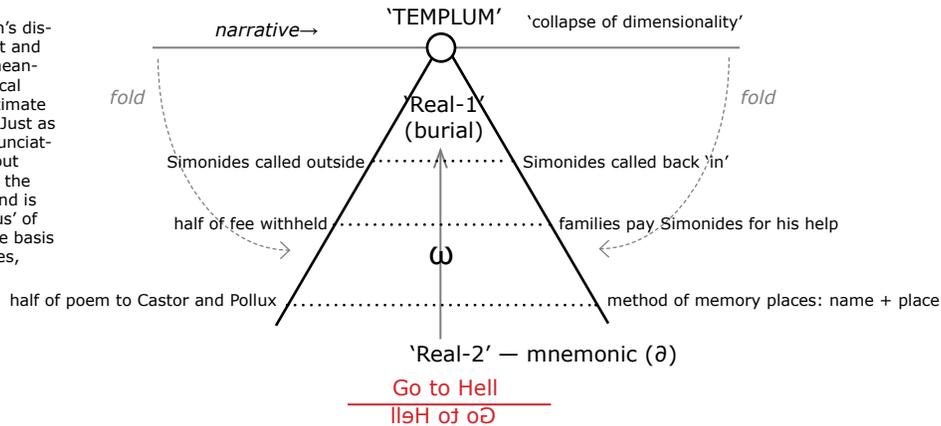


ENUNCIATING¹ THE AUTOMATED MEMORY

The story of the invention of 'artificial memory' has been recorded by Cicero and Pliny. Simonides, a poet on the Greek island of Ceos, was hired to deliver an encomium for Scopus, a wealthy politician-athlete after a wrestling victory. To prevent backlash from the evil eye, Simonides included lines acknowledging the (appropriate for wrestling) twin gods, the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux. Scopus took offense and announced that he would pay Simonides only half his fee — he could 'go to the gods!' (i.e. 'go to Hell!') to collect the remainder. At the banquet, Simonides had memorized guests names based on the technique of *loci* (L.) or *topoi* (Gr.) — memory places fixing each name by associating it with the guest's place at the table. Before long, however, a message came that there were two strangers who wished to see Simonides outside. When he answered this call, however, he found an empty street. Did the strangers vanish? Before he could go back into the banquet hall the building collapsed. All inside were killed. This 'fake call' outside had saved his life. Families gathered to pull their relatives' corpses from the rubble. A proper burial was essential for the welfare of the soul of the deceased and prosperity of the family as well. But, the bodies were crushed beyond recognition. Simonides memory trick, however, saved the day. By memorizing places as means of recalling names, he was able to identify the victims and allow for their proper burial. Scopus, who had told Simonides to 'go to the gods' himself could now go.

1 'Enunciating' 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 chiasmic form of the Simonides story is also the structure of the mnemonic device of memory places. Each thing to be remembered is assigned a place. If the place is well chosen, then new meanings arise out of this coupling. Frances Yates, the classic modern source of this story, does not notice the chiasmic form. Camillo, the Renaissance master of the spatial mnemonic's mystical implications, does; he connects it to the three-part structure of the soul, as revealed in the Kabbalah: left, right, and center.

Translation of the literal Λ -form of chiasmus to the Lacanian-Aristotelian 'mathemes' involves understanding the implications of enunciation in the context of the 'efficient cause' idea of setting in motion something that had formerly been at rest. A boundary/frame must be crossed, and in this crossing, a space (a) must be left behind that constitutes a metonymical substrate, an unconscious 'of' the material objects chosen to structure the memory device.

EFFICIENT CAUSE layer 1

FINAL CAUSE layer 2

FORMAL CAUSE layer 3

<p>A → defect inherent in reading a mystery story</p> <p>90°</p> <p>the unconscious of the mnemonic technique will be recovered (<i>analepsis</i>) when Simonides reverses the symmetry that couples names with specific locations; efficiency is evident in the artistic design of a method that is concealed. The story shows the value of a 'suspended effect', where the technique for remembering names becomes a means for burying the dead.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Simonides as unconscious</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TUCHĒ</p> <p>The theme of 2's is developed as: (1) half of the poem dedicated to (2) twin gods; (3) the withheld half of the poet's fee; (4) the method of pairing places and names; and (5) the call outside and the call back in</p>	<p>butterfly design</p> <p>90°</p> <p>symmetry →</p> <p style="text-align: center;">\$</p> <p style="text-align: center;">a</p> <p style="text-align: center;">subjective objects</p>	<p>narrative</p> <p>90°</p> <p>mnemonic device of <i>topoi</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">MATERIAL CAUSE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">chiasmus</p> <p>bi-episodal structure of the story</p> <p>metalepsis: the method of remembering live guests become the means of recovering the NAMES of the dead guests. Name place name is the 'metonymy of metonymy' logic of metalepsis. The 'recovery' (<i>analepsis</i>) that follows is the literal claiming of victims' bodies and preparations for proper burial.</p>
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CAUSE → EFFECT

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The effects of the mnemonic device of places become, in the second half of the tale, the cause of recovery. This makes use of the 'automaton' of the method, its continual assignment of names to places within the visible/invisible memory place (correlation between an ideal mental place and the physical banquet hall was essential for the method to work in the case of this story). The key is to see that the memory device is the *act* (enunciating), which can 'do without' the *énoncé* of the names, which fill in the blanks created by the method of memory places. Separation of the place-framework from contents enables the creation of multiple levels of metonymies that can 'contaminate' the metaphoric/formal creations.

Automaton as 'enunciating' operates entirely in the negated territory that is also materialized; the unconscious 'never sleeps' in the sense that it is an activity that, while eclipsed, continues necessarily throughout the act of imagining and recalling, creating ciphers and structuring them in all component parts

ENUNCIATING POE : NOTES

- §1 This analysis shows what has not been discovered before this point: that the method of mnemonic places is chiastic, and the story about its invention is itself chiastic. This is revealed not just through a placement of story elements along the Λ -shaped diagram but an analysis in terms of discourse/enunciation and the idea of the (Lacanian) extimate. The three mathemes show that the story's three layers — (1) the diegetic narrative, (2) the surprising call-back to re-deploy the memory system to name the crushed victims, and (3) the secret link between the story's content and its own chiastic structure — identify memory with the 'key element', metalepsis, the metonymy of metonym, and its successive 'escape', analepsis (recovery). These are our familiar elements, R2 (defect, ∂) and R1, the two versions of the real (internal and external, respectively), keys to the obversion plays of the extimate.
- §2 The key to the Simonides story is the role of efficient cause. Efficiency is, according to Aristotle, whatever can move the work or set it in motion. It is associated with the artistry of the artist. At the same time efficiency is 'efficient' — it optimizes the use of labor and materials with respect to an 'economy' by which an outcome is regarded as not only appropriate and just but clever. The artist avoids the obvious way of accomplishing something and conceals techniques and strategies; secrets as such have been a traditional component of artistry. Simonides' system of places operates silently and secretly in the background, but the chiasmus which is identical to his method also operates silently in the background of this anecdote. In fact, no scholar before this analysis has noticed, let alone analyzed, the chiasmus of artificial memory in general or this story in particular!
- §3 Compare the pivot of the Simonides story to the *templum* of the spatial organizations of Roman cities and camps (as well as the idea of a center of the world or time). The two men who allegedly called for Simonides to meet them outside the hall disappeared. They were the 'A' cause (i.e. the real bomb in the example of the bomb scare) who were effective in their very absence. The relation of the twin gods, Castor and Pollux, provide the key. One twin was allowed to live *on the condition of the other twin's absence*. The twins themselves allow Simonides to live *on the condition of their own absence*. The absence of *énoncé*, cause, 'obverts' the effect so that it becomes the sufficient (and efficient) cause. This obversion of a material substrate is the logic of sacrifice, which must first kill its victim in order that a 'language of the gods' be revealed.
- §4 Comparing Simonides method with Poe's odds-and-evens method and Roussel's *procédé* shows that Surrealism, especially in its precedents and earliest days, was not a break with history but an effort to remember it under the extreme conditions of amnesia. This highlights the point of artificial memory's artificiality: the mnemonicist gives his 'natural' memory over to the artificial system, in effect taking an oath renouncing personal memories, which can be exclusive and selective. Artificial memory, as automaton, is 'put into nature' through its method of places. These fully externalized objects become subjective, partial, when coupled with memory contents. The logic of the extimate transforms them into thinking machines.
- §5 The method of places is a rigid automaton that allows its 'reality contents' the maximum amount of contingency, variation, and inconsistency. As S1, the method of *topoi* is 'idiotically symmetrical' — symmetrical in its open Λ -structure, pairing places with random contents to be remembered — and idiotic in the open blank space where places and contents are fused, anamorphically, into prophetic 'monsters', one of whom becomes the 'tell', or internal inconsistency R2 that points the way to the ultimate truths of the system, R1.
- §6 The Lacanian image of signifiers, S2, as 'sliding past each other' is inverted by the reader who creates the sliding by his/her own physical act of recalling. The traveler's POV, in other words, creates sliding, just as the landscape is made to 'slide by' the car or train window. In this sense, S1, the master signifier, is able to quilt the signifiers in a rather literal and direct way in Poe: by creating a web of anamorphic monster-bridges that encode one side of the text through mirror images in the other. The memory system (S1) is the frame of the window 'past which' images of the landscape 'slide past'.