Hermes, the Polythetical Thief:

Reversed Predication, Detached Virtuality, and Constructs of Fantasy in the Resistance of Architecture to Theory and Resistance of Theory to Everything Else

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The *political*, the *unconscious*, and *architecture* are terms that, immediately after launching into the world of discourse, are drawn into maelstroms of generality, contingency, and controversy. I wish to circumvent this specter of early demise by providing a single account adequate to all three terms, a structural definition based on sober facts: historical origins and evolutionary necessity. This project will not appeal to any who benefit from the maelstroms effects, which are considerable, and of two kinds: (1) the suspension of connections binding the three terms, with the resulting illusion that there can be a non-architectural, non-political unconscious — or any other isolationist combination; and (2) the specialization of vocabularies and discourses leading to the privatization of these terms within proprietary disciplines, a practice associated with university education specifically and scholarship in general. Allowing the topical structure linking the Unconscious, the Political, and Architecture (capitalized from here on to indicate their membership in this key triad) allows these three terms to achieve a kind of *kenosis* — to borrow a term from Harold Bloom's system of "revisionary ratios," a state of topical polysemy akin to Umberto Eco's "open semiosis."[1]

The key to the symmetries of the crystal of Architecture, the Political, and the Unconscious is "reversed predication." Although the term "reversed predication" is specific to logic theory and linguistics, the idea has played an impressive role in cultural history and the evolution of language, customs, and ideas that has not been recognized by those fields. It is, for example, the regulating idea behind the ancient practice of "silent trade." Silent trade is practiced in its original form in some parts of the world even today. In modified form, it has endured as an "operator" stitching together the everyday exchanges that require symmetrical but irrational relationship between two parties. For example, no sale would succeed unless the buyer should think the price a bit low, while the seller thinks it to be a bit high. The "idiotic symmetry" of reversed predication is the staple of the comedian's repertoire, the spice of any divorce case, and the hack writer's remedy for low sales.

Norman O. Brown has provided the benchmark for the study of silent trade, as an early institution attributed to the god Hermes.[2] The aim of silent trade is to maintain absolute separation between trading partners while at the same time regulating an exchange system sensitive to market forces — surpluses, variable demand, availabilities, etc. Commerce under the prohibition of contact with strangers — which, in ancient times, was regarded as spiritually contaminating if not potentially lethal — used silent trade as a universal "work-around" solution. Where paths in

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[1] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Iinfluence: A Theory of Poetry* (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

[2] Norman O. Brown, *Hermes the Thief: Hermes the Thief, the Evolution of a Myth* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1947).

unclaimed territory crossed, a marker, usually two or three medium-sized stones, would be positioned so that they signaled an interest into the potential of a site for silent trade. Other stones kicked against this first indicated support for the location; the pile of stones was in effect a material histogram of market potential.

Hermes' name in fact is derived from the original meaning of *herm*, a "pile of stones." Because each of the partners in trade visited the site alone, credit for the exchange function was attributed to a god who protected the site from abuse. In this case, however, there was evidence the god was present. Each trading participant "played the god" for the others. Divine agency was important to authenticate the fairness of trades. Before currency systems monetized all goods within a single system, barter operated informally but efficiently. One partner who lowered the value of an exchange — leaving three fish for a bowl of fruit instead of the usual four — would be shorted on the next trade. The system was in a sense one of open and dynamic bidding in the context of intrinsic (*versus* market) value, akin to the modern practice of "puts" and "calls."

The stability of silent trade has allowed it to survive into modern times wherever currencies and/or common languages are lacking. Any belief in Hermes as the actual divine agency is supplementary; the traders can be atheists and the system will still work. Nonetheless, it is the "remainder" created by the irrational symmetry binding the traders that makes it "divine" in a more durable sense. The "idiotic symmetry" intrinsic to every trade is efficient and durable. Stability in the face of irrationality constitutes a basis of the common, as a covenant or binding oath. In Freud's notion of symbolic castration, power is achieved by ceding power completely to the network of symbolic relationships and the objects and symbols that maintain that network. There is no king without the symbols of regency — crown, throne, scepter, etc.. When these are taken away, the king is just an ordinary person. The same principle applies to all levels and stations within the network. Subjectivity within the symbolic is a process of misrecognition: we are mistaken for the positions we occupy, indicated by material things and actions. Politics is, if anything, about stability, even when periodic instability must be staged. This is not just the thesis about the historical use of "maintenance warfare," warfare strategically rationed by a nobility to, allegedly, reduce the overall tendency to international hostility. Politics is, ultimately, culture taken at the level of the performative, synthesizing ideas, actions, potentialities, and virtualities at the level of the (shared) Lacanian Symbolic.

Like silent trade, the Political devises its own idiotic symmetry. The classic formulation of this is the (again, Lacanian) figure of the discourse of the Master, drawn from Hegel's famous account of the master-slave relation in his *Phenomenology*. The master is master by virtue of his willingness to wager his life on his honor. In other words, for a master to be a master, there must be other masters, against which honor must be tested. Only the servant can appreciate the irony of this wager, and his/her appreciation is payment for exemption from this formula of symbolic castration ("castration by the Symbolic"). Where the master S_1, is "over" the slave, $ (or, the master principle is put over subjectivity in general), the servant's domain, knowledge (S_2), conceals beneath it an enjoyment prohibited the master. The essence of this enjoyment is the irrationality of the appreciation of the irrational situation of the master, and the complicity of servants that keeps it going. At any point revolution could end this subjective limitation, but "masters without other masters" would objective the absurdity to a condition of generic, ambiguous freedom. As Lacan used to say, "freedom … to do what?" Hence, the political begins

afresh with the period begun with the French Revolution, with Beaumarchais' librettos, with the idea of equality. The absurdity of the master-slave relationship is carried into the open, into what James Joyce presciently called "the shout in the street." If silent trade depends on the idiotic symmetry of each trader believing the other to be a god — with or without any definitive theology involved! — the Political depends on the idiotic symmetry of the double, the equal "more equal than others." As Hegel put it, the assertion of identity, A=A, leaves one breathless.[3] At what moment does A "leave itself" only to return to the position in front of the equal sign, to confront its double? The absurdity of basing identity on a model of direct mirroring, as in A=A, must be adjusted to the idea of a "displaced identity" in which two parties see, in the other, a fantasy being, a symbolic Other. This is the basis of Freud's contention that, in every act of love, there are at least four people involved: the two "literal" partners and the additional fantasy-constructed being required for each partner to imagine an enigmatic source of love. Who is this Other, who knows me better than myself, who is somehow in me *more than myself*?[4] This indirect construct involves the construction of fantasy, which cannot be interpreted as a fiction, if only because there is no "fact" before this "fiction" comes into being.

Love is not the primary instance of the Political. In Louis Althusser's view, the political involves the voluntary inscription of the view of an (imaginary) Other, taken on by the subject, without any direct force.[5] This process, "interpellation," is famously exemplified by the pedestrians crossing a street when a policeman shouts "Hey, you there!" Each thinks that the policeman is shouting at him/her; each has internalized the presence of the Other, not as a positive source of mandates but as an enigmatic void, a blank that cannot be successfully filled out. Mladen Dolar has shown that Althusser's interpolated subject is the victim/beneficiary of Lacanian *extimité*: an objective interior has been topologically transported to a subjective interior, making the subject a case of an "objective subjective."[6] Contrasting his position with Althusser's contention that interpellation occurs suddenly and without a remainder, Dolar shows how there is a small remainder of this process — a *residuum* within subjectivity — that constitutes a "psychoanalytical subject." This subject, too, can be revealed as an "objective subjective," but this is a process of psychoanalysis, directed toward the unconscious. Here, the process of analysis itself reveals a telling clue. Near the end of analysis, the analysand has no further defense; he/she uses the "last resort" of falling in love with the analyst.

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[3] G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1977) §197–§230.

[4] At this point the similarity between Hegel's discussion of self-consciousness and the tautology of A=A and Plautus's famous play on the doubles theme in *Amphitryon* comes to mind. The servant Sosia encounters Mercury (Hermes), sent by Jupiter to delay the servant before he can warn his master, the General Amphitryon, of the deception involving Jupiter's masquerade as the general in order to seduce his wife. The Hermetic facility with telling a lie so that a truth is secretly indicated (cf. an oath that is a set-up for a more subtle advantage of the oath-giver) is evident.

[5] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *"Lenin and Philosophy" and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971).

[6] For an introduction to Lacan's idea and use of *extimate*, see Jacques-Alain Miller, "Extimacy," in *Lacanian Theory of Discourse: Subject, Structure, and Society*, Mark Bracher, Marshall W. Alcorn, Jr., Ronald J. Corthell, and Françoise Massardier-Kenney (New York and London: New York University Press, 1994), 74–87.

Love itself involves an idiotic symmetry in addition to the four-fold arrangement cited by Freud. Love, Dolar points out, is a combination of chance and necessity. The idea of true love cannot exist without the element of free choice. A forced marriage is loveless unless some token of choice or concession is introduced. Yet, even though love's bastion be built upon freedom, there is no love worth its name that does not involve the spell of predetermination. Lovers feel themselves in all cases "destined to fall in love," despite the radical contingency of their meeting. What is in fact a most improbable passion is seen to be set in the stars from all eternity.

At this point it is necessary to consider briefly what must be taken up later in greater detail. Fate is ultimately one of the polar conditions of the uncanny as defined by Ernst Jentsch: the living person who carries a kernel of death within him/her, a kernel that leads to a fated appointment with death as an ultimate, inevitable conclusion. This polar condition affords us the insight that love's other idiocy, the element of free choice, is required, as the housing around this kernel of fate. One is never more alive than when energized by love as possibility, as an illusion of infinite extension. At the same time, and by the same token, one is never more than at this precise point set on a track to an unseen End, a destiny which, if voiced, is willingly embraced.

The whole subject, in Dolar's revisionary view, is a composite being: the interpellation of ideology is incomplete; it takes psychoanalysis to find the Unconscious, as a remainder from the Political-as-interpellation.[7] In this two-step process, the uncanny has been engaged in the form of the inscription of outside to inside. An external force has appeared at the center of the subject, a kernel held open by the enigma of the Other. But, what about this complementary condition in terms of the uncanny? While free choice (the autonomous subject) and fate (the destiny of falling in love) are engaged, what of the other side? Instead of the living subject drawn to an inevitable death, what of the dead subject who has "forgotten how to die," or "does not know it is dead"? In all cultures this is a universally recognized interval. first, there is an actual death, a death of contingencies, accidental or biological. At a later point, the subject must *achieve* a second, a symbolic, death. This is an achievement because, as with all fundamental passages, conditions are imposed. Things can go wrong (Hell) or right (Heaven). The wandering soul can make wrong turns. The grieving families can overlook some protocol of the rituals of mourning. Some crime may yet be unpunished, some debt unpaid.

Enough about Subjects — What about Objects?

While the Political and the Unconscious, each with their own "idiotic symmetry," replicate the universal, tight structure of silent trade, they constitute only one half of the formula of the uncanny. The "objective subject" of the free subject drawn to a fated end as yet lacks its complement, the "subjective object." What is this object?

Again, the example of silent trade and the logic of reversed predication have a suggestion. The materiality of silent trade involves two entities: a site (primordially, a crossroads), and a structure (a pile of stones, the "herm"). Here, the traditions attached to the god Hermes, laboriously assembled by Norman O. Brown, suggest a model. Brown began his study by asking how it could be that one god could be associated with so many diverse functions? Hermes was the god of commerce, the god of shepherding, the god of theft by stealth, the god of

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[7] Mladen Dolar, "Beyond Interpellation," *Qui Parle* 6, 2 (Spring/Summer 1993): 75–96.

seduction, the god who conducted the souls of the dead to Hades. Were these separate traditions bundled together as the Olympian gods of the Greeks began their journey to consolidation? Is he the result of the assimilation of diverse traditions where multiple religions were combined into one syncretic whole? Or, could the diversity be a function, simply, of the disorganized variety of texts, uncoordinated, unrelated, directed each to its own ends and means?

Brown concluded that Hermes' theological portfolio was not an accident. What one god embodied, no mortal could easily explain without going beneath the surface of material practices. Underlying love, theft, trade, transport, and Hermes' other roles was the theme of *stealth*. In particular, Hermes manifested his trickery in getting across space. Cattle were stolen from their pens, not by force but by stealth, by a use of wit. Love was not commanded through rape but rather through seductive whispers. Whatever is taken by Hermes is *given willingly by the victim*, at least at one stage of the process. Homer equated stealth with "skill at the oath" — the ability to enter into an agreement, at one level, while accomplishing a deception at another. In this formula, what is literally pledged can be the surface of a theft operation, a subversion of an equality of appearances. This not only anticipates the essence of ideological interpellation, where *extimité* ("extimacy") converts the subject into an "objective subject," but also the psychoanalytical supplement, defined as falling in love. Both can be described as acts of predication that are reversed. In the case of ideology, the subject becomes objective by internalizing what is external, *voluntarily*. And, in the case of lovers, what begins as a free choice ends with its logical opposite, a fully determined fate. What has begun as "external" ends up as "internal" — objectifying the subject by flipping the topology within which free choice seemed to rule.

Architecturally, when an outside goes inside we have the courtyard, the walled garden. When the reverse happens, we have the condition of an interior imposed upon an exterior — *any* exterior. We have "subjectivized" the object. By "interior," what is meant? The first official emblem of architecture is the Daedalan labyrinth. This three-fold fractal folds a tripled movement: ABA. The full schema reads: A (aba), B (aba), A (aba). Like all fractals, the geometry can be continued either to higher, more inclusive levels, or internally. The fractal objectifies the condition of the reversed predicate. Just as Hermes refined the art of subjecting oneself to an oath in order to take advantage of the one to whom the pledge is made, the fractal is "recursive." By subsuming its exterior to its interior, it becomes an exterior that is "all interior" — but the reverse condition applies. Hades is, if anything, a fractal. To see this, consider that the Political, the Unconscious, and Architecture replicate, on a "higher" level, the triad frequently used to characterize architecture: *utilitas*, *firmitas*, *venustas*, roughly translated as utility, formal structure, and beauty. Utility and structure, like the Political and the Unconscious, are natural pairs. One responds to the other's needs and demands, and the response fits specifications set down by each culture. One could call these two the "ideological formation," since the wide variation of styles and means by which needs are met by architectural forms calls for a rhetorical position to develop: "This is how to build!" … "This building is the kind of thing we like!" … and so on.

If we use Lucretius's idea of an even flow of atoms, human functions and rhetorically structured materials mesh together as two sets of parallel vectors, each answering the other in a cause and effect manner. The result is a building that works, but a by-product is that causality itself is endorsed. In steps *venustas*, not as a representation of what is conventionally thought to be beautiful, but as the *enigma* of beauty. Just as the Other inscribed itself into the subject in the

interpellation of ideology, this kind of beauty inscribes itself within the even flow of cause-and-effect atoms uniting *utilitas* and *firmitas* in functional complacency.

At this point, extimacy involves space and time, because architecture, in order to become Architecture, must use the material media of extension. And, because utility and structured form have already appropriated extension on behalf of their idea of order, which is always ideologically presented as *self-sufficient* (the "shed" that needs only a bit — if any — of "decoration" for market appeal), *venustas* must disrupt the causal order. It (she) must intervene in the form of a *clinamen*, a swerve, an exception. Extimacy, an outside converted to an intimate interior, opens up the ideological flow of cause and effect, custom and control. It constructs a *site of exception* by means of a *space against space* and a *time against time*. The iconoclasm of *venustas* in architecture is both an opening and a logical violation. It is a Hermetic site. And, like Hermes, it is a place of solitude (*locus solus*) based on reversed predication of the oath taken for reasons of stealth, the oath that delivers on its promises while satisfying a secret desire.

Returning to the primal example of silent trade, consider that the stone kicked to lie next to another stone is a minimal definition of architecture. Here, we might say that the minimum delivers the maximum. Who can say when the single stone becomes a pile? Two stones might be regarded as the absolute minimum, but for these two to be conjoined, the idea must have first occurred to the one who kicked one to the other. Like the philosophical issue known as *sorites*, the problem of groups, a pile of sand can be reduced to one grain and still retain the idea of a pile as *virtual*. The key is that the singularity of the one grain already owes itself to the idea of the pile — which has been *removed* or *not yet added* — to make the grain what it is.

The most elegant proof of sorites comes from Kōbō Abe's book, *Woman in the Dunes*. Abe explains that, as the wind moves across the earth, a vertical force is generated. Particles that meet the size and weight requirements are lifted by this force, and carried horizontally by the wind. While the majority of particles are made of silica, *any* particle with the right shape and lightness may fly along. In effect, the earth is "sung" into the wind, and then the deposits reverse the process, depositing sand in lyrical signatures: dunes, banks, deserts. These sites — we should note this extraordinary coincidence — are notoriously antithetical to *utilitas* and *firmitas*. Vitruvius himself explains the impossibility of building on sand and of even the problems with incorporating sand into the most useful of building materials, concrete.

The physics of Abe's explanation of sand corresponds to the poetics of *venustas*. The horizontal compliance of form with function is opened up, with a "song" that creates an exception. The virtuality of this exception amounts to a reversed predication, an oath taken with a supplementary accomplishment in mind. "Stealth," in this case, relates to the whisper tradition mandates for the seductive lover. *Venustas* involves both the agency of Eros, the chief demon among the Olympian gods, and the sub-texts of cunning, stealth, and tricks in general. Were we to diagram the site of exception, we would place a horizontal wedge against the parallel vectors of function and form, and erect an orthogonal dimension, a whisper and an invitation to vertical flight, singing materiality into the horizontal plenums of sky and sea, a circulatory system known primarily through its deposits: *piles* of sand, or precipitates of stones that are the first Architecture because they constitute the *first site of exception*.

Herms as points of trade, of course, were not the first sites of exception. If we read the account given by Giambattista Vico in his *New Science* correctly, human conceptual ability began with the clap of thunder that compelled pre-humans to open up clearings within the dense forest. Such swiddens were primarily used for divination.[8] Their practical effect was to afford a view of the sky from which the word of thunder had more signs to give; from these signs developed, first, writing, then the articulate speech that sang these signs, a collective appeal to the forces of nature that operated within the plenum of the sky.

If there were not houses on the ground at this time, there were houses in the sky that prefigured them. Constellations rotating seasonally brought a means of order to both time and space, coordinating agriculture — the second advantage of swidden clearings — and allowing the correlation of movement of animals with the development of plants and with each other. Celestial houses did not have to wait for the fantasies of Bruno Taut, Hans Scharoun, and and others in *Die Gläserne Kette* mail loop to land on earth. The temple, and by extension the altar, were primarily located and formed along the orthogonal control point that then quadrated the imaginary space and time of early religion — an earthly order reflecting a celestial one. The seductive whispers and songs directed upward were themselves "orthogonally" linked to the "horizontal" oaths that become laws for the Symbolic order. The human oath thus had its secret agenda, its stealthy aim.

In terms of the forest, the predication of trees, once empty space was realized to contain it — i.e. to make it a *forest proper* — reversed itself, under the force of thunder, to extimate an opening. The outer space interpellated to an internal clearing: a site of exception made into a place of *objectivity*. This was literally true, not just according to Vico but from the evidence of early and still-enduring "traditional" cultures. The sly clue that Romans required open sky within the Senate house, for taking oaths and investing laws with divine authority is only one of the many examples that could be cited. Oaths, whispers, seduction, trick, the orthogonal, *venustas*, the acousmatic force of thunder, the interruption of the causal-conventional order, the creation of mind by means of an "orthogonal" unconscious first revealed in religion, the *sorites* of stones or piles of sand … anecdotal evidence piles up (literally!) to provide a "polythetic" field against which our conventional ideas of architecture, the political, and the unconscious might re-form themselves. Where other accounts divide in order to conquer through privatizing ideas, the polythetic method includes the accidents and quirks that abound in history, "short circuits" that do not respect disciplinary boundaries or media differences.[9] Theory, freed by the polythetic, roams across art, religion, ethnology, philosophy, psychoanalysis, the brain sciences, and even pure mathematics to collate its clues and add "nutritional value" to thought's alimentary process.

The Poetic Architecture of "Between the Two Deaths"

The polythetic, of course, echoes the perverse polymorphism of Hermes — the thief, the lover, the trade-regulator, the taker of deceptive oaths, the messenger, the conductor of the souls of the

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[8] Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1968), §733.

[9] A polythetic set or class is defined by characteristics that are neither necessary nor sufficient, allowing a loose structuring of what Ludwig Wittgenstein called "family resemblances." Polythetic sets are preferred over monothetic sets in cases where causality is not known or cannot be determined in advance; where process takes precedence over product.

dead (those who do not yet realize that they are dead). Lacan's interest in the interval "between the two deaths" speaks directly to Architecture. It requires a virtuality that is Architecture *minus* the causal equations that bind *utilitas* to *firmitas* — in other words, *venustas*, the site of exception. What is really exceptional about the business of bridging the gap between life and death is the retention of the idea of order — spatial and temporal order — while denying certain causal rules that qualify it for an ideological application. Here, we have a specifications list for "detached virtuality," as found in the four primary forces evolved by poetic practice: (1) the double, (2) travel through time, (3) the contamination of reality by the dream, and (4) the story inside the story, or "fractal narrative."

What binds these four space-time violations together under the heading of love is their employment of the orthogonal idea of the Hermetic oath — the pledge taken to accomplish a secret independent end. Each "horizontal" rule is accompanied by a "vertical" vector of exception. We move from ideology to the remainder of subjectivity, which Mladen Dolar assigns to love; and in that move we engage the "idiotic symmetry" of fate and freedom. Do we — and this is the critical question — not also constitute Architecture *primarily* as a site where a voice, specifically a "voice of the dead" (*apophrades*) may be heard as the result of a "resonance" that is set up within the stochastic circumstances (the accidents, the random conditions).[10]

I propose a rather odd example, one I would rather not make except for the fact that it presents itself as obvious. The conversion of the Apostle Paul, in Christianity, is characterized by two unavoidable conditions. Paul is isolated, excepted. He is blind to his conventional circumstances while, at the same time, he hears a voice, the call to Christianity. He falls. Compare this to ancient images of Justizia, Justice, shown to be missing (we first think) her head. Later, even modern images refer to the truth of this headlessness by blindfolding Justice, a sign we take to mean that Justice must be free of prejudice. The trick is known by young children, who think themselves to be invisible if they only cover their head. In reversed predication terms, blindness and invisibility are convertible. This optical-visual example, in fact, shows how reversed predication works in general. It was not the case that Paul simply did not see his surroundings. He became invisible — as all true miracles are invisible — from the outside world of polarized, one-way predications. The violation of the causal order was *ipso facto* an intrusion of the detached virtual space and time, within an opening that must be considered as, essentially, a simultaneous instance of a mouth and an ear. The even flow of atoms linking *utilitas* and *firmitas* as vectors is also a perceptual lock. Interrupted by a site of exception — and miracles are nothing if not this — causality yields to the extimate. An objective interior is created that, for Vico, initiates human culture through the authority of divine signs gained through the interpretation of auspices. At the same time, objects are created to sustain and reinforce this new subjectivity through its passage within the site of exception — a mirror of the objective interior, a set of subjectivized externalities.

Such are the objects of art, that sustain the artist's (or some Other's) voice past the point of literal death. Mladen Dolar notes, in *The Death of Opera*, the unusual prevalence in the first

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[10] This is the sly point made by Alan Turing, when he asserted that the human intelligence added to the transactions between unknown-to-each-other interlocutors was a function of the curtain alone.

decades when opera emerged, of the theme of Orpheus.[11] This formalization of "between the two deaths" in a form of a love quest to retrieve the snake-bitten Euridyce through song includes all the themes required of the virtuality of the site of exception. In the reversed predication brought about by Orpheus's appeal, life is given in place of death, the lover follows her champion back to light. But, Orpheus cannot help but reverse predication once again, fatally. He *turns around to look*, violating the blindness/invisibility that govern the path connecting Hades with life.

The story of the maiden abducted to the Underworld has, of course, many more complex features. It is the story of winter, the gap between seasons of growth and harvest. It is the secret of fertility, the dry seed that yields the new plant. It is also about the fecundity of the invisible, the original meaning of the word "Hades." The underworld is a gap, fissure, a space accessible by cave-entry, in enfilade. Through such a small opening, great gifts emerge. A variation on this theme of "good things from small containers" is Pandora's famous box/jar ("box" comes from a confusion in translating the Greek word for jar, πίθος. Hesiod's version is preachy. Angered by Prometheus's theft of fire, Zeus gives Pandora a jar containing the sum total of evils. Unable to resist her curiosity, she violates Zeus's instructions not to open the jar under any circumstances. Hesiod's version is a veiled account. Pandora was, like her later sister Eve, one of many such vain women created to attend the extimation of a perfected utopia into a wilderness containing the full variety of human suffering.

Hermetic themes are present, if one looks closely, in this cosmic example of reversed predication. The serpent of Eden promises that humans will come to know good and evil. This promise involved a trick analogous to the legal fine-print saying that the contents of Pandora's small jar that would become the objects of the human world. The specifically evil nature of the contents corresponded to the suspended fantasy of Eden: Adam and Eve were, though "immortal" as tradition would have it, residing in the interval "between the two deaths" by virtue of the fact that they, in Lacanian terms, had "forgotten how to die." Their second, symbolic death was a birth into the mortality of human life as the first humans. The expulsion from Eden preserves the structure of the relation of Eden as a crystal fragmented and subsequently concealed, in the negative, throughout creation. The ability to recover these — a key component in Gnosticism — is, again, a Hermetic matter. Hermetic wisdom traditionally involved seeing what was unconcealed but invisible to ordinary (cause-and-effect) consciousness. Like the letter in Edgar Allan Poe's famous short story, "The Purloined Letter," the object of desire was concealed by being left out in the open, for anyone to see. But, of course, the blindness to the letter came with desire to recover it — blindness and invisibility, the primary Hermetic reversed predication.

If Hermes conducted the souls of the dead to Hades, he was indeed the god presiding over the interval "between the two deaths," and hence also the god responsible for the pole of the uncanny represented by this condition. In the other direction of the Jentschian polarity, the living who believe they are making free choices but, ironically, this very freedom establishes a dreaded fate, Hermes is about the discovery of this fate as Absolute Truth. The truth is not a fact but, rather, the structure that has engineered freedom into necessity. Here, Architecture — in its essence as *venustas*, its agency as *eros*, and its constitution as a site of exception — recovers, in

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[11] Mladen Dolar, "If Music Be the Food of Love," in Slavoj Žižek and Mladen Dolar, *Opera's Second Death* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002).

the personalities of Pandora, Eve, and their sisters, the final essence, seduction. What is whispered in the ear? The jewel within the matrix of love is Hermetically concealed by the blindness of *utilitas-firmitas*. What opens the eyes? What is like the azure of the clear sky swallowing Justizia's head, granting her invisibility (a property of the helmet of Hermes) and, at the same time, wisdom?

The Resistance of Architecture to Theory (and Everything Else)

The case for Architecture's alignment with Hermes, *venustas*, and the site of exception involves difficulty. This is not just the conceptual difficulty, such as that faced by Norman O. Brown in overcoming the barriers of tradition and translation in assembling a "logic" of Hermes that made philological as well as anthropological and poetic sense. This is a theoretical difficulty, and overcoming it makes theory resistant to appropriation by ideology, which prefers the simplifications of topics isolated by techniques, specialties, and disciplines. Corresponding to theory's resistance is the resistance within the phenomena themselves, the built-in negative, the irrational, the gaps and folds that refuse to be projected on to flat media.

Resistance is embodied in detached virtuality, the operationalizing of Hermetic tricks in the media of space and time. Unlike the usual form of "contiguous" virtuality, which adds unseen sides to seen ones, performs fly-throughs in digitally constructed projects, or pulls together the green-screen and animated illusions of contemporary film, detached virtuality, as its name suggests, is based on detachment: ruptures and tears in the fabric of space and time that extends human agency smoothly into the distance and future. Detachment comes when time is out of synch, when memory becomes an active form of imagination (*anamnesis*), and when a radically divided space, such as those encountered in any theater, activate a space more real than the streets and buildings around it.

In this, Lacan is instructive. In the formation of subjectivity, ideology uses contiguous virtuality to construct norms of spatial and temporal expectations. What is a town "supposed to look like"? What does a house "look like"? Answers are usually in the modality of ideology. A house is said to imply "family values." A city is in large part a mirror of expectations about groups and their interactions. This side of the political (lower case 'p'), allied with the Lacanian Symbolic, objectifies the subject, employing the illusion that subjectivity is completely subsumed within the ideology — with the "state apparatus," as Althusser put it.

When Dolar argues that there is a remainder in the process of ideological interpellation, we should take up the radical reading of this remainder, a reading necessarily leading to Architecture. The remainder has, within itself as a potentiality to escape the ideological dimension of the political, a means of reconstructing a collective Political that aims to know (*kenosis*) the fantasies used by ideology to buffer the Real. To remain within the Symbolic, and hence to remain a subject within the significations of language and culture, requires castration *by* those symbols: a willingness to be, amidst the terms of language and culture, *mis*-identified. This is what Lacan characterized as the alienation implicit within the systems of symbolic relations. What is the alternative to alienation and misidentification, if any?

Technically, Lacan specifies that the alternative to alienation is separation, specifically separation from the Symbolic. Separation in architectural terms is the detached virtuality found, traditionally, in the interval "between the two deaths." The Architecture of Hades, the Invisible, is

the Daedalan Labyrinth model of fractal twists and turns, a building whose recursive structure confesses to the Hegelian irony of identity, A=A. Self-consciousness, "know thyself," is the aim of analysis, the Lacanian project to come to terms, specifically, with desire. The subject discovers her authorship of fantasy, of the Other, of the substitution of the goal by the aim. The psyche's last-ditch resistance to this discovery process is love, but of course it is love's double nature — chance and necessity — that provides the key.

Are we justified in allying this second stage of subjectivity — which escapes ideology but yields to psychoanalysis — with Lacanian separation, and (further) separation with detached virtuality, the forms of which are given in the poetic formulæ of the double, travel through time, contamination of reality by the dream, and story in the story? Are we also justified in our interpretation of this detached virtuality and its traditional forms as part and parcel of detached predication, especially as depicted in the traditions of Hermes, variants of the structure of "silent trade"? We must remain true to the original model. Silent trade specifies not only a "site of exception"; it engages precisely the performative structure ("idiotic symmetry") required to make this architecture durable and effective. Hermes, as Brown discovered, was not accidentally diversified into functions of thievery, love, passage, commerce, and tricky oaths. Just as Brown was able to avoid generalities that would damage the networks that "made Hermes work" as an ancient idea, we must look to the polythetic reality of Architecture that sets it within the complex symmetry of the Political and the Unconscious.

This symmetry comes close to the one Lacan used to describe the relations binding the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real — the domains of subjectivity represented generally by language, imagination, and trauma. We can immediately see how Politics embodies aspects of the Symbolic, Architecture the Imaginary, and the Unconscious (Lacan's own specific designation) the Real. When Lacan described the relations of the three domains as a Borromeo knot, he pointed specifically to the topological property that made that knot technically a tangle. One ring lies on top of its predecessor, and is in turn overlain by its successor. But, the "last" ring, which should normally lie on top of the two previous rings, is placed beneath the "first." The result is that the three rings are held in place by this recursive motion. Like the twist in the Möbius band, it is impossible to say which ring is first or which is last. The topology binds them all equally and in the same way. Each ring is understood through its relationships with the other two.

Thus, Architecture (once its 'A' status has been identified with *venustas*, as a site of exception within the laminar flows created by *utilitas* and *firmitas*) corresponds to the Imaginary. Through its specifically detached virtuality (*utilitas* and *firmitas* necessarily employ contiguous virtuality) it creates openings by which time and space are allowed short-circuits. From our knowledge of the history of these sites, we know that they are primarily dedicated to what we might call, generally, the performative. Linking Architecture with the Lacanian Imaginary calls for a brief qualification. In English, imagination merges two functions that, in some languages, remain distinct. Much of imagination in English would fall within the range of operations of contiguous virtuality. The word "fantasy" is set aside for more extreme fictions. In Romance languages, the tendency is to normalize fantasy, as in the Italian *fantasia*, as something required for the everyday operation of the mind. While *imaginare* is also used everyday in the sense of needing to picture things that might be the case, *fantasia* requires a synthesis. As Vico puts it, in *fantasia* the imagination works as memory, and *vice versa*.

This emphasis on *fantasia* connects both to Lacan's idea of fantasy as an insulation — a final barrier — separating the subject from the traumatic Real as well as to Lacan's famous experiments with optics and topology. It also connects to Lacan's primary idea of subjectivity as it emerges in the "mirror stage," where the young child recognizes for the first time its status as an image. In relation to the Real as well as to the optical idea of the Imaginary, separation is the key. It is also accurate to say that the subject recognizes, in the mechanical-optical barrier between itself and its image, a radical break that is key to the construction of ideology and the Symbolic. Subjectivity itself takes its start from this break. During subjectivity's two phases, the first dominated by ideology, the second by love, the Unconscious relates to the subject through fantasy. It cannot directly signify its contents; rather, it must "signalize."

Detached virtuality creates an Architecture of subjectivized objects, scattered, puzzled signifiers. Like the pile of stones that constituted the original *herms*, these objects are a kind of *sorites* — predications of no particular structure or value. Yet, they like the Unconscious seem to signalize something. Their significative power is based on the stochastic resonance of accidental encounters. Isn't this too little to go on? Within the protocols that conflate Architecture with issues of utility and form, which continually define architecture only in relation to non-Architecture, certainly these mean nothing. However, the legacy of detached virtuality is not only rich and diverse, it demonstrates clear and consistent practices that, since ancient times, have made use of stochastic resonance as a modality of the highest precision and effectiveness. As artists, writers, musicians, and architects have discovered this modality, they have employed it, and the evidence of this employment is the basis for continuing the thesis that Architecture, in its role as the structuring principle of sites of exception; the Political, in its role as the performative; and the Unconscious, in its (psychoanalytical) agency of *venustas*/*Eros* constitute a dynamic unity — a unity grounded in the logic of reversed predication.[12]

The Anamorph and the Lipogram

What is the evidence for such an astounding claim linking Architecture to the Political and the Unconscious *via* reversed predication? What, in fact, *is* reversed predication? In the example of silent trade, reversed predication is the "idiotic symmetry" linking the trading partners. Each thinks the other is Hermes. This seems to be a fiction but the fiction *performatively* creates the god Hermes *as such* — a "divine" agency able to produce reliable results. The logic of idiotic symmetry is fractal. It is also the logic of the divine reality of Hermes, a divinity that does not

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[12] This thesis is put forward in its most difficult form purposefully, to expose it maximally to critical objections. Equally, while this position depends on specific scholarship, the attempt is made to follow Vico's example and theorize "as if there were no books in the world." The motive is, again, to avoid concealing any part of the theory beneath the authority of a previous thinker, to "take it off the table." The aim of exposing the thesis is key to the strength of the hypothesis of resistance. Theory must resist other kinds of thought in a way that resistance itself is considered as fundamental to its methods of thinking. That is to say, theory cannot resist simply for the sake of being opaque or eccentric. Theory should aim to be "private" in the sense that it must at some point detach itself from the desire for confirmation, a desire that generates fantasies that, despite their obvious source, achieve a fetish status for the theorist. Such fantasies ultimately limit the Political/collective value of theory. The unexpected benefit of privacy is collectivity: a "thinking in common" that, more than acquiescence to a proof, restores the role of dynamic dialectic.

require a scintilla of religious superstition; a god who does not require our belief, only our practice.

This is not an astounding new claim. Slavoj Žižek often cites the example of Blaise Pascal's advice for Christian converts, that they should be led through the motions of a true believer rather than instructed in the particulars of religious belief.[13] The actions *precede* the beliefs, which "arrive" retroactively. This is the logic of the form of metaphor known as metalepsis. A priority becomes real at the moment of a future realization. One should write this as "Real-ization" to emphasize that we have, in this grammatical moment of future anteriority, broken out of the Symbolic and reached the point in the Borromeo knot where the rings overlap the wrong way. This future anterior — a central feature of Lacan's theories — is itself an example of the detached virtuality of "travel through time." Metalepsis involves the separation of doubles, a prior event and a future one, who between them restructure the "predications" whose resonance, whose "signalizing," had gone unnoticed. In Hermes' terms, the predications in between are the "pile of stones." The traders, who alternate being divine and mortal in an idiotically symmetrical way (mathematically, they can be described as a "square wave"), provide the energy to activate this pile, to turn it into Architecture, into a site of exception. The Political of this situation is obvious: a durable relationship is established in silence, through separation and the symmetry afforded by separation ("detached virtuality"). The Real of the matter is that silent trade works because of the *resistance* of the Unconscious, a resistance that is not just a characterization of the difficulty we have of subsuming the Unconscious within a theoretical system, but a *functional resistance* that makes, out of the need to "signalize," the radical necessity that is the essence of the Real.

There are many approaches to the materiality of detached virtuality's creation of sites of exception: shamanistic practices, literary/poetic experiments, Surrealism, the structure of "sacred" architectural sites, numerology, Hegelian dialectics … this is only a small fraction of the list. Two things, however, stand out as particularly relevant to the example of silent trade, the portfolio of Hermes' diverse divine functions, and the case for Architecture's identity within the matrix of the Political and the Unconscious. These are "anamorphosis" and the "lipogram." Putting it briefly, anamorphosis and lipogram allow the Real of the Unconscious to be *articulated* — in the literal sense of the word, "endowed with joints." Joints are needed for the Hermetic "pile," the series of predications that have no evident structure but which add up to a material basis for encounter. Without them, there can be no actual works of art, music, literature, or architecture. Articulation is a strategy allowing duration while, at the same time, preparing for and anticipating closure.

An example of how articulation works in the context of predication is the case of *Festarchitektur*, the temporary conversion of conventional buildings and spaces by the fantasy of religious or civic observance. The need for closure is evident; the festival must come to a close at a precise predetermined time. The need for duration is the principle of extension: the festival must, as a temporal interval, subject all spaces to its rule while allowing staging areas, such as the points of assembly required for parades. Festival space is radically dichotomized. Staging and performance spaces can be constructed at any scale, in most conditions. All that is required is a means of marking the transition between the two functions.

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[13] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (New York: Verso, 1989), 36–37.

Markers have a double function. They allow for the flexible adjustment of festivals to unexpected circumstances and conditions. At the same time, they function as a metronome. Their built-in symmetry is a remote echo that will be met at some future point. Markers (predicates) can be detached from their twins, so to speak. Because the marker is essentially a frame, erected *ad hoc* as needs arise, the twin is theatrically defined as an audience and an act. At some future point the frame will reverse its direction and take up the audience into its spectacle. Like the house lights and stage lights that take turns illuminating first the auditorium, then the show, this "square wave" relation prepares for a short-circuit, a metaleptic conclusion, when the audience becomes the show.[14]

Because markers are used to create a symmetry loose enough to escape rigid spatial literalization, they naturally employ anamorphosis (the construction of views based on pre-determined points of view) in all its variants. Normally anamorphosis is optical. As a marker, it extends into the temporal, with the assurance of a future metaleptic moment. A ready example is Hans Holbein's famous double portrait, *The Ambassadors*, which contains a literal anamorph, a diagonal blur at the feet of the painting's richly robed subjects. The blur requires the viewer to take up one of two positions, high to the left of the canvas or low to the right. The two points and the angle of the blur make a 27º angle with the horizon, which runs through the sound-hole of the lute shown between the two subjects. John North has shown that this angle was not arbitrarily chosen. It was in actual fact the angle of the sun on April 11, 1533, the Good Friday upon which many people believed would be the day of the Apocalypse and the date inscribed on the back of the canvas, with the even more precise and puzzlingly accurate specification of the exact time the sun would reach this angle: 4 p.m.[15] The reasons were primarily numerological and specifically eschatological. The date was composed of three 500-year periods (500 years was regarded as cycles, a set of three was a complete era). The eleventh day was the last before the complete set of twelve. And, thirty-three was Christ's age at the time of crucifixion. A crucifix is shown on the upper left corner of the painting, half hidden by a green curtain. The line joining it with the angle of the anamorph completes the vertical side of a triangle, whose other side meets the horizon also at 27º. The theme of threes is maintained by 3x3x3 and the "sigma value" of 27 (2+7=9).[16]

Like Hermes, anamorphosis expands from its original base to include a wide range of phenomena, linked within the idea of reversed and delayed predication. The "square wave" function of anamorphosis is its most obvious feature: you either see it or you don't. It is either off or on; there is no "in between" position, or rather there is no stable in between. Rather, there is a gap, a dimension added to the two alternatives that, as in the case of silent trade, specifies the

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[14] Think, for example, of the final scene of Marcel Carné's 1945 film, *Les Enfants du Paradis*, when Baptiste, the newly disillusioned actor customarily dressed as a "Pierrot," is swept up in a crowd of Pierrots, whose costumes dissolve his identity in a sea of revelers. The film's plot involves the contamination of the diagetic story by the plots played by the actors on stage, echoing the irony of "paradise" being the term used to indicate the cheapest seats, the second balcony occupied normally by the humblest patrons.

[15] John North, *The Ambassadors' Secret* (New York: Hambledon and London, 2004); Painters often put the date of completion on the reverse of the canvas, but the inclusion of the time of day was and is unusual. Until North's analysis, no curator or art historian had thought this extreme accuracy to be significant.

[16] Cecil Balmond, *The Number 9: The Search for the Sigma Code* (Munich: Prestel,1999).

virtuality of a Hades, an "invisible," that violates the normative spatio-temporal order. Holbein does this with the idea of the Apocalypse, *signalized* through the angles, numbers, and dates intentionally planted on the front and reverse of the canvas.

Markers are, in Deleuze's terms, *demarks*. They are "outside of nature," outside of the usual systems of signs used to coordinate networks of symbolic relations.[17] They cannot operate within the normative mechanisms of metaphor, where framing is stabilized; rather, they require a metonymic, portable use of framing that, as in the case of *Festarchitektur*, can be reversed to extend the potential sites of the festival while at the same time marking them for a symmetrical closure. Metonymy's meaning "resonates at a distance." It creates dimensions that convert the delay into a fantasy space-time whose markers set a pace for closure. Because metonymy tends to a conclusion operationalized by the wind-up of delay, it especially favors the use of chiasmus (an X-structure) that is reminiscent of the original cross-roads of Hermetic exchange.

The lipogram (a text excluding the use of a single letter, as in Georges Perec's novel, *A Void*) uses the alphabet the way Holbein used the number 9.[18] It was "present" by being "absent."[19] Not for nothing was the artist Jasper Johns noted for framing both alphabets and the 0–9 number sequence! Johns positioned the numbers into rows that were "one space too large" (11), causing a diagonal pattern to evolve as the sequence was repeated. Nine appeared at the center and three corners of this quadration. In the upper left-hand corner, all nine numbers were superimposed on each other.[20] The missing letter of Perec's novel instigates numerous brilliant work-arounds. Perec reworks the titles of famous poems and novels, revises famous passages, such as Hamlet's famous soliloquy, "To be or not to be":

> Living, or not living: that is what I ask:
> If 'tis a stamp of honor to submit
> to slights and arrows waft'd us by ill winds,
> Or brandish arms against a flood of afflictions,
> Which by our opposition is subdue'd?[21]

The work-around creates new meanings, but these *revolve* around the absence of an 'e'. Without the absence, and without the prior text, this circumlocution would lose its wit. As it is, there is a void (noted by Perec's translator in choosing the title, *A Void*, but present in the original title, *Disparition*, "disappearance") that should be considered as a form of anamorphosis. Like optical anamorphosis, a unique effective point of view is specified *by means of the frame* but also *outside the frame*. Also like optical anamorphosis, there is a radical divide between the reception

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[17] Richard Rushton, *Cinema after Deleuze* (New York: Continuum, 2012).

[18] Georges Perec, *A Void*, original French title, *Disparition*, trans. Gilbert Adair (Boston : D. R. Godine, 2005).

[19] Balmond argues that the number nine's versatile command within the digital number system is based precisely on the ability to be absent and present, visible and invisible, at the same time. The sigma value of any number is, for example, unchanged when multiplied by nine. Multiples of nine create palindromic pairs (09/90, 18/81, 27/72, 36/63, 45/54) that fold 1–10 at the point between 5 and 6.

[20] Robert Bernstein and Carter E. Foster, *Jasper Johns: Numbers* (Cleveland, OH: The Cleveland Museum of Art, 2003). Bernstein and Foster did not see any significance at all in Johns' arrangements.

[21] Perec, *A Void*, 101.

of this presentation and the presentation itself, which is, as a void, akin to watching Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. The novel, by virtue of its void/anamorphosis, is entirely performative. The "real novel" — or rather the *Real in the novel* — is present by means of an object (the letter 'e') that has been subjectivized (created, through absence, in the reception of the reader).

Thematizing the Missing Letter

One of Lacan's famous slogans was "the letter always arrives at its destination," a contention that baffled Jacques Derrida. Lacan had in mind the retroactive logic of metalepsis, the future anteriority of meaning itself that could bring meaning out of nowhere (*hapax*). Applied to the idea of the lipogram, the missing letter, one could specify the destination as the future anterior conclusion, the common Political moment within the work, where each reader becomes the "true reader" because, in effect, the act of reading has been converted into an act of writing.

Another story, specifically about a "missing letter," uses delayed symmetry, reversed predication, subjectification of an object-space, the creation of a fantasy buffer, the detached virtuality of the story within the story, and the conversion of the reader to a writer (a complete Hermetic menu!). This is Edgar Allan Poe's famous detective tale, "The Purloined Letter."[22] That this story is structured chiastically has been discovered by the well-known Poe scholar, Richard Kopley.[23] From a mid-point defined by the exchange of the reward money for locating a letter potentially damaging to the then-Queen of France, the tale contains phrases and ideas on each "side" of the butterflied text that are reversely predicated. Imagining the text to be folded into a *lambda*, Λ, the phrase "A poet is one remove from a fool" on the "left" (first half) of the text is balanced by "all fools are poets" on the right. "Scrutinized each individual square inch" is matched to "scrutinizing with the microscope." The most interesting pair is, inexplicably, overlooked by Kopley. The opening sentence reads, "It was an odd evening …" In addition to introducing the reader to a bizarre mystery story, this refers to the game of Morra, an ancient play based on the use of hands and counting. The reference in the position of the reversed predicate is to the story of Atreus and Thyestes, *twins* who fell out over Thysestes' seduction of Atreus's wife. In revenge, Atreus cooked up Thyestes' children and served them to him at a cannibal banquet. This reference to self-reference cannot be missed! The banquet itself is the void created in the middle of the story's Λ, an anamorphic space in which and by which the reader becomes the writer of a story supplemental to the literal ("letteral") one provided by the text.

Poe leaves no doubt about his intentions. The missing letter is hidden by being left out, not just in plain view but in precisely the spot it should be: a "card rack." Kopley notes that "card rack" is a phonetic palindrome. Sounded out, it is the same reading left to right or right to left. By virtue of this trick, the minister who stole the letter can swear that he has "nothing to conceal" — the double-edged oath of Hermes. Concealing nothing incorporates the negative in an obvious and effective way. The anamorph is that this invisibility is based on blindness, another act of reversed predication.

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[22] For a modern text, see "The Purloined Letter," in *Edgar Allan Poe: Poetry and Tales*, ed. Patrick F. Quinn (New York: Library of America, 1984), 680–698.

[23] Richard Kopley, "Formal Considerations of the Dupin Mysteries," *Edgar Allan Poe and the Dupin Mysteries* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 7–26.

Summary

The lesson of silent trade is that the logic of reversed predication, in which predicates and predicators can be multiplied and "delayed," leaving a hole to be filled by the spectator — who, by virtue of arriving late, has the unique opportunity of occupying "paradise" — *via* anamorphic operations radically reconstructing the dimensionality of the point of view. This is not a thesis about particular works of architecture, it is about a way of looking at all of architecture, and about the refinement of that look to see Architecture's means of creating sites of exception. In such sites we see a new subjectivity unfold to replace the ideology of functional/instrumental relationships. This new subjectivity, best examined in my view through the revised critical theories based on the Freudian-Lacanian field, takes its tempo and program from love, where freedom and fate lead to a common destiny (the discovery of the role of fantasy, as the last attempt to dimensionalize a barrier between the subject and the traumatic Real) as well as to full possession of the "subjective object," or, in other words, Architecture.

This is not an attempt to produce a Theory of Everything, but rather to show that theory's resistance is not an epistemological or methodological problem to be overcome but rather an inevitable consequence whenever theory tunes into the resistance implicit in the structure of sites of exception. These sites are defined by moments, by subjects, and by the structure of reception that make such sites places of learning (*kenosis*) and a link with the past (*apophrades*). To borrow more terms from Harold Bloom's "revisionary ratios," such sites are the result of a retreat (*askesis*), paradoxically both *from* and *on behalf of* the demonic, which we might, on behalf of Vitruvian *venustas*, Eros. Eros has a long philosophical resumé, in which there is even an architecture section. Even the link connecting Eros to Hermes as been noted. But, to conclude, there is more work to be done.

First, the coincidence of Bloom's revisionary ratios with the components and moments of the site of exception and its Hermetic logic is not accidental. Although Bloom himself did not seem to realize this, the ratios have an internal structure that opposes *askesis* to *demon*, constructing a line on which the remaining terms (*clinamen/tesseræ*, *kenosis/apophrades*) construct dialectic projects. This is a matter for another occasion.

Second, the matter of *sorites*, the philosophical name for Hermes' eponymous pile of stones, has been approached through the device of predication, even of reversed predication, by the eccentric mathematician George Spencer-Brown. His non-numerical calculus, able to sum up a wealth of interactions between forms and functions with only one symbol and two axioms, can also, it turns out, address issues of *venustas*. Spencer-Brown felt the need to extend his *Laws of Form* autobiographically, and wrote an account of a failed romance.[24] Again, the second book is not a coincidence, but an example of a dedication of the remainder of a primary process (the calculus could be said to be about interpellation) to a psychoanalytical theme centering on love. Seeing predication as a collection of delays is congenial to architecture, where spaces begin their lives in dedication to answering to some need through material arrangements, is only the first step. Even the symbolism of such answering is a part of the predication, as the 18c. Venetian friar, Carlo Lodoli suggested in his motto, "Devonsi unire fabbrica e ragione, E sia funzion la rappresentazione" (if making is based in truth, then function will be revealed in the

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[24] George Spencer-Brown, *Only Two Can Play This Game* (New York: Julian Press, 1972).

representation).[25] The second step engages an anamorphic view. It converts architecture into Architecture by using anamorphosis and the idea of exception to restore the meanings of the Political and the Unconscious, not *in addition to* Architecture, but *through* it. Like Lacan's Symbolic and Real, the Imaginary — about both the re-positioning of the point of view and the construction of fantasy, which in our case engages detached virtuality — is both the link between the two and the element divided by its own interest in the Symbolic and the Real, the Political and the Unconscious.

These two adjacent topics constitute two final directions of study. For the first, the Political, a new order following Maurice Halbwachs' promising work on memory, monuments, pilgrimage, and music needs to be established.[26] Aldo Rossi was the first architect to theorize this relationship, and he rightly connected Halbwachs to Raymond Roussel's idea of *locus solus* — paradigm exemplar of the site of exception.[27] At this point, the recent scholarship on Roussel by Mark Ford comes into play.[28] Here, Roussel's use of a technique known as *la procédé* generated texts through a palindromic process akin to Poe's, but also specified ocular procedures involved with miniatures and imagined dimensions. The Political is not about ideological alignments and processes, although it includes them. It is about the common, and the experience of works of art and architecture that construct the common.

The Unconscious requires the Freudian-Lacanian field in that the "clinical view" of the subject studiously avoids what Slavoj Žižek has called the "swerve to the left" (advocacy of a particular group, or identification with its disadvantages or needs) or the "swerve to the right" (advocacy of a naturalism, evident in the current popularity of sustainability; or organicism, as is implicit in Phenomenology). The middle path is the "critical" part of "critical theory." It avoids being coopted by ideology and thus can grasp ideology as an object of study. The insistence on the language-like structure of the Unconscious was critical for Lacan. It meant also that the Unconscious resisted language, and sought to communicate through indirect means. Without a theory of dreams, or of fantasy, there can be no theory of Architecture.

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[25] Marc Neveu, "Architectural Lessons of Carlo Lodoli (1690–1761): *Indole* of Material and of Self," Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, 2005.

[26] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992); *La Topographie légendaire des évangiles en terre sainte: étude de mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1941).

[27] Aldo Rossi, *Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982) 3, 96, 103, 130, 140, 142, 143, 144, 152, 153, 161, 180, 188, 193.

[28] Mark Ford, *Raymond Roussel and the Republic of Dreams* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 200).