

**ANXIETY IN GENERAL**

It is time to consider how Bloom’s idea of anxiety applies in a much broader sense to other conditions and situations. The first diagram shows a near-eclipse of one element by another, as shown in the idea of “being caught up in” some situation or dominated by some delusion or infatuation. It is the subject caught up in an “automation” by a rational action. The retreat to R1, a more inclusive idea of reality, a symbolic construct of what is ultimately real, appears to offer relief but, because this outer boundary is actually the interior boundary (tessera) constructed with the alienation of R2, the subject in flight “reappears” at the opposite/antipodal point, just as a vanishing point seems to “move along with” the shift of the point of view. Freud described this mirror action accurately: when traveling in a train compartment, he mistook his reflection in the mirror for a shabby old man, dressed in a night shirt, who had invaded his private space.

** scape frame** R1

- the object of fear re-appears from the opposite side of the frame
- the flight to a more stable reality, R1
- the minimal margin of eclipse reap-ears as an independent internal division at both new conditions

**escape frame** R2

- the “enigma” inaccessible “cosmic” enigma
- “local error” / R2

The frame defines a field, an externality, but in fact it is the original interior distinction turned inside-out (estimated), so that δ is really the “left-hand version” of α.

**Apophrades and Tesserae:** the source of anxiety is R2, a defect or “local error” that cannot be resolved, an anomaly, which is uncanny in its resistance to rational action. The retreat to R1, a more inclusive idea of reality, a symbolic construct of what is ultimately real, appears to offer relief but, because this outer boundary is actually the interior boundary (tessera) constructed with the alienation of R2, the subject in flight “reappears” at the opposite/antipodal point, just as a vanishing point seems to “move along with” the shift of the point of view. Freud described this mirror action accurately: when traveling in a private train compartment, he mistook his reflection in the mirror for a shabby old man, dressed in a night shirt, who had invaded his private space.

**Tesserae:** the inside-out, “Möbius-band” condition of the frame, which equates outside with inside and vice versa, is commonly represented in popular culture of the uncanny. In Edgar Allen Poe’s story, “Masque of the Red Death,” wealthy friends seal themselves off from the plague that has devastated the surrounding countryside; during a revel — where their self-satisfaction “goes to far” in its confidence — the plague appears in the personification of a masked reveler dressed as a macabre figure of death. The exterior, imperfectly and improperly exiled, re-appears at the precise center: this is Lacan’s extimacy in perfect literary form.

Anxiety is about an attempt to distance one’s self from one’s self-constructed-as-radical-other. In Bloom’s system, the young poet finds that the older poet has been “speaking his language all the time,” but in a way that only the younger poet can decipher and bring forward in a new way of writing poetry. This, in poetry terms, is the phenomenological view of perception, i.e. that perception is not the passive reception of stimulus but, rather, a construction of a world by blending the accidents of physical reality with the (mostly unconscious) actions of the subject. The subject is never absent from the seemingly separate, objective “objects” perceived to exist externally in the world, objects whose resistance to our knowledge and mastery already involves a hidden subjective presence. It takes an inside-out mentality to unravel this puzzle. Therefore, anxiety — the uncanny experience of absence in presence and presence in absence — is always a matter of what Jacques Lacan called “extimacy,” the “intimacy of the external,” which can face in two directions, either toward the “objective subject” or the “subjective object.”

Anxiety is fuel for human existence. It motivates us to create, to act, to respond, to build, to think. It is not a problem as much as it is the key to why anything human is human. It is fear turned into culture, a fear that cannot be resolved because it is intrinsic to human subjectivity and worldly objectivity. Anxiety, in short, was “put there” originally, in a place that inherently resists attempts to remove it.