

Metalepsis of the Site of Exception

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“I caught him, with an unseen hook and an invisible line which is long enough to let him wander to the ends of the world, and still to bring him back with a twitch upon the thread.”

—G. K. Chesterton, “The Queer Feet,” (1911)

Architecture could be said to be an art of managing invisibility. Politics, it could also be said, is about manifesting the invisible of potential social order, often in the midst of ideological conditions that prohibit it — and often this prohibition comes in the form of buildings and landscapes. What is literally invisible but nonetheless present and influential we call “virtual.” We can imagine and experience a reality even if it can’t be shown literally, and much of what we can experience ultimately depends on events and processes that have taken place outside the sense–immediacy of the literal present.

Thus, it is important for architecture theory to pay its closest attention to cases where representation breaks down, for it is precisely at such points that invisibility becomes critical. In particular, the invisible makes possible a “site of exception,” where the imaginary and its virtual resources dominate. One way of describing this is through the orthogonal contrast of “vertical” and “horizontal” forces. In the horizontal, relations “on the ground” are regulated as if “from above.” Barriers, restrictions of movement, channels of travel and communication, and so on are vertically imposed, and challenges to this authority metaphorically are said to come from “below,” as is clear by the way anti-authority is demonized. Those who defy boundaries and boundary logic are said to pop up suddenly, “without provocation.” They must be dealt with by removal or the more extreme measures, such as the CIA’s practice of rendition. The expression “the disappeared” testifies to the wide adaptation of this metaphor of invisibility in relation to the vertical and horizontal order of the landscape.

With the rise of social activism identified with prominent public spaces — Tiananmen Square (China), St. James Park (Toronto), Tahrir Square (Egypt), Zuccotti Park (New York), Frank Ogawa Plaza (Oakland), Taksim Square (Turkey), to name just a few — the word “Occupy” has assumed the role of the vertical demonic, a motion from the bottom, against the zenith. Resistance “springs up” from nowhere, often at points regarded as centers. It challenges the “word from on high.” Even in normal, compliant life, law imposes its invisible rule with uniform regulatory access to every point in the horizontal plane. Taking exception to this order aims to establish a new horizontal configuration, but it does so first by challenging what Stefano Boeri has called the authority of the zenith.¹

If the Occupy Movement has excelled in any one thing, it is to make the connection between the horizontality of sites of exception and what Jacques Rancière has called *dissensus*, the difference required for political thinking and speech to activate new ideas of order. After the initial vertical gesture (“Occupy!”), a horizontal strategy begins.² At the request of a speaker (“mic check”), a message is relayed orally throughout the crowd. This acoustic practice is effective in adjusting without homogenizing the horizontal Occupy space. In allowing points of dissensus to develop and reverberate, it offers both resistance and feedback to messages, preventing ideological stratification. Localized signs of affiliation such as flags and fashion — think of the Ukraine’s orange, Georgia’s rose, Kuwait’s blue, Iran’s (or Sri

Lanka's, or Ukraine's, or ecologists') green — speak to the horizontal vitality of the site of exception.³ As in the Middle Ages, such devices take on the power of magic hieroglyphs. They “signalize” without sending specific messages. They open up short-circuits of meaning, as Rabelais pointed out in his review of costume colors in the opening pages of *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. The impact of sites of exception over the past twenty years challenges architecture and landscape theory to come up with some new ideas.

Theory should no longer be able to retreat to cozy metaphors of home, as in the romanticizations Heidegger's concept of “dwelling.”⁴ Theory should call out those who argue that architecture is on the side of the bankers.⁵ Theory should resist premature foreclosure of environmental politics by sustainability advocates who argue that all we need is more technology. These necessary challenges are complicated by the fact that the role of invisibility/visibility in political sites of exception cannot be described by the kind of virtuality used by digital representations. The digital virtual has become the tool of ideology. It has smoothed the way for the architect who wishes to be, sequentially, a designer, contractor, developer, and corporate player. Opposition to ideology requires theory to recognize a different kind of virtuality, one that *constructs the spaces and times* of dissensus.

Occupy's striking use of visibility and acoustics in the horizontal resistance constitutes a mandate for this new science of the virtual. In the following, I propose to show how the *place of dissensus* is constructed and how it works as an alternative to ideology. The contrasts of the vertical and the horizontal, present from the ancient beginnings of architecture's career in politics, require theory to shift from interpretation to an interest in activism.⁶ This shift requires examples that can be experienced directly by the reader. Film, where the spaces of production and reception meet in every instance of performance, offers a laboratory for expanding architecture theory through new virtualities of dissensus. Alfred Hitchcock's 1954 film, *Rear Window*, provides a clear first view, where the verticals and horizontals of the set and the dramatic idea establish dissensus in what will be explained as a “metaleptic” operation.⁷

Part I: dissensus and verticality/horizontality

Relations among subjects, potentially political, reach a critical point at the question of mastery. Where mastery in general and masters specifically are defined in a hierarchical way, Jacques Rancière carefully distinguishes the political from the ideological. In “vertical” ideology, each is ruled from above; *each in turn* rules those below. No one is able to locate the ultimate source that tops this pyramid of power, a tip that seems to lie *outside the system* because it itself is not mastered by anything more powerful. The opposite end of things is the base condition where subjectivity completely lacks any mastery of its own and, hence, any rights; this subjectivity is metaphorically “home-less.”⁸ This condition, on the side of a frame opposite the Ultimate Mastery, also lies outside the structure; but, because every thing within the frame is structured by the relation between the *animus* of active mastery to the *anima* of response, it provides the tension that pulls the horizontal chain taught.⁹ Those dominated and defined by this condition, like India's “untouchables” or the West's literal homeless, experience a kind of slavery and are consigned to a servile direct dependence on materiality.¹⁰ Inside the pyramid, slavery pairs with mastery as the logic of every link, marking every step with an abstract verticality regulating the horizontal conversion of nature to utility.

According to Rancière, politics contrasts with ideology by being, “a local, precarious, contingent activity — an activity which is always on the point of disappearing, and thus perhaps also on the point of

reappearing.”¹¹ Steve Corcoran, Rancière’s translator and editor of *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, writes that politics is born of disagreement, dissensus, “an activity that *cuts across* forms of cultural and identity belonging and hierarchies between discourses and genres, working to introduce *new* subjects and *heterogeneous* objects into the *field of perception*” [emphasis mine], a process, I claim, materialized within “sites of exception,” as fragile as politics but actual, vivid in space and time.¹² In this “cutting across,” dissensus and its field of perception are orthogonal to mastery’s hierarchical/vertical space. Not only are the sites of dissensus architectural; they are the essence of architecture, in architecture’s resistance to appropriation by ideology and/or the commanded utility of functional sheltering.

Does dissensus really operate “horizontally” in contrast to ideology’s “verticality”? Is Steve Corcoran’s description, “cut across,” anything more than a characterization? Do horizontality and verticality have real, material implications? Do they deploy space or time with any effectiveness? Does their orthogonal relationship have any theoretical meaning? *Are they really architectural?*

Verticality and horizontality are qualities of spaces and times that must be completed by the imagination, “virtually.” This is not the kind of virtuality that simply fills out spaces and times by adding the unseen sides, or implying pasts and futures. It is even less the virtuality of digitally-generated “virtual space.” The virtuality of dissensus takes action against zenithal dominance of the horizontal. It *detaches itself* from such continuities and dynamically establishes particular spaces and times, relative to *particular frames of view*. In contrast to the idea that architecture simply works within the laws of nature to supply human demands and desires, I propose that architecture *as architecture* constitutes an *exception* to such laws, demands, and desires; that architecture creates a specific kind of “autonomy of exception,” and then endows that autonomy with powers of self-generation. Here, architecture aims to escape from the ideologies of supply and demand, as well as its own material biology. This “exception of architecture” confirms and supports Rancière’s program of how we might envision the political through the aesthetic.

Architecture is identical to the detached virtuality of the site of exception

Rancière has noted that aesthetics was not originally about the beauty of objects made to be consumed as art.¹³ Aesthetics began as a description of sensible experience in general, and Rancière recovers this meaning in relation to a “distribution of the sensible,” “of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determines the very manner in which something in common lends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution.”¹⁴ Sites of exception, as the architecture of the political as well as the political of architecture, grow out of the performative, a self-generative and self-regulating whole. One way of describing this autonomy would be “autopoiesis.” This is not the autopoiesis of Humberto Maturana, Francisco Varela, and Niklas Luhman (sources frequently cited by advocates of “parametricism”).¹⁵ Rather, the autopoiesis grounding the architecture of dissensus has to do with the uniquely human discomfort within nature; the speaking subject’s unstable relationship to appearance and placement. The idea that self-regulation arises out of discomfort comes from G. W. F. Hegel. Slavoj Žižek explains: “Hegel is — to use today’s terms — the ultimate thinker of autopoiesis, of the process of the emergence of necessary features out of chaotic contingency, the thinker of contingency’s gradual self-organization, of the gradual rise of order out of chaos.”¹⁶ I want to recast the relationship of vertical ideology *versus* horizontal dissensus in terms of the ironic topology that connects Hegel’s autopoiesis with our project.

Hegelian autopoiesis creates a unique program for the “distribution of the sensible,” a detached virtuality that regulates human symbolic systems by means of a “lock” binding the real and imaginary. By lock, I have in mind the Borromean knot of three interlocking rings Jacques Lacan has used to describe the relations of the Symbolic, the Imaginary, and the Real. Subjectivity can be explained by the topology of the knot. We must note that our explanation requires us to project a view of the knot as seen from above, a series of rings lying on top of one another in a cloverleaf. This projection, however, will conceal the topological logic, which will appear as a “surprise” when we look closely into the connections. The projection view invites us to use such terms as a “first ring” and “last ring,” but first and last do not exist in the topology of the knot.

Although each ring seems initially to rest on top of the preceding one, the “final” ring slips under the “first,” making a lock. This lock not only binds the system together; it creates a new dimensionality by distributing the “boundary conditions” (the arbitrarily defined first and third rings) into all of the parts, creating a Möbius band effect that permeates the whole system as an invisible glue. There is really no top or bottom ring topologically speaking; the stack gives way to the topology of the knot. The *boundary converted into the bounded*, a “reversed predication,” is the autopoiesis of what is uniquely human. This is the irony that Hegel constructed as dialectic, as we will see later in the example of the parable of Lordship and Bondage. But, nearly one hundred years before, Giambattista Vico had uncovered this connection to autopoiesis when he sought to uncover the origins of mythic thought. And, one hundred years later, Freud located autonomy within the *automaton* of the unconscious; and, half a century later, Lacan, in the process of rescuing Freud from his misconstruers, described this automaton as a dark, internal subjectivity active in externalities, everyday experiences: an ability to be inside and outside at the same time, later refined in the idea of extimity (*extimité*).

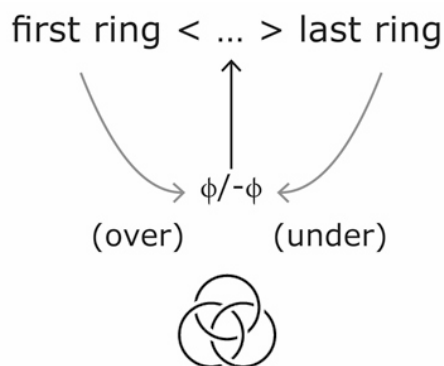


Figure 1.1. Detached virtuality depends on a “logic of inscription” by which the (contradictory) properties of the boundary appear, as an enigma, inside an interior that is bounded by strict sequence. In Lacan’s Borromean knot of the Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real, the externality of the last ring and the first ring becomes an internality — an objective subjectivity — that binds the set together. In projective space, each ring rests on top of the preceding one ($R_1 < R_2 < R_3$) — a “vertical hierarchy” — but the “final” ring slips beneath the first, $R_3 < R_1$, creating the anomalous condition where R_3 is both “before” and “after,” both $<$ and $>$, or $<>$. Expanding this gives the knot, $< \dots >$, a *field* within which this illogic is encountered at any point as an over-under exception, $><$, functioning as an “inside frame.”

The projected image of the Borromeo knot, where it appears paradoxical, contrasts with its internal topography, which is consistent, symmetrical, and binding. What would allow us to make a leap to the more specific conditions of the work of art and, soon following, architecture? What in art involves transactions between structures that afford visibility but themselves remain invisible? And, what visibilities “horizontal” in their movements through space and time, are nonetheless subject to invasion by exception? In art, the structure of the performative aims to build tension and set up the audience for key moments of surprise. Surprise in art must follow a strict code. It must not be gratuitous — surprise for the sake of surprise. It must be grounded in what the audience has already learned but which is latent. It must relate to the revelation of a new level of meaning or experience.

The rhetorical figure of metalepsis, “a metonymy of a metonymy,” creates surprise of this kind. Freud used metalepsis to describe an uncanny experience he had while traveling in a train.¹⁷ Not being aware of a mirror on the door, he was alarmed when an “old man” tried to enter his compartment. He did not recognize his double; for a moment it was a separate being, with the intention to enter where it did not belong. The framing device of the spectator became a part of the framed. Results can range from the mildly annoying or amusing to the frightening, the uncanny. The interval taken to realize the structure of the surprise constitutes an exception to the rules of physics. Realization does not dispel metalepsis, as a mere illusion. Rather, it reveals a talent, a proclivity, *already installed and active* that, within the human, lies ready for such experiences.¹⁸ It is this identity, and not the momentary effect of the trick, that ties metalepsis — a true “distribution of the sensible” in Rancière’s terms — to the autopoiesis of exception and to the material sites it requires. Can we define this distribution? And, can we identify it as not just *an* architecture but architecture in its purest form?

Metalepsis, since Gérard Genette, has been described as the incorporation of the “diegetic” (point of view) framing elements into the mimetic level of those contents that have been framed (a story, a play, etc.).¹⁹ But, first, a word about mimesis to situate it within the idea of sequencing, which can be notated as a series (...) set within a frame (<>), <...>. An audience “arrives” at a story at a time where events have already been going on, a virtuality of “just before,” <. At the end of the novel, play, or film, there is a symmetrical cut off, a “just after,” >. Diegesis, the construction of a *distance from and along which* the reception of the work of art may take place, combines the < of “just before” with the > of “just after” along with framing, constructions of space and time dimensions, and prior agreements with the audience, < ↓ >.²⁰ The diegetic point of view is a critical, cultural, and metaphysical construct. It is the *idea* that we as an audience might be able to witness a spectacle contained within a frame; that the meaning of this spectacle is *for us* — *for* our point of view, *for* the distance that alienates and silences and stupefies us. In this sense diegesis is a *repayment* of the costs of our withdrawal from the scene of mimesis (*askesis*), our imaginary death.²¹ It is important for us to consider how diegesis, essentially a “vertical” operation, resembles ideology in its relation to dissensus. To do this, we must define metalepsis in relation to fantasy.²²

Metalepsis is a magic trick based on the division between the frame and the framed, diegesis and mimesis. It allows the audience to encounter some form of itself, installed within the mimetic particulars of the work. Equally, it allows characters and elements to escape from their mimetic prisons, to jump off the stage or hop off the screen, as does the film actor Tom Baxter in Woody Allen’s *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985). The absurd exception to framing rules forces the audience to recognize that which it itself had done originally in establishing the conditions of diegesis and mimesis.

Metalepsis is not simply an abstract condition; it is a staged collapse of spatial and temporal protocols that normally hold the audience on one side of a line and the show on the other. Violating this boundary requires the special engineering supplied by the literary forms of the fantastic, the genre peculiar to violations of normal causality, as a means of developing its specific architecture of detached virtuality. Let me define the genre of the fantastic in a limited but architecturally pertinent way. The Argentine master of the fantasy, Jorge Luis Borges, condensed his genre into four motifs: the double, the story in the story, travel in time, and contamination of the horizontal reality of mimesis by the dream or fiction. All motifs are, in fact, a contamination that develops along the vertical line established by diegesis. And, all are variations on diegesis's career as a "story in a story."²³

The audience that is first held at a distance from the mimesis of the artwork by the orthogonal constructs of diegesis, $\langle \downarrow \rangle$, encounters a mirror of its own detachment whenever a story is told inside a story. This motif sets the pattern filled out by the other three forms of the fantastic. The story inside the story portrays characters of the mimetic drama who become a mirror of the real audience. The audience sees its own framing action rotated 90°, to a "lateral view," \perp to \rightarrow , so to speak, and in rotation the exchanges between the frame and the framed, the stage and the backstage, are now visible as features in the horizontal mimetic frame.²⁴

In David Lynch's neo-noir film, *Mulholland Drive* (2001), we attend an audition where the ingénue, Betty Elms (Naomi Watts), reads a part for a new film. We expect her to do poorly, having already witnessed her amateurish practice session. Once in place with the lead actor, however, she converts the dull script lines (a young woman resists the advances of an older family friend) into a magical concession (destructive desire stoked by the flames of danger). Her tone, timing, and aggression take the production company executives, the audience inside the diegetic frame, by storm. *Mulholland Drive's* "real" audience must additionally consider that they have watched a good actress play a bad actress playing a good actress, a thespian version of the Borromeo knot. In this process Watts has held all of these modes in clear tension, never losing a "level" of the complexity. This moment of unexpected mastery jolts the real audience into the larger consideration of the possibility that the main story is a death narrative — in which case this magical performance makes sense because it is from the point of view of a dead woman who aspired to be a successful actress. In Borromeo ring language, our $R_1 < R_2 < R_3$ sequence is "surprised" when R_3 slips under rather than over R_1 , when the "bad actress" becomes a "good actress." This obversion, $R_1 < > R_3$, equal to $R_1 > < R_3$, returns us to the opening sequence, where we witness a suicide, a "self-negation" in the best Hegelian spirit.

Watts, in stepping out of mimesis, has invited us to step in. Her demonstration of diegetic mechanics makes us look at ours. In this straightforward (non-magical) but nonetheless complex scene, we see how the simple device of the story in the story can engage the other themes of the *double*, the *time travel* required to re-cast the story as a death dream in relation to events in normal reality, and of course the generic theme of *contamination* that flows along the vertical dimensional detachments of diegesis. Contamination can involve the invasion of reality by a dream, a story, or competing witnesses' accounts, as in Akira Kurosawa's film, *Rashomon* (1950). It can be about the audience discovering its own forgotten—repressed procedures and presuppositions. It is the mirror in the middle.

The verticality of contamination is evident in the ways it is traditionally represented as an exception — the attack of demons from below or space invaders from above (cf. *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, 1951). The dimensionalities of detachment and re-attachment can be found outside art, in secular sites of exception where dissensus re-organizes space and time to bring about political potentialities. In both art and life, a new kind of appearance is made possible through the *extimité* of outside to inside, inside to outside. The world no longer encloses these spaces, as a part to be distributed in one way or another, the part surrounds and encloses the world. Dissensus brings about philosophical self-reflection in a literal and dimensional way.

But, I want to go further, to make dissensus and architecture synonymous. Figuratively, I think this is not so hard to do. Dissensus interrupts a horizontality, a flow of activity within a space, regulated by the vertical pinions of ideology. We are into the analogy of Lucretius, who imagined reality as an even flow of atoms through a void. Now imagine the vertical of a place like Zuccotti Park: multiple overlapping regulations and laws defining public order. Public demonstrations, like Occupy Wall Street, must disrupt this order. They must, implicitly, confront the verticality that maintains the orderly horizontal flow of public exchange. Thanks to the precedent of free speech as a general principle trumping the mesh of law-and-order regulations, the demonstrators succeeded in doing this, up to a point.

This is the point. Although Occupy activists interrupted a horizontal order, their opposition was initially vertical. Had not dissensus been built into the U. S. Constitution from the start, as the First Amendment principle of free speech and right to demonstration, this vertical challenge to vertically imposed regulation of the flow of activities around Zuccotti Park would have been possible but not “legal.” Once in place, Occupy used special horizontal techniques to manage space and time resources — for example the famous “mic check” protocols to guarantee free discourse.

For architecture, the model is the same. A horizontal *utilitas*, “utility” in a general sense, is supported and regulated by a vertical *firmitas* — not just structural solidity of physical materials and mechanical systems, but the range of supports — that includes laws and customs, economics, and so on. In contrast, *venustas*, ordinarily but misleadingly translated as the modern “beauty,” operates demonically, disruptively. It must first counter the vertical dominance of *firmitas* — this is its kinship with natural disaster. Then, it must create a turbulence, a Lucretian “clinamen,” within the even flow of public utility. This is like a space within layers of tissue, the creation of new dimensions within others that flow past. As with René Daumal’s unfinished fantasy, *Mount Analogue*, where seekers of the truth-imparting jewel, the paradam, must penetrate the pocket of invisible space containing the island whose mountain is the sole source of these gems, the site of exception is a machine that manages visibility and invisibility. Entry is conditional, based on one’s personal character and resistance to ideology.

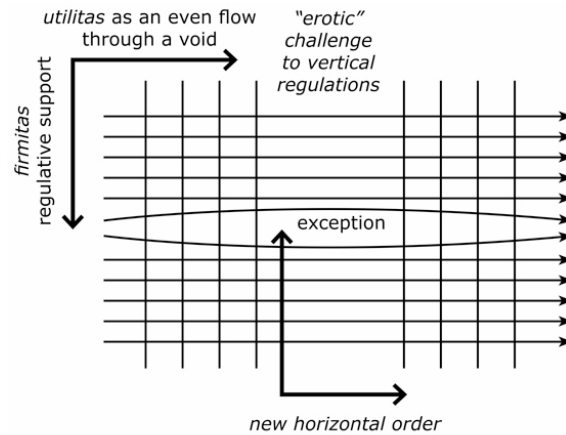


Figure 1.2. In terms of the Lucretian concept of reality as an even flow of atoms along a void, the site of exception interrupts the smooth laminar flow of activities (*utilitas*) regulated vertically (*firmitas*) by challenging the vertical order and installing a new horizontality as a site of exception. In this “clinamen,” horizontality continues to resist the ideology of the vertical by imposing practices at the level of appearances: $\phi/\neg\phi$.

Venustas is the order of the festival, but also the natural disaster, the fire, the flood, the earthquake. Disaster films reveal the curious attraction of the destruction of architecture. A pleasure comes from the negative of annihilation. Karlheinz Stockhausen pointed this out with his unpopular remark, that the destruction of the World Trade Towers on September 11, 2001, was an unrivaled aesthetic masterpiece. *Venustas*, in its destructive or constructive form, interrupts “business as usual.”

Thus, the observation by Rancière, that the police’s response to *venustas* of exception is to order passersby to “move on ... nothing to see here,” demonstrating that the police have a perfect grasp of the calculus.²⁵ They intuitively couple the horizontal flow of *utilitas* in Lucretian terms with commanded invisibility of Eros! We should always ask: “invisibility of *what* and invisible *for whom*?” The site of exception will always be a matter of an architecture of *venustas*, of architecture *as venustas*.²⁶

A minimalistic graphic calculus

If Lacan’s idea of extimity is the generative principle of the site of exception, thanks to its “Hegelian autopoiesis,” metalepsis can be expanded in terms that preserve and explain extimity’s theme of the inside-out. I would like to take up extimity by means of its two principal components, which are able to appear independently: (1) double inscription, the mutual contamination of two opposite terms and (2) reversed predication, the sudden flip of a relation of containment, dominance, or possession. Double inscription might be described as the process whereby two polar terms reach a second stage where neither term vanquishes the other, but each undergoes a transformation (cf. the master and slave’s “sublation” of each other’s positions). Each term is “inscribed” into its opposite, and thus both are preserved. This is the process Ernst Jentsch used to describe how the basic division between “alive” (A) and “dead” (D) generates the key terms of the uncanny, i.e. the condition of the living person drawn to a fated end, A_D , and D_A , the dead subject who has “forgotten how to die” and continues the momentum of life through the period Jacques Lacan has called “between the two deaths.”²⁷ The uncanny is what it is, so to speak,

because double inscription has created two mirror conditions, and these conditions are well known through their cultural manifestations in religion, ritual, folklore, and the arts.²⁸

Reversed predication, the reversal of a container–contained relationship, as in the metonymy of the part for the whole (“heads of state,” “all hands on deck,” etc.), makes double inscription into something that can be fleshed out in space and time. This representation, however, creates a problem. Reversed predication is a condition that, *to an observer who frames it*, seems to flip in an inexplicable way. Examples include: an unexpected reversal of a visual figure and its ground; an unexpected dominance of a part over a whole; a sudden realization of an anamorphic element hidden in a graphic work.²⁹ The surprise reversal, which typically appears to be a magic event, discovers a state that has been present “all along” as a topological reality; but topology is not capable of surprise until we *project* it and deprive its key dimension of its visibility. Topology is to diegesis what answers are to a crossword puzzler. Engagement comes from delaying the answers, in experiencing the problem without the solution, the effect without the cause. But, without the presumed reality of answers — i.e. without topology — diegetic suspense makes no sense, nonsense.

Alienation is endured as suffering, but we do not suffer alienation naturally. We have to *learn how to suffer*, and this learning is key to our subjectivity and tied to the experience of extimacy.³⁰ For topology, the distinction “inside/outside” makes no sense; it is only when we use projective spatial representation or linear time that we “have to choose” between one view or the other. Mimesis converts interiority, the framed representation, into an exterior, an “imitation of life.” Thanks to diegesis, this conversion takes place silently, with the consensus of the audience and actors. When the tranquility of mimesis is interrupted by metalepsis, the whole logic of diegetic framing is imported, and as a result we experience the instability of dissensus. In the case of the defeat of General George Custer at the hands of the Lakota Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Indians at the Little Bighorn, it would make no difference topologically that the Indians surrounded Custer or Custer surrounded them. Of course, it made a difference to Custer. “Reversed predication” means that the container–contained relationship is unstable; that extimacy is taking place. This is why Custer was *surprised*.

To explain double inscription and reversed predication, topology can account for mechanics, but the affective results — surprise, suspense, and the uncanny — are not just as illusionistic byproducts. They are the intended results. We need a “calculus” to notate topological transformations and their subjective effects. The point is not to explain away the effects as illusions but, rather, show how these effects, as an aesthetics, come to serve as the fuel of the dissensus that makes places and times what they are in human terms. The remarkable thing is not just that humans learn their subjectivity through the identification with the negative, the death drive; but that they also assimilate the *economy* that converts the delayed complexities of this economy into immediacies of effect. The calculus may help explore how this happens.

Extimacy can be described in minimalistic graphic terms, as $\langle \rangle \rightarrow \gg$. Translation: a series of predications is bounded by two elements, $\langle \dots \rangle$, frames that are themselves “partners” in a reversed predication, \langle becomes \rangle . Birth is “life over death,” $L > D$; death is defeat, $D > L$. These partners are “flipped” and planted inside the sequence as a vertical intruder, $\langle \dots \uparrow \dots \rangle$, which then acts as an internal frame at a particular site (\gg). When this inside frame appears in the phenomenal–mimetic sequence, $\langle \dots \gg \dots \rangle$, this insertion takes on the nature of $\phi / \neg \phi$, a metalepsis combining vertical and horizontal

components and “rotating” the chain so that its framing and contents can be viewed simultaneously: $\langle \dots \varphi / -\varphi \dots \rangle$ or $\langle \dots T \rightarrow \neg T \dots \rangle$.

Because of the curious nature of extimacy, the contents of the framed enclosure $\langle \dots \rangle$, mimesis, is as much an exterior as an interior. Thus, \gg can be described as an inside frame whether it appears within an exteriority, such as an Occupy site as a pop-up on public land, or an interiority, as when the audience sees a version of itself inside the play or film, watching a play or film. Mimesis is an “imitation of life.” With the frames set up by diegesis, it creates the sense of life’s externality. The visible mimesis inside the brackets, $\langle \dots \rangle$, is bounded by super-sensible, *meta*-physical elements, but we must remember to ask, “super-sensible *to what*, and *for whom*. The \langle and \rangle are forbidden by rules of contiguous virtuality to appear within $\langle \dots \rangle$. Exteriority and interiority are relative to this frame. The invisibility of the diegetic elements allows mimesis to be perceived as an exterior. Because (1) mimesis lies within a reversed predication and (2) the “contents” of mimesis themselves involve a series of reverse predications, as in temporal succession of one moment by the next, relations between inside and outside are stabilized only in local, tentative ways — hence, the tonality of “the uncanny” is a permanent and radically substantive interior of mimesis.

In my minimalistic calculus, extimacy, $\langle \rangle \rightarrow \gg$, brings a sequence of things or actions, $\langle \dots \rangle$, into direct conflict with its topology, which is super-sensible. In topology $\langle \rangle$ and \gg are equivalent and unnoteworthy, but in the seriality of mimesis, a crisis of detached virtuality occurs. Each crisis pits mimesis’s sequentiality, its aspect as narrative, against topology. The forms of this conflict — double inscription, reversed predication, the inside frame, etc. — engineer the highly charged experiential effects of extimacy, exception, absurdity, the undead, and so on. The radical uncanniness of mimesis invites us to introduce the calculus through Jentsch’s two principal forms, A_D (the living subject drawn to a fatalistic end) and D_A (the momentum of the dead subject past the point of literal death).

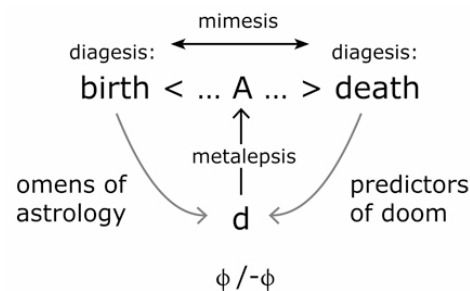


Figure 1.3. Ernst Jentsch specified two key themes of the uncanny in terms of a double inscription of opposites — the living person drawn to a fatalistic end (A_D) and the momentum of the dead soul past literal death to a second, symbolic death (D_A). In the first condition, the alive subject (A) has death inscribed as an interior kernel of fate, operating within an “inside frame.” The mimetic field, $\langle \dots \rangle$, framed by diegetic elements, the reversed predicates of “birth/death,” is invaded by the metalepsis of death, present in the form of past prophecies and future omens. Birth succeed by death, $B < D$, and death survived, $B > D$, become $B < > D$, then $B < \dots > D$, “invaded” by the $\varphi / -\varphi$, which “signalizes” the uncanny and materializes the frame elements.

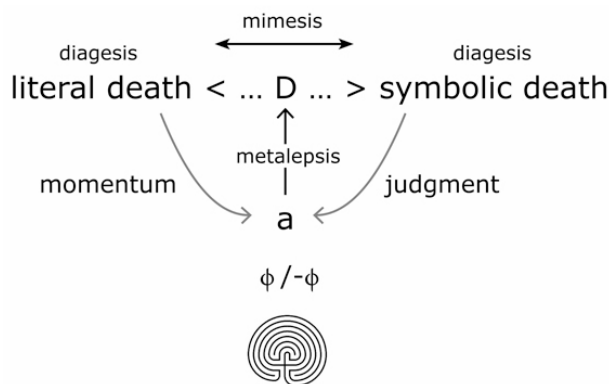


Figure 1.4. In the reversed predication of the uncanny, “between the two deaths,” D_A , is framed by the *literal* and *symbolic* deaths. The mimetic field is haunted by the futurity of judgment propelled by the momentum of the soul after the moment of literal death. The classic symbol of this interval, the classical Thesean labyrinth, conveys this directly, by representing $\phi/-\phi$ as a series of unintuitive directional reversals. The ‘a’ is the multi-purpose Lacanian *objet petit a* as well as the Aristotelian *automaton*, animating the interval between the two deaths with a desire/life akin to machine movement.

Metalepsis, the breakdown of the rules that insulate the diegetic point of view from the mimetic content, folds time and space using detached virtuality’s four main forms to manage the surpluses and shortfalls of appearance. The diegetic frame begins as an insulation device. What happens on the stage stays on the stage, and the mimetic life of the stage suggests that the rules of ordinary reality are enforced. In diegesis without metalepsis, no dream or story contaminates reality, even a fictional one. No character can be found in two places at once. Omens are just as spooky as they are in ordinary life. Metalepsis takes on these established rules of insulation in order to break them, connecting *what not ought to be connected*. The site of exception consolidates its uncanny architecture through compacting these violations into sudden appearance, disappearance, and reappearance.

I use the notation $\phi/-\phi$ to link the “phi phenomenon” of visual continuity in the psychology of perception to the phallic function of visibility/invisibility in specific relation to the boundary. Boundaries and phalluses have been linked since ancient times, when stone “herms” with erect phalluses were used to mark the boundaries of fields and burial grounds.³¹ Where the point of view has maintained a “vertical” detachment, an “aerial viewpoint” so to speak, its collapse into mimesis involves an entry into the horizontal of spatio-temporality of relations “on the ground.” Here, “horizontal” is not simply a formal alternative to the verticality of ideology and hierarchy. It is a means of construction, of engaging an architecture essential to the politics of dissensus. Politics, like aesthetics, is a ubiquity and eternity, in the form of a place and a time.

Three ways of describing diegesis/mimesis: being, symbol, technē

Thus, we should discuss the political in terms of the topology of extimity and the formation of “sites of exception,” which we *experience* as detached virtuality and may *understand* as metalepsis. But, first, back to the “ideology of the everyday” and the “distribution of the sensible” as a hierarchy connecting the power of “masters” who “have a part” as citizens to servants, who have no part even if only for lack of time.³² There are three recognized ways of styling this hierarchy. The first is as the “Great Chain of

Being,” where pure spirit—as–will radiates downward through successively less spiritual creations, finally ending in whatever lacks use of its own will entirely and is powerless, abject. I described this chain in terms of a “pyramid of power” in the opening of this essay.

A second aspect of the relations of mastery is as a system of symbolic relationships where, like a language, a self-defined, self-generating axiomatic system desires “maximal coverage” within its own grammatical and rhetorical rules; language or any other symbolic system as a “causal chain.”³³ The chain is not taut; its signifiers “slide past” each other; meaning is “postponed” by defining one term by another, which is in turn defined by another, etc. This circularity guarantees that the Symbolic will aspire to be a “world” of signification capable of relating to anything and everything. This means that speaking a language constitutes a full range of subjectivity, of all possible relations to the world, but that different languages construct different “worlds,” where each language experiences the contrast between not being able to say exactly what one means and saying too much (a key example of $<$ and $>$), i.e. evidence of an unconscious.

Finally, we might imagine a series of mechanized conversions between nature and culture. Nature as dominant is reversed into natural resource: $< \rightarrow >$. Natural resources are converted into useful goods, the raw gets cooked, the instrumental attitude sees everything as useful for some human end. Consumption justifies destruction. Here, as in the case of symbolic systems, the aim is to attain “maximal coverage,” i.e. dominion over the earth and its resources, an adaptation of the pyramid of power as a set of mechanistic practices, technologies, automations. This frame of consumerism, $< \dots >$, has as its predicating elements, the idea of mastery, $M<$, and the idea of automation of will, $>S$. Anything that can be engineered to take orders is, in this sense, a “slave” of the consumer system, an automaton. The series inside the frame is chain of *technē*, so to speak. We can even imagine language in terms of *technē*, language reduced to its designative, indicative function, able to give orders, define things, declare mastery. But, *technē* as work or accomplishment contains the kernel of reversed predication at that sums up the irony of mastery. As is evident in cultures that preserve the traditions of the demonic “key” within matter that must be placated in order to convert natural resources into consumable goods, each act of craft or art involves a gap between nature and culture that cannot, as negative, be dispelled. Mastery is always a gain that incurs a debt, and the theme of debt collection, as in the story of Faust, is as famous as it is universal.

The Hegelian case of “master $< \dots >$ slave” develops the pyramid of power in human terms. We can not only imagine pure will in terms of human examples, we have a history replete with cases. Similarly, servitude is a general quality of human life, endured by anyone in a state where orders of some Other must be followed. The calculus anticipates Hegel’s insights into this formula, however. It predicts that irony will use the pretext of appearance and disappearance, $\phi / -\phi$, to discover the irony of the master’s situation, i.e. that only a slave, not an equal, can be enlisted to admire the master and thus gain the upper hand; that $M \leftrightarrow S$ will be stable in ways that $M_1 > M_2$, masters confronting each other (war, duels, massacres, etc.), can never be. In history, stability equals survival.

The action of the calculus is simple. Diegesis frames a mimetic field; metalepsis recombines the framing elements in material ways tied to appearance/disappearance and inserts them into this field. The point of insertion appears to be an exception, but in fact it is the logic of the whole, brought into focus through an instance that calls forth latent truths, ancient topologies. The exception is the voice of the repressed; it

cannot speak directly, it must “signalize.”³⁴ Each approach to the relations of mastery, of being, symbol, or power, requires the creation of externalities that, reincorporated into the interior, work as “subjective objects,” as *signalizers*, as demonic “ghosts in the machine.”³⁵ Each re-inscription of the external positions excluded by the frame into the mimetic world within the frame resists the smooth, hierarchical structuring of frame as ideology. Thus, each holds the potentiality of dissensus, and the emergence of the political, through the architecture of the site of exception.

While this model of dissensus, like the human project in general, is always subject to the threat of self-extermination — dissensus cannot be converted into a sustainable utopia — neither does even the worst gulag lack the potential to become a site of exception. Like language, where any expression always falls short of what is intended but paradoxically says more, the human project *in general* is a case of too little and too much, a permanent *scale dysfunctional* condition, $\langle \rangle$, which Lacan condensed into the *poinçon* symbol that appeared in his *matheme* for fantasy, $\$ \diamond a$.³⁶ Like the $\langle \rangle$, things can become $\rangle \langle$ through the site of exception, through the actions of metalepsis and “detached virtuality” that materialize the “political potentiality,” as an unconscious present through architecture.

The calculus of metalepsis sets up a means of economizing the discussion of how re-inscription within the frame constitutes the *venustas* of the architecture of the site of exception, and how this *venustas*, as demon Eros, uses detached virtuality to dimensionalize its distinctive spaces and times. Part 2 returns to Hegel’s parable of Lordship and Bondage to renew fundamental relationships linking mastery to signification and the formation of sites of exception using detached virtuality.

Part 2: *Rear Window*, Mastery, and the Story in a Story

Metalepsis is essentially the detached virtuality of the “story in a story.” The audience sees itself inside the mimetic representation, in the form of a fictionalized double. This seems natural enough, but this duplication flips a switch. Mimesis now absorbs the job of diegesis. The predication of theatrical space, by which backstage \langle stage \rangle auditorium, is turned 90° so that the old audience can witness it in *enfilade*, $T \rightarrow \perp$. In this position, the irony is on full display. In the custom by which the backstage and auditorium must be silent whenever the stage is active, we have a “square wave” oscillation between appearance and disappearance: $| +\phi | -\phi | +\phi |$ before the curtain goes up, $| -\phi | +\phi | -\phi |$ when the show is active and the backstage and auditorium must remain dark and silent. Other “detached virtualities” support and complete this view of the story in a story, which turns the square wave on its side. The double enters into the frame under a variety of embodiments: rivalries, replacements, mistaken identities. Once the vertical process of spectation is rotated to its horizontal position, contamination freely flows among stories, dreams, and represented realities. And, because every story is a travel to the past that can convert to an omen of the future, metalepsis also provides us a time machine. Once metalepsis takes over, we can see the light-in-darkness and darkness-in-light conditions that qualify mimetic appearance as an economy of enigma.

What of other cases where, specifically, the desire to appear is compromised by such enigma? Such is the situation of the Master, who aspires to appear as a master, but who is thwarted by the composite irony of invisibility inside visibility. How does the square wave, then, model $M \langle \dots \rangle S$, whose framing elements appear within the mimetic frame? How does it explain the miniature monster of $\phi / -\phi$, the anamorphic appearance that complicates the (failed) function of mastery and the troubled flesh of the master, which must travel between mortification and deification?³⁷

Because both Hegel and Lacan considered the issue of mastery as central, we may compare their respective projects. Hegel's mastery is the closest to our ideas of power, ideology, and politics. Lacan's idea of mastery concerns the individual subject's aspiration yet failure — to meet demands, to express, to know truth. From the Mirror Stage onward, the subject is a negative project, a shortcoming within the aspirations of the Symbolic to represent the world adequately. Žižek: “[T]he subject is ... the very abyss that forever separates language from the substantial life process.”³⁸ Lordship and Bondage would be just a cruel conundrum were it not for metalepsis and the antagonism, within appearance and disappearance, between the horizontal and the vertical. It is the very irony of the Hegelian parable about mastery that reveals metalepsis as an operator that fleshes out the abstract relationship of mastery through the materialities of appearing and disappearing. Lacan metabolized this irony through the concept of extimity and reinvested it within his ideas of discourse, enunciation, visibility, and partial objects.

Mastery-as-failure is also central to architecture, and most particular to architecture as *venustas*, where the demonic challenge to the zenithal ideology of the everyday involves many Hegelian and Lacanian techniques. But, it is difficult to demonstrate the utility of failure amidst the demands of the everyday, where failure is officially avoided. The experiments we must undertake to uncover the inner workings of *venustas* must explore the territory of fantasies, and in particular in works of art, where failed subjectivity is the principal source of interest.³⁹

First, let us pull mastery into focus through the calculus. The master, M, and slave, S, first stand in a simple relation of predication, $M > S$. The master has power over the servant; the servant, as servant, has no effective will other than the master's. The master as a framing element embodies “pure will”: no content, no thoughts, no knowledge. But, the master cannot *represent him/herself* satisfactorily to other masters because they wish to do exactly the same thing. The obligation of the master to appear creates the “field of honor,” the battlefield or dueling ground, to which every master must submit, risking death. Only the servant can preserve the master's honor in any sustainable way, but this must be done indirectly, by metonymizing the master as a name and a “house,” allowing the servant to invest respect in something more godlike than the frail flesh of any individual master — thus, the laws of inheritance. Through this series of breakdowns and repairs, $S > M$, and the parable of Lordship and Bondage becomes $M < S$.⁴⁰ Thus $<$ is also a house maintained by servants $< \dots >$, whose work — the knowledge, skills, and labor — miniaturizes and multiplies the irony of reversed predication, as nature is converted to goods for the master to enjoy. The master remains outside of this thanks to his or her implicit ignorance; the servant is also a $-\phi$ in the process, first because the master's will directs all work, second, because the square wave function of metalepsis requires “diegetic” elements to be invisible (something easily detected on plans of castles, villas, etc.). The $M < \dots > S$ schematic generates many workable forms, some of them extremely literal, as in Palladio's designs for farming estates in the Veneto.

Because the master and servant alike are withdrawn from this field of *technē*, the architectural example of the courtyard serves well. The servant is commanded to remain out of sight unless obeying the master's instructions. Masters and servants appear only with liveries and protocols that maintain an abstract honor in the face of an invisible gaze of the Other. Everyone in this system must “keep up appearances.” The master is a murderer, retaining from ancient times the combined function of priest, king, and executioner — the hand as well as voice of the law. The servant's ironic witness distinguishes, however, between the master as a mortal particular and mastery embodied in the idea of honor. While the servant subscribes to

the former and survives, in the latter the servant collectivizes into a Greek chorus. The appearance of the master according to protocol, ϕ , is balanced by the gaze appropriated by the servants as powerless witnesses, $-\phi$. Servants, who have in the chorus become “more in themselves than themselves,” $S>S$, i.e. *pure reversed predication*, may not act, but they may look.

The courtyard, $\langle \dots \rangle$, is a place of production, of predication. It is also a place of witness, where the contractual invisibilities of master and servant stand opposite each other, $M\langle \dots \dots \rangle S$. But, there is a slight asymmetry, related to the reversed predication powers of the servant. The slave *as slave* is able to penetrate the master’s darkness, while the master can barely tell his slaves apart.⁴¹

Dissensus and the calculus of Rear Window

I would prefer to use a film example so that the reader may have full access to the performance as it was intended to be experienced by the audience. I would also prefer an example where $A\langle \dots \rangle B$ as the space of reception is also the design of the set, as well as the temporal configuration of the plot. It would be hard to find a better example than Alfred Hitchcock’s 1954 film, *Rear Window*, shot entirely within a single set constructed inside the studio at Paramount. $A\langle \dots \rangle B$ materializes as an urban interior courtyard. The point of view character, Jeff Jefferies (James Stewart) is convalescing from a broken leg suffered on an assignment as an action photographer. In the opening scenes, we survey the wreckage: the plaster cast on his leg, his smashed camera, the last photo presumably taken just before he was hit. Jeff’s studio apartment with its large rear window, α , is, for the movie’s audience, a kind of forecourt inserted between them and the mimesis of life around the courtyard: $A\langle \alpha \langle \dots \rangle B$.

Opposite this constructed overlook, we see an apartment whose rooms appear in enfilade that Jeff can view from the side, \dashv : $A\langle \alpha \langle \dots \rangle \dashv \rangle B$. Lars Thorwald (Raymond Burr), a jewelry salesman, tends his invalid wife. Anna scolds her husband for his boring meals and overhears phone calls to a girlfriend. This troubled marriage relates in a loose way to Jeff’s relation to his glamorous socialite girlfriend, Lisa Fremont (Grace Kelly), who visits him to press her case for marriage. Jeff, a slave by virtue of his injury, begins to take pleasure in watching Thorwald carefully. Thorwald, in Jeff’s illicit spy-view, turns out to be a master of the Bluebeard kind. Across the optical field, $\langle \dots \rangle$, Jefferies inserts inside frames thanks to his telephoto lens, $\langle \dots \rangle \langle \dots \rangle$, converting fragmentary observations into telling signs of murder. Each conversion of an observation into evidence is contested, first by Lisa and then by Jefferies’ wartime buddy, now NYPD Detective Thomas Doyle. Lisa is converted when she sees Thorwald packing a shipping trunk. Her conversion is confirmed when Jeff reports Lars has been looking through Anna’s handbag: No woman goes on a trip and leaves her handbag behind! As evidence builds, a conclusive test is devised. If Thorwald possesses his wife’s wedding ring, it must be because the wife is no longer able to wear it: $wife>ring \rightarrow ring>wife \rightarrow \langle \rangle$, an inside frame converting the comedy of everyday life into a murder story.

Jefferies and Thorwald, slave and master, also embody the two paradigmatic conditions of the uncanny. Jeff’s convalescence mimics the interval “between the two deaths,” D_A . In fact, we have no clear evidence that the entire movie is not a death dream.⁴² It is entirely possible that Jeff died in the accident and, in the remaining seconds before death, dreamed of his life as he would have wished it to conclude. Thorwald’s concealment of the wedding ring sets up the thread of fate whose hook can be jerked from any distance, in

this case the dark distance separating his apartment from Jeff's, a distance strung with the filament of magnified optics. Thorwald's A_D is the A_D of all murder stories, the discovery and capture of whodunit.

Within this uncanny dialectic, the discovery of the wedding ring, \diamond , becomes the film's most dramatic plot point. When Lisa breaks into Thorwald's apartment but is surprised by an angry Lars (the police arrive just in time), she "signalizes" to Jeff while the police question her. She has found Anna's wedding ring and now, with her back to Jeff, who is watching through his camera from across the courtyard, points to it on her own finger, held behind her back. The hand and ring enter into the Real and silent space of the servant/chorus whose gaze has sought vengeance for the murdered wife. Thorwald notices and realizes Jeff's surveillance. This small case of reverse predication (the ring's *detachment* from Anna Thorwald means that Anna is dead, $A > r \rightarrow r > A$) brings about the reversed predication of Lars to Jeff, $B > A \rightarrow A < B$.

This plot point triggers a high-suspense ending sequence, which also employs a series of miniaturized reversed predications. Thorwald locates Jeff's apartment through a test phone call. Jeff cannot lock his door in time; his wheelchair cannot make it over the raised dais at the entry — a dais that at the beginning of the film was used as a stage to show off Lisa's expensive fashion apparel. Lisa had tied this stage to turning on lights — one lamp for each of her three names. In the final scene, Jeff has engineered a duplication of this three-fold illumination. He plans to stall Thorwald's advance by popping off flash bulbs in the darkened room to buy some time in hopes that the police will come before it's too late. "Before it's too late" had also echoed in Lisa's case for marriage, and the three flashes — $\phi/-\phi$, $\phi/-\phi$, $\phi/-\phi$ — symmetrically match Lisa's introduction, when she announces her name by turning on three lights. Thorwald is captured and, thanks to Jeff's second fall, another broken leg has fully domesticated him. Jeff in the final scene sleeps contentedly as Lisa reads a *Beyond the High Himalayas*.⁴³ This is the new horizontality of happy marriage, of dissensus made apparent as Lisa replaces the travel adventure book with the fashion magazine, *Harper's Bazaar*.

As is the case with comedies in general, one wedding is not enough. Jeff's metaleptic camera lens has corrected the murder of Anna Thorwald — a counterpoint played across the vertical dimension with themes of burial, the digging up of evidence by the "dog who knew too much," and the climb into Thorwald's apartment for the key evidence. Predications-as-marriages had been delayed until this vertical was rectified. And, it turns out that the delayed predications all reflect something of the vertical in their own corrections. Miss Lonelyhearts, the spinster on the ground floor whose suicide was interrupted by music coming from The Composer's third-floor studio, now visits him to listen to a recording of his successfully published song. Miss Torso, plagued by tall suitors, is overjoyed when her short Odysseus returns from the Army. The couple with "the dog who knew too much" have found a new pet, whom they initiate to the basket-drop to the courtyard. These "delayed predications" reverse the old, melancholy ones. The verticality of surprising coincidence has corrected the verticality of ideology. The symmetry that was latent, as potentiality, a case of $-\phi$ as topology, is now made visible, ϕ , as marriage. As horizontal glue, this ϕ corrects the symmetry of the courtyard as a site of exception. The marriage idea overtakes the normal model of the city as a collection of strangers.

The detached virtuality of Rear Window

Without the devices of detached virtuality, the unity of the set, the plot, and the idea of *Rear Window*'s story could not have been established. The antagonism that made Jeff and Lars doubles in the sense of rivals and symmetrical opposites could not have been activated through Jeff's surveillance or Lisa's break-in. The double inscription of Thorwald's apartment by the story of murder, which made it stand out in stark contrast to the other residents' stories of simple insufficiency, would not have gained the status of a story in a story, the sub-plot of investigation set within the failing romance of Jeff and Lisa. The plot of *Rear Window*, like the "police procedural," reverts to temporal reconstruction once the story of the crime is inserted within the story of failing romance. The wedding ring in particular establishes *in retrospect* the moment when Thorwald must have removed it from Anna's dead hand. Clues point backward to the crime and forward to the necessary echo of punishment. Once details become clues, they are reversely predicated, and the gap between the two states of "just a detail" and "sign of a crime" is vertical, composite, and reciprocal.

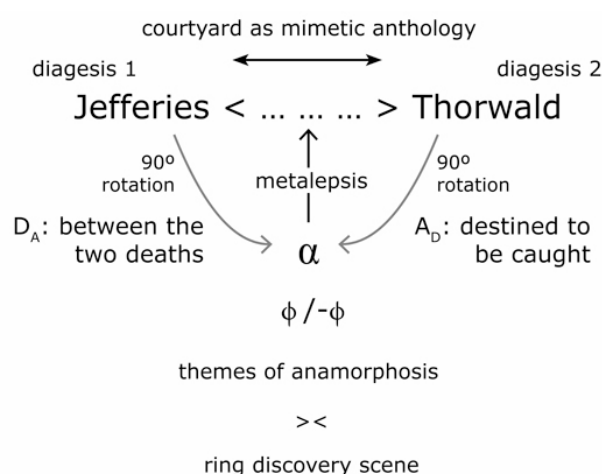


Figure 1.5. *Rear Window*'s mimetic field is the interior urban courtyard, which is a physical model of the anthology that narrates separate half-stories that will be joined in the end. This final collective marriage first requires a trial of economies managed by metalepsis. The framing elements, Jefferies' studio apartment and the Thorwalds' enfilade of three rooms, a story in a story, are thematized separately by the uncanny's two primary conditions. Jefferies is "between the two deaths," thanks to his broken leg; Thorwald is the living person who conceals the corpse of his wife, whose wedding ring will "signalize" his guilt as the details are converted into clues leading to his arrest and conviction.

When Jeff's policeman friend Doyle argues that not all suspicious things are evidence of crimes, he is claiming essentially, "detail>sign-of-crime." When a detail becomes a clue, this predication is reversed: "detail<sign-of-crime." The gap between > and < is vertical, double, and bi-directional: \updownarrow . The downward verticality of crime calls for an upward correction. Even the historical punishment for murder, hanging, suggests that verticality is implicit in the logic of crime and punishment and crime's traditional close collaboration with ideology, as a publically accepted legal arrangement.

The double vertical is the highway along which metalepsis travels to insert the spatio-temporality of detached virtuality within the mimesis of the initial story: $A \langle \dots \updownarrow \dots \rangle B$. We have, after all, a film whose story is about what the audience does in order to enjoy any film — i.e. watch from the protection of darkness, under imposition of silence. The opening credits make this clear as the "curtain" of the film is

symbolized by slowly raising the three screens covering Jeff's apartment window. (The lowering of these same screens at the end of the film, conclusive evidence of Hitchcock's intention to signalize the relation of Jeff's voyeurism to the audience's, had been cut but added back with the restoration of the film in 1999.) The $\mathbb{1}$ is equivalent to the $\emptyset/\neg\emptyset$ of appearance and disappearance, which occurs in the gap between reversed predications as well. This is the gap that theory must "interrogate" in order to develop a comprehensive theory of dissensus in its relation to the architecture of sites of exception. One cannot collect sites of exception to put in a portfolio; one cannot even photograph a site of exception. What is "there" is the experience of the site. But, in works of art, the events that manage visibility and invisibility offer a guide to what happens outside of art, in the world of politics simple. Here, the reversible dictum of "life copies art" proves true. Mimesis it seems is a two-way street. The intention to employ metalepsis, the recognition of the need for each of the four forms of detached virtuality, and the explicit deployment of horizontality and visuality in both literal and figurative ways in works of art provide an extensive collection of laboratories in which we may observe the laws of exception in Real time.

In sum ...

The figure of metalepsis brings a fresh perspective to the operation of dissensus within physical settings, where the architecture of "sites of exception" at the same time establishes retroactively that part of architecture that is architecture — i.e. its root relationship to *venustas*. Metalepsis deploys a logic by which diegetic framing elements are materialized as (phallic/phenomenal/material) elements whose anamorphic qualities create an uncanny disturbance within the mimesis of framed representation. The framing elements themselves constitute a case of reversed predication, a container-contained or hierarchical relationship that has "flipped." This primary instability at the phenomenal level is nonetheless a stable topology within subjectivity as a whole; and the process of obversion is, as Lacan's idea of extimacy demonstrates, fundamental to the subject's realization of subjectivity as fundamentally negative.

Despite the complexity of conditions and perplexities that result from translating topological conditions into "projective" experience, a calculus that represents the verticality of diegesis and the horizontality of metalepsis shows how historically well-established cultural practices (the uncanny, detached virtuality, storytelling strategies, ideological formations, etc.) have involved metalepsis as an operational logic. Architecture and landscape theory, in moving from interpretive to active modes, may use such a calculus to recast theory as primarily experimental, pro-active, and provocative. As Nadir Lahiji has put it, architecture theory must be "infinite responsibility without alibi." Critical questions are those that must be re-cast continually within new epistemologies and new vocabularies. What remains the same is the gap, which the subject must learn to interrogate, and through such interrogation to "tarry with the negative" that is subjectivity's essential nature.⁴⁴

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Endnotes

- 1 The idea of zenithal authority has been elaborated by Stefano Boeri (“Eclectic Atlases,” in *The Cybercities Reader*), as a part of his interest in “Eclectic Atlases” created from the “horizontal data” of subjective interaction.
- 2 In this present volume, Nadir Lahiji has carried forward the case that Rancière’s key idea of dissensus is perhaps the most pivotal for architecture theory. Lahiji has developed an original and persuasive position that architecture, the political, and the unconscious constitute a triangle of the indispensable for architecture theory, and his lectures, writings, and seminars are the key sources for my thoughts on these issues.
- 3 The association of political action with bright colors may be one reason for their lack of enduring success. Slavoj Žižek has warned the Occupy Movement that protest as if it were a kind of “party.” In response to an Occupy member’s statement that they were out just to “have a good time,” Žižek replied: “Such statements display one of the great dangers the protesters are facing: the danger that they will fall in love with themselves, with the nice time they are having in the ‘occupied’ places.” Slavoj Žižek, “Occupy Wall Street:

What Is To Be Done Next?" *The Guardian*, Tuesday 24 April 2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2012/apr/24/occupy-wall-street-what-is-to-be-done-next>. Accessed July 4, 2013.

- 4 Several commentators have noted that *Dasein*, literally "being there," for Heidegger was unambiguously a state of being out of place, a radical discomfiture. For the more popular, sanitized "lite" view, see Sarah Robinson, *Nesting: Body, Dwelling, Mind*: "If we close our eyes and take a deep breath, and summon meaningful memories, we quickly notice that they are tied to a specific place. The place evokes a network of sensations, the warmth of sunlight on your skin, the smell of your love, the sound of her voice. Architecture, through its unique means, creates a harbor for these ephemeral, tangible things."
- 5 This would sound like a reactionary exaggeration if these strategies of appropriation did not have such high visibility and credibility confirmed by the very literal encouragements of many, whose views are summed up by Michael Speaks, "After Theory: Debate in Architectural Schools Rages about the Value of Theory and Its Effect on Innovation in Design," *Architectural Record* 193, 6 (June 2005): 72–75.
- 6 As a general guide to understanding the background of *dissensus*, it is necessary to consider the role psychoanalysis may play in the construction of new architecture theory on the subject. See Todd McGowan, *Enjoying What We Can't Have*, 25–51.
- 7 I have reviewed this film from several different angles before. As with all works of art, its wealth is never likely to be exhausted by any analysis. Donald Kunze, "From Babel to Hitchcock: Suture, Interpolation, and Absence in the Formation of Architectural Meaning," *Intersight* 7, ed. Keith Johnson (2004): 187–200. What makes this study different is the persistent, helpful guidance of Nadir Lahiji, who has, over the past ten years, guided me to an interest in Jacques Lacan's idea of extimacy, Jacques Rancière's idea of dissensus, and many other concepts critical to my projects. Lahiji's patience in my gradual accession of theory's obligations to the (Jamesonian) political and the (Lacanian) unconscious has been extraordinary.
- 8 In addition to using the more extreme term, "slave," in addition to "servant, to emphasize the way the subject's will can be appropriated by and re-assigned to the Other, I choose the characterization of homelessness so that we might connect the bottom of the power hierarchy with the condition of the uncanny, which in German retains the relationship to home: *Das Unheimlich*, the "unhomely." I hope to show that the relationship is neither casual nor accidental.
- 9 I purposely inserted the terms *animus* and *anima* to link this framing to Giambattista Vico's discussion of Stoic physics in his *Autobiography of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Max Harold Fisch and Thomas Goddard Bergin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 148–149. Vico realizes the shortcomings of this as a theory of physics but relocates it into an idea of *ingenium*, where metaphor is able to animate, in a quite "unnatural way," particulars of expressions, images, and ideas by inserting a sharp expression, which he identifies with *cælum*, which conveniently means both "heaven" and "a wedge." The irony of one and the same word representing the highest manifestation of spirituality and the lowest type of tool possibly gave Vico the idea of the frame constituted by these two extremes of power and powerlessness, able to structure everything in between.
- 10 The bottom of the Pyramid of Power is mute and invisible in negative ways relative to the layers above but positively in the ways in which slavery converts to a mastery of nature, through skills and knowledge that will be unknown and invisible to the master in Hegel's parable of Lordship and Bondage. Villas of wealthy Romans provided special passageways so that slaves would be invisible until the moment they would appear to serve their masters. Their speech was limited by custom and law. In the positive sense, however, their skills and knowledge of the materials they converted for the enjoyment of their masters accumulated and was passed on, a kind of "mute speech" embedded in the material cause of production.
- 11 Jacques Rancière, "Introducing Disagreement," 6. Lacanians will immediately recognize the potential of Rancière's specific use of the term "appearing" as related to the phallic function of sudden appearance and disappearance as well as perceptual psychology's "phi function." The ϕ is also the magician's bread and butter, no less the psychoanalyst's. The ϕ and $-\phi$, in oscillation with each other, contain not just a simple "now you see it now you don't" functionality but an entire logic of visibility and blindness, a means of concealing within (ideological) content of experience an alternative sensorial program, i.e. anamorphosis in the most general sense. The appearance of the ϕ and $-\phi$ is that of the composite "partial object," exiled originally to the periphery but suddenly revealed within the central interior, a *monstrum* of the margin and marginality.
- 12 Steve Corcoran, "Editor's Introduction," in Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus*, 2.
- 13 Rancière and others have noted that aesthetics as a "science of art" is not historically valid. This specialized application occurred well after the classic texts on aesthetics, Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* (1750) and Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790), inspired by Edmund Burke's *Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), appeared.
- 14 Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 12.
- 15 Where Slavoj Žižek cites Varela's description of autopoiesis in his essay, "The Emergent Self," the results are "metalepsis without diegesis." What the autopoiesis of natural systems lacks, and what autopoiesis as a model of human mind firmly possesses, is the construction of the point of view, a consciousness that requires the presumption of a consciousness "already in place." Varela's "logical bootstrap" appears as a defect ("paradox") that admits no further explanation. It is a topology that relies on exegesis of a reflective account to be a topology. But, the topology of metalepsis—with—diegesis, e.g. a point of view, builds the point of view into the idea of boundary. The point of view is the alienation produced by language, a contraction of the Real to produce "reality." Francesco Varela, "The Emergent Self," 212. Quoted in Slavoj Žižek, *Less than Nothing*, 157–158.

- 16 Žižek, *Less than Nothing*, 467, also see 157–58. The theme of autopoiesis reveals Giambattista Vico to be Hegel’s unrecognized predecessor, the thinker who, in comparatively obscure conditions, carried out the Hegelian project with an even greater autopoietic effectiveness. The Vichian motto *verum ipsum factum (est)*, the made is itself exchangeable with the true, sums up self-generation in the term *ipsum*, “itself.” Vico condensed *ipsum* into a logic of the first human master signifier, the *imaginative universal*, the basis of mythic thought, where irony’s invisibility affords a non-ironic visibility. The world appears with the greatest force as an signifying presence of authority. Vico’s paradigm was the thunder, demonic and traumatic. Retreat from this traumatic Real, *askesis*, constructs the historical civil world where political relations replace religious ones through a gradual secularization. But, we must not forget that the original trauma was *self-constructed*, and in this autopoiesis was formed a logical kernel — a remainder — able to survive all successive transformations: a “permanent uncanny” that, as self-fear, remains radically alien but essentially our own — our only true — possession, our *ipsum*, our autopoiesis, not the autopoiesis of the cells of plants and animals. See Donald Kunze, “Skiagraphy and the Ipsum of Architecture.” For Vico’s account of the imaginative universal see *The New Science* (1744), §381, §460, §809, §1033. Vico’s imaginative universal is the first theoretical recognition of reversed predication, and Vico is the first thinker to realize the importance of this phenomenon, Hegel the second.
- 17 Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, 162.
- 18 Freud’s response comes from his final settlement of the event in terms of physics. He does not reflect (no pun intended) on the power of the alien image *as the double it was recognized to be*, a recognition based on a pre-existent proclivity. The mirror did not simply provide an illusion. It triggered a repressed Real and gave it momentary life. In contrast, one could say that Lacan’s entire *œuvre* was dedicated to this short interval, i.e. the Mirror Stage, when the child, in a comparatively brief interval in his/her life, is fascinated by a reflection known to be a reflection. As with the famous game of *fort* and *da* played by Freud’s grandchild, the interval is a means of “learning how to suffer an absence.” In the *fort-da* game, where the child is amused by the loss and recovery of a spool — but especially the *loss* — subjectivity comes to terms with itself as identifying with the negative, with loss. Santner (*The Royal Remains*, 68): “We are libidinal beings, that is, we desire in a human rather than an animal sense, because our enjoyment is entwined with the signifier, with titles and entitlements, with the various ‘offices’ with which we become entangled with the world.” This “entanglement” is the topology of metalepsis, the delay of the detached reflection.
- 19 Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 166, 234–237.
- 20 I do not limit the meaning of the frame to the decorated border described by Meyer Schapiro in “On Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art: Field and Vehicle in Image-Signs.” Rather, I have in mind a full range of analogies linking the physical frame to poetic bounding functions, including closure, physical illusion, and narrative enclosures. See *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames*. Note: the arrow is shown in a downwards direction because the audience is “silenced” in the construction of metalepsis.
- 21 This aspect of reception should be, at some later point, be connected to Rancière’s thoughtful exploration of the role of the spectator. I take his recommendation to move beyond mere passivity/silence as advice for theory rather than actual audiences. The “stupidity” of the audience is negative, but actively so. Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 11–14.
- 22 It is not entirely coincidental that Lacan uses the *poinçon*, \diamond , in his *matheme* for fantasy, $\$a$ (the barred subject in “one of a hundred relations” to desire). The *poinçon* is a punch, as in the train conductor’s authentication of a ticket or the silversmith’s registration. It “validates and cancels at the same time,” placing fantasy squarely within Hegel’s *Aufhebung*. I regard \diamond as equivalent to $\langle \rangle$ in order to relate it extimity and, in the case of diegesis, the operations of establishing a point of view. Fantasy, as a means of relating to the Real of desire, must engage the uncanny staging strategies of detached virtuality. As diegesis, \diamond is also distance, the distance of *askesis*, withdrawal, and this is key to the asceticism of the Lacanian “barred subject,” $\$$, and the silence of the unconscious.
- 23 Borges’ four themes (the story in the story, the double, travel through time, and the contamination of reality by the dream or fiction) are cited by James E. Irby in his introduction to Jorge Luis Borges, *Labyrinths, Selected Stories and Other Writings*, xviii. Borges’ original summation is not cited.
- 24 The story in the story theme goes unnoticed in its most usual form, the “reaction” of the actor to some happening, often shown before the real audience has a chance to witness it for themselves. Reaction shots diagetically frame events yet to be shown in order to prepare the audience for the “correct” view, to see things as characters within the fiction see them. In this sense, the performative is continually and radically permeated with the four forms of the fantastic, beginning with the story in the story.
- 25 This is from Thesis 8, Jacques Rancière *et alia*, “Ten Thesis on Politics.”
- 26 The meaning of Vitruvius’s three “virtues” of architecture has been widely debated. I wish to avoid this debate by coupling the obvious pair, utility and solidity, and appealing to the comparatively greater antiquity of *venustas* as sympathetic with Rancière’s idea of aesthetics as a “distribution of parts,” taking us into the realm of the political. Evidence that ancient Greece dealt with these matters directly, and in just such terms, is addressed by scholars such as Jennie Lemoines and Nicole Loraux, who find that mythology had been used to engineer the particular gender implications of Greek democracy.
- 27 Ernst Jentsch, “Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen.” For Lacan’s idea of “between the two deaths,” see “Slavoj Žižek, Key Ideas: Influences,” <http://www.lacan.com/zizekchro1.htm>, accessed July 1, 2013. Although Lacan centralizes the story of Antigone, the general relevance of this theme to culture, religion, and folklore are evident by connecting to the most proximal term in ethnography, *katabasis*, the theme of descent. See this entry in Pauly-Wissowa’s *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*.
- 28 Mladen Dolar (“‘I Shall Be with You on Your Wedding-Night’: Lacan and the Uncanny”) counters the suggestion by Anthony Vidler (*The Architectural Uncanny*) and others that the uncanny arises primarily on account of the hyper-rationality of the Enlightenment.

- 29 Reversed predication is not a term commonly found outside formal linguistics. I propose a more general use, to cover the varied kinds of reversals involving containment: possession, control, membership, figure-ground, etc. The Russian saying, “without songs there are no birds” captures the idea of reversed predication perfectly. Reversed predication is a case of synecdoche, the sublation of the whole by a part, and as such takes up the logic of metalepsis, where the diegetic point of view invades the mimetic interior of framed spaces and events. Such contamination is the stuff of nursery stories and fairy tales, as when an object, such as a ring, takes possession of the wearer. The mechanics of charms and imitative images and figures such as Voodoo dolls are cases of reversed predication, where the device has an inexplicable efficacy, transcending both the scale of hierarchy (part dominates whole) and physical dimensions (a double can effect its power over great distances and times).
- 30 This discovery marked the turning point in Freud’s conversion to the recognized centrality of the death drive. See, on this subject, Todd McGowan, *Enjoying What We Can’t Have*, 37–38; also Eric L. Santner, *The Royal Remains*, 69–76.
- 31 For a comprehensive account of the connections between Hermes, silent trade, boundaries, and the phallic function see Norman O. Brown’s *Hermes the Thief*.
- 32 Ranci re, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 12.
- 33 This corresponds to Jacques Lacan’s idea of language as a series of “sliding signifiers,” abbreviated by S_2 in his mathemes of the four discourses (*The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, Seminar XVII). The S_2 includes any network of symbolic relations defining the subject in relation to Others. Its boundary features are, on the dominant side, the Master Signifier, which  i zek has described as an effect turned into a cause, S_1 . On the side of the element without will, so to speak, is the condition of the Aristotelian *automaton*, natural chance. When these elements combine to re-enter the horizontal ground of mimesis, the form, among other things, the famous Freudian Thing and the Lacanian “partial object,” where automaton becomes absolute and tyrannizing autonomy.
- 34 Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, 234ff. Genette defines metalepsis as a violation of the rules that normally prohibit the “diegetic” point of view, the implied or actualized narrator, from entering the mimetic interior of the story. Inscription of this “external” element to the interior of the mimetic imposes special conditions on how it may refer to its status. The diegetic element cannot signal this directly, rather it must “signalize.” Its presence, muted by its mimetic environs, must somehow resonate in a general way.
- 35 See, for example, how the concept of the *holon*, coined by Arthur Koestler in his book *The Ghost in the Machine*, attempts to cover the same ground as the detail of metalepsis: autonomy (e.g. automism), inscription (function as both a part and whole), and information (revelations about the order of the system). Koestler did not see just how human machines could be, and held the metaphor in check, as an emergent property. Had Koestler allowed his system of holons to draw from Hegelian dialectic, his “holarchy” would have approximated Hegel’s mimetic field of affordance, saturated with the logic of conversion needed to allow for the exception filled by the idea of the ghost. Koestler’s missed opportunity led to needless oppositions, for example the contrast of chaos and order in the idea of the “heap.”
- 36 The *poisson*, \diamond , carries an alluring set of associations. It is at once the punch made by the conductor to cancel the tram/train ticket, the mark of authenticity made by silversmiths on the bottom of their works, and an enclosure made by the conditions of scale dysfunction, the “too little and too much” of language and other networks of Symbolic relations. My application of the *poisson* as one variation on the use of $<$ and $>$ as boundary markers and set brackets argues, in effect, that authenticity is both extimate and expandable. The scale dysfunctionality of extimacy arises out of the negative, the idea of cancellation embodied by the conductor’s punch.
- 37 This initially obscure-sounding expression has historical precedent. Eric L. Santner, in citing Ernst Kantorowicz, 34–35: “[Primarily from the High Middle Ages to the late Renaissance] Kantorowicz shows . . . that the royal personage had two bodies, one natural and subject to the fate of all mortal flesh and one supernatural, whose representational or official corporeality gave quasi-divine legitimacy, presence, and enduring substance to governmental authority — to *Herrschaft* — across the succession of generation.” Santner argues that the two bodies theory, thanks to the logic implicit in *Herrschaft*, carries forward into even modern conditions of mastery, such as the case of the famous paranoiac, Judge Daniel Paul Schreber, which Freud famously diagnosed using only the evidence of Schreber’s own book about his mental illness. This, in my view, compounds other evidence on the subject, i.e. that mastery in general requires two bodies, one a misrecognized being with supernatural powers, the other a mortal being. My gambol, made in the experiment of *Rear Window*, is that mortality takes the form of the master, A_p , embodied by Thorwald; while D_A is the misrecognized (thanks to his name) all-seeing slave (thanks to his broken leg) L. B. Jefferies.
- 38 Slavoj  i zek, *For They Know Not What They Do*, 201.
- 39 In this regard I must make explicit the need for architecture theory to adopt an attitude of experiment into failure following the model of psychoanalysis, which follows Freud’s advice, to examine the refuse piles of the conscious mind.
- 40 All commentators note the irony by which the servant becomes indispensable to the master, but none to my knowledge have recognized the necessity to transubstantiate the mortal master into a name and house. This critical step reveals the key elements in laws descended from Medieval times guaranteeing the rights of succession and inheritance, reflected in the meticulous aristocratic sciences of heraldry and naming.
- 41 This is not an idle characterization. G. K. Chesterton’s short story, “The Queer Feet,” constructs an algorithm of the inherent blindness of masters, in a story of an annual banquet held by a club of wealthy Londoners at an exclusive hotel, where waiters as well as guests dressed in evening clothes. Chesterton’s master thief, Flambeau, devised a plan to steal the club’s bejeweled fish-knives by adjusting his demeanor. When facing guests, he would walk as a waiter; when facing waiters, he would carry himself as a guest. Only the detective, Father Brown, closeted in the cloakroom adjacent to the hall, had noticed the trick. Flambeau’s squeaky shoes revealed that

the “monster,” the waiter–guest, was one and the same person: $| +\phi | -\phi | +\phi | \dots | -\phi | +\phi | -\phi | \dots \phi / -\phi$. Thus, in solving the crime with this one–two–three acousmatic formula, the servant-priest “mastered the masters,” $M \langle S$. Brown sums it all up with a formula that could be applied to any metalepsis, any *venustas* capable of detached virtuality: “I caught him, with an unseen hook and an invisible line which is long enough to let him wander to the ends of the world, and still to bring him back with a twitch upon the thread.” *The Innocence of Father Brown*, http://www.gutenberg.org/files/204/204-h/204-h.htm#link2H_4_0003, accessed July 20, 2013.

- 42 In addition to the signs of catastrophe presented in the opening scene, there is the stronger evidence of the three curtains. In the first few frames, as credits are rolling, we see the curtains gradually raised. At the end of the film (added back in the restored digital version), the curtains are lowered, in reversed sequence. The opening of the curtains signals a “literal death,” Jeff’s own and the audience’s voluntary death of silence and motionlessness. The closing of the curtains is the symbolic death, literally the “death thanks to the symbolic conclusion, i.e. the reversing of the last predication.
- 43 Hitchcock is minding his P’s and Q’s. *Beyond the High Himalayas* was a real book by Chief Justice William O. Douglas. Douglas had recently ruled on cases pertaining to privacy.
- 44 The phrase “infinite responsibility without alibi” comes from a conference of the same name organized by Nadir Lahiji at Penn State University, March 2008. The idea of “interrogating the gap” comes from Azita Ranjbar, Ph.D. candidate in Geography, Penn State University, 2013.