narrative of error with dead ends, wrong turns, false entrances, fictitious

There is no real end to mythological analysis, no hidden unity to be grasped once the breaking down process has been completed. Themes can be split up *ad infinitum*. Just when you think you have disentangled and separated them, you realise that they are knitting together again in response to the operation of unexpected affinities. Consequently the unity of myth is never more than tendential and projective and cannot reflect a state or a particular moment of the myth. It is a phenomenon of the imagination, resulting from the attempt at interpretation; and its function is to endow the myth with syncretic form and to prevent its disintegration into a confusion of opposites....

Multiplicity is an essential characteristic, since it is connected with the dual nature of mythological thought....

The constant recurrence of the same themes expresses this mixture of powerlessness and persistence. Since it has no interest in beginnings and endings, mythological thought never develops any theme to completion: there is always something left unfinished. Myths, like rites, are "interminable." And in seeking to imitate the spontaneous movement of mythological thought, this essay, which is also both too brief and too long, has had to conform to the requirements of that thought. It follows that this book on myths is itself a kind of myth.

If it has any unity, that unity will appear only behind or beyond the text and, in the best hypothesis, will become a reality [only] in the mind of the reader....

When the [mythological] pattern undergoes some kind of transformation, all its aspects are affected at once....

I shall no doubt be accused of overinterpretation or oversimplification in my use of this method. Let me say again that all solutions put forward are not presented as being of equal value, since I myself have made a point of emphasising the uncertainty of some of them; however, it would be hypocritical not to carry my thought to its logical conclusion. I therefore say in advance to possible critics: what does this matter...?

At the beginning of this

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At the beginning of this introduction I explained that I had tried to transcend the contrast between the tangible and the intelligible by operating from the outset at the sign level....

Our task then is to use the concept of the sign in such a way as to introduce these secondary qualities into the operations of truth....

At a very early stage, almost from the moment of beginning to write, I realised that it was impossible to organise the subject matter of this book according to a plan based on traditional principles. The division into chapters not only did violence to the movement of thought; it weakened and mutilated the thought itself and blunted the force of the demonstration. The latter, to be convincing, seemed, paradoxically enough to require greater suppleness and freedom.

I also came to see that the ... data could not be presented in unilinear fashion, and that the different stages of the commentary were not interlinked merely in order of sequence.

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I also came to see that the ... data could not be presented in unilinear fashion, and that the different stages of the commentary were not interlinked merely in order of sequence. Certain devices of composition were indispensable to provide the reader from time to time with a feeling of simultaneity; the impression would no doubt remain illusory, since an expository order had to be respected, but a near equivalent to it might be achieved by an alternation in style between the discursive and the diffuse.... I saw that the process of analysis would take place along different axes: there would be the sequential axis, of course, but also the axis of relatively greater densities....
It followed from the liberty I was thus taking in developing my themes in several dimensions, that the division into isometric chapters must give way to a pattern involving parts of unequal length, fewer in number but also more voluminous and complex, and each of which would constitute a whole by virtue of its internal organisation according to a certain unity of inspiration....
If it is now to be asked where the real centre of the work is to be found,

different stages of the commentary were not interlinked merely in order of sequence. Certain devices of composition were indispensable to provide the reader from time to time with a feeling of simultaneity; the impression would no doubt remain illusory, since an expository order had to be respected, but a near equivalent to it might be achieved by an alternation in style between the discursive and the diffuse.... I saw that the process of analysis would take place along different axes: there would be the sequential axis, of course, but also the axis of relatively greater densities....
It followed from the liberty I was thus taking in developing my themes in several dimensions, that the division into isometric chapters must give way to a pattern involving parts of unequal length, fewer in number but also more voluminous and complex, and each of which would constitute a whole by virtue of its internal organisation according to a certain unity of inspiration....
If it is now to be asked where the real centre of the work is to be found, the answer is that this is impossible to determine." (Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked* p1 - 17)

It is here that the discourse on labyrinths (but is it possible to speak "on" any text? Read: "in" labyrinths, then), reflects on itself and cryticises itself. It enters into a desperate plagiarism with legions of crytical (inter)texts. These entropic paths of (dis)order court unreadability, in an interminable game of seduction and ruin. The paths of the labyrinth are so constructed that it has no centre, no

inspiration....
If it is now to be asked where the real centre of the work is to be found, the answer is that this is impossible to determine." (Levi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked* p1 - 17)

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