

Topology of Truth

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“La femme n’existe pas.”¹ This statement does not deny the existence of women; it marks a limit within language. “Woman” cannot be secured as a universal term in the symbolic order. Something always escapes, and what escapes does not disappear but returns as symptom.

From this perspective, “Woman” is not an identity but a place where a particular relation to truth takes shape. It is not a stable figure, but a site where something unresolved continues to appear—if it appears at all.

In Persian myth, particularly in the *Shahnameh*, feminine figures appear in a peculiar way.² They are often idealized, yet never fully graspable. They do not represent an essence but mark a return to what resists being fully said. Through them, culture negotiates what cannot be directly symbolized.

This tension may be located, for instance, in the figure of Rudabeh. Positioned at the limit of law and transgression, her desire does not resolve contradiction but sustains it. Something appears there, but only as displaced—neither outside the symbolic nor fully contained within it.

Freud’s notion of *screen memory* allows a way to read this movement. A screen does not simply conceal; it displaces—perhaps even produces what it seems to hide. It produces a surface on which something appears only by being diverted—never directly.³ In this sense, the feminine functions as a screen: it both marks and deflects the encounter with structural lack.

Perhaps it is not even a question of depth. The structure seems closer to a surface—twisted, folded, without a stable inside or outside. What appears concealed returns on the same surface, displaced yet continuous with what distorts it.⁴

Following the logic of the “not-all” (*pas-toute*), the symptom does not simply reveal truth, nor merely conceal it. It speaks as a lie—not in opposition to truth, but in its place.⁵ What returns in the figure of Woman is not a truth waiting to be uncovered, but something that insists precisely where truth fails to appear as such—or perhaps where it never appears as such at all.

¹ Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore, 1972–1973*, trans. B. Fink New York: Norton, 1998, p.58.

² Ferdowsi, *Shahnameh* [The Book of Kings], c. 977–1010; see also Dick Davis, trans., *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*, New York: Penguin Classics, 2006.

³ Freud, S., “Screen Memories” (1899), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, III, London: Hogarth Press, 1962.

⁴ Lacan, J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis, 1969–1970*, trans. R. Grigg, New York: Norton, 2007.

⁵ Miller, J.-A., “The Seminar of Barcelona”, *Psychoanalytical Notebooks 1*, 1998, pp.11-65.