



Zuhair Post-structurally Hanged *

*The two stony meadows where she dwells
look like tattoos in the sinews of one's wrist.*

The entire history of the concept of structure,

*I recognized the three stones blackened by fire
at the place where the kettle was placed at night.*

before the rupture of which we are speaking,

*The women have covered their howdahs
with a thin screen sporting blood-red fringes.*

must be thought of as a series of substitutions

*There are many who dwell in Qanan,
the shedding of whose blood is lawful,*

and many, unlawful. of centre for centre,

*The tribes of 'Abs and Zubyán battled one another,
and ground up the perfume of Manshim between them.*

as a linked chain of determinations

*They led their animals to the deep crimson pool,
and hacked them up with sharp knives.*

of the centre.

*They who paid the blood money indemnity
did not even shed enough blood to fill a teacup.*

Successively,

*War is not what you have learnt it to be;
it is not a story based on suppositions.*

and in a regulated fashion,

*If you stir it up (O, accursed thing!)
it will rage on fiercely.*

the centre receives different forms or names.

*Then it will grind you
as the top millstone grinds the lower;*

The history of metaphysics,

and it will give birth to monstrous twins.

like the history of the West,

And I know what happened today and yesterday;

is the history of these metaphors and metonymies.

but, verily, of the knowledge of what will happen tomorrow,

Its matrix...the determination of Being as "presence"

I am ignorant. in all senses of this word.

And he who dreads the hounds of death, they will reach him,

It could be shown that all the names

even if he runs up a ladder to the heavens.

related to fundamentals, to principles,

And he who rebels against the butts of his comrades' spears,

or to the centre

will have to obey the sharp spearheads of his foes.

have always designated an invariable presence

And he who travels far will see his friend

– eidos, archē, become his enemy.

Many silent ones please you;

telos, energeia,

but their excess or lack of wisdom

ousia...alētheia,

will appear when they speak.

transcendentality,

A tongue is one half of a man,

consciousness,

and the other half is his mind;

God, man,

and there is nothing besides these two,

except blood and flesh.

and so forth.

* Image is *Al-Jazhira* from the *Al-Mu'allaqat* 5, by Dia al-Azzawi (1978). All texts in italics are from fragments of the "hanged poem" of Zuhair from *The Muallaqat* (written appx. 590 A.D.) translated by F. E. Johnson and revised by Sheik Faiz-ullah-bhai, from *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East* (1917) with some minor alterations. All other text is quoted from Jacques Derrida's famous paper "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences", delivered at a conference at John Hopkins University in 1966.

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