In the early development of the child, transition is made by means of objects that have a value because of their appearance/disappearance. They are known as "partial" or "part" objects because, in terms of uncertain presence, location, status, and meaning, they are never fully or wholly knowable or materially simple. They are the material correlations of symbolic transactions — "demands" (demander, to ask, in French is more reasonable than the English demand) — that constitute a series of thresholds between infancy and adulthood. Demand is itself never simple, just as the objects associated with it are composites of material and ideal being. "Asking" takes place on two levels or modalities. In one, the exchange of a substance seems to conclude the arrangement; in the other, a larger social benefit is enjoyed. Absence or presence, appearance or disappearance, work in different ways for each of the types of demands, and these differences contribute to the complexity of the objects and substances involved.

In the case of the first demand made in life, that for food, direction is significant, and also the fact that the demand is transitive. The infant asks for nourishment and is given the breast. The breast contains food, but food enters into the infant’s body, a container and contained. Just where the breast is and what it contains remains ambiguous in the transaction. In the case of toilet training, the direction of demand reverses. Now it is the mother who demands something of the child. At first the child confuses the logic of this demand and believes that it, like the demand for food, is transitive; that it can be satisfied with the exchange of a substance. This is radically not the case. Shit is not the gift the child hopes it is. The mother wants something but the only material that seems to be involved is involved in its absence. Emphasis shifts to from the materiality of the exchange to the second register or modality, the social. The mother wants something, that something is an absence, a negation. Yet, giving is involved even if the gift is not what was originally thought. This initial confusion remains with all gifts that follow, and all demands for gifts. Every gift will, from that point on, have something of the paradox of shit sticking to it, a small element of the negative.

The third partial object, the phallus, is not a demand, but a demand is related to it indirectly in terms of a presence and absence used to resolve the child’s understanding of the meaning of the family. The child competes with the father for the love of the mother, but cannot win. The child fantasizes that he/she may produce a child as a gift for the mother and forever win her exclusive love, but this fantasy dissolves as hopeless. The father is the cause of the mother’s absence, and the relation of the phallus to erection furthers its idea as something present then absent that becomes the function itself of presence-absence. The “name of the father” applies to anything relating to the ambiguous loss of the mother, the first being who is lost without

1 The readily acceptable example is the child who asks for a drink of water in the middle of the night. The need for hydration at that hour is doubtful. What is clearer is that the child wishes for the company of the parent.
ever being possessed and thus an embodiment of the essential mystery of desire. All names from this point on will have something of this power of the name of the father.

The gaze and the voice constitute the final stages of development, concluding the transition from ambiguous (polymorphous) sexuality to ideologically defined sexuality — i.e. sexuality based not on sexual exchanges but on sexual identities. In the case of exchange, the roles required by fantasy would determine the sexuality of the participants who, as imaginary beings, would provide a variety of relationships. Identity forces the logic of the name, and hence the function of the family, into the modalities of male and female, the former based on an absolute rule applying to everyone but one exception, and the later based on a rule that is never fully applied to anyone, without any exceptions. The idea of exception is the common element belonging to gender in general, and the fact that exception can be managed puts ideology at odds with the “psychoanalytical” or “analytical” subject/subjectivity.

Exception, as such, is tied to the partial objects that advance the subject and subjectivity in general from dependence to independence, infancy to adulthood. In what amounts to a case of primal reversed predication, the substances become the radical materiality of the rules of exception, which are also economies of exchange. The exception that allows someone to be exempt from the rules of castration that limit others who would call themselves male; and the differently distributed exception that allows everyone to be partly exempt from any rule whatsoever — in effect, “maleness” and “femaleness” in the most basic sense — are materially tied to the issue of desire and desire’s relation to appearance and disappearance, presence and absence, and any force or rule that is maintained through negation — meaning in effect any force or rule that holds subjectivity together symbolically.

Reversed predication is, thus, the logic that converts subjectivity from something “inside” to a complex exteriority whose “table of elements” is made up of five substances: the breast, shit, the phallus, the gaze, and the (acousmatic) voice. These are the substances of the boundary; they are boundaries. When Freud notes that the subject is drawn to the boundary, to the limit or edge where subjectivity meets with objects, with the external world by the death drive, by the pleasure derived from repetition that returns the subject to the same position of impass, he refers to the means of finding pleasure that seems to come from externality but in fact is a confirmation of an inner subjective absence or loss. The boundary, which always seems to forbid passage to something desired, embodies the desire as return. Hence, nostalgia is a version of ideology’s promise of a future resolution, the former moving backward to the past, the latter forward to a future; the back and forward motion makes time into the medium of ideology and, thus, anxiety, fear, and fright become the stages derived from distance from objects ideology defines in the negative. Love, desire, and passion — the positive forms — are ideology’s other side, its promissory notes.

The contrast of the ideological subject and the psychoanalytical subject is made evident at the stage of (psycho-)analysis, where the analysand falls in love with the analyst as a “last ditch
effort” to prevent the discovery of the unconscious and hold on to the short-circuits that have created symptoms related to the death drive’s mandate of repetition. The discovery of the death drive as pleasure is the aim of analysis, but the subject’s substitutions — symptoms (sinthomes) — have become the preferred substitutes for this enjoyment. The analysand now makes these substitutes into a gift for the analyst to postpone the moment of truth.

James Joyce discovered how writing (and language in general) were related to this moment and conceived of four “prismatic” words of the thunder to initiate four separate recoveries of the truth via the macaronic language of “empty” signifiers. The thunder, by means of its direct relationship to negation, is able to convert fear as a reaction to fear itself and thus give the world its “divine” quality, its aspect of substance impregnated by meaning-as-daemon: the material universal. Material substance, in these terms, contains all meaning by virtue of a lock of secrecy that can be released through a procedure akin to primitive divination rituals. The universal component of these practices was the “automaton,” the dyad and “free radical” able to join opposites and opposite logics, that of randomness and absolute order. Thus, ancient laws were both applied without exception or qualification/mediation but derived/discovered using chance procedures. As laws were secularized (i.e. made to fit the needs of everyday life), the component of automaton was restricted and formalized. Prophecy was a “last resort”; trials by fire and water became religious rituals and institutions demonstrating general piety. But, the thunder idea retained the essence of the idea of law, through its ability to convert circumstantial fear to fear itself. What Joyce discovered in the sequence of seemingly randomized syllables, < ... >, was that the bounding elements, the beginning and end of the thunder (the silence just before and the silence just after), entered materially into the prismatic changes of sounds within the series, converting acoustics to acousmatics. This converted the sounds into words, and made the words convey the power of the universal, manifest in the idea of the word as law.

Thus, Joyce is the first physician of metalepsis, who identified Vico as the first meta-physician. The designation of Joyce as a physician is not intended as a characterization of someone who applies a theory discovered by another. The intention is to connect Joyce to Asklepius and, by extension, the project of writing to the project of healing the wound. Asklepius drew blood from the Gorgon Medusa. From the right, the blood was able to restore life to the dead (D_A in the symbolic logic of the uncanny). From the left side, the blood was poison (A_D). The left-right logic was not simply a method but in reality a means of knowing-without-knowing, a "stereognosis" drawn from the fact that the framing elements constitute a left-right, appearance-disappearance, presence-absence — i.e. phallic — basis. In effect, knowledge is a matter of the (psychoanalytical) discovery of the basis of pleasure in the death drive and an accounting of the substitutions made, as sinthomes, to convert the death drive into the ideology of paranoia or nostalgia. The aim is to restore time to its psychoanalytical role and cleans it from its ideological deployment to create paranoia or nostalgia, fear or love.
In this project, substance as demonic is closely related to the idea of knowledge as embodiment, but in keeping with the logic of the thunder, embodiment involves the negative role of the bounding elements. Thus metalepsis is about the "prismatic" differences that build the point of view into the view, as a material component, a simultaneously thick-thin tissue Lacan identified as the lamella. By "thick-thin," we mean that the lamella is about the construction of distance and the collapse of that same distance. It is about waiting in the sense of waiting for nothing, waiting for Godot, and about being too late; about the "just before" and the "just after." Stereognosis, knowing without knowing, "knowing in relation to the bilateral symmetry of metalepsis," in this case amounts to readiness.

**Need, demand, desire**

The relation of need to the drives is the most common cause of failure to account for the drives theoretically. Once assimilated to a "natural order" (a need for food, shelter, etc.) a need can be aligned parallel to the pleasure principle: one desires good things and avoids bad things. Freud realized not only that this rule was defective, but that the idea of pleasure itself was complex. Observing his grandson play with a spool of thread, he realized that the pain of loss (the mother’s absence) could also be "enjoyed," but that this kind of pleasure had to be learned through a series of rehearsals. The rehearsals themselves became a component of the pleasure of the negative, and the theme of repetition became the basis of the "death drive," not a drive to extermination per se but, rather, the set of total resistances to death. Thus, in the circular returns of the death drive, contrived to relive the same empty location, the same loss of an object that was never possessed, the over-presence of death becomes tolerable through repetition, assimilated as compulsion. Once pleasure comes from these repetitions, the brain’s chemistry takes over.²

Need cannot be reduced in this way. Demand, thanks to language and the Symbolic field in general, is always multi-valent. Demand is always to some degree enigmatic in that it never fails but over-specify and under-specify its objects. Desire, which one associates with pleasure, is, to the contrary, related to the negation of loss; and in the case of the death drive the lost object was never possessed in the first place. Desire is engaged with a demand that over-specifies, as in the advertising slogan, "Coke is it!" The it cannot be sold or consumed, it can only be desired. Thus are aim and goal combined in Lacanian psychoanalysis. The subject takes aim at a goal, a target; but the goal is already the aim. Converted into the language of diegesis and mimesis, framing as a taking-aim and content as the intended purpose of taking-aim, allow need, demand, and desire to be stated as a calculus.

² The common example is the “tune stuck in the head,” a melody that, though possibly hated, is “enjoyed” at the chemical level of the brain thanks to the chemicals released with repetition. The famous “mind-body problem” can be put in such simple terms: the brain is able to enjoy what the mind despises. Pleasure “enjoys the subject,” rather than the subject enjoying something. This is the model for all emotions that take over the subject, especially those leading to convulsive laughter or crying. The laughter “laughs the laugh.” Tears “cry the subject.” The causal chain is reversed as the effects become the causes.