

The Intimate of the World

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I

Imagine an etymological dictionary written by Jorge Luis Borges, where the words “virtue” and “virtual” are given a common root, let’s say, in Sanskrit, $\sqrt{\text{VIR}}$ — this is not so far from the truth!¹ Like the words “cleave” (to cling together) and “cleave” (to split in two), they drift apart as Sanskrit spreads out from the Indus River valley and co-mingles with other languages; they are twins, separated at birth. One develops an affinity for the home, the family; whenever it leaves for a long time, its return is celebrated by banquets and ritual. The other prefers the prairie and the plains, the lengthening shadows of sunset, the uncertain crepuscular mists of dawn. It lives a ghost life, revived by storytellers around campfires, by dreams, by wild hallucinations of sailors on rudderless ships. The time comes when this renegade twin, “virtual,” consolidates its interests. In its hunger for some kind of home it ambitiously aims for the ultimate home, the universe. Its choice is not the outer ramparts of space, lined with stars, but, more strategically, the depths of caverns, lakes, and oceans. This way Virtual claims all those who fall, and becomes the symbol of a final rest from which the dreamer cannot be awakened. Virtual is the center of the earth itself, not a geometrical point but a cosmic condition: a center *of* a center, an intimacy, a place of ultimate concealment and absolute opacity; a place that cannot be discovered because it never truly existed in the first place.

“Virtue,” the sanguine twin, beloved family man, became jealous and apprehensive. He was, after all, the darling of the visible, the evident: the public marriage of the seasons in spring, the triumphant processions of trophies stolen in wars, the metaphors of maidens changing into trees before one’s eyes. His “music,” so to speak, was all by Mozart. He began to doubt his happiness: — What happens inside the dark cave of the Virtual? A melancholic Greek suggested that this is, in fact, the reality papered over by our myths of circular unities; a schoolteacher from Stratford invented a mad king who found a second, sad sight inside his blindness while wandering on a stormy heath.



Fig. 1. The "Curtian Lake" (*Lacus Curtius*).

Then came the day when the public square, disturbed by an earthquake, turned to a nightmare of mud. Deep fissures swallowed up buildings and animals. Business was disrupted, public ceremonies had to be suspended, the life of the city came to an abrupt halt. After engineers failed to find a solution, the city fathers consulted a psychic with good political connections. Like all of his sibylline clan, he preserved his reputation by giving only half-answers. This time was no different: "The only thing that can save us is the sacrifice of that which we hold most dear." This sentence, by specifying only half of what was needed (a second-order reality, R2, a "defective answer"), used the key of mystery to gain access into the deep interior of all those minds that had heard it. Like a seed that falls on rocks and waters, meaning did not flower except in the one fortunate case where the mind already contained the missing half of the prophecy — what in grammar is called "future anterior" because it combines the two ends of time, and what in psychoanalysis is called "the extimate" because it combines the two ends of space (a first-order reality, R1). The twin, whose own "inside of the inside" retained traces of his ancestral origins, knew the dark truth the psychic's half-speech required. The two pieces of meaning fit together perfectly, like the *tessera* of pottery broken by friends at parting as a promise of reunion. Virtue proclaimed, "I know the answer to the riddle. The city's most precious treasure is the citizen, the *Vir*, who is willing to die for it." Thereupon, he mounted his horse and, fully armed, rode into the chasm. The point at which Curtius (for this was the noble hero's name) left to meet his antipodal twin, Virtual, is called the Curtian Lake; it looks to the untrained eye like some unfinished public works job. But, Borges would assure us, this point no less significant than the Omphalos at Delphi, a place of darkest mystery, marked by an ϵ .ⁱⁱ



Fig. 2. The 'ε' at Delphi.

II

Jacques-Alain Miller, son-in-law and spokesman for the late psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, writes, of intimacy,

In psychoanalysis, it seems to us natural from the start to place ourselves in the register of intimacy, for there is no experience more intimate than that of analysis, which takes place in private and requires trust, the most complete lack of restraint possible, to the point that in our consulting rooms — these places reserved for the confessions of intimacy — analysands, *though in the house of someone else, sometimes act as if they were at home*. This is confirmed when such an analysand takes out of his pocket the key to his own house as he is reaching the door-step of his analyst.ⁱⁱⁱ [Emphasis mine]

Psychoanalysis, which Lacan identifies as a special kind of discourse (one of a set of four), places the lost object in the field of the Agent. The subject is the Other, standing outside of the 1/x formation where knowledge, S_2 , is inverted and placed beneath this lost object (a/S_2), the mere mention of which creates a mixture of pleasure and pain. The analyst plays the role of the dummy, *le mort* or 'dead man' in French — a position of silence and attentive listening, since the subject can only discover truth for itself, in the form of "acousmatic" remains of consciously formed statements: the cough just after, the pause between words, the stutter, the denial. Psychoanalysis is the ε-point of subjectivity, the place where archeology of ancient remains, whose accurate name is necromancy, takes the form of prophecy.

The mistaken view of popular psychology is that the unconscious lies concealed *inside* the darkest central recesses of the conscious mind, as a dark stem or core; that our knowledge of it, if it is anything more than a fiction, is a matter of excavation, although it can "pop unexpectedly through" consciousness to embarrass, humiliate, or warn the subject. The reverse case — that consciousness is in many ways internal and unconsciousness external — took Lacan some forty years to expound, using all the tricks of topology, knot-tying, and puns he could amass. The crown jewel of this project was the idea of the extimate. *Extimité*, a coinage combining the idea of an intimate externality, was a natural outgrowth of Lacan's expansion of the classical Freudian "partial objects" (breast, fæces, phallus) to include the gaze and the voice. Partial objects involved topologies rather than topographies

— they resisted being mapped because of their complex Klein-bottle-style spatial relations. They are the key to Lacan's theory of the subjective body and the relation of this body to the phenomenal world. Some echoes of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology* can be heard; in other instances Lacan advances beyond Merleau-Ponty to the point that the latter must attempt to catch-up lost ground with his last book, *The Visible and the Invisible*.^{iv}

Beginning with the breast, the infant's relation to nourishment cannot be separated into subject and object. That is, there can be no "transitive" spatial relationship. The breast constitutes both a figure and a ground, a mellifluous surface of warmth and satisfaction. In the transition to anal orientation, the order of demand is important. With oral organization, the infant's cry comes first, then the maternal response. In the case of anal organization, it is the mother who makes demands of the infant, and a new relationship is formed, that of the symbolic role played by the literal "inner expression" of the infant's body. Later, this symbolic quality will play into the role of shit in its relation to boundaries, *cordons sanitaires*, the racisms directed at foreigners, etc. From this point on, it will be the Other who draws the lines.

At the level of collective subjectivity, culture, the intimate object, the partial object, comes from outer space (an "authentic" all-containing container; let us label it R1) into our home space, our *œcumene*; it re-organizes it, just as the Ka'aba stone organizes the world of Islam, but the results of its presence cannot be mapped projectively. The dimensions are not transitive distances, the same from left to right as right to left. The distance from New York to Montréal is not the same as the distance from Montréal to New York. The spaces of partial objects have a left and right, a tendency to tilt and capsize, an inverse and obverse. Shadows and reflections mingle at the same level of reality as the bodies that cast them. This is not the "world of dreams" or the "imaginary landscapes" created in works of fiction: this is the real world, the Real as such, resistant to symbolization and so chimerical in its physics that we subjects must view it only through the lens of fictions we invent to skirt around its paradoxes (let us label this R2, "defective representations").^v

When a bit of the outside comes into the known space of the lived *œcumene*, it becomes an outlandish, unpredictable scandal. We cannot survey it, circumnavigate it, x-ray it. It has brought the space of the limen along with it, resulting in an obversion that resists our attempts at description and control. Mastery is foiled by the Real. The effect of the partial-object is "subjective objectivity," so to speak. This has an enormous impact on our concept of "the virtual," since in common usage the virtual is used to describe simulations of reality that are free from the effects of subjective objectivity. We know that this cannot be the case; so the question is, what is the virtual in the (Freudian-Lacanian) field of the partial object? The first adjustment to be made is to space itself: there is no space that is not a "space of experience," thus no space that is not, from the start, subjectively objective.^{vi}

Despite the increasingly sophisticated attempts to relate the virtual to the imagination and imaginary, and despite the seemingly obvious connections between dreams, fictional constructs, and the creation

of “virtual spaces” in which “real world conditions” may be simulated, what is currently thought to be “virtual” is precisely the opposite. Let’s use television as an example. What could be a better case of packaged “realities,” some aspiring to be authentic records of “real events,” others presenting fictional situations, often absurd, simply for escapist-entertainment purposes? What is clear, up and down the spectrum of authenticity, is that the television functions, as Slavoj Žižek says, like the ancient Greek chorus, the synchronized group of performers who “expressed the audience’s emotions for it,” i.e. functioned as hired mourners releasing the family from the obligations of extreme sadness.^{vii} The laugh and applause tracks added to sit-coms do this directly, but television in general, through its editing and framing techniques, creates a space within our domestic spaces that is radically Other. The television is not the electronics organizing the movement of images and connection to networks supplying content; it is not, in related cases, the software allowing designers to show simulations of future projects. “Television” in this case is the Other, which organizes our desire into its most radical form. The example Žižek gives is from Stalinism’s absurdist central demand: that if you really love the party you must confess and be executed. To be a good communist (the Lacanian “subject of enunciation”) one must be the traitor to communism (the Lacanian “subject of the enunciating”). The subject must be on both sides of the divides created by enunciations of desire and the responses to desire. When someone yells “Fire!” in a crowded auditorium (enunciation), it doesn’t matter whether or not there actually is a fire (the utterance as referenced meaning; *énoncé*). The effect is effective without a cause. The unconscious (the act) is effective with or without the consciousness (the literal cause).^{viii}

So, we know very well through popular culture examples what is the effect of the “automaton.” It takes over for us, allows us to be split up. It organizes our generic, amorphous desiring through the imposition of an Other. We know all this without having read a word of Lacan because Lacan’s truths are the glue and logic of popular culture. We continue however to construct theories in the register of the *subject* of enunciation, confessing to guilt that can only be defined within the subjectivity of the enunciating. It isn’t the case that Stalin exemplified a “theory problem”; theory has always been a “Stalin problem.” In terms of the virtual, where the television (showing material that is “enunciated”) sits within the presumed reality of domestic space (the place where “enunciation” is located), our desire becomes the desire of the Other (the television), and we are required “to denounce ourselves.” The criss-cross absurdity is not a defect; it is a *sine qua non* of the functionality of the consumption of television’s virtuality.

In short, television is uncanny, not just casually but in the precise technical way Ernst Jentsch defined it in his classic and influential articles published in 1906.^{ix} Here, Jentsch defined two antipodal cases that set up the range of possibilities for any uncanny phenomenon: the dead person or thing that “did not know it was dead” and continued to show signs of life (DA); and the living being that contained, at its heart, a “program” that led it, fatalistically and inexorably, to its death (AD). Lacan later created a parallel description of the “double inscription” by which the unconscious and consciousness communicated. This was not a logical relationship but a functional and active transference, just as

“television” was not the creation of a separate reality but a single, dynamically interacting Real that switched the subjectivity of enunciation and enunciated. Our question, and the question around which all issues of “the virtual” pivot, is: what is this switch?

If we follow the case of the uncanny, we may perhaps get lost in the wealth of clues and evidence. Zombies, vampires, mourning practices, foundation rites, divination, sacrifice, masks, necromancy — i.e. practices and imaginative formations that are common to all cultures and all periods of history — provide theory with an encyclopedia of the uncanny, not the limited tasting sample proffered by Anthony Vidler in his account of the uncanny, which truncates the traditions of the uncanny to the period of European history following the French Revolution.^x As Mladen Dolar has said, the French Revolution merely re-cast the conditions of the uncanny that it had inherited from the wealth of cultural practices preceding it. This re-casting saw Enlightenment as creating a vacuum into which “un-reason” would rush, creating “Gothic” horrors that were, *ipso facto*, critiques of industrialization. In this view, it is easy to side with Reason as “misrecognized” by those who “clung to their religion” in the face of change.^{xi} Vidler’s account is, in the end, an *apologia* for the Enlightenment. To place theory back on track, we must look squarely at the dynamic exchanges between the poles of the uncanny, which are, simultaneously, the “automaton” of the unconscious and the “opportunism” of the consciousness — terms borrowed from Aristotle’s addendum to his system of four causes (formal, final, material, efficient), the *tuchē* of human coincidence and *automaton* of “natural accident.” We will not need to define *tuchē* and *automaton* abstractly. We will find that they, like the polarities of the uncanny, have been taken into the cultural, political, and historical imagination and given the flesh of the world, the “intimate of the world.”

III

Many architectural theorists acknowledge and even mildly sympathize with Lacan’s account of subjectivity; however few see any real connections to the material or historical actualities of architecture. Yet, the debate over the role of virtuality in architecture has come to the critical center of all discourse and a new assessment of its meaning must be made. It is no longer a question of finding a balanced relationship or appropriate role, but of resisting an ideological mandate to substitute, for critical understanding of the human imagination and use of architecture, a far-reaching stratagem of justificationalism. This is what Žižek would call a theoretical “swerve to the right.” In distinction to a “swerve to the left” — where abstractions of the evidence of the clinic to create a case for the political hegemony of capitalism (Foucault’s inversion of the gaze does just this) — the swerve to the right reverts to a naturalism that traces cultural forms back to biological or mathematical bases.^{xii}

Just as Jungians prove the validity of archetypes by demonstrating their antiquity (“primordality” is then substituted as a basis for critical truth), the “research studios” using parametric algorithms establish their validity through, primarily, biological analogies. “Rhizomes,” employed as an *analogy* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s *Mille Plateaux*, have been literalized to justify associative

networks of overlapping structures.^{xiii} Interpretation is no longer necessary, since homologies suffice for demonstrations. Even models of complex cultural meanings such as Foucault's "heterotopia" and Bataille's "heterology" require a logic that parametrics disqualifies through analogies and captions. Legitimate studies of structure, such as Varela and Maturana's autopoiesis, are re-engineered to eliminate the essential element of the unconscious, which autopoiesis comes close to defining in precise Lacanian terms!^{xiv} The point is not to advance theoretical understanding but to justify new, powerful ways of organizing architectural projects for multi-national corporate projects. The "political unconscious" of parametrics, even if parametrics denies the unconscious, is the creation of an emblematic corporate signature, readable from Guangzhou to Leipzig, operating within the full functionality of outsourcing, virtual client interfacing, and BIM.

The "swerve to the right" connects to the "primitives" of biology and mathematics, often merging the two, to prove its case.^{xv} It is important to separate these efforts from questions of the virtual from theory itself. Parametrics is not a theoretical position but, rather, a position that requires insulation from theory's principles of polysemy and cultural-political history. There can be no theory of subjectivity in the parametric approach because, like the intensive instrumentality of Stalinism, the subject must be the subject of enunciation and enunciated at the same time. Let's not waste time talking about the theoretical merits of parametrics because this will only endorse the practices that are set up to eliminate theory entirely. Like other swerves to the right, the intention is ideological: to get "theory on board" so that practices can find the minimum degree of justification to continue their public relations projects. Theory's job is to expose the ideological core, the Stalinist logic, and the political economy of parametrics. Theory will not win in this contest, but it will lock arms with those who throughout history have recognized inevitability and, in the face of it, nonetheless said "no!"

Virtuality, in its relation to virtue, comes as close as is possible to addressing the pivotal issues that require our "no." How can the case be constructed? Here, we follow the insight of Žižek, that the issue is not the effect of "virtual reality" on our actual lives, our professions, our political conceptions, etc.; but the "reality of the virtual" — how all kinds of simulated realities embody the Real and not just a semblance or mock-up. This carries forward Pascal's recommendation for converting non-believers to Christianity. Don't worry about ideas or beliefs, he advises; simply get the initiates to kneel, bow their heads, go through the motions; the rest will follow. "The rest," it turns out, is not the reality anticipated by imperfect rehearsals; the rehearsals *are* the hard-core actuality upon which belief will subsequently rely, to make its claims for authenticity. In terms of the reality/Real of the virtual, we have already encountered everything we need in the fly-throughs, blobs, and swooshes of parametrics. The built works will not exceed the simulations; in fact, *they will fall short*. Their access to the fantasies created by Maya is limited; without a screen interface, in the actual completed work of architecture, a point of view can stray. The sense of scale returns to the subject who walks rather than flies through the site. No longer able to squeeze through vents or zoom skyward, the eye is grounded. The subject's own virtuality returns to compete with the ideologically mandated Real.^{xvi} There is a gap, between what the "actual subject" sees and feels and what the subject believes that the Other

“requires” him/her to see and feel in order to Enjoy! properly.^{xvii} This is the key to the relationship between the Real of the virtual and virtual reality.

Žižek compares the situation of the would-be Jewish emigrant from then-Soviet Russia, Rabinovitch:

The bureaucrat at the emigration office asks him why [he wishes to emigrate]; Rabinovitch answers: “There are two reasons why. The first is that I’m afraid that in the Soviet Union, the communists will lose power, there will be a counter-revolution, and the new power will put all the blame for the communist crimes on us Jews — and there will be again the anti-Jewish pogroms ...” “But,” interrupts the bureaucrat, “this is pure nonsense; nothing can change in the Soviet Union — the Soviet power will last eternally!” “Well,” responds Rabinovitch calmly, “that’s my second reason.” The logic is here the same as with the Hegelian proposition, “the spirit is a bone”: the failure itself of a first reading gives us the true meaning.^{xviii}

When we combine the Lacanian ideas of “the unconscious is structured like a language” and extimacy, we arrive at a new and advantageous critical position. “Language” is not simply the static rules of syntax or grammar, but the dynamic of embodied speech — the “enunciating” and “enunciation” (*énoncé*, utterance) that split the “Stalinist” subject. This split is the “automaton” aspect of the unconscious, and the extimate requires that we look not inside, to a homunculus behind a screen, but to the radically subjective “partial objects” that are embodied externally. As Agent Mulder of *The X-Files* famously said, “The truth is out there!” Lacan’s additions to Freud’s list of partial objects are significant: the gaze requires us to include the issues of blindness and invisibility within our critique of visibility; the voice requires us to consider language in the “residue” that cannot be accounted for by phonemic-based linguistics, namely *la voix acousmatique*, the “acousmatic” voice.^{xix} Because both the gaze and the acousmatic voice are prominent in cinema, film criticism has been a fruitful source for critical theorizing about other art forms, especially architecture and place studies.^{xx} But, painting, especially examples that have served as “meta-paintings” referenced by other artists and critics, provides the most useful visual basis for constructing a theory of the partial object through the topography of diagrams.

The task theory must undertake is the construction of reference conditions, established preferably through graphic and diagrammatic means, which may serve as a Rosetta Stone for diverse theoretical approaches. Just as Lacan’s L-scheme and the mathematical Kleinian four-group served a generation of Structuralists to connect linguistics, anthropology, art theory, and political history, we must revisit the idea of the diagram, refreshed by the extimate and the need to articulate the idea of double inscription by which Lacan defined the relationship between the conscious and unconscious. This unified field, if sufficiently comprehensive, will take time to build. But, what if there is a means of a “short circuit” — a discovery of some instrument used in the past that, designed to achieve precisely the same functions, meets the specifications of contemporary critical theory?

IV

In his original study of Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin mysteries, Richard Kopley advanced the theory that Poe frequently employed a chiasmic design, butterflying the text so that the second half could be folded on to the first half, creating symmetrical matches of subjects, ideas, and, often, literal words.^{xxi} In some cases, matches could serve as indices to "calibrate" the alignment of the two sides of the text. In other cases, the halves were bridged by an "anamorphic" connection that specified a silent, concealed meaning — a crossing that re-interpreted the two "spring points." The midpoint of "The Purloined Letter" is defined by the exchange of the reward money for Dupin's solution of where the letter is hidden. The letter is invisible by being left "in plain sight," and this is the key to Poe's use of symmetry, which hides by displaying itself clearly in the expressions paired by folding the text, just as the purloined letter had been "folded and re-folded."

Using the game of Morra ("odds and evens") as his ancient precedent, Poe matches such expressions as "Dupin now arose ... but sat down again" with "it is far more easy to get up than to come down." This indexical use calibrates the fold, so that the Minister's theft of the letter from the table in the King's chamber is echoed by Dupin's theft of it from the Minister's letter-box. The letter-box is described as a "card-rack," whose sounds when pronounced backwards show that it is a palindrome, a chiasmus in miniature. The prize match, however, is the connection of a reference to the banquet of Atreus for his twin Thyestes (Atreus fed Thyestes his own children, butchered and cooked, in revenge for Thyestes' seduction of his wife). This gruesome event is matched to the most subtle of Poe's references to Morra, at the beginning of the tale: "It was an *odd evening*."^{xxii}

Poe could do such tricks naturally, for he was a born cipherer. A contemporary (and presumably reliable witness to this mastery was the Reverend Warren Cudworth, who, writing for the *Lowell Weekly Journal* (1850) noted that:

The most profound and skilful cryptographer who ever lived was undoubtedly Edgar A. Poe, Esq. It was a favorite theory of his, that human ingenuity could not concoct a cipher, which human ingenuity could not resolve. The facility with which he would unravel the most dark and perplexing ciphers, was really supernatural. Out of a most confused medley of letters, figures and cabalistic characters, in any of the seven different languages, the English, German, French, Spanish, Italian, Latin, and Greek, his superhuman power of analysis would almost at once evolve sense, order and beauty; and of the hundreds of cryptographs which he received while editor of one of our popular periodicals, he never failed to solve one unless it was illegitimate, that is, unless its author put it together not intending to have it make sense.

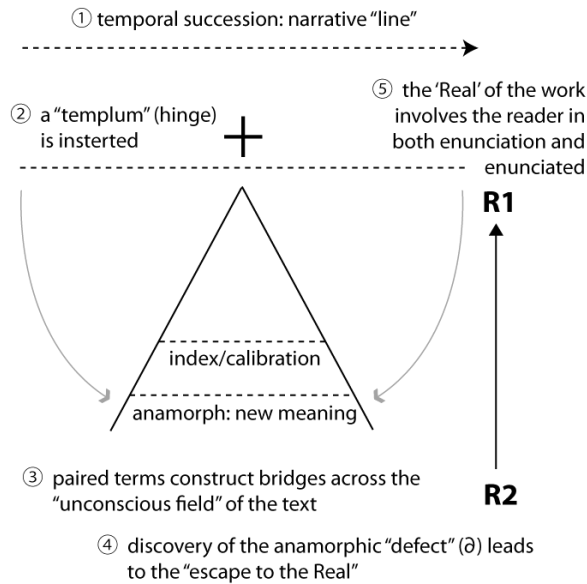


Fig. 3. Poe's chiasmus creates an "unconscious" in the form of a space lying between the two halves of the text; this anamorphic unconscious becomes the "field" for the connection of a the discovery of "defect" (R2) and the "escape" to the meta-level of the text, R1, where the reader participates as both reader and writer, subject of the enunciated and the enunciation.

The cipher-anamorph opens up new critical space, especially given its "in-between" status, relation to the "silent middle" that is characteristic both of the Lacanian master-signifier, which also presents us with a conundrum of invisibility and blindness, where "the failure itself of a first reading gives us the true meaning."^{xxiii} In lived experience, the "intimate of the world" is the immediate presence of the cipher-anamorph, the status of spaces and objects as partial objects. Strangely, this new conception contains echoes of other, quite similar conceptions. Consider, for example, James Joyce's description of "epiphany" in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which begins with an analysis of St. Thomas Aquinas's stages of apprehension of beauty: *Ad pulcritudinem tria requiruntur integritas, consonantia, claritas* ("Three things are needed for beauty, wholeness, harmony, and radiance").^{xxiv} Poe's chiasmus fills the bill in a rather unexpectedly material way. Its wholeness is established by a definitive beginning, middle, and end — the classical rhetorical components of any literary work. "Harmony" is the music created by the lyre-like design of chiasmus, where the two wings of the text have been opposed to suspend, between them, a vibrating (anamorphic) key to meaning (cipher). Radiance is the result of the transfer, to the reader, of the silent, "invisible" meanings of the work — not through the commonly assumed medium of symbols and allusions but, directly, through the material presence and life of the work. The epiphany (ἐπιφάνεια) is the realization that the mortal Jesus is Christ, chosen to be the adoration of the Magi in some cases, the twelfth night of Christmas, or the later baptism performed by St. John. All of these traditions contain hidden references to *integritas*, *consonantia*, and *claritas*, but, as Joyce explains in the earlier work, *Stephen Hero*, not in terms of symbolic expression, which is subject to cultural convention, but to the *mechanism* of esthetic apprehension.^{xxv}

Can we be more precise about the “folded and re-folded” space of epiphany? We need to move from an exclusively esthetic definition to questions of structure and event. Like Joyce’s example, a clock striking 9:30, it is the space of the everyday. Joyce’s and Poe’s model are congenial both to the idea of epiphany but also Lacanian “double inscription,” where the “extimated” unconscious appears in the form of a partial object, on the half-hour presumably, an object whose achievement of unity, harmony, and radiance just as easily results in obscene horror as in beauty. The frame provides a diagrammatic link between the artistic employments of epiphany and the “political-obscene” conditions of alienation and separation that are more characteristic of the “Real of the virtual.” If we wish to explore both, frames must be the principal components of our extimity translation machine.

V

The phenomenon of double framing has no truly adequate special term — *encadrement* is a French word that will make do, although in France this means no more than what happens in an ordinary framing shop. *Encadrement* is the painterly version of the literary fantastic’s arsenal of tricks: the double, travel through time, the contamination of reality by the dream, the *story in the story*. The last item expands to pictures in pictures, tunes in tunes, and dream that have dreams inside them — i.e. the phenomenon of self-reference. The four themes are fundamentally different versions of the same thing: the creation of two out of one, the ability of the two to violate “normal” space and time, the ability to poke through the insulation separating space and time. The story in the story requires two frames. The first frame gets you into the work of art, but there’s an encounter with a second frame that makes you realize you have not gotten *all the way in*. We can say that either another kind of art-work pokes out or that we poke in. In either case there is a space created between the two frames that is existentially problematic.

Techniques of double framing have been a standard ploy in the arsenal of artists’ tricks since antiquity. The best artists and writers have, therefore, typically sought to create works that will stand up to the competition of the ages. Such works, in literature, include Apuleius’s *The Golden Ass*, Plautus’s *Endymion*, Seneca’s *Atreus and Thyestes*, umpteen poems, Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy*, Huxley’s *Point Counter Point*, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.^{xxvi} Painting, because of the easy reach of self-portraiture, allows for diverse ways of including casual references to mirrors, folds, and recursive spaces. In the phenomenon labeled iconicity by Max Nänny *et al.*, paintings in paintings may introduce allegorical material that seems at first superfluous to the main subject of the work; but in many cases the artists connects material in the foreground, between the frames, to the moral of the scene framed in the back.^{xxvii} Frame 1, the boundary which the viewer crosses to enter into what may be called, borrowing from film terminology, the “diagetic reality” of the work (the straight-up representation of subjects in space), thus bears a relationship to Frame 2, the “suture” or inclusion of an “extraterritorial,” problematic representation. The diagetic reality may be said to have a “hole in the front” (by which we, the audience, are invited to enter) and a “hole in the back,” which traditionally makes some reference to eternal or cosmic meanings. In these terms, even Pablo

Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907) joins into the "hole in front / hole in back" game with its masked figure in the rear, opening up the curtain of the sky. Like the angel of the Apocalypse in Giotto's Arena Chapel mural, the intention is to suggest that all reality is itself a representation and can, like this literal one, be rolled up and put on the shelf.

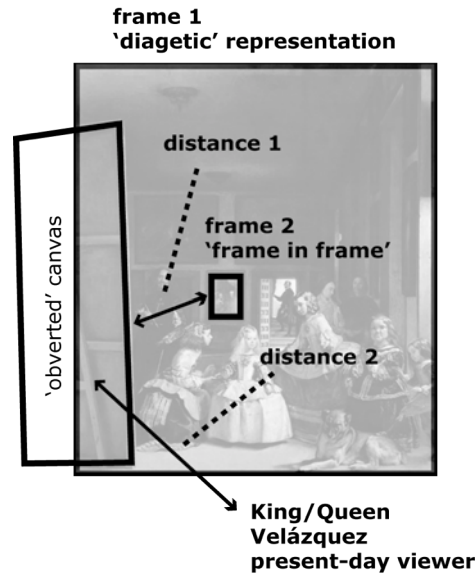


Fig. 4. Distance 1 and distance 2 are "collapsed" in the conundrum created by Velázquez's *Las Meninas* (1656).

The outer frame that introduces the audience to the main scene of Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* includes a canvas whose back is turned towards that audience. More complicated, the painter of the painting is shown working on that "obverted" canvas. This is a complex pivot within the diagetic space of the painting. It creates a "templum" or crossing-point. From the audience's point of view (POV) to the obverted canvas, there is a distance ("distance 1") that is collapsed if we suppose that Velázquez is in the process of painting whoever is standing where the current viewer is presently standing. The frame around *Las Meninas* is equated with the frame around the obverted canvas.

At the same time, the image on the obverted canvas is reflected in the mirror at the back of the room. we can see, in the abnormally luminous reflection that it is Filipe IV and his wife, Mariana. We can imagine an easy explanation: that the King and Queen are having their portrait painted; that the courtiers, the *apostador*, the maids of honor (*las meninas*), and the royal daughter, the Infanta, are in the room to keep them company. The mirror image is, however, quite large. The original image that is its source must be much larger than life, but the size of the obverted canvas allows for this explanation. The "uncanny" effect of the mirror is, however, that it seems to reflect the live King and Queen directly, without the mediation of the obverted canvas. Its image appears as it might if the King and Queen were standing as close to the mirror as they now are standing in front of the picture plane that is the location of the actual canvas of *Las Meninas*. In effect, both distance 1 and distance 2

"collapse," thanks to the presence of the obverted canvas and its triangulation of lines of sight, distance 1, distance 2, and our direct view of the mirror.

Lest the status of renown this painting has justifiably earned imply that its double-framing technique makes it unique, allow me to compare it to an example where double framing is not so obvious, but where the relationship to architecture is circumstantially more intriguing: Pieter Breughel, the Elder, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* (1558). It was this painting that Auden cited in his poem, "Musée des Beaux-Arts":

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters; how well, they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
...
In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.^{xxviii}

The indifference of the plowman and ship's crew is a key clue. Theirs is the "diagnosis" of the painting; the disappearing legs of Icarus are both out of space — barely noticed — and out of time. The plowman is not mythological; the fisherman is quite ordinary; the town and other ships are engaged in commerce not the creation of eternal myths. However tiny, there is an "obverse" operator in this painting that subtly divides the distance we use to consume the diagetic "visual argument" from the distance that maps out the allegory. This is a partridge (L. *perdix*) sitting on the branch of the tree near the fisherman.



Fig. 5. Pieter Breughel, the Elder, *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus* c. 1558; Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels.

Perdix was the nephew Dædalus's sister sent to apprentice with him. This precocious lad aroused his uncle's jealousy when he effortlessly invented two useful tools. He observed a fish-spine and fashioned a saw after its design. He fastened two pieces of iron together with a rivet and invented the compass. Dædalus plotted to kill Perdix by throwing him from the temple of Minerva, but Athena, another virgin, took pity and changed him into a bird, the partridge, known for never flying far away from the ground, perhaps to soften the trauma of this attempted assassination. The partridge's relation to architecture (Dædalus was the first architect, but Perdix discovered architecture's means of cutting a section and drawing geometrical figures — i.e. he made possible the "view from above") is compounded by its sexual reputation — Medieval bestiaries all agreed that the female partridge was so fertile that could be impregnated by the wind. This led to the inclusion of a partridge in a famous painterly rebus, which further attracts our attention because it is a rebus placed on an artificially painted sill framing the diagetic space showing St. Jerome in his study.

The main painting is itself structured by a series of tiles that, using shadows and architecture, present a thesis about the relative spiritual purity of the desert (on the right) as compared to the city (on the left).

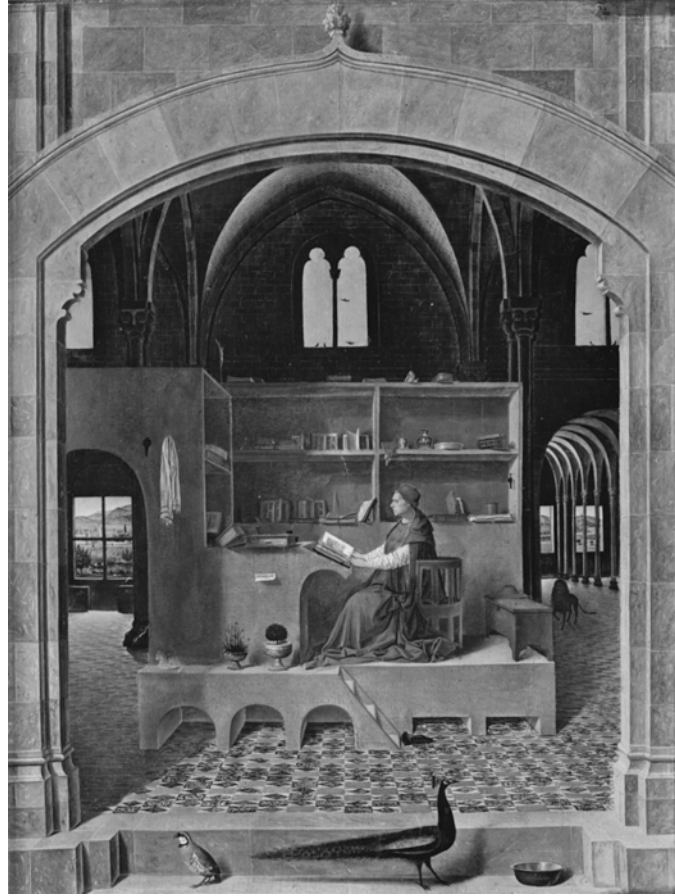


Fig. 6. Antonello da Messina, *St. Jerome in His Study*, 1474-1475; National Gallery, London.

The solution to the rebus-like figures shown on the sill of the painted portal-frame is related to Jerome's theological interest in Mary's perpetual virginity, which he argued on the basis that God impregnated the Virgin by means of divine word (*afflatus*) — an argument that seems to be esoterically Medieval until one considers Jerome's chief contribution to Christianity, the translation of the polyglot books of the Bible into the single Latin vulgate. In nearly every painting of the Annunciation, Mary is shown reading a Bible placed on a lectern. The wind is personified by the Angel Gabriel, whose announcement is already a *fait accompli*. The matter, however, speaks directly to the problem of translation. For the Bible to truly be the word of God, translation had to be raised to the status of impregnation.^{xxix} Meaning had to grow within Jerome just as Jesus had developed within the womb of Mary. Again, as with *Las Meninas* and *Landscape with the Fall of Icarus*, we have an obverse object inside the diagetic space, the lectern book — surely the Bible — which faces towards its creator and collapses the distances between the viewers of the painting and the "allegorical" content that involves them in a comprehensive, regressive structure.

This advanced theology helps expand our notion of between the two frames, the F1 that introduces the diagetic illusion, the F2 that constitutes a defect in this illusion but then serves as a partial object,

both gaze and acousmatic “reverb unit.” This last carries us past the issue of symbolic castration that is mediated by the last partial object on Freud’s “developmental” list. Symbolic castration means “castration by symbols,” i.e. the subject’s *misidentification*, put in terms of a slight geographical or social displacement ($-\partial$), establishes a field on to which functions of the gaze and the acousmatic voice play central roles. This is the space between the two frames ($F1 \rightleftharpoons F2$), which can be thematized as the Lacanian category, “between the two deaths,” Ad (sensitized therefore to DA), and charged by the anxiety component of fantasy ($\$ \diamond a$), where the “defective” half-speech, *mi-dire*, $R1$, can provoke a separation such as Curtius’s valiant dive into the virtual-Real, $R1$, of Hades (Gr. *the invisible*).

This is not an esoteric condition unique to psychoanalysis, although psychoanalysis in the Freudian-Lacanian field is perhaps the only means of clarifying its structure and functions for a more generalized critical theory. The interval between $F1$ and $F2$ is the condition of the “real of the virtual,” the condition by which “reality” is already-always virtual-ized through the mechanisms of interpellation of the Other. This is the reality of all subjects who, walking within architecture and urban spaces conceptualized by the scale-less fantasies of parametrics and more primitive drawing techniques, do not know how to interpret the mandate to Enjoy! Their desire has been “Other-fied,” they are left with anxiety about where they are to stand, move, sit, turn. Their dislocation ($-\partial$) cannot be resolved by a podium-mounted location map that says “You are here!” (usually smudged blank by pointing fingers). Between $F1$ we are in a condition alternating between the anxiety of misrecognition and the separation motifs the estrange us from even familiar environments. This can happen when a long-standing tree or building suddenly disappears or when an object or place that had been previously assimilated into the everyday takes on magnified importance. Freud has baffled many “place theorists,” including the redoubtable Joseph Rykwert, with the following comparison:

If you walk through London you will find before one of the greatest railway stations of the city a richly decorated Gothic pillar — “Charing Cross.” One of the old Plantagenet kings, in the thirteenth century, caused the body of his beloved queen Eleanor to be borne to Westminster, and had Gothic crosses erected at each of the stations where the coffin was set down. Charing Cross is the last of these monuments, which preserve the memory of this sad journey.... [This monument is a memory symbol] like the hysterical symptoms; so far the comparison seems justified. But what would you say to a Londoner who today stood sadly before the monument to the funeral of Queen Eleanor, instead of going about his business with the haste engendered by modern industrial conditions, or rejoicing with the young queen of his own heart?^{xxx}

For urban goodness promoters, Freud seems to be advocating indifference and scolding sincere appreciation.^{xxxi} Something quite different is happening. Freud is demonstrating how the field of the everyday is disrupted, both in scale and boundary terms, by the realization of a partial object. The clinical response is comparable to that of a hysteric, and Lacan qualifies this as a kind of discourse,

$$\frac{\$}{a} \rightarrow \frac{S_1}{S_2}$$

Hysteria discourse is precisely what guides the movements and actions of Roger O. Thornhill in *North by Northwest* (1959). Pulled out of his quotidian environment where he is “a man in the crowd,” Thornhill is mistaken for someone else then plunged into anxiety fueled by the (reversed) gaze, ‘a’, (the police are “looking for him”). He must both run *from* the police and *towards* the triangulation that will restore his identity. In all cases, Thornhill is portrayed as smaller than the spaces he inhabits: the overly-towering UN building, the majestic faces of Mt. Rushmore, where “Teddy Roosevelt seems to be looking at [him],” and the modernist house where he must climb up the sub-structure. In the Lacanian formula for fantasy, the subject is both anxious and alienated but the center-stage effect creates a *jouissance*, or as Lacan sometimes wrote it, *joi-sens* (pleasure-knowledge). The Other in this case is the Master (Leo G. Carroll, playing the CIA section head), who presents the subject with a paradoxical mandate. He is to impersonate an agent, Kaplan, but Kaplan does not exist. He is a fiction invented to throw off the Russian KGB; they move his effects from city to city to create the illusion of a real but illusive spy, and the Russians cannot find him because he did not exist in the first place. Kaplan also fits the bill for the “lost object” whose suppression/loss in the beginning sets up the effective cause of the whole narrative. Like all object-causes of desire, the object cannot be found because it never existed in the first place.

Thornhill is hysterical in the sense that all subjects who experience $-\partial$ enter into the structure of the hysteric’s discourse. Interpellation isolates us from others around us “who seem to know where they are going” and traps us within the two frames that define the condition of separation, “between the two deaths.” Momentum has carried us past the first frame; we did not notice the difference, we did not hear the call, just as Thornhill does not hear the bell-hop’s call for Kaplan when he rises to summon the same bell-hop to deliver a message to his mother. As in *Las Meninas*, the portrait in the back of the room “rushes up to confront us with evidence of our own presence in the frame.” In *North by Northwest*, this action takes place at the UN waiting room when, after Lester Townsend has been killed by a knife thrown by the KGB agent, he falls into Thornhill’s arms and is photographed by the reporter already standing nearby. “Distance 1” and “distance 2,” which had separated the two frames and thus preserved the diageitic illusion, suddenly collapse in the hysterical moment when the *obverse object* that had been holding them apart, creating a space for silent observation, disappears. In *Las Meninas*, the frame disappears simply because we do not realize the geometric angles that make it the source of the image in the mirror. It is turned away from us (a ‘-x’ effect), and its middle-term role make it a $1/x$ element operating with metaphoric logic. Equate $-x$ and $1/x$ and you have $\sqrt{-1}$ or i , the imaginary number that allows us to do the impossible and find a place for the a-symbolic partial object Real in the symbolic field, S_2 . S_1 , the master signifier, which works through “obversion” (two forms of negation, $-x$ and $1/x$) is the radical Other whose field is the denominator in the fraction S_1/S_2 in the

hysteria *matheme*. S_1 's double negativity allows the collapse of space and time that popular culture develops through the traditional themes of the double, travel through time, the contamination of reality by the dream, and the story in a story. Since this latter element is the literary version of the painterly technique of *encadrement*, we can now get a fuller picture of the interval between the two frames as the operational topology within which "the intimate of the world" finds the field that is to serve as an unconscious automaton.

VI

When we hear the phrase "the optical unconscious" or "the political unconscious," it normally refers to, in these famous cases, to the optical and political *qualities* of our unconscious minds.^{xxxii} Lacan's transposition of the unconscious to the external world, where it gloms on to partial objects in particular, establishing a *temenos* of anxiety and separation, is not easily understood. Even when examples such as Curtius's dramatic sacrifice or Walter O. Thornhill's hysterical situation play out this Möbius-band condition in the easily-consumed *amuse-bouches* of popular culture, we can be hard put to explain these examples of *encadrement*, unable to show how two frames constitute the condition of *katabasis* (stories of descent into *Hades*), or explain the relation of "between the two deaths" to butterfly texts bridged by anamorphic ciphers. The S_1/S_2 formula of hysteria resembles nothing so much as the complicated computer invented by Alan Turing to break the Germans' Enigma code.

This last example reminds us that the issue of automata is normally linked to the computers whose algorithms construct virtual realities as alluring substitutes for "real experiences." Ever since Herbert Simon and Marvin Minsky, the aspiration for a truly effective artificial intelligence has fueled science fiction and scientific futurology alike. The rather ironic Lacanian position would be that there is already a perfect "thinking machine," that it's "out there in the world," and that it has been working perfectly, thanks to the humans who have always used it as their unconscious. So, the idea of the "unconscious of architecture" means, rather than that buildings are somehow intelligent beings with perceptions and thoughts, something that actually goes much further! It is the idea that architecture serves the human mind in specific ways that only architecture can provide; that its externality and resistance to understanding is key to its function as a "thought machine"; and that in every sense architecture has been an *automata* since its earliest inception.

The critical premise of this view has to do with the relation of the unconscious to language. Lacan is insistent on this point: "The unconscious is structured like a language."^{xxxiii} This restores the ancient distinction of thought from mere calculation: it is a communicative, dialectical, social event, even when it occurs in private soliloquy. Thus, the difference between the subject of enunciation and the subject of enunciating opens up a gap that culture fills not with symbols, values, or other content but, rather, paradoxical mandates. These mandates construct a spatiality and temporality; require that there be phases of development; forms of discourse. They structure the circular relationships between the symbolic, imaginary, and Real such that the subject, unable to symbolize or face the Real, resorts

to fantasies that relate him/her to the “impossible-Real” object-causes of desire. Lacanian dictums like “desire is the desire of the Other” make sense within a system that axiomatically switches the *place* of thought, from interior to exterior, just as the extimate “sychs” into other cases of philosophical realization that have discovered this obversion: Plato (the Cave), Leibnitz (monads), Hegel (“spirit is a bone”), Kierkegaard (the “comedy” of Christianity).^{xxxiv} In all cases, some variation on the theme of enunciated/enunciating, Möbius-band topology, or the extimate is evident and instrumental.

Where virtual reality is associated with the “machine model” of artificial intelligence, questions center around the technical issue of “how good is it?” and “is it ethical to counterfeit reality in this way?” Authenticity is implicitly accepted as the aim of virtuality even though it is by definition unachievable. Comparisons of the simulated with “reality” — on-line courses with face-to-face classroom experiences, FaceBook with “normal” social interaction, Second Life as an attempt to add back limitations on virtual fantasies, etc. — these all make for good Sunday Supplement reading, but they ignore the fact that *the virtual is already a mode of reality, and that the virtual always has permeated ordinary life, even when there has been no technology of simulation*. This has been evident particularly in the arts, folk arts, literature, religion, and myth where the uncanny has dominated. As the Structuralists emphasized, traditional cultures don’t, for example, create elaborate distinctions affecting cooking and table manners because they make food “good to eat” — rather, they are done to make food “good to think.”

We move to a performative rather than object-based model of the virtual, and the consequence is that ethics — virtue — is implicitly involved. This point was proven rather dramatically by the controversial statement made by Karlheinz Stockhausen, that the destruction of the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2000, was perhaps the most perfect esthetic event ever witnessed. The outcry was predictable. The characterization of horror as beauty was unacceptable, but this response contradicted the *behavior of those* who returned to the replayed images over and over, who found themselves unable to say what they meant, who felt more and more anxious the more they witnessed the replayed catastrophe. In Lacan’s topsy-turvy world of the extimate unconscious, the Real resists symbolism. Repetition/return is the *only* function. And, anxiety is not a by-product but the *intended achievement* of the process. In terms of the “architectural performative,” *jouissance* does not and can not distinguish between positive and negative, obscene enjoyment. Desire, after all, is the desire of the Other, not the consenting subject. It is more accurate to say that the 9/11 replays “enjoyed the audience,” in the sense of Gern in the German expression, *Sie können mit mir Gern haben* (“You can do what you want with me”). *The image enjoyed the audience*, the audience did not enjoy the image. The Real’s resistance to symbolization prevented any caption, any explanation, and only negative reactions to the images and to Stockhausen’s remarks.

Anxiety, the *intended product* of this performance of perfect (esthetic) unconscious, demonstrates that the Real of the virtual resides within the radical displacement of the subject between the two frames, F1 and F2. *Encadrement* charges the atmosphere, and that charge is called anxiety: the inability to

find rest, a proper home location, a correct point of view. Location is defined as $-\partial$: whatever place is chosen, it is incorrect by a small increment. Within every image perceived, there is another image that interpellates/interpolates it. The subject between enunciation and enunciated does not know how to “enjoy” the framed event; does not know how to understand the caption that points to required meanings. Within every sign written or spoken is an Other whose desire undermines normative understanding. This is easily demonstrated by the recent innovation of “augmented reality” (AR). A smart phone camera is pointed towards a scene to reveal tags, sounds or graphics, that caption the view. The site that the subject personally occupies is not “authentic” until it has been “authenticated” by the tags. The subject of enunciation becomes the subject of the enunciated, a POV that has already-always been retroactively valued, leaving the real subject at a $-\partial$ distance away from the spot he/she is actually standing!

The antidote to being interpellated by the Other is, in this case, the cipher — the use of $-\partial$ to create a virtual image within reality that, like a *moiré*, sets up a pattern within the gap established through symmetrical echoes within a work of literature, art, or architecture. Like Stockhausen’s perfect esthetic, the anamorph resists symbolization. It hystericizes the subject, who can unconsciously substitute pleasure and pain, by putting it on stage, between the two frames. It does not create symbols; it creates ciphers.

VII

How does this cipher work? Lacan’s formula for fantasy identifies “landmarks” that work like geodesic control points: two versions of reality. The first kind of reality is the well-known concept of increased perspective. We take “the long view” to see the context of things more clearly. We “step back” to see “the bigger picture.” The topology of this kind of reality, R1, can be peeled, onion-like, to reveal a concealed interior or fashioned as a pre-Copernican cosmos, with the temporal, delusion-prone inhabitants of earth encircled by the system of eternal spheres whose configuration determine their fates, and all of these enclosed by the unchanging Empyrean fixed stars the face of an ultimate paradise beyond.



Fig. 7. Truth, or R1, depicted as a region beyond the Empyrean layer of fixed stars.

The other version of reality, R2, is encountered as an internal defect or inconsistency, a clue leading from a failed illusion to an enlightened revisional view. In Peter Weir's *The Truman Show* (1998), the dupe Truman does not know that he is the star of a television show that broadcasts every moment of his life. Truman's car radio inadvertently tunes in to the director's broadcast instructions to the cast and crew. This technical glitch can be considered as a form of anamorphy, since it points simultaneously toward two conflicting views of reality.

Anamorphy features prominently in Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Purloined Letter," where the object of interest is concealed by leaving it out in full view. The story is cleverer than this, however, because, as Richard Kopley showed, the anamorphic structure of *the entire text* is itself "left out in full view" but not consciously recognized by most readers. The butterfly design creates a gap that becomes the site of the "unconscious of reading." The site is constructed as a mechanism; it is an *automaton* in the popular culture sense — a kind of reading machine — but the Aristotelian definition of automaton amplifies this. It is one of the supplements to the system of four causes (formal, final, efficient, material). Taken along with the other supplement, *tuchē*, we have an interesting picture of how Poe's automaton works. *Tuchē* is the human counterpart to natural chance. It is the "opportunism" or "affordance" that operates as contingency within human life. We go to see a museum but the museum is closed; we then visit a book-shop around the corner to discover a book that provokes us to go to Japan. Life is filled with such "*tuchē* moments"; we could say that *tuchē* is the "stuff" of life. Automaton, Lacan argues, operates within *tuchē* by providing it with a means of distancing this opportunism from intentionality. Chance delivered "out of the blue" is authentic, the stuff of divination, "a sign from God." Magicians know this well, and use repetitive motions and operant conditioning to create the effects of unmotivated accidental appearances.

The coordinated effectiveness of automaton and *tuchē* was the subject of Poe's review of a popular automaton of his day, the chess-playing "Turk" invented in 1770 by Wolfgang von Kempelen and later exhibited by Johann Mälzel, inventor of the popular metronome. Poe's assessment borrowed freely from an earlier analysis made by David Brewster, who in turn relied on a pamphlet authored by Robert Willis. Poe finds the previous analyses by Brewster and Willis insufficient, despite their detailed analytical documentation. Why? W. K. Wimsatt, the famous literary critic, cannot imagine.^{xxxv} He sees Poe as an unoriginal blustering show-off. On two points he may be correct, but not the first. Poe wonders at how the public, who have had the "trick" of the Turk revealed to them so many times, continue to be amazed at Mälzel's performances. The key is that *willful ignorance* creates the *pure automaton* that von Kempelen could not achieve.

Magicians have commented frequently that their shows would not work for any audience that truly believed in magic. Skepticism is the required primary element of wonder, for it dissociates the viewer from the viewed. Interest would make the demonstration simply an extension of expectation, a voyeur's opportunism, *tuchē*. Such contingency would defeat any surprise. "Automaton" is, as Poe — being a good Lacanian 150 years before Lacan! — the suppression of the knowledge of a human

chess-player concealed within the cabinet of the Turk. That the player is the effective cause is too simple an explanation; it is the *suppression* that makes this the effective cause. While the human may occasionally lose a game, the audience's willful suppression *never fails* and, thus, is the true automaton.

Thanks to this voluntary act, the subject advances to a position "on stage" (\$), but here he/she is interpellated by Mälzel's sequential demonstration of the cabinet's emptiness. Literally speaking, the subject of enunciation (the human player) is concealed from the subject of the enunciated (the audience). The trick is that this inversion puts the audience "under the spell" of an automaton, while the concealed chess-player is the opportunist taking advantage of opportunity (*tuchē*). When an internal defect, R2, is encountered (i.e. when a game is lost), Poe is able to articulate R1, the "escape" to the higher-order reality of the trick. This is not the revelation of a concealed chess-player, which everyone already has accepted. It is the audience's realization of its own complicity in constructing the "reality of the virtual." True to Lacanian theory, the hysteric experiences pain as pleasure, and this realization is converted to the inexplicable pleasure that keeps audiences, who "know the trick," coming back for more, just as Stockhausen observed in the case of 9/11 replays. The R1 "escape to the Real" is anagogical. It is a return to the origins out of which consciousness has invented its own unconsciousness, an automaton that "does not sleep"; does not require our attention; does not yield to captioning or explanation; but continues to function day and night, on any kind of diet.

The condition of being between two frames, *encadrement*, becomes the Rosetta Stone of the virtual, the *Real* of the virtual. By means of tangency (*tuchē*) connecting internally symmetrical elements, a form of "propriocept," or "knowledge based on touch/contingency," the R2 of defect may be used as a key to the anagogy of R1, which we might call "stereognosis" because it relates the left-right of the body to a left-right style of discovery. The automaton can be diagrammed by showing the initial suppression of the key fact (the knowledge of the player in the case of the Turk; the negative horror of planes' impact on the Trade Towers in the case of Stockhausen; the bell-hop paging Thornhill in *North by Northwest*; the concealment of Truman's role in *The Truman Show*) is the effective cause that divides the subject into two parts. This is a "primary extimacy" by which the subject is both "on stage" between two frames (F1 \rightarrow F2) and permitted invisibility, as a fictional being whom other characters cannot see.^{xxxvi} This split permits the final product, the illusion, which is the result of the subject's experience of anxiety of the split (- ∂), the appendage of a fantasy of separation, *a field on to which* is mapped the circumstance of the subject on stage. The field has two principal dimensions, based on the (Aristotelian) material cause and formal cause — i.e. "what and how." As a field, this metaphorical product is the stuff of *tuchē/affordance*: a function of contingency. Motive and intentionality provide the fuel for movement and encounter, the temporal mapped on to the spatial. Such are the flickering images cast on to the wall of the Platonic cave.

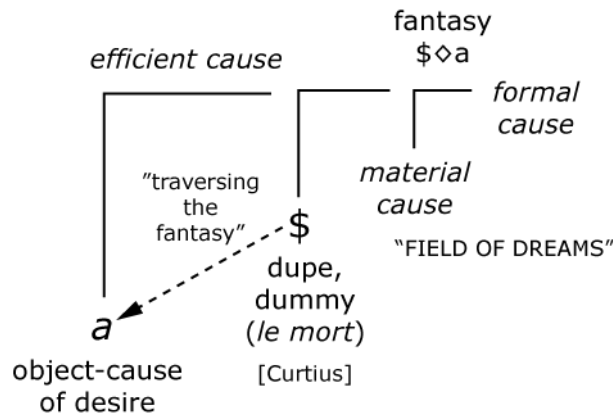


Fig. 8. The suppression of *a* is the “Real” giving rise to the “virtual” as fantasy. The right angles indicate an “orthogonal” relationship between the (metaphoric) results of the distinction and the (metonymical) surpluses whose suppression or invisibility enables the results.

The Real of the fantasy — its “tell,” so to speak — is found in retrospect, with the recovery/discovery of the role of the subject in suppressing the original object-cause of pleasure. This element can be known only retroactively.^{xxxvii} As Lacan would say, its temporality is that of the future anterior. Although we may only discover it at some future point, we will discover it, as Curtius discovered it, as “already-always” there.^{xxxviii}

ENDNOTES

i. The Latin word, “*vir*,” actually means a specifically heroic man. “Virtue” (excellence, worth, efficacy) was derived from it as soon as Latin became the romance languages and, only slightly later, English. Walter Skeat, *an Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (Oxford: Oxford University, Clarendon Press, 1968), 693. “Hero” comes with its own ethnographic baggage. From the Greek, it carries tones of the original, which simply signified “the dead man.” The relation to heroic action was behavioral: a hero was one *willing to die*. The hero could, tradition claimed, also visit the land of the dead, *Hades*, and return alive. This journey, the *katabasis*, was related to a trial or accomplishment undertaken for the collective good, such as the rescue of a maiden whose return will allow the return of summer. That *Hades*, literally “the invisible,” is the virtual interior space of the visible exterior earth adds to the mysterious circumstances connecting the virtual to virtue.

ii. Richard Ellmann reports that the name-conscious James Joyce thought Odysseus’s name was a composite of *outis* and Zeus — “Outiszeus” — hence, a “divine nobody.” This illuminates his use of the Greek letter E to represent Giambattista Vico as “Earwicker” throughout *Finnegans Wake*. The E, possibly related to the ϵ found on the omphalos stone at Delphi, may have an ultimately more profound relation to memory if Camillo’s reference to Hercules proves to be related. Richard Ellmann, *The Consciousness of Joyce* (Toronto and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 13. Cited originally in Donald Kunze, “Chiasmus, Artificial Memory, and the Arts of Arrangement,” *Nexus Network Journal: Architecture and Mathematics* 12, 3 (2010): 386. See also Lu Beery Weneker, “An Examination of *L’Idea del Teatro* of Giulio Camillo, Including an Annotated Translation, with Special Attention to His Influence on Emblem Literature and Iconography,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1970.

iii. Jacques-Alain Miller, “Extimacy,” *The Symptom*, 9 (Fall 2008), <http://www.lacan.com/symptom/?p=36>, last accessed January 20, 2011.

iv. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968).

v. So great is the resistance to the real nature of the Real that the tendency, even among (one should say “especially among”) academics is to prefer the inversion to the actual case. For example, Michel Foucault’s account of the gaze reverses the direction of the Lacanian gaze. The result, a geometrically consistent core-and-periphery model of centralized control, most clearly described in his *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan

Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1975). This created a particularly awkward interpretation of Bentham's ideal prison, the Panopticon, where the Lacanian gaze must be imagined by the prisoner as "the Big Other," in the field of the "blind spot" in the visual field, precisely as Lacan would have had it. Instead, Foucault emphasizes the lightness and efficiency of the system that allows guards to be absent for long periods of the day. A similar reversal of the gaze's direction was accomplished by Christian Metz and other film critics who dominated the field for nearly thirty years. According to Todd McGowan, in "Looking for the Gaze: Lacanian Film Theory and Its Vicissitudes," *Cinema Journal* 42, 3 (Spring 2003): 27-47, Metz's use of the gaze as the medium of the audience's role of power made critics of this review into the "real Lacanians" who, in objecting to "Lacanian film theory," actually re-installed a corrected version.

vi. This has been made clear by thinkers from Plato onward. In more recent times, scientists from Von Uexküll to Heisenberg have struggled to emphasize space's subjective nature — that there is a "fly space for flies," etc. — to the radical example of Schrödinger's cat, which is dead or alive based on our observation and *measurement* of it. The positions of quantum physics correspond to Lacanian psychology: in the Real, the cat is *simultaneously* dead and alive, but our perception requires a fantasy about this "impossibility" so that for our (virtual) reality, the cat is *either* dead or alive. The relation of the live cat to the dead cat is contained in a *cipher* constructed by the unconscious. Psychoanalysis does not attempt to prove that the cat is alive, dead, or neither but, rather, to discover the cipher. This strategy is not unique to psychoanalysis but can be demonstrated in methodologies of folklore, art, and esoteric philosophy from ancient times to present.

vii. Slavoj Žižek, "The Lacanian Real: Television," *The Symptom*, 9 (Fall 2008), <http://www.lacan.com/symptom/?p=38>, last accessed January 22, 2011.

viii. On the relation of enunciation/enunciated to the extimate, see Jacques-Alain Miller, "Extimité," *Lacanian Theory of Discourse: Subject, Structure, Society*, ed. Mark Bracher, Marshall W. Alcorn, Jr., Ronald J. Corhell, and Françoise Massadler-Kenney (New York and London: New York University, 1994), 74-87. Miller focuses on the inscription of the Other into the heart of the subject, but the subject can be viewed collectively: the home, the town, the oecumene. Since this "act" cannot be represented or paraphrased, it is in a sense a "defective" form of reality, what we call here R2, related to Lacan's *mi-dire*, "half speech." The Other can also be related, following Žižek, to the partial object in the guise of the "uncanny organ without a body" — think of the ballet slippers in Michael Powell's 1948 film, *The Red Shoes*. Enunciation/act can live without the enunciated (*énoncé*). The shout "Bomb!" does not need an actual bomb to be able to clear a room. This autonomy of the enunciated is the key to Vico's portrayal of the thunder as the first word and the reason that the enunciation is identified with the unconscious (in this case, the unconscious of the ultimate Other, Jove). The first humans, in Vico's theory, misrecognize themselves in the violent personification of the thundering sky. Thus, the extimate is the basis for Vico's "imaginative universal." The effect does not need a cause but is the basis of an "extimate" condition of the subject, R1.

ix. Ernst Jentsch, "Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen," *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift*, 8, 22 (August 26, 1906): 195-98 and 8, 23 (September 1, 1906): 203-05.

x. Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

xi. Mladen Dolar, "'I Shall Be with You on Your Wedding-Night': Lacan and the Uncanny," *October* 58, *Rendering the Real* (Autumn, 1991): 5-23.

xii. For an accurate picture of the "swerve to the left," see Slavoj Žižek, *ibid.* "In 'post-structuralism,' the subject is usually reduced to subjection. He is conceived as an effect of a fundamentally non-subjective process: the subject is always caught in, traversed by, the pre-subjective process (of 'writing', of 'desire', etc.), and the accent is put on the different modes of how individuals 'experience', 'live', their positions as 'subjects', 'actors', 'agents' of the historical process. For example, it is only at a certain point in European history that the author of works of art, a painter or a writer, began to see himself as a creative individual who, in his work, is giving expression to his interior subjective richness. The great master of such analysis was, of course, Foucault: one might say that the main point of his late work was to articulate the different modes of how individuals assume their subject-positions."

xiii. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis, MI: University of Minnesota, 1987), originally published in 1980 as Vol. 2 of *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie* by Les Editions de Minuit, Paris.

xiv. See Patrik Schumacher, *The Autopoiesis of Architecture* (London: John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2010). Vol. 1: *A New Framework for Architecture: The Autopoiesis of Architecture* and Vol.2: *A New Agenda for Architecture*. The hallmarks of parametricism are evident in Schumacher's books. One volume contains over 200 chapters; the ambition is to claim *all architecture* as an example of parametric logic, not just buildings created with parametric software. Even more ambitious is the proclamation of social, economic, and political ideals within the same framework. For a correction of this use of autopoiesis, see Louis Kauffman's work on the recursive conditions in George Spencer-Brown's *Laws of Form*.

xv. The condition of a "swerve to the right" shows why attempts to counter the reductionism of parametric modeling cannot be based on "Jungian" phenomenological defenses of the humanities as the bulwark of the

integrity of the subject in culture. Ultimately, the adversaries rely on the same "logic of the primordial" that racify the subject with a "naturalism." A recent example is David Brooks' analysis, *Social Animal*, to be released in March 2011. A preview was published in "Social Animal: How the New Sciences of Human Nature Can Help Make Sense of a Life," *The New Yorker* (January 17, 2011): 26-32. The "natural attitude" is one that claims that, behind the geographic and historical particularities of separate cultures, there lies beneath a common template, perhaps the result of biological evolution, in relation to which our perceived lives are symptoms and appearances. The Lacanian position is precisely opposite. The realm of appearances is the Real, the domain made possible by language as the ultimate basis of the Other, a realm into the entrance of which the subject becomes actual, not virtual.

xvi. This argument is not designed to blame modern sophisticated software for all of theory's problems. The mandate of the Big Other, to Enjoy! a landscape or building in a particular way, was there from the start, as soon, one could say, as human language was initiated as a means for organizing the unconscious. This is the "Vichian moment," when the thunder frightened the first humans to image that the sky was the surface of a god, who meant to say something to them by means of the thunder. The inadequacy of this first word, portrayed in James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* in a number of passages, was the key to its function as a master signifier. In other words, language begins with a failure to understand. See Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas G. Bergin and Max H. Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1948).

xvii. This demand of the other is imagined by the subject but nonetheless entirely effective. It had been called "interpellation" by Louis Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)* published in English in *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001). I prefer to connect interpellation to its geographical counterpart, *interpolation*, the need to triangulate the subject's position based on coordinates of displacement arising from misrecognition. Alfred Hitchcock's 1959 film, *North by Northwest*, begins with a scene of misrecognition where a call for the (non-existent) CIA agent George Kaplan coincides with Roger O. Thornwald's rise to send a message to his mother. (No more "primal scene" could be concocted!) The KGB spies misrecognize him and the resulting flight from these "enchanters/enchangers" requires the triangulated interpolation of geographic locations: the UN, the Illinois cornfield, and the modernist villa atop Mt. Rushmore. All these are "high places" in the sense that they provide map-like images of the landscape traversed by voice or gaze (UN: the announcement to call Lester Townsend; the cornfield: the strafing of Thornhill; the villa: the discovery of Townsend through his reflection in the TV screen). Ciphers, such as RØT, involve double negation, such as the bids at the antique auction, mock assassination at the Park Service cafeteria, and the matched phrases about truth marking the beginning and ending scenes (Thornhill: "Lying ... [is] just an expedient exaggeration"; Vandamm: "Nothing but a series of false innuendoes"). The indices establish the field upon which interpolation creates the *moiré* felt as anxiety within the web of false identities set up by the CIA and Vandamm.

xviii. Žižek, *The Symptom* 9. The reader who has reached note 23 below will want to return to this joke. The 1/x logic comes with the cancellation of the 'x' condition, the endurance of the Soviet system. "If -x then 1/x," is the logical claim of the would-be *émigré*. The failure of the first reading gives us the true meaning. The lack of an *énoncé* (utterance, referent, cause, Other) produces nonetheless the *act*, the *objet petit a*.

xix. On this subject, see Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

xx. See for example Todd McGowan, *The Real Gaze: Film Theory after Lacan* (Albany, NY: SUNY, 2007).

xxi Richard Kopley, "Formal Considerations of the Dupin Mysteries," *Edgar Allan Poe and the Dupin Mysteries* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 7-26. Kopley does not use the word "chiasmus" and so does not relate Poe's technique to this ancient classical and Biblical device. Where counterpoint and symmetry are concerned, literature and art could have supplied many useful comparisons. Chiasmus can be considered to be the "Mirror Stage" of poetry, where the work can literally reflect on itself and introduce new meanings silently and invisibly through links that are perceived by the reader but present only in the negative in the actual work.

xxii. I am proud of this example, for Kopley has missed it. Yet, in my view, it is the subtlest and best example.

xxiii. The Lacanian master signifier (S₁) uses the logic of the rhetorical figure, the enthymeme. The enthymeme employs a "silent middle term" to connect the speaker ("master" in this case) to the audience. In true Lacanian fashion, the enthymeme splits the subject in accordance with the distinction between the enunciation and the enunciated. The logic is pure Lacanian: the *mi-dire*, or half-speech, whose meaning is anchored in negative fragmentation, a matter of 1/x logic, and reunion, a "separation" motif: x/-x. This combination is nowhere better captured than in the Beatles song line, "Blackbird singing in the dead of night."

xxiv. James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1922), 248.

xxv. Although *Portrait* contains no use of the word 'epiphany', the anticipatory earlier work, *Stephen Hero*, contains two, and links epiphany with Aquinas's three components. James Joyce, *Stephen Hero* (New York: New Directions, 1963), 211, 213. Joyce, knowing no Greek possibly got his instruction on the use of the word from Friar Darlington, who taught him Latin. Theodore Spencer, "Introduction," *Stephen Hero*, n16. The glow attendant to an appearance of a god in paintings possibly contributed to his particularly optical descriptions. But, the example of the Ballast Office clock, which struck half past nine at the time of Joyce's talk of epiphany, demonstrates a certain synesthesia, since unlike the strikes of the hour, which count the time, half-hours are marked by a single tone.

xxvi. The obvious example to mention is the story of Zeuxis and Parrhasius, too good, but but also too complex, to include here.

xxvii. Max Nänny and Olga Fischer, eds. *Form Miming Meaning: Iconicity in Language and Literature* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1999).

xxviii. W. H. Auden, "Musée des Beaux-Arts," *Selected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson (New York: Vintage International, 2007), 187.

xxix. That translation, not phenemics, structure, or semantics, is the central problem of language, see George Stienner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (New York: Oxford, 1998).

xxx. Sigmund Freud, "About Psychology," Five Lectures given at the 20th Anniversary Celebration of the founding of Clark University in Worcester, Mass., September 1909.

xxxi. Eugene Victor Walter, *Placeways: A Theory of the Human Environment* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 108-109. Also Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Anthropology of Urban Form in Rome, Italy, and the Ancient World* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1988), 188.

xxxii. Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (London: Routledge, 1983). Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1993). See also W. J. T. Mitchell, *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2005).

xxxiii. Jacques Lacan, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason since Freud" *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. by Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006)

xxxiv. The most famous case is Hegel's controversial contention that "spirit is a bone": "This whole embraces the definite parts fixed originally and from the first, and also the lineaments which arise only as the result of action; this whole so formed is, and this being is an expression of what is inner, of the individual constituted as a consciousness and as a process. — This inner is, too, no longer formal, spontaneous activity without any content or determinateness of its own, an activity with its content and specific nature, as in the former case, lying in external circumstances; it is an original inherently determinate Character, whose form alone is the activity. What, then, we have to consider here is the relation subsisting between the two sides; the point to observe is how this relation is determined, and what is to be understood by the inner finding expression in the outer." G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology* trans. A.V. Miller (New York: Oxford, 1977) §311.

xxxv. Poe's essay on the Turk has been extensively dissected by W. K. Wimsatt, Jr., "Poe and the Chess Automaton," *American Literature* 11, 2 (May 1939): 138-151. Wimsatt claims that Poe's work was entirely unoriginal, but Wimsatt not only mistakes Poe's bravura showmanship for serious forensic study but he also missed the key evidence that Poe gave in his enumerated points, that the Turk could not be a chess machine because such a machine, embodying the *principles* of chess, would not be able to lose any game. This is something of a hyperbole but correct in the sense that any principle of chess would account for all occasions and accidents; if it cannot then a chess-machine cannot exist. "Big Blue," the IBM chess-playing computer is not, by this measure, a chess-machine but simply a computer that can simulate occasions and situations drawn from empirical encounters with chess, never actually an internalization of any principle. Poe knows the principle of literature, however, and employs it with success in the Dupin mysteries. *Poe knows his automata!* Poe's source, Sir David Brewster, *Letters on Natural Magic, Addressed to Sir Walter Scott, Bart.* (New York, 1832). Brewster himself cribbed the analysis of Robert Willis, published in London in 1821.

xxxvi. In this sense, the spectator-subject is analogous the concealed dwarf in the Turk.

xxxvii. The knowledge of retroaction is not a new idea, but one articulated with great precision by Pavel Florensky in his book, *Iconostasis*, trans. Donald Sheehan and Olga Andrejev (Crestwood, NJ: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996). Florensky describes the dream situation where the sleeper dreams a narrative that ends with the external event that provoked the dream, such as a ringing bell or falling object.

xxxviii. This is Vico's constructed position of the "new science" by which a reader may internalize the history of human cultural development, described eloquently in *The New Science*, §345. It is also the conclusion of the short story about contingency by Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of the Forking Paths," in *Collected Fictions, Jorge Luis Borges*, trans. Andrew Hurley (New York and London: Penguin Books, 1999), 119-128. This, too, is the in-a-nutshell description of Freud's archaeology of the unconscious, finding R2 defects in contingent enunciations that allow discovery of the R1 object-cause of pleasure (-/pain) wielded by the automaton of the unconscious, what Lacan called, accurately, "traversing the fantasy."