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Before I introduce the subject of this article, I should confess that its subject is the subject itself. The question of the subject always brings along a question of location and, therefore, a question of topology. Consequently, what we have here as a subject is a subject which does not conform to the rules of being a subject and hence this subject-non-subject demands an approach where topology and atopy should be put in a complementary relationship rather than an oppositional one. Without cutting the long word short, or without putting our subject under protection, or without opening what cannot be opened, we can at least say that our subject here is an umbrella, an umbrella which, being the subject of three different persons, can be seen, though only at the beginning, as the subject of that which incessantly echoes the question of localisability.

1. Nietzsche's umbrella: 'I forgot my umbrella.' A fragment that is not a fragment – a manuscript in *The Gay Science* which has infrequently been accounted for.

2. Sevim Burak's umbrella:¹



Anlatsanıza	Tell us
Anlathlar	They told us
Anlatildi	It was told
Anlatarak	As they told
Anlattimdi	I had told
Anlattiydi	She told it
Anlatiyordum	I was telling
Anlatiyormusuz	We were telling
Anlatiyorken	As we were telling
Anlamazdik	We wouldn't understand

1 S Burak, *Everest My Lord* / *İşte Baş İşte Gövde İşte Kanatlar*, Yapı Kredi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2006. In the text that follows in the right-hand column the fragments in italics are quotations from this book in my translation.

In *Everest My Lord*, Sevim Burak's umbrella, getting into full complicity with the principles of Gestalt, assumes a visibility and yields itself to us as if there is something to be protected. (Being only one of the numerous figures in the text, the space it is taking under protection is actually its own visibility: though it is opened, that which is opened by being opened is neither itself nor something else. Although it is a bit early to

say that this umbrella constitutes the ‘crypt’ of writing which opens itself without opening itself within the body of *Everest My Lord*, do not all the broken sentences, illogical word layers, and our ‘Beautiful Turkish’ which is forced to a maddening – ah our unique, the Everest Turkish, the beauty of which has to be protected, since Nurullah Ataç,² always against everything but especially against that which is ‘woman’ – point to it?)

3. Jacques Derrida’s umbrella: an umbrella which, coming from *Éperons, Les Styles de Nietzsche*,³ puts at stake not only the theory of psychoanalysis but also all the theories of the ‘subject’ in an introduction written by Derrida to Abraham and Torok:⁴ an umbrella which, overturning what we know as umbrella and thus destroying the topology of a storm, finally – finally? in other words preparing, right from the beginning, from the moment of its birth, the end of the name we know as Derrida (*nom propre*) – claims to be the ‘crypt’ of psychoanalysis.

Derrida writes, in *Éperons, Les Styles de Nietzsche*, that Nietzsche’s approach to women is a matter of style, though it is mostly interpreted as a question of misogyny. The woman is the irreducible and this irreducibility sharpening the stylus of the one who writes – who if a man is castrating for he is castrated in turn – against the castrating forces renders it provocative: Nietzsche’s strategy – as we know it especially from *Ecce Homo* and *The Gay Science* – is to give way to a parade of styles which, affirming the castratedness of the self-castrating forces, transforms the question of identity in writing to a question of irreducibility and thereby gets into an ironical relationship with it.

Derrida, playing between the words ‘style’, ‘stylus’ and *éperon*, ‘spur’, concludes with the word, trace. In this sense, *éperon* forms the trace of the style, and the latter points to the disappearance of the absent-presence: the style of the writer is thus a parade of styles constituted by getting into a dissimulative and productive relationship with this absent-presence. In other words, the style is only when it is not, and only when it can point to a multiplicity of styles. In order to explain the noise ensuing from this multiplicity and its relation to the woman and ‘distance’ Derrida quotes Nietzsche:

Although it looks like a play, Sevim Burak claims that Everest My Lord is a novel:

‘Novel 3 Acts’

A novel which is not a novel a play which is not a play a novel which is not a play.

Is it because the characters are presented as if in a play that we think it is a play?

Should one seek the undecidability of the text in its title: Everest My Lord? Both ‘Everest’ and ‘My Lord’?

We should have some serious considerations about the sexuality of Everest My Lord.

Everest My Lord doesn’t see anyone. Not even The Shadow of the Writer...

2 Nurullah Ataç (1898–1957): One of the founders of Turkish as a new systematised language whose legislative essays about language became a prison-house of language for a later generation of writers.

3 J Derrida, *Spurs, Nietzsche’s Styles/Éperons, Les Styles de Nietzsche*, trans Barbara Harlow, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979

4 J Derrida, ‘Foreword: *Fors: The English Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok*’, in N Abraham and M Torok, *The Wolfman’s Magic Word: A Cryptonomy*, trans Nicholas Rand, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1986

5 F Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Vintage Books, New York, 1974, Fragment 60, pp 123–4

6 Derrida explains the phallogocentric way of thinking's relationship to a certain way of hearing in the introduction, 'Tympan', to *Margins of Philosophy*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, by way of dwelling on the nature of tympanum. To find a point of departure in this introduction, I believe it is necessary to raise the following questions: Can one hear Derrida? For instance, could Hegel have heard him? Or, Plato? Or, more basically, has the Philosophy – yes, the Philosophy with a capital P – heard him?

Without doubt, by raising these questions I'd like to ask whether the way of hearing that Derrida endeavoured to show us in innumerable articles and books has been heard and also whether the hearing itself has been heard. Such an attempt first and foremost requires that we should listen to the 'Tympan' once again. What is philosophy's relationship to hearing? And if we are still hearing things when there is nothing to hear as we are dealing with a philosopher who worked with spectres, especially with the spectres of Marx – without forgetting also his references to Hamlet and the ear – can we say that the ear of philosophy by means of which it also hears itself has got ridden of the symptoms of tinnitus?

Perhaps the most direct way of opening up this discussion goes by way of referring to the tympanum which has already started to get re-formed in response to the vibrations it is receiving right now. Actually we have to understand here that we have committed a mistake as soon as we have talked

'Not to be dead and yet no longer alive? ... It seems as if the noise here has led me into fantasies. All great noise leads us to move happiness into some quiet distant. When a man stands in the midst of his own noise, in the midst of his own surf of plans and projects then he is apt also to see quiet, magical beings gliding past him and to long for their happiness and seclusion: women. He almost thinks that his better self dwells there among the women, and that in these quiet regions even the loudest surf turns into deathly quiet, and life itself into a dream about life. Yet! Yet! Noble enthusiast, even on the most beautiful sailboat there is a lot of noise, and unfortunately much small and petty noise. The magic and the most powerful effect of women is, in philosophical language, action at a distance, *actio in distans*; but this requires first of all and above all – distance.'⁵

Here, according to Derrida, in Nietzsche, the woman and that which establishes itself as woman by preserving its distance is that which traces the trace left by the stylus not by yielding to an identical relationship with it but by dissimulating the truth of identity. But if the style is that which constructs itself in relation to the absent-presence but is deconstructed at the moment of its construction, it requires the preservation of distance as distance. The ability to do so belongs to woman rather than to man because it is the woman who resists any definition or determination: it is exactly for this reason the 'feminine operation' requires a certain type of ear and a certain habit of listening.⁶

It should be stated immediately that Derrida's reading of Nietzsche which is not an interpretation or a hermeneutic study (in later sections of the book Derrida criticises Heidegger for proceeding along the lines of hermeneutics and thus missing the woman in Nietzsche) aims at foregrounding both

'The head of the Writer is hidden behind the trees just as in illustrated puzzles where – a squirrel – an illustration where the head of a hunter slowly emerging with a gun in his hand and his bag hanging from his shoulder, watching carefully a hunting dog stalking an almond-eyed gazelle escaping from the dog.'

The Prime Minister has just left the parliament. Is he a higher or a more honourable man than Everest My Lord? Or a woman? Still, the Ladies enter.

The Shadow of the Writer slowly emerges from behind the trees. Yet it is only the 'shadow'. What has happened to the writer? Can the absence of the writer be due to the fact that she has already assumed the duty of writing Everest My Lord? Is it only the shadow of the writer who has disappeared and left behind a shadow who can write the story of Everest My Lord? A story which has got nothing to do with a story?

'Everest My Lord: This writer has been working on a book written for no one and everyone.'

In a world where there can only be the shadow of the writer. The Shadow of the Writer is only able to follow the traces of the shadows cast on herself. That which gives

about form. All because it becomes the proof that the tympanum, before it is reformed by these vibrations, has always already been formed, and has given form to the vibrations it has already received. As against all these dangers, that is, against the return of the Philosophy which, despite all the attempts at its tympanisation, survives and returns with a capital P, Derrida claims the necessity of puncturing the tympanum. In one sense, it means that if the tympanum, drawing a border between the inside and outside, gives way to a Hegelian moment of *Aufhebung*, it is only possible with a punctured tympanum to affirm and negate such a moment. The resulting way of hearing will without doubt be the one which welcomes distortions, noise, incessant echoes – a way of hearing which is respondent not only to that which comes from outside but to what comes from inside as well. In such a scheme, the hierarchy which establishes the distinction between the inside and the outside will be disturbed, and the sides will be put into resonance by means of the punctured tympanum.

Derrida says: 'In other words, can one puncture the tympanum of a philosopher and still be heard and understood by him?' (*Margins*, p xii).

Here Derrida's concern, as he constructs with an example from Nietzsche's Zarathustra, is to teach human beings to hear not only with their ears but also with their eyes. If the person to be taught this lesson is Hegel, such a strife can be realised by forcing Philosophy to a 'place' or an atotology where it won't be able to reappropriate any more the border or the margin by means of which it has constructed itself. 'And if the tympanum is the limit, perhaps the issue would be less to displace a given determined limit than

the woman and the woman in Nietzsche. If the intention is to present the dissimulation of truth, this operation requires a trajectory which, finding its point of departure in woman, and avoiding any claim to localisability in both Nietzsche and Derrida's reading of Nietzsche, leads to an atotological situation. As Derrida puts it:

'That which will not be pinned down by truth is, in truth – feminine.'⁷ 'The feminine distance abstracts truth from itself in a suspension of the relation with castration.'⁸ On the other hand, this relationship is suspended by castration but here that which suspends is not the truth of castration. Neither the suspended is suspended via castrating the truth which is the duty of man. The reason for that lies in the fact that the woman does not believe in the opposite of the castrating force, for such a belief cannot save the woman from a thought based on oppositions: on the contrary it bars her way to dissimulation. For the woman, castration can never be realised, but she needs its consequences, and only by means of the latter can she play with the castration of man and lead it to a state of undecidability. According to Derrida, if castration has actually been realised, the ensuing syntax would have had to have stabilized this state of undecidability.⁹ Yet the undecidable, being unlocalisable, gives way to an atotological situation, pointing to a cryptic indeterminability in both Nietzsche's and Derrida's texts.

'Since she is a model for truth she is able to display the gifts of her seductive power, which rules over dogmatism, and disorients and routs those credulous men, the philosophers. And because she does not believe in the truth (still, she does find that uninteresting truth in her interest) woman remains a model, only this time a good model. But because she is a good model, she is in fact a

the real its reality has disappeared.

The Shadow of the Writer writing the Everest My Lord seems as if she has acquired language only quite recently. The infinite matrix of permutations that constitute the language cannot be exhausted by endless recountings or recitations of numbers, letters, and various possible verb declensions. Does The Shadow of the Writer want to give birth to something? Will she be able to give birth to an honourable and metaphysical being like Everest My Lord in a world where being can only be considered as trace? Trauma and Hysteria

The one who is writing the Everest My Lord is speaking from the zero degree of writing: The Shadow of the Writer or Sevim Burak. Her preferred position as a woman is to be The Shadow of the Writer: Whoever this writer is – man, phallus, phallogocentric view? – she will form a copy of it. Yet in a place where the writer does not exist as a model, The Shadow of the Writer can imitate only that which doesn't exist: 'dissimulation'.

'How do you write the numbers?'

Is it possible to ontologise 'to get exhausted', 'being exhausted', and 'to exhaust'? Sevim Burak's umbrella gets specular: Or is it the impossibility of it

to work toward the concept of limit and the limit of the concept. To unhinge it on several ties' (*Margins*, p xvii).

According to Derrida, Philosophy's resistance against deconstruction is exactly this resistance to being unhinged. The Philosopher – whether knowingly or not – is the one who keeps his feet firmly on the ground; he is an expert in appropriating the Being and the Proper to himself and also to Philosophy, and his expertise lies in his capacity for trespassing borders and thus appropriating them within itself so that the formerly unknown and unthinkable become known and thinkable. As long as the tympanum is not punctured the order of *phallogocentrism* and *logocentrism* will reign; and Philosophy's discourse will survive by reappropriating its tympanum again and again.

On the other hand, against all this resistance, tympanum always punctures itself and what is critically important at this point is to accept that this puncturing is not that which can be heard. If we ask what resists here, we can comprehend Derrida's approach to the unthought as against Heidegger's. In other words, although the unthought can be rendered thinkable or knowable by a Hegelian *Aufhebung* or a Heideggerian *Schritt zurück* (step back), it turns into the following question for Derrida: why should we need the unthought if it can be rendered thinkable? If we can think of tympanum together with Derrida's 'différance', it means to say that the tympanum has always already been punctured and that we will never be able to hear whether it is punctured or intact, though we can hear their effects.

7 *Éperons*, op cit, p 55

bad model. She plays at dissimulation, at ornamentation, deceit, artifice, at an artist's philosophy.¹⁰

As Derrida quotes Nietzsche, the woman is an actress whose history 'oscillates between histrionics and hysteria'.¹¹ For all these reasons, we cannot think of the question of woman or 'what is woman' as distinct from art, style and truth. The woman in itself does not have any truth in itself, or, there is no such thing as the truth in itself for the woman, lest there be a multiplicity of truths. It is in this sense that 'The question of the woman suspends the decidable opposition of true and non-true and inaugurates the epochal regime of quotation marks which is to be enforced for every concept belonging to the system of philosophical decidability. The hermeneutic project which postulates a true sense of the text is disqualified under this regime. Reading is freed from the horizon of the meaning or truth of being, liberated from the values of the product's production or the present's presence.'¹²

All this deterritorialises the thought about the whole and also the belief that Nietzsche's text is made of fragments. For instance, when reading Nietzsche's sentence, 'I forgot my umbrella', Derrida avoids any attempt at an hermeneutical reading because it would mean reconstructing or relocating not only this sentence into a whole to which it once belonged but also the thought of the whole itself.

'It is quite possible that that unpublished piece, precisely because it is readable as a piece of writing, should remain forever secret. But not because it withholds some secret. Its secret is rather the possibility that indeed it might have no secret, that it might

– *exhausting the numbers and letters, given the infinity of the general economy against the restricted one – that renders the-umbrella specular?*

Sevim Burak worked as a fashion model for a period in her life.

Although there's no clue about Sevim Burak's forgetting her umbrella – for it stands as one among the other figures in the text: a dog, a basket, a doll, an anchor, the moon, etc – does it mean that she remembers her umbrella?

What are the conditions of remembering one's umbrella? Remembering starts with forgetting says Plato or Freud – the forebearers of the male language.

One of the forgotten objects: 'The BEDSTEAD enters the stage.'

Language becomes language by manipulating the principle of identity, and the system of categories, in turn, is established by way of reducing the multiple to the same: this is actually the meaning of the system. If one can understand what Phallus means in this world, then one can understand every single thing. In such an organisation there are writers and writers:

Man is man, woman is woman, subject is subject, object is object and one should not mix the characteristics of one with another. Yet:

only be pretending to be simulating some hidden truth within its folds.¹³

When one considers that the umbrella is a means of protection against an attack from the outside, a means without an essence whether it be closed or opened, the possibility of its being the crypt of the text gains more validity. Leaving behind all the possibilities of a topology towards an atopological topology, and preserving its distance, this umbrella pops up in the space of the specular so as to raise, through *actio in distans*, a question about the passage from nothingness to being in the texts of Nietzsche, Derrida and Sevim Burak.

'The stovepipe starts crying.'

Punctuation marks which construct (by failing to construct) the syntax of the language of the decidable are replaced by 'I'. A slash? An oblique line? Does it echo the obliqueness of the tympanum?

The tympanum turns oblique to reduce the effect of the shocks coming from outside. But the things continue attacking, forcing the boundary between the object and the subject. No matter if the stovepipe cries or even each and every object starts crying, will the ear of the Everest My Lord hear these sounds?

8 Ibid, p 59

9 Ibid, p 63

10 Ibid, p 67

11 Ibid, p 69

12 Ibid, p 107

13 Ibid, p 133

14 J Derrida, 'Maddening the Subjectile', *Yale French Studies*, 84, 1994, pp 154–71. 'On September 1932, he [Artaud] concludes a letter to André Roland Renéville like this: "Herewith a bad drawing in which what is called the subjectile betrayed me."'

15 As a friend (U Çelikyay) reminded me, there is also another forgotten umbrella in Lautrémont's *Les Chants de Maldoror*, trans Guy Wernham, New Directions, NY, 1965, p 282: 'the chance meeting of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table'.

16 Sevim Burak had a tailor's shop in Istanbul for a period in her life. It is said she would pin, stitch or suture her sentences, paragraphs and fragments on curtains.

17 J Derrida, 'Foreword: *Fors*', op cit, p xiv

18 I would have been talking about the things that happen to us as we are reading a text by Sevim Burak.

Subject, objects and verbs run 'like a hound' in the face of The Shadow of the Writer who is writing them. Is it The Shadow of the Writer who gets hysterical? Or, the subjects, the objects and the verbs and etc? Or is hysteria the precondition of our capability for talking about The Shadow of the Writer ... when the things of which a writer becomes a writer revolt against the phallus-writer and start running like a 'hound' towards 'l'écriture féminine'?

'THE HOUSE THINKS'

The regime of footnotes towards the end of the 'Novel' is designed to obliterate everything written by The Shadow of the Writer. Footnotes getting into an opposition with the main text incapacitate any synthesis which is gradually rendered impossible from the beginning of the text. Neither is the inside here nor the outside there. What Derrida used in a text, by borrowing from Artaud – the subjectile – is forced to madness and into showing up itself. Will the trajectory of our 'subject' be satisfied by the fact of its being thrown? Are we going to be able to follow the trajectory? Does the 'subjectile' show itself? Does it betray? Is umbrella our subjectile which is supposed to be dissected rather than being stitched together by a sewing machine?

*'What is a crypt?'*¹⁷

'WHAT IS TRUTH?'

*'WHAT AM I?'*¹⁸