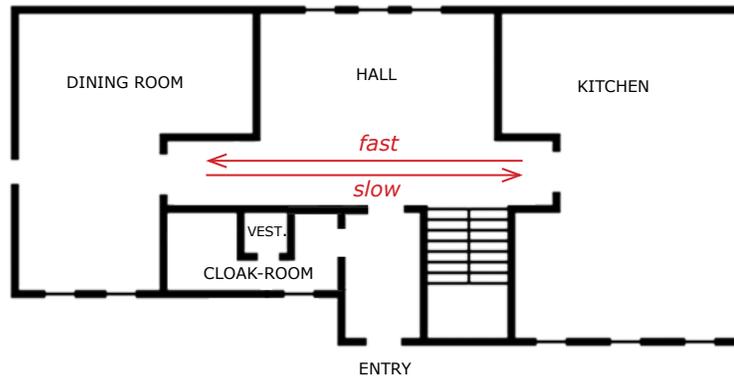


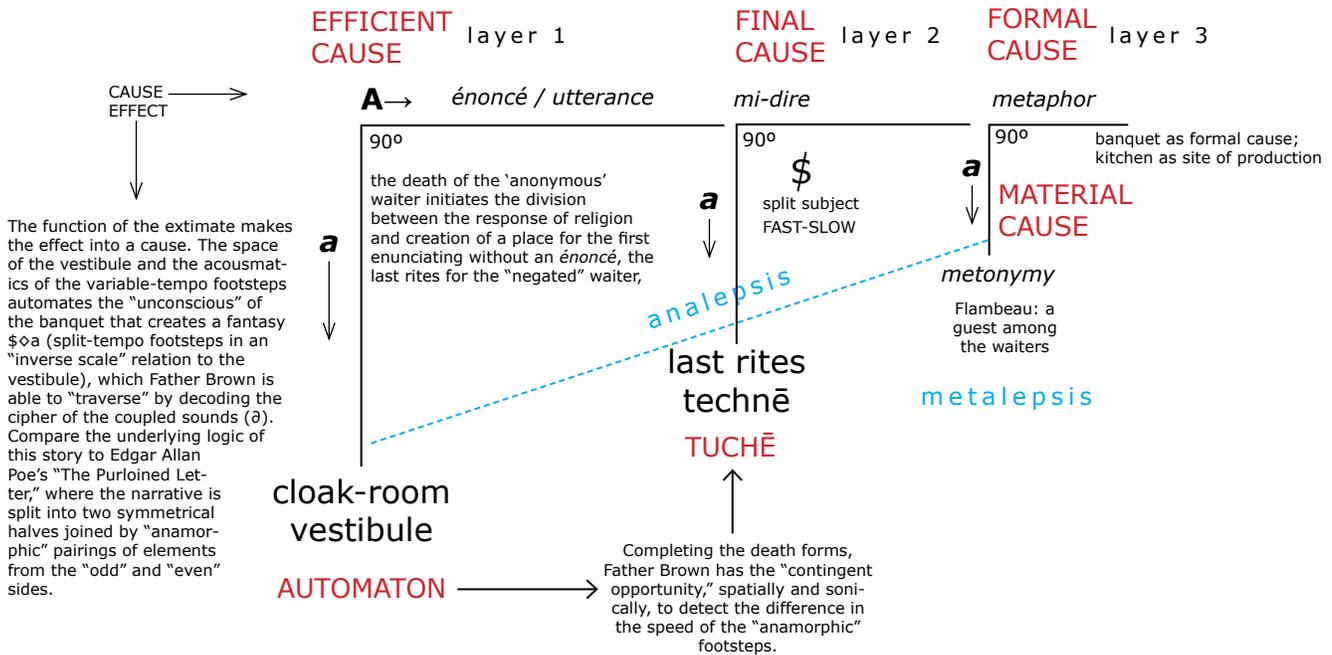
ENUNCIATING / ÉNONCÉ¹: "THE QUEER FEET"

The British mystery story author, G. K. Chesterton, has provided an illuminating example of the "BoLaGram" ("BOundary LAnguage diaGRAM") expanded through the Aristotelian system of causes and chances converted into "mathemes" defined by the function of enunciating/enunciation. An exclusive club, "The Twelve True Fishermen," meets annually at a posh hotel in Belgravia for a dinner. They bring their own silver service with them — a set of bejeweled silver fish-knives — to use on the dinner's elaborate fish course. Father Brown, Chesterton's famous detective character, is called to give last rites to an Italian waiter who has just suffered a paralytic stroke. While filling out the necessary papers in a small room adjacent to the hallway connecting the kitchen with the dining room serving the banquet in progress, Brown hears something strange: footsteps that walk slowly in one direction and quickly in the other. Deducing that there is, literally, a "crime afoot," he confronts a gentlemen who is attempting to leave the banquet early and thinks that Brown is the coat-check clerk. The "gentleman" is none other than the master criminal Flambeau. The trick was based on the fact that both waiters and guests were dressed in tuxedos. A stranger in a tuxedo could, by changing his posture, gait, and demeanor, appear to be a waiter when in the presence of guests, and a guest in the presence of the waiters. The text of the story may be found at http://art3idea.psu.edu/locus/queer_feet.pdf.

1 'Enunciating/énoncé' refers to Lacan's distinction between the speech act and the literal contents of words, meanings, and grammatical/syntactical relationships (*énoncé*). The extimate affects this distinction directly. Just as the shout Fire!, an effect or enunciating act, has direct effects without requiring a real fire to serve as the *énoncé*, effect become cause and is associated with the 'unconscious' of the partial objects that form the basis of Aristotle's two 'chance' causes, automaton and *tuchē*.



The plan of the Vernon Hotel duplicates the left-to-right logic of the Aristotelian "mathemes" — masters on the left (A below), servants on the right (Formal/Material Cause below). The "dropped-out" waiter becomes the 'a' that calls for the INTERvention of Father Brown, who is given the vestibule inside the cloak-room to complete his official forms. The passageway is the place where he detects the fast-slow footsteps and deduces that the thief Flambeau is a "waiter among guests" and a "guest among waiters."



QUEER FEET : NOTES

- §1 Chesterton's story is already replete with several chiasmic structures, making it ideal for boundary language analysis. The key chiasmus is the criss-cross between waiters at the Vernon Hotel and the guests, members of an exclusive club, "The Twelve True Fishermen." Both wear formal dress and are, essentially, twins with opposite but complementary roles. An analysis of this story in BoLaGram form is at <http://art3idea.psu.edu/boundaries/mystery/mystery1.html>. There is an advantage to expanding the BoLaGram into the framework of the Aristotelian causes: it reveals the split between the "subject of enunciating" and the "subject of enunciation (*énoncé*)."
And, because the story uses a difference (∂) in the sound of footsteps as its central clue, the expanded diagram shows how analepsis (recovery) works in tandem with metalepsis (the "metonymy of metonymy"). This helps us understand the paradoxical time-reversals in the act of recovery (cf. Pavel Florensky's descriptions of dreams that "begin at the end) as well as the key role of encadrement, where two frames position the subject in a mid-ground space-time that is managed by enunciating/*énoncé*. The utterance (*énoncé*) is, as tradition also has it, a case of *mi-dire*, half-speech; and in this story the half-speech is matched by the half-sounds of footsteps that are slow in one direction and fast in another, related to the thief Flambeau's principal chiasmus, that he is a "waiter among the guests" and a "guest among the waiters." With the chance to connect Michel Chion's *voix acousmatic* (acousmatic voice) to temporality as well as the traditions of curses and blessings, this story promises to answer most questions about boundary language's relation to both Lacanian discourse as well as the topology of chance. Those not familiar with the story should read the on-line copy at http://art3idea.psu.edu/locus/queer_feet.pdf.
- §2 Temporal inversion, usually a case of "last comes first," is present here as a contrast between slow and fast footsteps. When Flambeau is facing a group of waiters, he walks slowly to make them think he is a guest. When he is seen by the guests, he quickens his pace in order to appear to be a waiter. This fast-slow "switch" serves as #1 negation in the double-negation process of the extimate; the second negation is spatial, and like other second negations, it involves the boundary around a "partial object," in this case the clue of the thief's presence and plan. In order to access this partial object as space, Father Brown must occupy a special "*poché*," a literal pocket or fold in space: an alcove in the cloak-room of the hotel. The relation of this space to enunciation has already been explained. The priest was called to deliver last rites to a waiter who had suddenly taken ill and died. The priest is completing the documents of this *énoncé* when he hears the footsteps in the corridor on the other side of the cloakroom wall.
- §3 The first two 'causes', efficient and final, include the elements of natural chance (automaton) and human chance, or opportunity (*tuchē*). These combine the elements of Lacanian discourses (S1, master signifier; S2, knowledge; a, object-cause of desire; and \$, the barred/divided subject). The discourse of the hysteric, the master, analysis, and the university can be mapped on to this section of the diagram to investigate the relationship between the products of discourse (the formal/material matheme) and the 'layers' beneath them, comprising the fields of agent, other, production, and truth against which S1, S2, a, and \$ rotate. The set-up of "The Queer Feet" is convenient. We have literal Masters (A), a dead waiter (a), a subject divided between enunciating/*énoncé* (Father Brown), and the metaphor of the banquet, with its metonymical kitchen and waiters. Flambeau, the thief, is a "guest among waiters," a metalepsis that will demand connection with its symmetrical opposite, a "waiter among guests." The translation of this chiasmus into sounds produces an acousmatic "voice," manifest as a difference in time (∂) that serves as a *mi-dire* or "half speech" that only Father Brown can interpret.
- §4 Can 'a' do without A? This is Jacques-Alain Miller's description of *énoncé*/enunciating through the example of the person who yells "Bomb!" There does not have to be a bomb, an *énoncé*, in order for the act of the enunciatING to be fully effective. The 'a' may drop out, so to speak. The head waiter may die; it doesn't matter; the dinner must go on. Here, the master-servant model of Lacan's discourse is informative. The servant is "invisible" and "silent" in the lives of the masters. The footsteps are not normally heard as anything significant. The masters, A, may continue their metaphorical ceremonial banquet without taking the waiters into consideration. That one waiter dies is symbolic; one waiter's death or life is of no importance. Later, in the matheme of Formal/Material cause, we see that the servants are the metonymical support for the masters' metaphorical event: the exclusive club celebrates their allusion to being fishermen by using a priceless silver service brought out only once a year. The metonymy of this metaphorical silver service is its value, the reason Flambeau has devised his robbery plan. Flambeau must be a guest among the waiters to disguise his presence in the kitchen, and a waiter among guests to move invisibly in the dining room. This obvious case of "metonymy of a metonymy" (metalepsis), through its "time signature," attracts the attention of the other "acousmatic" operator, Brown, for whom spells (*mi-dire*) are a professional skill.
- §5 The roles of the matheme as both \diamond and $\langle \rangle$, authentication and scale inversion, are represented directly in this story, which makes it a perfect workshop for boundary language. The connection between the acousmatics of the "queer feet" and the professional *mi-dire* of the priest's ritual formulæ point to the role of the magic spell, the *double-entendre*, the speech-within-the-speech — the *mi-dire* of the everyday, so to speak — that creates anamorphosis in language as well as visual art.