

# How like a (Fig) Leaf: Supplanting Shame, Growing Differences

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She exhibits her primary content, her crowns of veils, of branches, her vegetable furs, and makes possible and inevitable the work of the languages which cover her in words of love.  
— Hélène Cixous.<sup>1</sup>

How unlike a book title. How unrecognizable in the humanities in the year 2000 (the date that Donna Haraway's book-length interview *How like a Leaf* was published).<sup>2</sup> We are uncertain of the subject of the comparison. Is Haraway herself "like a leaf"? Is the interview form, or the printed page? Her eccentric title speaks to Haraway's refusal to endorse the Western ethnocentric mode of thought as that which cuts a once and forever line dividing nature from culture. This persistent

mode of thought cuts across the humanities: in this essay you will find its influence at work in art history, theology, philosophy, visual culture and literature. But at the same time, and in light of work by Haraway, Jacques Derrida and Hélène Cixous we can find a more complex and hospitable mode. On the side of curiosity and on the side of lability, *How like a Leaf* entreats us to view:

Biology [as] an inexhaustible source of troping. It is certainly full of metaphor, but it is more than metaphor... biology is not merely a metaphor that illuminates something else, but an inexhaustible source of getting at the non-literality of the world.<sup>3</sup>

Insisting upon this tropological play, this thickened sense of the figural at the edge of the world that troubles the division of nature and culture at its root, this essay will proceed through five sections: five "Figures" or five "figs". Each furthers investigation into the sexual stakes of this division, stakes that

cannot but shift how we think of other categories. Rather than import figuration in order to fulfill a technical and discrete literary task (such as the work of proximity in metonymy) I will take what Haraway dramatically names as its inexhaustibility to encourage a graft between her work and that of Derrida. Her exuberant inexhaustible biological troping speaks to his "limitrophy" as the inherent condition of the limit as that boundary that is, however counterintuitively, a site of "growth".<sup>4</sup> Rather than mark an end or barrier, the limit interleaves.

Mindful of the philosophical lean upon even the sciences, Haraway explicitly cautions us against the invocation of gardens. Gardens, she notes, tend to revert to *the* Garden, recalling Nature to a state of innocence and the requirement that *she* must be saved, fenced off, guarded, or is already guarded, fenced off or saved by an impene-





Figure 1. Fig leaf. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:New\\_fig\\_leaf.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:New_fig_leaf.jpg).



Figure 2. Square Laferrière, Alger, ca. 1930. Source: Alamy, <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-alger-square-laferriere-c1930-artist-unknown-135274720.html>.



trable veil or symbolic bar. Countering the Judeo-Christian theology of Nature as guarded Garden, Haraway insists on a creative interleaving of *tropos* and *topos*, figure and place. This is a *geotropism*, she says. It is an earthly figure that consequently muddies the dominant figure in the history of rhetoric that is the sun and its supposedly all-pervasive

exterior command of a *heliotropology*.<sup>5</sup> Her earthy geotropism is a general condition, not one into which we have Fallen nor one from which we must or even could transcend.

### Fig.1 Woods

“If you go down to the woods today, you’re sure of a big surprise.” While not exactly a

“Teddy Bear’s Picnic”, this section invites you to go down to the “woulds” today. This “would” signals the conditional, a tense that deserves to be followed through the thickets of Derrida’s 2008 posthumous book, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, if we are not to resurrect the work of the concept that is otherwise dispatched therein. The concept

*should* donate absolute certainty. But, listening closely, Derrida “*would* like to choose words that are, to begin with, naked, quite simply, words from the heart”.<sup>6</sup> The direct flow of this sentence, apparently simple in that no “jargon” is in immediate evidence, metered by four commas, and issued with a cautionary conditional even as it shepherds words “from the heart”, closes the second paragraph of *The Animal That Therefore I Am*. Invoking the beginning several times in these opening lines, explicitly invoking the testamentary stature of “In the beginning”, Derrida circles around the desire for origins, the desire not to repeat, the desire for a “time before time” by which means we should sense the sheer cascading scale of that which he calls the “animal question” as it jostles with the concept and figure of nudity. The readerly method of following Derrida’s marked use of the conditional – *I would... were it possible* – allows his cultivation of differences vis-à-vis our violent conceptual heritage to bed in. This fragile guide ameliorates the difficulty for readers in recognising the conceptual identity between more obvious Cartesian dogma such as “the animal cannot speak” and

what may initially appear only tangentially linked – “the animal is not nude”.

Reading with an eye to the conditional as a form of remark, we might look again when Derrida tells us that “Man *would* be the only one to have invented a garment to cover his sex. He *would* be a man only to the extent that he was able to be naked...” and that “... naked without knowing it, animals *would* not be, in truth, naked.”<sup>7</sup> And we might wonder as to the truth of this condition when it joins in with the host of “abilities” that Man gathers at the same time as he expels all connection with those called “animal”.<sup>8</sup>

While most of the vast amount of critical writing on Derrida’s encounter with his cat has focused on his endorsement of the notion that an animal might gaze back at or respond to a human (rather than remain in thrall to instinctive reactions alone) one portentous aspect has garnered comparatively little interest. Drawing on his unease, his shame before his cat, Derrida remarks that “We would [...] have to think shame and technology together, as the same ‘subject’.”<sup>9</sup> Yes, another “would”. It is planted in a garden – *the Garden* – in order to seed some doubt within the Judaeo-Christian onto-theological story of History. It is to

disperse the origin tale that Genesis consecrates, implanting sin within autobiography and positioning nature as vegetation as that which is handily available to be appropriated in the single gesture of seeking cover behind the helpfully large but awkwardly abrasive leaves of a Fig. Not simply a bystander in that Garden, some scholars suggest that ‘the forbidden fruit’ itself was not an apple but a Fig.<sup>10</sup> Ingested, interiorized, implanted.

Yet, even such a sophisticated thinker as David Wills hedges his bets when writing of the seizure of the fig leaf as an affirmation that shame and technology are as one, a “blushing machine” as he says.<sup>11</sup> He is certainly aware that this sublation, this overcoming of nature in order to forge clothing, with clothing then standing for Man’s technological grasp upon the world, is that of dialectics. But in expanding “shame and technology” to include at least some nonhuman animals (those that mate) Wills drops critical attention to both sexual difference and the Garden in which shame and technology are dug in. He lets fall the nuance that Derrida’s conditional “woulds” have nurtured regarding the muddying of the naked truth and the scattering of any notion of an original sin.



Out of the seeming obviousness of clothing as a distinctively human technology motivated by the dialectical overcoming of weakness (the weakness of nudity welded to sin) – versus the seeming obviousness of the absence of clothing as such on other species explained completely by their alleged perfect adaptation to an allegedly ahistorical nature, Derrida refashions the stakes. “Clothing” becomes a particular instance of a general condition, yet that general condition is not “technology” (attached to Man’s supposed abilities) but the more modest form of “hiding”. Clothing and shame become demoted to particular instances of that which hides. And even that gesture of withdrawal – hiding – can never be complete: this is not an alternative between absence *or* presence. We are none of us revealed in the naked truth of presence, none of “us” at all.

A fruit that is not one, the fig is a vegetal form containing hundreds of tiny flowers within itself, accessible for pollination only to the tiny fig-wasp that burrows inside it and upon which it depends.<sup>12</sup> She lays her eggs, transfers pollen from the “fig of her birth” to the flowers, before dying there.<sup>13</sup> Male wasps are born in this interior where they remain,

living only to find females to impregnate and to chew holes in the fig through which those females will fly to transfer both eggs and pollen to another tree. Far from a single entity, their intimate life cycle is utterly bound to that of the fig-wasps. Growing quickly, their fruit feeds so many other animals that Mike Shanahan re-describes such trees as “keystone species”.<sup>14</sup> The fig tree, as D. H. Lawrence evokes it, possesses “self-conscious secret fruits”.<sup>15</sup>

### Fig. 2 Pants

Leslie Hill names the fig leaf as the origin of fetishism – the origin of that structure of “I know, but I don’t know” that commemorates even as it disguises knowledge of what is mistakenly taken for castration. Drawing not simply upon Sigmund Freud’s incidental assertion of this link, but on Derrida, he identifies it as both endemic to “cultural history” and even “all textuality”.<sup>16</sup> On the right hand column of Derrida’s most extravagant formal experiment, *Glas*, engaging Jean Genet and the homoerotic poetics of *The Thief’s Journal*, Derrida conjures the sporting of a “vegetable fetish”. Juicily doubling their metonym, a cluster of grapes hangs on the crotch of the criminal, Stilitano, with whom Genet is

in love.<sup>17</sup> On the left hand side of this dense field of citation, Derrida cites Freud on what appears to be a specialized case of fetishism – and one that wants to have it all ways:

In very subtle cases both the disavowal and the affirmation of the castration have found their way into the construction of the fetish itself. This was so in the case of a man whose fetish was an athletic-support-girdle which could be worn as bathing drawers. This piece of clothing covered up the genitals entirely and concealed the distinction between them. Analysis showed that it signified that women were castrated and that they were not castrated; and it also allowed of the hypothesis that men were castrated, for all these possibilities could equally well (*gleich gut*) be concealed behind the girdle—the earliest rudiment of which in his childhood had been the fig-leaf on a statue. A fetish of this sort, doubly derived from contrary ideas, is of course, especially solid.<sup>18</sup>

While the 1563 “Fig Leaf Campaign” of the Catholic Church had ordained the supplementary foil of fig leaves to be added to erstwhile nude statuary in order to identify such figures with the shameful self-awareness of Adam and Eve, Hill remarks that the gesture risked drawing the “audience’s attention to what it is designed to conceal, making it more noticeable still, and even perhaps reproducing and exaggerating its visual aspect”.<sup>19</sup>



### Fig. 3 Chestnuts

In the second book of his recent trilogy, *The Philosopher's Plant*, Michael Marder reconstructs a scene of reflection with regard to vegetation.<sup>20</sup> The volume's twelve chapters each explore a philosopher and "their" plant. Yet in his zeal to propagate a new field of what he calls "plant-thinking", Marder sometimes under-investigates the figures he suggests have escaped attention hitherto. In the case of "Derrida's Sunflowers", Marder prefaces his discussion with Derrida's reminiscences of Algeria (reminiscences that were generated by the invitation to write on the existentialist journal *Les Temps Modernes*).<sup>21</sup> In the book of "Plato's Plane Tree", "Irigaray's Waterlily" and "Derrida's Sunflowers" – just three of the chapter headings, Marder remains oddly uninterested in Jean Paul Sartre's Chestnut Tree. The teenage Derrida, Marder notes, allowed himself to pause from reading a novel to be caught up in the "lush vegetation" surrounding him in La Ferrière Square in Algiers.<sup>22</sup> Emphasising that this scene is "full of mirrors" between times, places and modes of philosophy, Marder informs us casually that the novel in hand was Sartre's *Nausea*. Yet Marder dis-

regards the vegetal encounter marking that very text (one that critics refer to as a metonymy for the entire novel).<sup>23</sup> Sartre's encounter, even as it spurred the disorienting eponymous *Nausea*, is blindsided. The distance that verdant Algeria implants in Derrida, and the difference in affect gleaned from his text, is all the more mysterious since Marder denudes it of contrast with Sartre's existential disturbance by the chestnut tree. Instead, he truncates Derrida's contemplation: he reduces it to a formalized figure of *differance* as the pretext for the misguided accusation that Derrida is only interested in the "flowers of rhetoric" rather than in "the sunflowers growing in a field".<sup>24</sup> Ironically this is the very accusation that Derrida levers at Sartre's work in the latter's book *Saint Genet*.<sup>25</sup> The "flowers of rhetoric" in Sartre's case might be taken as an attempt to immunize against Genet's homoerotic floral poetics (to throw a fig leaf over them). But in Derrida's case they neither defend against the homoerotic nor remain uprooted from realism.

In the spirit, apparently, of mirroring Derrida and Sartre, Marder tells us that the former also "looks up to plants", but he prunes out the sickness, the existential nausea in this literary

archive prompted by the very roots of what Randy Laist refers to as "the most famous tree in all existential philosophy" – Sartre's Chestnut.<sup>26</sup> Regarding *Nausea*, Derrida wrote:

[...] this great fiction (that I still admire and that I remember having read in a certain ecstatic bedazzlement at seventeen, in Algiers, in philosophy class, sitting on a bench in La Ferrière Square, sometimes raising my eyes towards the roots, the bushes of flowers or the luxuriant plants, as if to verify the too-much of existence... how to write like that, and above all, not like that?)<sup>27</sup>

It is not "counterintuitive" that Derrida should raise his eyes to the roots, as Marder suggests, given the staggered, terraced, planting that organised the sloping descent of La Ferrière Square.<sup>28</sup> More radically – which rhetorically directs us to "the root" as such – naming the roots is effectively to cite Sartre: naming the possibility of the world as "too much" grafts Sartre's existential horror in a Parisian park into what was then French Algeria only to put that horror in play. *Nausea's* contrasting vision is described by Sartre as follows:

And suddenly, all at once the veil is torn away, I have understood, I have *seen* [...] I was in the municipal park just now. The root of the chestnut tree plunged into the ground just underneath my bench. I no longer remembered that it was a root. Words had disappeared, and with



them the meaning of things [...]. I was sitting, slightly bent, my head bowed, alone in front of that black, knotty mass, which was entirely utterly crude and frightened me. And then I had this revelation [...] the diversity of things, their individuality, was only an appearance, a veneer. This veneer had melted, leaving soft, monstrous masses, in disorder – naked, with a frightful and obscene nakedness.<sup>29</sup>

Transplanting these roots, Derrida wonders how he will and *will not* write like that. *Nausea's* anti-hero, Roquentin, is overwhelmed by the tree roots. They become “monstrous masses”, they are finally described as “naked, with a frightful and obscene nakedness”, and altogether “too much”. Given this, perhaps Derrida's subsequent scene, decades later, with the little cat is a lesson in how not to write like Sartre. While Derrida feels unease – malaise, before his cat, this is not a mortal recoil from the incoherence of existence without anthropological anchor. Rather it is that which dismantles the *conceptual* inheritance that would keep the feline forever the same, closed within its category, supine before the sole source of meaning that the erect man more habitually assumes himself to be

#### Fig. 4 Sailors

Summoning up the diverse bestiary of his previous works in *The Animal That There-*

*fore I Am*, Derrida notes that “almost all these animals are welcomed, in a more and more deliberate manner, on the threshold of sexual difference. More precisely, of sexual differences [...]” It is true that Derrida's now infamous nude scene before his cat generates a malaise in the form of the strong negative emotion of shame. We cannot, however, subtract that shame from the onto-theological history that would corral this cat to “the animal”, categorically lesser in kind than “the human”, while staining man's knowledge with so-called original sin. This scene may take place in a quotidian bathroom but it doubles as the Garden. What is singular about Derrida is that he does not defend against his own, top to toe – or top to tail, implication in this history and its exits. The threshold of which he speaks is one of welcome.

Between the animals “lunging more wildly” in his face and the “shame related to standing upright”, the memory of a micro-garden materializes in the form of a shoebox packed with mulberry leaves on which silkworms feed. These silkworms that the young Derrida kept as a child in Algiers do not field an aversion lead lesson in sexual difference nor lead to a catastrophic expulsion. Rather they

supply a “marvellous” secret secretion of sexual and animal differences. Not a word, not a snake, “In the beginning” he writes – again – “there was the worm which was and was not a sex, the child could see it clearly, a sex perhaps but then which one?”<sup>30</sup> This reverie, from the last passages of Derrida's essay “A Silkworm of One's Own”, generates a primal scene that does not congeal into the repetition of a single fault, exceptional signifier or compensatory fetish as per the normative account of psychoanalysis.<sup>31</sup> His belated adult knowledge maintains a polymorphous viscosity, maintains a curiosity that does not freeze into anxiety: Derrida subsequently learned that “The serigenous glands of the caterpillar can [...] be labial or salivary, but also rectal.”<sup>32</sup> Silkworms make silk but that silk never becomes an object for the silkworm or its spur to mastery. Without then reverting to the figure of a veil, the silkworm likes to “hide itself”.<sup>33</sup>

Derrida's “Silkworm” was written as a kind of response to Hélène Cixous's text “Savoir”. One must, he says, on the edge of an ethical imperative, read and read aloud “Savoir” to allow its poetics so saturated in the labial consonant “v” to render “the lips at last vis-



ible and tangible” (we cannot help but hear consonance with the otherwise unremarked Luce Irigaray, the thinker more widely known for her affirmation of the labial, the labile and the contact between sensible and intelligible). This tangibility and its attention to the edges steers a path other than the objective “knowledge” of the title: “Savoir” would usually be translated into English as “Knowledge” rather than heard for its constituent syllables as “Her Vision”. The poetic means depart too from the vision donated by the laser surgery that is Cixous’s ostensible topic (on one level she really is simply recounting a story concerning her eyesight). Yet her sight takes leave from the narrative of human elevation and detachment from the world: “She hadn’t realized the day before that eyes are miraculous hands, had never enjoyed the delicate tact of the cornea, the eyelashes, the most powerful hands, these hands that touch imponderably near and far – off heres.”<sup>34</sup> Derrida’s meditative text dilates on the many veils (*voiles*) that Cixous’s poetics set sail (same word, different gendered article – *le voile/veil, la voile/sail*): he alights upon all her usages of the “veil” and lets the curtain fall upon “the veil”. Like the dialectical scission

between nature and culture refused by Haraway in my introduction for the sake of inexhaustible troping of the “non-literal” world, there is not – cannot – be one absolute Veil. After “Savoir”, would we *have* to think shame and technology together as the same subject?

Taking Cixous to dispel this alliance by an oblique countering of Freud, Derrida returns more directly to the latter, to his argument and his symptom in the infamous lecture on “Femininity”.<sup>35</sup> He had earlier essayed around the sudden and yet limited technicity of that femininity decades earlier in *Glas*, when remarking that “Writing remains modest because it is caught in a fleece.”<sup>36</sup> The golden fleece of *Glas*, smeared, made “gluey with drool” to produce “a kind of textual veil” spoke to the name and indeed to the silkworm of Genet.<sup>37</sup> In the “Silkworm” essay, Derrida speaks to the weave of Freud’s “*idée fixe*”, namely castration.<sup>38</sup> “Femininity”, of course, struggles to account for sexual *difference* as such, it struggles to step beyond what Irigaray called “The blindspot in an old dream of symmetry.”<sup>39</sup> But Derrida’s attention is caught by Freud’s ruse for allowing women perhaps one invention in “the his-

tory of civilization”.<sup>40</sup> Freud’s spurious generosity on this point is doubtless informed by elsewhere speculating that women find themselves “forced into the background by the claims of civilization” and thus “adopt [...] a hostile attitude towards it.”<sup>41</sup> Giving with one hand – women invented something, but taking with another – they merely follow Nature, Freud attributes to women the technique of “plaiting and weaving” motivated by shame deriving from “genital deficiency”.<sup>42</sup> It is remarkable that the meta-narrative of the dialectically entrenched post-Lacanian psychoanalysis positions “Man’s” initial immaturity as the lever by which he will overcome that weakness and accede to language but that *this* deficiency is hers eternally. The best she can do is weave a fabric in imitation of pubic hair, her suit forever a hair shirt, ever repeating and inventing nothing. Rather than entrench the same conceptual divide of nature and culture and seek to repair the insult by elevating woman to the same assumed status of man as the clothed inhabitant of fallen nature-that-is-culture, as *homo faber*, Derrida takes another tack. But, he muses, “what if a *tekhnè* never broke radically with a *physis*, if it only ever deferred it in differing



from it, why reserve this animal naturality to woman?"<sup>43</sup> Derrida puts us all on the same side. He drops the opposition of absence to presence and the supposed agency of "the Phallus, of the Thing or the Cause behind the Veil."<sup>44</sup> That side does not make a landing on the clean slate of representation with all players now equalized, but brings us all down to earth. In other words he refuses the elevation of man, and joins woman at the limitrophic interface of nature and culture. Back and forth across "A Silkworm of One's Own", Derrida brings out the veils of Cixous's writing up to and including her eyelids, and adding to it, dwelling at length on the texture of his tallith including as a memory of circumcision.<sup>45</sup> Unpicked, rewoven, stitched upon: the veil is never intact but was always and already a weave, a textile.

### Fig. 5 Poets

Re-emerging within *The Animal That Therefore I Am* the silken thread of a silkworm shames the elementary armature of horizontal and vertical that holds up a theological fiat. What may appear purely a physical, or geophysical, axis accrues metonymic ambition when it automatically, art historically,

stands in for landscape and portrait. Worse, the verticality of that portrait then becomes the metonymy of standing upright. While it is "erection in general and not only phallic sur-rection" that is "at the heart of what concerns" Derrida, resistance to divisibility on behalf of the concept or of the sign can be understood as a defence against the mutability of detumescence.<sup>46</sup> Deconstruction is improper. In an interview with feminist faculty at Brown University from 1984 – in the decade when Women's Studies programs were gaining traction, Derrida muses that "there is always something sexual at stake in the resistance to deconstruction."<sup>47</sup>

That something takes perhaps its most unexpected form in Derrida's *Death Penalty* seminars. After his long lament for the lack of a philosophy of abolitionism amid the calculus of pain that is the anesthesia of the death penalty, the first volume ends with resistance by means of the beating of Derrida's heart – and "the grace of the other heart".<sup>48</sup> That alone is arresting. But the next to last session of the second volume astonishes in the explicit and heartfelt alliance between deconstruction and feminism that it offers. In that session Derrida returns to Freud, fol-

lowing the red thread of blood as philosophy – and here psychoanalysis – shows itself to be unable to oppose the death penalty. Locating anxiety regarding the flow of blood, Freud finds himself turning his discussion of the defloration of women into one of female resentment born of penis envy (that is not the surprise). What is striking but again not surprising is Freud's twofold transition from so-called "primitive" peoples to his contemporary moment (itself a familiar synthesis from his colonial orchestration of the Subject of Europe in his speculative writings).<sup>49</sup> Firstly he locates the clearest instances of such resentment among "the strivings and in the literary productions of 'emancipated' women" of his own time.<sup>50</sup> Secondly, Freud risks a "paleo-biological speculation" that roots this impoverished condition on their thwarted desire to urinate standing up.<sup>51</sup> With some restraint Derrida responds that it is not that Freud's "targeting lacks insight", but that "the phenomenon he has not failed to identify requires an interpretation about which psychoanalysis does not utter a word".<sup>52</sup> With a heart-stopping divergence from the letter of Freud, Derrida aligns what he names the "original and irreplaceable role of literature





in the feminist cause” with the fact that it has been poets and writers generating abolitionist discourse – not philosophers “or even politicians”.<sup>53</sup> In such a gesture he links it with his own writing, and the thought and the risk of writing in deconstruction in its broadest implication.

Resisting the direction in Freud that aligns moral rectitude and the rectitude or erection of the body standing before the law (or indeed a urinal), Derrida resists too the congenital figure of disability lodged in the logic of castration to which the resentful writerly woman is destined. There is even a path emerging here that affirms the vulnerability of a resistant feminist emancipation with the “nonpower at the heart of power” taking shape in *The Animal That Therefore I Am*.<sup>54</sup> That nonpower is at the beating heart of the transpecific living, and it is sexual without opposition.

## Notes

- 1 Hélène Cixous, *La*, quoted in Jacques Derrida, “A Silkworm of One’s Own”, in Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida, *Veils*, trans. Geoff Bennington (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 62.
- 2 Donna J. Haraway, *How like a Leaf: An Interview with Thyrza Nichols Goodeve/Donna J. Haraway* (New York: Routledge, 2000).
- 3 Haraway *How like a Leaf*, 82.
- 4 Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, trans. David Wills, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).
- 5 Jacques Derrida discusses the problem of heliotropology in his “White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy”, in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), 207–72.
- 6 Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 1, emphasis added.
- 7 Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 5, emphasis added.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 See Mike Shanahan, *Ladders to Heaven: The Secret History of Fig Trees* (Unbound, 2016), 20.
- 11 See David Wills, “The Blushing Machine: Derrida”, in *Inanimation: Theories of Inorganic Life* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2016).
- 12 See Shanahan, *Ladders to Heaven*.
- 13 Shanahan, *Ladders to Heaven*, 66.
- 14 See Shanahan, *Ladders to Heaven*.
- 15 D. H. Lawrence, “Bare Fig-trees”, quoted in Shanahan, *Ladders to Heaven*, 5.
- 16 Leslie Hill, *The Cambridge Introduction to Jacques Derrida* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 50.
- 17 Derrida, *Glas*, trans. John P. Leavey Jr. and Richard Rand (Lincoln: Nebraska University Press, 1986 [1974]), 210b. A new translation of this book is due to be published by Minnesota University Press as

*Clang*.

- 18 Freud quoted in Derrida, *Glas*, 210a.
- 19 Hill, *The Cambridge Introduction to Jacques Derrida*, 50.
- 20 Michael Marder *The Philosopher’s Plant* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).
- 21 See Jacques Derrida, “‘Dead Man Running’ Salut, Salut. Notes for a Letter to ‘Les Temps Modernes’”, in *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews 1971–2001* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 257–292.
- 22 Marder, *The Philosopher’s Plant*, 194.
- 23 See Alistair Rolls and Elizabeth Rechniewski, cited in Randy Laist, “Sartre and the Roots of Plant Horror”, in *Plant Horror* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016), 164.
- 24 Marder *The Philosopher’s Plant*, 197.
- 25 Derrida, *Glas*, 13b.
- 26 Laist, “Sartre and the Roots of Plant Horror”, 164.
- 27 Derrida, “Dead Man Running”, 164.
- 28 Marder, *The Philosopher’s Plant*, 194.
- 29 Jean Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Robert Baldick (London: Penguin, 1965 [1938]), 181–183.
- 30 Derrida, quoted in Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 36.
- 31 Jacques Derrida, “A Silkworm of One’s Own”, in Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida, *Veils*, trans. Geoff Bennington (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 17–92. Compare the classical account of the sexual fetish in Sigmund Freud, “Fetishism”, in *On Sexuality*, vol. 7 in the Penguin Freud Library, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991 [1927]), 345–358.
- 32 Derrida, “Silkworm”, 49.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Hélène Cixous, “Savoir”, in Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida, *Veils*, trans. Geoff Bennington (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 9.
- 35 Sigmund Freud, “Femininity”, in *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, vol. 2 in the Penguin Freud Library, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991).
- 36 Derrida, *Glas*, 67.



37 Ibid.  
38 Derrida, "Silkworm", 28.  
39 Luce Irigaray derided Freud's inability to see anything that is not the same as the phallus. See her canonical essay "The Blindspot of an Old Dream of Symmetry", in *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 11–132.  
40 Freud, "Femininity", 166.  
41 Sigmund Freud, "Civilization and its Discontents", in *Civilization, Society & Religion*, vol. 12 in the Penguin Freud Library, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991 [1929]), 293.  
42 Freud, "Femininity", 166.  
43 Derrida, "Silkworm", 30.  
44 Ibid., 31.  
45 Ibid., 39.  
46 Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 37.  
47 Jacques Derrida, "Women in the Beehive: A Seminar with Jacques Derrida", in *Men in Feminism*, eds. Alice Jardine and Paul Smith (London: Methuen, 1987 [1984]), 196. This seminar is described as "authorised but authorless" in that it depended on the editors' transcription of Derrida's remarks, and those editors are unnamed.  
48 Jacques Derrida, *The Death Penalty*, vol. I, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2014), 257.  
49 See Ranjanna Khanna, *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).  
50 Sigmund Freud, "The Taboo of Virginity", in *On Sexuality*, vol. 7 in the Penguin Freud Library (London: Penguin, 1991 [1917]), 279.  
51 Freud, "Virginity", 279. The speculation is with approving reference to the work of Sándor Ferenczi.  
52 Jacques Derrida, *The Death Penalty*, vol. II, trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017), 232.  
53 Derrida, *Death Penalty II*, 232–3.  
54 Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, 28.

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