locus solus

When the uncanny is turned on itself, new dimensions can unexpected sources. This is the surprising result of looking closely at the symbols 'arbitrarily' chosen to signify the fields and elements of the bolagram: A, a, f, $, Ø (Δ) and ø (Ω). The two 'others', big (A) and small (a) use the French word autre, whose first letter is, conveniently enough, the ox, from whom we get the style of writing alternatively left-to-right and right-to-left, the 'boustrophodon'. The little calf brings in the issue of sacrifice, an element key to the small object-cause of desire. Both the subject and fantasy are 'barred'. In the subject's case the vertical bar is the staff of Hermes' caduceus, the anchor of the icon representing the idea festina lente (make haste slowly), and the 'forced choice' of the master signifier (ideology). The horizontal cross of the f, the imagined position of the other who is created as the ideal point of view, is horizontal, the screen that conceals/reveals reality to create, in effect, a blind POV (the position of the king in Lacan's theory of the three-part gaze). The open o' of fantasy projection, ø, is a garden negated as wilderness, the forest (selva) from which we derive the notion of freedom as 'wild/willed' (sauvage). These connections create another world for the bolagram and, like Roussel's meanings concealed anagramically within words and phrases, open up a narrative between the 'normative' and the 'antipodal' illicit position discovered through etymology, graphic heritage, or typological accident.

1. coincidences, part one

The bolagram, if anything, is about crossing boundaries. So is the caduceus of Hermes, the rod entwined by two serpents, the later staff of Asclepius. This image of the cosmic bounding condition represented by Okeanos (Ocean), an edge that has nothing beyond it but is itself the sum of Elsewhere, is carried forward to the symbol for festina lente, 'make haste slowly', an anchor wrapped with an S-shaped dolphin, curiously also the motto of the dauphin, the young king-to-be.

In the Hermes tradition we have themes of: (1) the art of seduction, (2) the boundary between life and death, (3) the tradition of 'silent trade' and the origins of markets, and (4) the idea of 'sacred theft' (all themes described by Norman O. Brown in his book, Hermes the Thief, 1947). In the caduceus, we have reference to all of these, in that they each constitute a case of the 'intransitive' boundary, a condition where crossing and crossing back return to a non-identical origin: 'true/false/not-false'. This is the 'triangle' of the anacoluthon, where some normative meaning is contradicted and replaced by a second meaning, which is then 'returned' to the normative that is retroactively redefined. 'My client may look like an idiot and talk like an idiot, but don't be deceived — he really is an idiot!' is the Grouch Marx example of this logic.

The case of the S-shaped dolphin is curious. The dauphin was the king-to-be: the eldest son of the King of France. Dolphin (delphinus) comes from a Greek word whose original meaning was 'womb'. The origin of 'hysteria' is, of course, the womb that wanders around the body in search of children, the displaced organ that is the 'partial object' par excellence in Žižek's theory of 'organs without a body'. The partial object is about the transgression of a rule that, put into terms of a graphic, is the absolute boundary between life and death.

The barred subject is the bounded, placed subject, the subject restricted to a place, who finds herself in a place that is already/always missing a key object, namely the phallus, often symbolically represented as a child. The Lacanian 'matheme' $0a, or fantasy, says as much: s/he finds that s/he has lost his/her lover or child and seeks a substitute in terms of some small object of that embodies desire. The bolagram's symbol for fantasy, Ø, designates this place as the forest, Eden negated or inverted.

2. coincidences, part 2

The boustrophodon (A=boustros, ox) suggests interpolation between two positions, and such is the anacoluthon's 'chiasmatic' relation between two alternating meanings. When the other is small, the objet-petit-a or object-cause of desire, the object is sacrificial: the son whom God asks Abraham to kill, the fattened calf (vitellono) who is the overgrown child-adult refusing to get a job and leave home (neotony), who lives within the domain of the father, castrated, willing to take a minor role in exchange for eternal youth (the Peter Pan syndrome).

In antipode, the Garden is the anacoluthic conjunction of differences or opposites. The conjunction is the Real, characterized by its infinite repetitions (the obsessive replay of the twin trade towers on 9/11), the victim (Bin Laden) who finds the vulnerable middle. Thus, the best example of the small a's (object-causes of desire) are in the objects now forbidden for airline carry-ons: objects which formerly had no particular value but are shown to have strategic use as weapons able to assist in the transformation of an airplane into a guided missile.
Boustrophodon (A) is also the ‘false choice’ dictated by the master signifier, the creation of causality out of contingency; an ideological formation that, although irrational, nonetheless ‘bars’/places the subject. The solution to the bar, the impasse, is the key (a) that, like the objects confiscated at airport check-ins, has magic value once the correct context is discovered. In Dürer’s illustration of the artist and model, this is the mechanical ‘mandate’ given the hand by the eye, vis à vis the formula of the lucinda. This mandate is overcome with Evgen Bavcar’s ‘operationalization’ of the visual field via his ‘manual’ set-ups. Bavcar’s flash is analogous to the lightning in the mysterious painting La Tempesta by Giorgione (1505). Here, the forced choice (transitive) is revealed as enigma, magic, and self-operationalized (sutured) a-symbolic meaning. In the story of Diana and Actaeon, the hunter who inadvertently views the naked goddess bathing is punished by a splash that converts him to his prey. The dogs mortify his flesh — the traditional role of the dog in many cultures, often reduced to the gaze of the dog (Sagdid, ‘the dog has seen’, in Iranian tradition). This is the Hermetic password, the caduceus, the token across the intransitive boundary separating the living from the dead.

### 3. coincidences, part three

The small object of desire returns (that is its role and meaning) to the heart (position is the key) of the Other, whose vulnerability, whose need to be sustained by subjects who acquire in the double lie that the Other is all-powerful, returns via the path, Ø (Δ), of desire. Delta is the triangle of symbolic, imaginary, and Real, but also the three-part Gaze of Lacan’s King, Queen/Minister, and Dupin. That these three’s are also the three-part structure of anacoluthon helps to answer many questions at the same time.

What is the relation of Diana’s hand to Actaeon’s stolen view? —A splash. What is the relation of Bavcar’s blindness to his manual (handed) assembly of a scene? —A flash. What is the relation of the ‘necessary’ fictim, the imagined ideal POV, to the object-cause of desire? None other than the tuché, the encounter, the contingency, the accidental appearance of the Real.

### 4. coincidences of crossed diagrams

The other as ‘A’ symbolizes itself, namely, the ‘blind-but-ideal’ POV created through the production/surplus of the subject, the tip of the cone of vision that sees the manipulated anamorphic scene contrived to displace the mysterious bifurcation of the partial object to the screen itself which, as anamorphic, conveys a ‘monstrous’ visibility conjoined of visible and invisible parts (the materialization of the horizon as ideological and therefore numinous). The enigma is the fact of enigma. Transferring this portrayal to Lacan’s account of the three-part gaze, the King is made to see nothing through the conspiracy of the Queen and Minister, each of whom is opposed to the other but united in their desire to prevent the ‘blind’ King from regaining his sight.

The ‘A’ shows the primary form of the anacoluthon, with each ‘leg’ acting as a position (of agent and of production), between which the interpolation process creates dilemma-like ‘horns’ and are in fact the entrance to the meandering path of the katabasis, whose gates are, like the gates of the dream, of ivory and horn (false and true dreams) but are in fact one gate compromised by the intransitivity of the labyrinth’s puzzle. There are no turns to choose, just the confusion of whether one is going in or out.

The matheme for fantasy, $\diamond a$, is the same as Ø, whose vertical line inverts the Garden (O) and connects $ with f, the idealized point of view. $ is the orthogonal operator ‘A’ — $>A>a — so Ø as a projection to f is mirrored through the network of symbolic relationships, where it ‘short-circuits’ through an anamorphic intersection (the screen) to connect with a.