

askesis as investigation

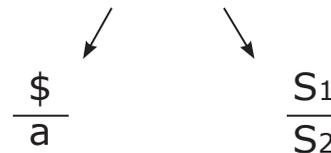
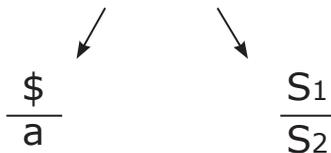
Askesis is about "sense of place" in ways that place is deployed within narrative and pictorial contexts. The Lacanian correlation is the figure of hysteria. The subject, who possesses knowledge without knowing it, has lost a valuable object but in fact self-concealed it (the plot-line of the reputed first mystery novel, Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*). Knowledge is cast in the form of a journey that distinguishes itself from utilitarian (projective, "zenithal") movement by "integrating the goal into the aim" (horizontal travel), converting geography into an intentional symbolic system (*kenosis*). Sense of place "opens up" a space, which is to say it "dimensionalizes" (or re-dimensionalizes) a given space to realize an optional path identified with this *kenosis* and the recovery of the lost object, a remainder/surplus. Objects within the field defined by hysteria convert to "partial objects," hybrids that are either subjectively objective or objectively subjective. They may be (1) objects "killed" by a positivistic drive to objectivity that nonetheless retain an enigmatic subjective remainder or (2) subjects "automated" to a fated end by a hidden remainder, a curse or drive. Hysteria's splitting-function converts physical systems, such as the subject's body or the landscape, to semantic systems regulated by a logic of halves and tuned to the subject's own split. Thus *tesseræ*, the split token, becomes the model both for travel and discovery: a perfect match that transcends rules of semblance, motility, and scale (dysfunctions fall into these three categories). The metaphorical products of this split (literalized contents of coded expressions) yield to decoding by "reversed predication," which discovers not only the concealed meaning but the process and motive of concealment. (This is what Vico did to discover the "imaginative universal" used by the first humans to "create" the world of the gods focused on the ritual clearings made in the primordial forests (*clinamen*). This is not a "literalization" but a "return of the repressed" that speaks (*apophrades*) the truth (*kenosis*) by breaking the code (Lacan, *passe*; Bloom, *dæmon*). This point is represented in Dante's *Inferno* with the discovery of Lucifer's inversion. Accounts of "sense of place" that ignore the mandate of the Bloomian dynamics operate as ideology, converting generalizations into characterizations and frame-and-caption directives. "Hysteria" is the result of this ideological process, and the discourse of the University (Lacan) is the spatial result.

\$	S1
a	S2

\$	S1
a	S2

DISCOURSE OF HYSTERIA: Metaphor converts meaning into literalized material content. "The key of gold opens the door of iron" uses the vehicle of the lock apparatus which is the illusion commanded by metaphor. This "spell" must be broken to break the code (and find money to bribe the gate-keeper), but it is also the system of metaphoric concealment that has been "cracked."

SENSE OF (HORIZONTAL) PLACE: Terrain is redefined by a loss of meaning (a) that compels travel to recover that lost meaning. The map correlative to that loss is suppressed by a curse or command (S1) that prevents the traveler from realizing that he/she already/always has possessed the remainder, that wandering is the manifestation of a dream-like state, and that discovery will amount to an awakening.



The subject is divided by "knowing without knowing," concealing a remainder or lost object (that was never really possessed!). Suppression triggers the potentiality of a future moment and place of discovery.

The master signifier conceals knowledge but it requires that discovery go beyond the literalizing decoding of the original metaphoric process. The "tesseræ moment" discloses the process and motive of concealment.

"The dream aims to preserve and extend sleep" (Freud). This physical extension is the dimensionalizing of the landscape constituting "sense of place" and temporalizing it. As long as 'a' is suppressed the subject is hystericized within the domain of sleep/spell.

Zenithal authority, S1, suppresses discovery of S2 that is correlative to the 'a' of loss, forcing it to be found by halves. The "other half" is the subjective of the object, the role/motive of original encoding. Being lost = "I don't know the 'where' of my subjectivity."



Bloom's system of revisionary ratios involves quadrature in several senses: (1) the opposition of the act of retreat, *askesis*, to a demonic repulsion involving the three-part Hegelian "forced-choice" negation — denial, renunciation, foreclosure; (2) the creation of a line demarcating transactions that still govern relations between the zone of retreat and the demonic foreclosure, at which *clinamen* and *tesseræ* establish formal symmetries in terrain, discourse, and travel; and (3) specification of a future moment of discovery, *anagnorisis*, where an "acousmatic" voice, *apophrades*, will restore *kenosis*. The "vertical" relations of *askesis* and *dæmon* are actually "orthogonal." The retreat from the zenithal/abyssal authority of *dæmon* requires a "horizontal" escape, so the vector of the right-angle is significant. It refers to the joint that connects the significant content with the concealed motive or construction of the content. Quadrature is both a *templum* dividing space and an enclosure that thematizes adjacencies, as the four sides of a map imply the possibility of an atlas by showing how other maps may be added to complete the system. Thus the periphery and center share a common logic, and this logic has been compared to the role of the number 9, which can "disappear" at the level of sigma values without changing

the value of other numbers (cf. Jasper Johns' paintings of white numbers; also quadrature relates to the "builder's square" shown in Vico's frontispiece image, whose motto "Ignota Latebat" and mirror suggest the hysteria model of Lacan. The square may be possessed by touch (stereognosis) but not projectively known except through enigma, as in the Möbius band. "She" is the divided subject who is her own prophesying Sibyl, thanks to her own self-concealing hysteria. The globe (space) is concealed/suppressed, subject to the ideological mandates of the altar (Vico's account of religion as the *certum* of ideology, cf. the discourse of the university).