# the gap between the frames

Distortion of Freud's theory of the subject has had consequences of preserving the hold of positivism over the social sciences' models of behavior, thought, and subjectivity. Ever resistant to the "metaphysics" of Hegel, even "humanist" paradigms such as phenomenology extol the subjective ego as an autonomous bearer of subjective responsibility, able to improve, make rational decisions, bear responsibility, etc. By packing the ego with moral content, the actual developmental dynamics of the psyche — and, worse, its intensive use of space and time in that development — have been misrepresented. Lacan sought to correct the ego-strengthening tendencies in Freud, and the distortions of Freudian theory by returning to the centrality of the "death drive," whose meaning had been romanticized into a drive towards death, rather than the resistance against death and the basis for the uncanny that Freud had envisioned. Lacan began with the idea of the mirror stage as a "spatial equation" mediating the relations of his three main components of the subject: the imaginary, the symbolic, and the Real. This model was temporal as well as spatial, retroactively distilling a "subject in pieces" unable to compete with the more impressive specular subject image. The mirror stage is about being offered a place in the network of symbolic relations that is never a good fit. The mirror stage for once and for all banishes romanticized ideas of place and re-places them with a world in which partial objects roam the earth, capable of revolution, paradox, anomaly, and dread — but also wonder, fascination, and epiphany. Any study of boundaries is obliged to take the partial object, not just the "classic" partial objects related to infant development (breast, feces, phallus) but the more "adult" ones — the gaze and the voice — seriously as operators capable of producing dysfunctions of identity, motility, and scale. With scale, Lacan's Möbius-band topology comes into play, as an *conjunctio oppositorum* of the large and the small (<>). These concepts allow correction of the two main kinds of error in the social sciences, a "left swerve" towards the historicity and re-racization of ethnic groups and places, or a "right swerve" to a single organic model of behavior and thought. An alternative is to consider "the clinic" as a model of the psyche that is ever resistant to culture studies, and to revisit culture studies in terms of its most radical thesis: the idea of radical historicism. Popular culture is therefore not an object of study but a "corrective" that steers critical theory in a path that has been established since Plato and has been maintained by arts and cultural practices of all cultures and periods.
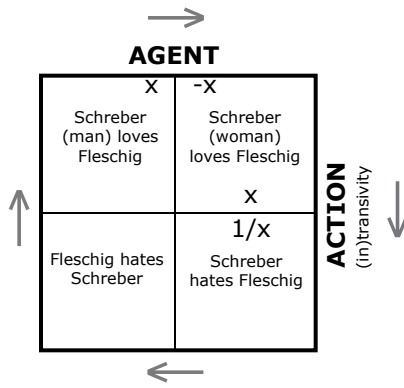

Marx Brothers, Mirror Scene, *Duck Soup* (1933)

narrative line ——— MIDPOINT

text ·········· countertext

text ·········· countertext

text ·········· countertext

αναμορπ

T**he Ø/ß Phenomenon.** The brain in perception "meets the world half-way," to the extent that the metaphor of a screen at which both objects and subjects meet is useful. The meeting is not neat. Both sides can overshoot or fall short of their assigned marks, and the screen is more of a stage with important nearby pockets of both production and resistance. The ∂ is a gap between object and shadow, which in all cultures has been accorded a minimum degree of autonomy. The detachable shadow is the basis for the animation of the (otherwise "dead") object and the corresponding "agalma" at the heart of the subject. Thus the natural order's strict distinction between death (D) and life (A) is modified to the zombie-vampire pair, Ad/Da. This blurring of a "natural" boundary comes from the folk traditions of the uncanny and modern popular culture. The Ø is formalized as a portal or permeability of the subject-object screen, where the rule of scale and identity is, as in the case of Alice's journey through the looking-glass, also transformed. Scale becomes (in)transitive (<>) and identity (=) is given two forms, one based on the privation (-x) of the reflected image, another based on the "prohibition" that accompanies a symbolic identity (1/x).

The fuzzy margin between subject and object can be seen as a delay as well as a pocket of space (*poché*) where relationships are "negotiated" to come up with a temporary truce. The visual arts technique of chiaroscuro this has two forms, a "frontal" chiaroscuro that is a slight pull-back of the point of view, such as Jefferies' studio apartment in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954), and an oblique or rotational form that views temporal processes from the side or above, time put into a left-to-right spatial sequence. Chiarascuro allows us to study the architecture of the subject-object screen in terms of Hegelian dialectiç, the Lacanian idea of "extimacy" (intimate externality, external intimacy), and the Žižekian idea of anamorphosis ("looking awry"). We can return to the options of a "popular culture corrective" armed with visual and narrative correlates to the -x and 1/x aspects of the Lacanian Real, which Lacan modeled as -x=1/x, or √-1.
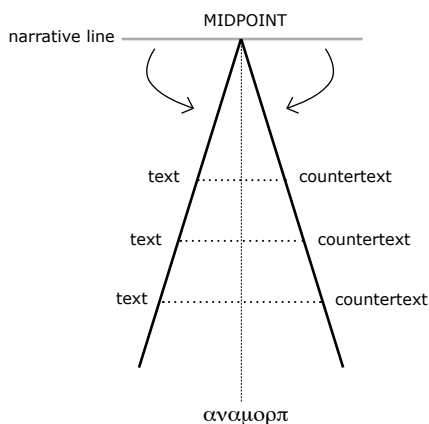
Poe's Chiasmus. Richard Kopley's analysis of Poe's novel and short stories has allowed a clearer view of Poe as a proto-Surrealist, based not on the sensationalism of his themes of survival after death but on precise techniques of ciphers built into the text that allow a Ø/ß function to flourish. Poe's detective tale, "The Purloined Letter," constructs a fulcrum around the exchange of reward money for Dupin's return of the missing letter. Text to the either side of this central '=' permits an anamorphic migration of meaning effects that combine the interests of privation and prohibition. The result is an uncanny independent of the "thriller themes" Poe frequently employs; rather this uncanny is, like the *procédé* writing technique of another proto-Surrealist, Raymond Roussel, a means of transferring the job of writing the text to the reader, where "writing" creates a resistance rather than communication of the symbolic: a temporalized performative element that continually creates new meaning effects through the √-1 combinations of privative and prohibitive aspects of anamorphosis. Poe's interest in ciphers and thinking machines such as the popular chess-player, The Turk, connects him to Alan Turing and Turing's hypothesis of machine intelligence, based on the privative function of the curtain. Like Pythagoras's use of the curtain in instruction, and Parhassius's use of the curtain in his contest with the painter Zeuxis, it is the Ø's subtraction of meaning (~~metaphor~~) that effectively establishes the performative within films, poems, architecture, and other arts.

AGENT

x	-x
Schreber (man) loves Fleschig	Schreber (woman) loves Fleschig
	x
	1/x
Fleschig hates Schreber	Schreber hates Fleschig

ACTION (in)transivity

The "Schreber Square"

Aeneas at the Gates of Cumæ

Rabelais (1494-1553)

Don Kunze
Professor of Architecture and Integrative Arts

Metalepsis and Analepsis. Metaphor is not so much the "false truth" of poetry as the "dummy" (*le mort*, "dead man") constructed to hold open a place while metony-mies are exchanged and managed. Metalepsis (concealing a missing metonymy, 1/x) and analepsis (loss and recovery of a "surplus" metonymy, -x) create conditions for a double reading of any temporal sequence where one can go "forward into the past" to discover and possibly correct a defective origin. Metonymy is managed with a system derived from Freud's original study of (and Lacan's commentary on) the famous case of Judge Paul Schreber. Freud had concluded that Schreber's paranoiac symptom, his belief that his analyst Dr. Fleschig was persecuting him, was a transformation of Schreber's fantasy that he was really a woman. He loved Fleschig but could not ac-knowledge that he did this as a woman. He converted the action of love into hate and switched the agent of that hate from himself to Fleschig. This, Lacan noted, was not the usual young child's switch of agency, known as "transitivity," common in jealousy, but a structural transformation. We can find the logic of the mirror stage in Schreber's symptom by constructing a square where (in)transitivity performs its double negation of agent and act.

The Schreber Square in Popular Culture. Because it employs the "logic of the Real," combining elements of privation and prohibition, the Schreber Square provides a universal basis for, among other things, Lacan's schema of four discourses, based on rotating four elements (master signification, knowledge, desire, the split subject) against a fixed field (agent, other, production, truth). Again, the '=' acts as the bar separating signifier and signified in the Saussurian formula of the sign, s/S (Lacan revised this to place the signifier 'S' above the signified, 's'). The Schreber Square becomes the basis for the kind of anagrams and ciphers Poe used … but we can, em-ploying the broader concept of chiarascuro, return to more ancient sources, such as Virgil's *Æneid*, where, as Æneas is about to descend into Hades to consult his father, Anchises, he pauses before a set of bronze panels that tell the story of Dædalus and the construction of the Minoan labyrinth — itself a fractal (<>) design. Before Æneas can successfully decode the left-right panels he his whisked away by the Sibyl. We understand that the cipher functions as what Lacan called a *mi-dire*, a half-word, both in and outside of language but nonetheless essential in the act of passage. The pass-word is to language what the dummy is to ventriloquism, a concentration of meaning effects into the performative.

Cosmicomics. The particular form taken by the performative is evident in folk prac-tices and popularizations of the uncanny in literature and art as well as in ambitious projects aimed at "Theories of Everything." Thus, Stephen Wolfram's automata come close to Lacan's notion of a ciphered unconscious, operating without any conscious oversight, day and night. No less do we find examples of a fractal logic in the lore of labyrinths, narrative designs, and so-called "theaters of the world," such as the *mons delectus* described in the "Table of Cebes," a polygot text of 1453. Here, the bicameral structure of the Real is put in terms of the convertibility of the labyrinth and the temple, where the margin requires a "password" or answer to a riddle. The riddle is the image itself, an "always already" condition of passage, the true as performa-tive. For a comic example of this idea, see Rabelais' staging of the debate between Panurge and Thaumast, restricted to mute gestures. In the plan for a "Theater of Wisdom," the Croatian-Italian monk Giulio Camillo devised a chiasmus in the form of a theater auditorium (combining the idea of acousmatics and anamorphosis). The origin was located on the stage, the origin of human culture and mind, where the user of the memory theater stood to combine the ciphered meanings of objects set in the rows and aisles of the auditorium. Like Poe, Camillo did not intend to *represent* mean-ing; rather he sought to *stage* it, setting up *loci* in readiness for the user to activate through moments of doubt and impasse.
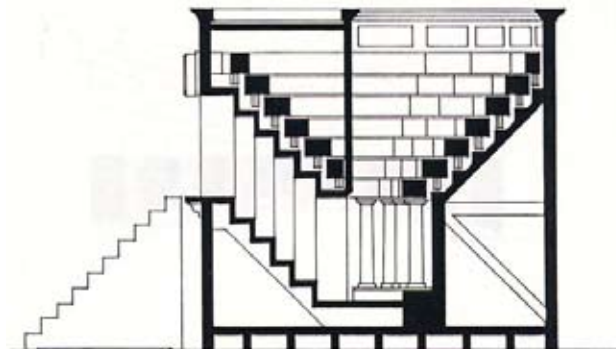
Section (speculative) through Giulio Camillo's "Theater of Wisdom" (1550)