

Chapter 1

The Unsung Role of Metonymy in Constructing Sites of Exception:
Ekphrasis, Divination, Epiphany¹*Donald Kunze*

My essay is not likely to resemble the essays on either side of it, so a brief explanation is necessary. My concern is for architecture theory and its access to ideas that allow it to expand through architecture's specific nature *as a means of knowing*. It is often necessary to “go outside” of what we regard specifically as architecture to show exactly how architecture is “already–always” a form of knowing at the most fundamental level of meaning of this word. My “gnostic” view is not widely shared.

My approach combines the legacies of Giambattista Vico and Jacques Lacan, using one as a “test” of the other. This study method creates some anachronisms (it seems as if Vico must have been reading Lacan) but it shows that the *certum*, a key Vichian idea, is both a part of what architecture is and a central paradigm for how we must study it. The *certum*, or “certain,” is what the mind is compelled to make of perceptual wonder, but symbolic representation cannot provide the 1:1 match *certum* needs. Rather, this criterion requires a “flow model” where, in “sites of exception,” time and space become *products of the curvature later attributed to them*. Once a predicate, now a predicator, curvature is also a parallax by which we conceive a depth within experience that is irreducibly “spiritual,” meaning the *animus* of the psyche, distinct from any of religious ideas that subsequently resulted. This is the reason why epiphany and divination are key to architecture theory, and why their essential structural components — ekphrasis, metalepsis, etc. — can allow us to use this key. Because the 1:1 involves two aspects of the idea of *automaton* — chance and necessity — it leads us directly to the role of the curtain, which, from Pythagoras to Turing, has been telling us all we need to know about psyche's relation to the “acousmatic.”²

Ferocious Thunder

Architecture did not begin with the primitive hut as a sheltering function but, rather, with the first clearings in the forest, made to see the sky. Why? Because the thunder was *ferocious*, although it was the first humans who were actually the ferocious ones, not the thunder. This is the fable that Vico invented and told in his *New Science*, but it has not been taken seriously or, worse, misunderstood and misrepresented.³ Metaphor began human thought proper, but its nature has been misunderstood radically by those who see metaphor as a conscious process and ignore metonymy as that which lay hidden in this first moment. It is as if architecture theory “got off on the wrong foot” with this error and never recovered. It learned to walk with a limp and then came to prefer its disability — why? Human thought and culture depend on the “occultation” of metonymy, without which any understanding of metaphor is impossible. This essay attempts to restore metonymy by showing how the structure of three historically durable and significant

forms of experience, divination, epiphany, and the ekphrasis that structures them, all rely on metonymy, without which their magic as architecture would be unthinkable.

What We Talk about When We Talk about Architecture

As is well known, architecture theory has suffered something of a status decline in the past twenty or so years.⁴ Architecture schools, if they teach theory at all, have tended to bracket theory within other studies — history, topical research, methodology, “research studios” — and practitioners have become increasingly preoccupied by the complex technology of document preparation and project management. At the same time, theory — critical theory in particular — has never been more needed, as the transformation of spaces and times of production, experience, and cultures in Late Capitalism has resulted in a world where homes, cities, and whole nations have become products within the ideology of consumerism.

The concept of architecture has always been exposed to damage by the interests of technology, media, and popular culture. This is the normal wear and tear of cultural revisionism. What is deadlier by far is the intentional exclusion of any truly critical–philosophical discourse. “Architecture” cannot be denoted or connoted. It is not any single idea in need of clarification. Rather, it is a network of ideational–material exchanges whose correlate, the Real of architecture, remains resolutely and materially mute, while its human exchanges engage ideation in its purest forms. Architecture is the “subjective object” *par excellence*. Architecture and thought are obverses; each is inscribed into the other, forbidding any simplistic dualism. Each intensifies and radicalizes the normative meanings of the other.

The Domination of Binary Signification

This is my central thesis: *the practice of portraying mind and matter as polar terms of a “binary signifier” threatens to foreclose any chance of developing a truly theoretical discourse about architecture.*⁵ I would claim that current polemics are based on this binary signifier, whatever the apparent differences of various schools of thought. They share, consciously or unconsciously, a common commitment to a model of metaphor developed (but later revised) by the linguist Roman Jakobson. Jakobson, working from the clinical evidence generated by soldiers brain-damaged in World War I, saw in the contrast of semblance aphasia and contiguity aphasia a clear basis for a functional division between the “poetic–holistic” capacities of semblance — “metaphor”; and the rational–deductive capacities of metonymy.⁶ The contrast was, for Jakobson, the 90° difference between two vectors. But, the binary signifier of metaphor–metonym was soon converted into a linear binary signifier “poetic–instrumental.” For architecture theory intent on contrasting theory and practice, pitting “humanists” against “pragmatists,” a stable playing field was required, with two opposed goal-posts.

Polemics led to canonization of the linear model over the vectorial, as if, once the playing field was able to support academic battles for mastery, the real aim was to enjoy the conflict in and for itself. Metaphor to the humanists; metonymy to pragmatists and technology geeks, the games could begin.

Aphanisis: The Subject Vanishes

The result of this divided field has been what could be regarded as a fatal case of *aphanisis* — the disappearance of the subject. Ernest Jones, Freud’s principal advocate and translator for Anglo–American audiences, originally defined *aphanisis* as a loss of sexual desire. Jacques Lacan, in his project of restoring Freud’s key ideas, expanded *aphanisis* to cover the disappearance of the subject in general “behind the signifier” — that once we enter into networks of symbolic relationships subjects are misrecognized within new schemas of semblance.⁷ Jakobson’s orthogonal model retained metonymy at every scale of the symbolic, although its meaning was negative, echoing “at a distance” from the signifying chain. Many who adopted this model converted the orthogonal vectors into a linear opposition. One famous instance in architecture theory has been the binary, “poetic–instrumental.” Unavoidably, the linearization of the \perp vectors loses the idea of subjectivity.⁸ Without recognizing the “occultation” of metonymy, the subject will not just remain invisible to theory, it will “take theory down with it.”

Borrowing the title “What we talk about when we talk about architecture,” from Raymond Carver’s short story, “What We Talk about When We Talk about Love,” is intentional.⁹ When we talk about architecture we must look closely, both at love as the (Socratic) *dæmon Eros*, who appears from the depths of the occulted metonymical signifier, and as the *form* of this love talk, *ekphrasis*.¹⁰ This form is both (1) the internally framed insertion of one work of art within another as well as (2) the more ancient belief that material objects have the capacity to speak. *Ekphrasis* is thus both about *framing*, (even in cases where the medium does not change, as in anthology), and about *the mute speech of materials*, (even when there is no obvious magic agency, as in the case of the unconscious, or when speech is simply defective in some way, as in the case of the unreliable or defective narrator).

Theory is not the same as the “theoretic.” This is the active presence of thought inside the materiality of architecture. The theoretic is about the uncanny instability of architecture’s sheltering function, the feeling that walls have let in the very *dæmon* they sought to exclude, a violation of the frame; but it is also the symmetrical at–home feeling we find in strange places, the frame violated in the reverse direction. Architecture’s uncanniness is, thus, i.e., it has a “left” and “right” version, based on how the frame is violated. This point was missed entirely by Anthony Vidler in his famous book on the architectural uncanny although it was a key point of Freud’s classic study and Ernst Jentsch’s earlier work.¹¹

The position of the *theoretic* within architecture is a question not just of how metaphor “occults” metonymy but of how metonymy subsequently radiates meaning “from a distance,” as a primary dynamic.¹² What we talk about when we talk about architecture is metonymy, and *ekphrasis* shows how this is the case.

The Defective Narrator: Less than Meant, More than Intended

Subjects complain that they are never able to say all they mean to say, but they end up revealing, “without knowing it,” more than intended. This puts *subjectivity in general in the position of*

being a “defective/unreliable narrator.” We hear “more than subjectivity thinks it has said.” The narrator’s failure generates muteness dynamically: a continuous production of a silent speech (“*acousmatic*”) within and around the *acoustic*, literal function of communication.¹³ The more metaphor tries to say (and falls short, <, in the act of transference), the more metonymy calls from afar, >, through the negative, which “haunts the positive.”

Examples of the defective narrator technique can be found masterfully employed by the American short story writer, Raymond Carver. Stories narrated by characters with little appreciation of what was actually happening around them allowed readers to find those spaces for themselves (for example, “The Cathedral” or “What Do You Do in San Francisco”). Carver’s trick shows how the defective narrator gives access to two kinds of virtualities. First, there is a *virtuality of the remainder* the defective narrator has left out. Second, there is a *virtuality located in the defective narrator himself*, as the famous Hitchcock “man who knew too much” but who *does not know what or even that he knows*. This latter condition is identical with *kenosis*, revered by mystics as the highest mental state, achieved by emptying the mind to allow the inflow of divine content. Ventriloquism, as the primary *acousmatic* principle of metonymy, is important first because of the internal distance between the ventriloquist and the dummy — a split in the consciousness of identity — but also because of the relation to mute materiality, a *mutos*, revealed by the French term for the dummy, *le mort* — a condition that could be regarded as the ultimate in defective narrators!

The defective narrator embodies the function of mute speech (a surplus). At the level of theory, muteness is about the *lacks* and *resistances* that make theory primarily a negative enterprise. Exiled from the signifying chain, a defective narrator sees the chain from a constructed distance — he/she enacts the “of” element. When the defective narrator ventures *into* the signifying chain, he/she appears as a defect, a source of turbulence. Both forms of defect, the *of* and *in* versions so to speak, reveal metonymy’s actions and structures. These allow us to explore subjectivity through its full range of architectural engagements, from ideology, to *dæmonology*, to the *kenosis* of “knowing without knowing.”

The *In-minus-Of* of Metaphor, the *Of-plus-In* of Metonymy

To get past the destructive binaries, “poetic–instrumental” and the *coincidentia oppositorum* frequently posited as a remedy, “poetic–material,” we must understand the “of” factor — how metonymy operates at a distance from metaphor; and an “in” factor — how metonymy nonetheless locates itself inside metaphor’s chain of signifiers, as a kind of glue that can suddenly give way to “sites of exception.” This giving-way is the payoff. It is structured as *ekphrasis*. Exception is the special condition *within* the work that allows for self-reference and self-reflection, the site of political action, or the site of cultural birth/rebirth.

In short, the site of exception is where everything wonderful–horrible and grotesque–beautiful happens, suddenly and materially at any scale (my label: “epiphany”). It is the site of the special form of *learning*, *kenosis*, that comes about seemingly from nowhere (my label: “divination”). It is the place of the Occupy! demonstrations, the short–lived “color revolutions”

of Ukrainians, Egyptians, and Turks. It is the *locus solus* of enigma, whether constructed (Piranesi's *Carceri*) or simply construed (Proust's magic materiality in *Remembrance of Things Past*). The site of exception is the place within any building or landscape where subjectivity finds itself face to face with the paradox of identity challenged from the inside; the place where the past "slides across the future" in a conversion of the "now" sensation to pure revelation.¹⁴

Without sites of exception, the human cannot be human, art cannot be art, architecture cannot be architecture. In short, the site of exception is the "test case" for architecture theory, theory's Armageddon. If theory cannot tackle the complex Real of the site of exception, it should not just remain silent. It should close up shop.

In-Sider's Game: Metaphor and the Causal/Signifying Chain

Don't be too hard on humanists in love with metaphor. It is easy to see why metaphor could be regarded as "all there is." Metaphor's "in" takes place within circular, self-contained systems of representation, in which diverse media mix with social forms, historic conditions, political agency, and scientific endeavors. Meaning moves horizontally through semblance relations, passively recognized or actively created. (I rotate Jakobson's vectors of metaphor/metonymy 90° to emphasize the "horizontal" role of metaphor in creating "landscapes/terrains" of meanings "sliding past" each other.)

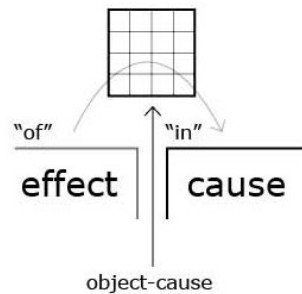
Beginning at the Mirror Stage, individual subjects are asked to give up uniqueness and submit to general misrecognition in order to resemble someone they admire or follow, to challenge others for a more dominant position, and to live through models of behavior and value.¹⁵ Once the subject accepts subordination to representational paraphernalia (the king to the crown, etc.), *aphanisis* within the Symbolic becomes a way of life. The subject vanishes beneath symbolic appearances, a disappearance required for participation in networks of symbolic relationships. Symbolic castration is, literally, castration by the (metaphoric) symbol. We are all castrated by signs once we take our place in the networks of symbolic relations. Once we buy into the Symbolic, once we choose Speaking over the autism of Being (the "forced choice" that comes with the Mirror Stage), we accept the curse of (mis)representation. Metaphoric semblance compensates this misrepresentation with the promise of mastery and excitement of success or failure within the Symbolic.¹⁶ The Symbolic is an addicting adrenaline rush locked in by the ironic topology of the (Hegelian) figure of Mastery and Servitude.¹⁷

Automaton in Reverse Gear: From Chance to Fate

What happens with accident, breakdown, revolution, etc. — wherever the causality of the causal chains of semblance can no longer enforce its horizontal logic? In other words, *what is exception and how are its sites constructed?* The most famous case of this is the ancient scandal surrounding the birth of twins. In the lore of antiquity, nearly all heroes begin their literary careers as twins — a semblance crisis. It is no accident that ancient cities are founded by heroes who are twins (Rome: Romulus and Remus, Castor and Pollux). The exception to the rules of semblance, occasioned by accidental breakdown, automatically becomes a Fate to be settled by

religion or combat. The ancient city as a site of exception is “domesticated” by the murder of one twin.

The terms within the horizontal system of semblance/metaphor depend on converting effects into new causes (which produce new effects, which become new causes, etc.). In the gap between the effect and cause there is always a vertical, metonymical *hinge* that provides the most likely site of breakdown (Fig. 1).¹⁸ At this hinge point, metonymy, formally distant, is brought through the middle and re-tooled as a “master signifier.” Because the gap is aligned with the parallel verticality of *automaton*–as–Fate, this re-tooling creates an “inside frame.” Exception expands across a new, interior space–time dimensionality/causality.



Metonymy is pulled in from its “distant location” outside the signifying chains and brought through the middle of the two predications to expand into a field defined by an instant, where past overruns the future.

Figure 1. Each link of a chain of signifiers involves a reversal of the predication of effect, as the result of cause, into a cause itself. Where the effect had been *of* a cause, the new cause creates a framed *in*-interior of all new resulting effects. The mediator is the “object-cause,” the material properties of the effect that can be converted into causes of new effects. The gap however always retains the potential of expanding into a field, where metonymy, formerly “acting at a distance,” constructs an interior frame.

The horizontal system of signifying chains relies on semblance to establish a notion of family resemblance and group definition. Thanks to the suppression of a key term, which becomes the (vertical) “act” initiating (horizontal) discourse (Fig. 2), multiple horizontal signifying chains can run in parallel. This allows metaphoric transfer across the bars separating the chains, a process that “quilts” the layers together to provide momentary semantic stability. The signifier that allows this is really the vertical hinge element that has reversed the cause–and–effect process without forsaking its status as a sign. This formerly suppressed element “haunts the signifying chain” from a distance that, when collapsed, creates the trauma of the Real.

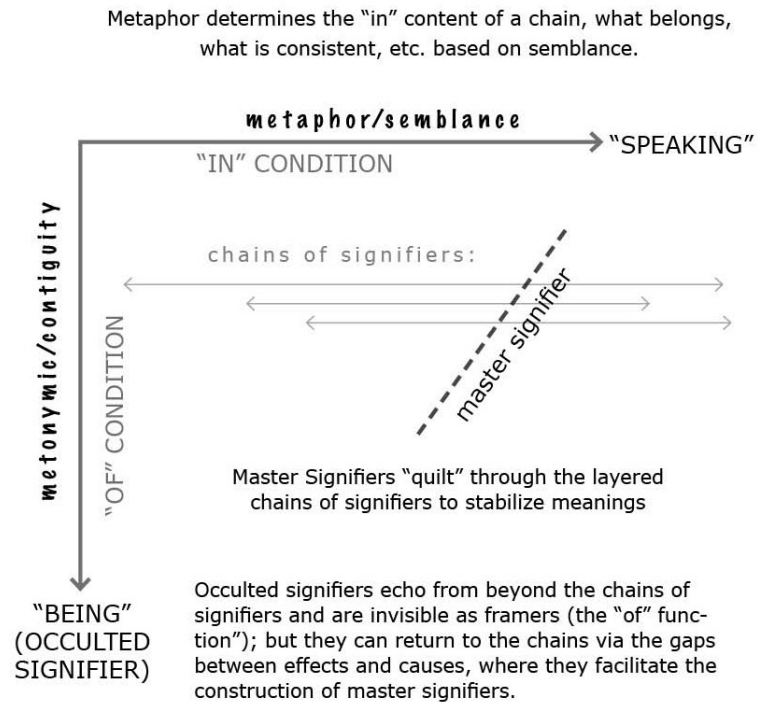


Figure 2. By rotating Jakobson’s metaphor–metonym vectors 90°, horizontal signifying chains run parallel, sliding past each other. Subjectivity, given a forced choice between speaking and being at the Mirror Stage, chooses speaking over (autistic) being. From this point on, the subject is “misrecognized” within a system of assigned semblance. Being is occulted but not eliminated. Its metonymies take the form of framing functions (“of” conditions) that work from outside the chains of signifiers. Metaphors are “master signifiers” that “quilt” layers together, stopping the sliding process. For example, the “Sun King” quilts the planetary system to the hierarchy of royal kings, dukes, knights, etc. and stabilizes hierarchical power by identifying the King with the Sun.

A ready example of this is a favorite I have used often before, Fredric Jameson’s citation of Steven Spielberg’s 1975 classic thriller, *Jaws*.¹⁹ Jameson calls the shark a “demark,” after Deleuze’s description of things that stand outside the natural order. Once outside, the shark’s “of” status makes it no longer the fish in the system of sea-life within the smooth-running ecological system. It becomes a *sign*, an omen, a prodigy, a monster in the ancient sense of a “warning from the gods.” The shark’s former position within the causal chain had given it both positive and negative status as something that eats and is eaten, an occupier of both “positions” of predication, so to speak. As a master signifier, a site is opened up, where this binary becomes an enigma — an animal that, unlike other animals, seems impossible to kill; and whose over-presence is intended to “teach humans a lesson” ... but, about what? About exploiting nature for human gain? About teenagers having sex in the water? About the surplus Capitalist pleasure of beach life, attracting the jealousy of some Proletarian evil eye? The point is that the site of exception resists all attempts to resolve ambiguity and restore unity. It is permanently enigmatic — we should say “enigmatic.” Thus, a “hero” (ἥρως = literally a “dead man”) is required to re-assert action (Being) over speaking. The legendary divine frenzy of the hero matches the extra-

territoriality of the shark as master signifier. The site of exception becomes a field of combat, “sacred combat” fought within the negatives of the two domains, animal and human. The human hero reveals his animal core, and the site of exception becomes a combat open to chance. The vertical–to–horizontal of/in operation of metonymy has converted it. To wit: the shark *is not a metaphor of anything*. It is a channel for an enigmatic backflow of meaning along the metonymic vertical “for” that had served the system of (ecological) semblance by staying at a distance, occulted. The invisible glue holding together the “in” has been energized by the binary meaning of *automaton*, as both chance and necessity, accident and Fate.

Ideology and the “It”

At this point, we can easily see how metaphor serves to sustain ideology, while metonymy serves as a means to challenge it. Following the famous example used by Louis Althusser, the natural subject is converted to the ideological subject in a moment known as interpellation. A policeman yells, “Hey YOU!” and all of the several people in the midst of crossing the street believe that the policeman is hailing them personally. Because the policeman as Big Other *did not make his desire specifically known* — i.e. he did not engage any subject “horizontally,” putting them in handcuffs and hauling them away to jail — his vertical engagement worked outside of the metaphoric causal chain, as a “demark” — a *metonymic* presence materialized as an absence, a *lack* of knowledge about what was said and who was the intended receiver — a breakdown in the continuity of the causal chain. This absence, Althusser advised, lodges in the core of the subject, which it hollows out — a placeholder to be filled by any of the ambiguous, desires of the Other imagined by the ideological subject and acted on without the need for explicit instructions, which would be required if ideology worked horizontally.

Subjectivity in general is at first ideological–Symbolic (i.e. horizontally organized through metaphors of power) thanks to the invisible/vertical interpellation of the ambiguous shout in the street. This is ideology’s specific “lightness.” It does not need to exercise power directly, or in any obvious manner. It works through subjects’ voluntary anticipation of the Other’s enigmatic desire. The intimacy of this desire, its position within the subject at the subject’s very heart, constitutes the magic glue of ideology’s horizontal structure. But, metonymy illustrates another curious feature of ideology: its self-sustaining, self-replenishing capability. Ideology–as–metaphor is what it is because of this capability, *and only the of/in functionality of metonymy can explain it* — and, explanation is the philosophical responsibility of theory.

Metonymy Shows How Ideology is Inseparable from Late Capitalism

My final and most ambitious claim for the role of metonymy is to show how ideology is linked at a fundamental structural level to the logic of Late Capitalism. The proof is ridiculously brief. The example is borrowed from Slavoj Žižek but the point about metonymy is my own.²⁰ The soft drink Coca Cola® not only promotes a Freudian–Lacanian view of ideology at the level of advertising imagery (“the Real Thing”) but also as a consumer product promoted to satisfy thirst, where the “it” in “Coke is it!” occupies the position of the Lacanian *objet petit a*, the mysterious

element which, though impossible to be defined or located (and hence the stuff of metonymy), is completely effective as an object-cause of desire. The ideology of consumption comes down to this: “We want you to think you’re satisfied but of course if you are, you won’t continue to buy our product, so we need to lie about the satisfaction of consumption.”

The famous slogan, “Coke is it!” directly expresses ideology’s reliance on the empty signifier. As an unassigned good, the “it” is occulted, allowing Coke’s aura to radiate from outside the main signifying chain. No one knows what “it” is, otherwise “it” would not be cool. The “it” combines impossibility with the Real. (Hard to believe, but corporate executives actually “get their Lacan right.”) And, Coke is ideological not just in its promotion of “it-ness” but at its level of material being, the level where master signifiers working within the metaphoric chain are most effectively established. The famous trick of Coke is its saltiness. “The more you drink the more you want” is not a matter of desire pushed to the overflow mark by Coke’s tastiness, but of the extra salt’s creation of thirst (<) even when, at the same time, the consumer drinks more and more (>). This is consumer ideology in a nutshell: demand, <, is *created* by supply of what we don’t need, >.

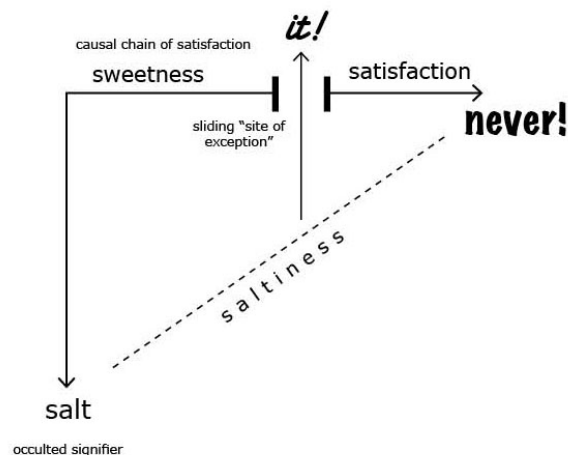


Figure 3. The material enjoyment of Coke depends on the suppressed substance, salt, which increases thirst the more one drinks. Like any other occulted signifier, salt “haunts the signifying chain” at a distance and serves, through its negative status, to be “present and not present at the same time.”

We can now, thanks to the logic of metonymy, reveal the truth of corporate ideology in critical theory terms: the “it” of Coke is the “occultation” of salt. A diagram (Fig. 3) shows how the suppressed signifier, the “it,” is actually the saltiness that is occulted beneath the dominant over-sweetness of the drink. As consumption continues, the saltiness delays satisfaction. This is Althusser’s idea in a nutshell. The void created by the unspecified imaginary–enigmatic desire of the Other is carried along as an interior “site of exception” of the subject. From an imaginary space below this line representing everyday life, the empty shout continues to reverberate, creating an ever–more–intense desire to please the Other, continuing the “thirst” of ideology (Fig. 4). Consumerism and ideology are, metonymically speaking at least, identical.

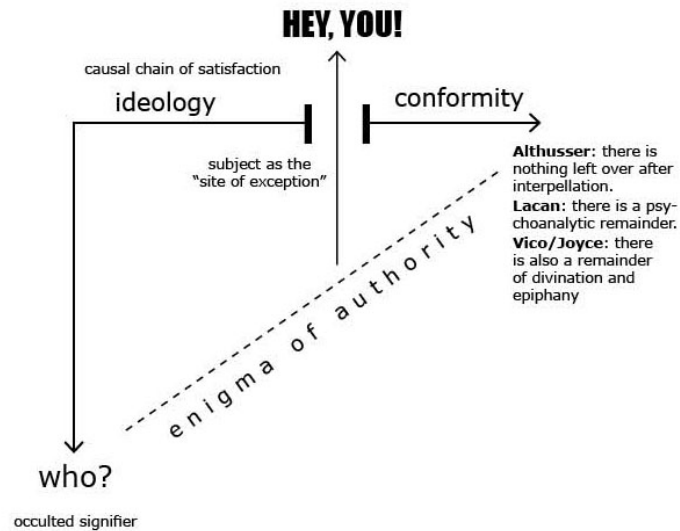


Figure 4. Ideology's cruel effectiveness lies in its ability to haunt the signifying chain (networks of human symbolic relationships) not with content but rather the enigmatic and ambiguous absence of content. The Other never says what it wants, nor does it specify whom it addresses. Thanks to metonymical occultation, Althusser's function of interpellation operates without the need for an expensive "state apparatus" — police, jails, courts, etc. Each subject acts as if he/she is being surveilled at all times. Where Althusser claimed that there was nothing left over from the process of interpellation, Lacan held that there was a small remainder left — the subjectivity accessible to psychoanalysis. We add that there is an additional remainder after psychoanalysis: the metonymy of the occulted signifier, evident in divination (Vico) and epiphany (Joyce).

My claim is that architecture is essentially *a relationship between metaphor and metonymy* — a relationship managed by ekphrasis's ability to frame and give mute objects the power to speak. But, when theory is given the job of uncovering metaphoric–poetic relationships, it is *precisely* metonymy that is ignored or falsified! Valorization of metaphor without metonymy puts architecture theory in the position of being more and more thirsty the more "knowledge" it drinks. Theory can correct this false polemic negatively, by showing that it lacks scholarly support; but I would prefer to build up a positive case, to show how ekphrasis uses metonymy in poetic conditions that are indisputably central to all arts and especially architecture: "sites of exception," clarified by the historical examples of divination and epiphany.

Ekphrasis: the Framing of Exception

In Haruko Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*, an elderly idiot-savant, Satoru Nakata, must find a magical "entry stone," which occupies central importance in the separate dreams of two characters who do not yet know each other but whose stories intertwine. In an extraordinary ekphrasis, Hoshino, the truck driver assisting Nakata, encounters the mysterious man dressed in white who calls himself "Colonel Sanders." Sanders, a shape-shifting spirit who claims to know the location of this entry stone also runs a prostitution ring employing young women working

their way through college. Hoshino’s complimentary session is with a philosophy major who, to keep his libido going, quotes Hegel and Bergson. Instead of quoting Hegel or Bergson directly myself to introduce the architecture of ekphrasis, obviously the “nice thing to do,” I prefer this doubly/triply framed reference, to allow that there is something of the story of *Kafka on the Shore*, its insertion of a sexual episode between two parallel narratives, which retroactively re-enchants the meaning of the original quotes. We have not just the Murakami novel, but the two diegetic realities that constitute that novel, and the seemingly gratuitous, modestly pornographic episode with the philosopher-prostitute. It is this shift in meaning I am after — a shift that seems to miraculously embody the whole idea of ekphrasis and the necessity of metonymy. Let’s go:

“At the same time that ‘I’ am the content of a relation, ‘I’ am also that which does the relating.” [Hegel]

“The pure present is an ungraspable advance of the past devouring the future. In truth, all sensation is already memory.” [Bergson]

Finding the exact location of these quotes in the original sources would not be easy, but rest assured that they epitomize the main intentions of Hegel in *Philosophy of Right* and Bergson in *Matter and Memory*.²¹ Not only does Murakami’s prostitute seem to be doing her homework, she seems to have anticipated a certain desire of her key sources to let their words be pulled together into a more perfect union. Such is the power of story-telling!

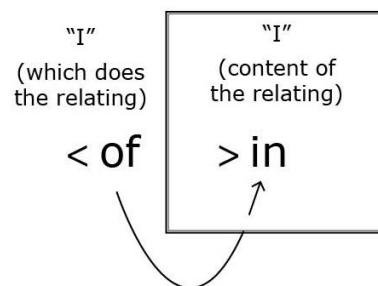


Figure 5. “At the same time that ‘I’ am the content of a relation, ‘I’ am also that which does the relating.” This frames the condition of Lacanian “extimacy,” the inside out condition involved in interpellation, corporate product design, but also divination and epiphany. Metonymy occults signifiers by attempting to avoid the confrontation between the two ‘I’s by establishing an alternating status for the spaces inside and outside the frame. As in the theater, the audience must be “dead,” <, when the stage is “alive,” >, and *vice versa*.

At the most basic level, any work of art is, technically, an ekphrasis because it requires entry into a framed space, <...>, where the “I” that is the content of a relation, a “contained” condition, <, is revealed to be, also, that which does the relating, a “containing” position, > (Fig. 5). Because the standardized idea of ekphrasis comes from a similar boundary shift from < to > inside the work of art, it is as if the work of art was showing, within its own interior, what it was all about in the first place. Ekphrasis asks us to suspend our disbelief *again*, from *inside* the same work of art we have already suspended our disbelief to enter! Thus, the artwork teaches us what

it is and how to use it, its own mimetic framing and construction, by asking us to remember what we have already done, allowing our past to “run across our future.” Because ekphrasis is essentially the architecture of a double frame, we should consider how any double frame *is itself* an ekphrasis, with all of the qualities and potentialities of ekphrasis in the work of art; then we should consider how the architecture of the double frame is by extension the essence of architecture in historic and existential senses.

First, consider the work-within-the-work structure as a break in the causal chain of the literary story’s mimetic construction. Within this smooth flow of signifiers, self-reference occurs as a delay, a defect. A fictional character stops at some threshold and looks over to see some work of art or stops to hear a story that is not just an infill of exposition. The point of view is, at the edge of a new domain of space-time, given a double vector status, a right angle, a detour, \perp (Fig. 6). Ekphrasis negates one action and initiates another, which happens “inside it” without having to obey any rules governing this inside. At the same time, ekphrasis reminds us retroactively that we have *already done this same thing* by leaving our “ordinary reality” to enter a fictional world — positive to negative to another negative embedded inside.

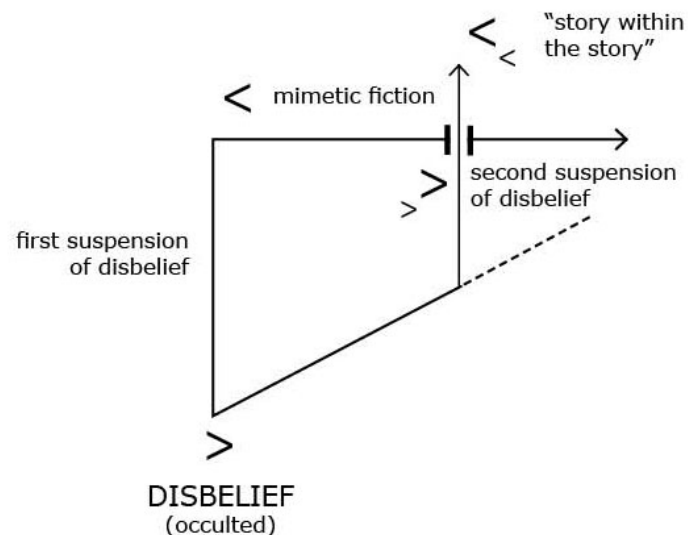


Figure 6. Ekphrasis uses its own rules of framing to create a frame in a frame, where our entry into the work of art is mirrored by characters who, like us, become spectators. The inside frame may be of a different medium, or it may be, like a story in a story, identical. What ekphrasis reveals is the how the original metonymical occultation that allowed the ekphrasis in the first place, $<$, is brought within the frame it itself created, $<<$, a kind of “less than nothing” of double negation. Within this time-space inside and outside of time-space, $>$ and $<$, a 1:1 condition emerges, a “more than everything,” $>>$.

Although negation of negation is a “less than nothing” ($<<$), the two negatives do not return us to a positive. Rather, we recall how we already suppressed our disbelief, became another “I” inside the work of art, and now this “I” appears within the frame of the second negation. This puts us on both sides of the frame; our “less than nothing,” $<<$, has become a

“more than everything,” >. We are in-between. The surplus of the moment speaks back to us in a *language of singularity* that resides *entirely inside the immediacy of the moment*. Hegel’s frame-trick and Bergson’s sensation-as-memory combine to create a defect ending in “surplus singularity.”²²

If ekphrasis is primarily architectural, can’t we say that architecture, with its spaces inside spaces and frames within frames, is fundamentally ekphrastic? This is not just a matter of reverse engineering. The other, more ancient component of ekphrasis is the idea that mute substances can speak.²³ Architecture is ekphrastic not just on account of its use of double frames but, even more so, because, as something “mute” it nonetheless communicates not just *in spite of* but *through* its muteness.²⁴ “Myth” and “mute” are etymologically and phenomenologically equivalent. In architecture this equivalence is evident in the way that simple lack, as in the cases of weathering and ruin, can convert architecture into pure art. Ekphrasis shows how this equivalence involves space-within-space and time-within-the-time. In the equivalence of muteness and myth, we have the immediate results of a “less than nothing” that has said “more than intended.” Muteness converts natural negation into revelation. In its muteness, its “defective narration,” architecture actualizes its being. Architecture’s *venustas* of fabular meaning may be as simple a matter as breaking the causal-metaphorical links binding *firmitas* to *utilitas*.²⁵

Bergson: when the future is devoured by the past, sensation speaks through the language of memory as oracular, memory directed towards a future.²⁶ Ekphrasis, as this “speaking sensation,” *reverses causal direction*: effects become causes. Sensation is not the effect of stimulation but itself an object-cause of meaning. In its *mythos* modality, architecture is “dæmonized/charmed” through the media of its materials, “sensations that are already memory.” Hegel plus Bergson equals the confrontation of two forms of the same identity within a fold of time where the past devours the future in a moment of pure sensation.

Ghosts, Hosts, Voices of the Dead

The failure of the subject to say what she means to say, while at the same time she is saying more than she realized is not just a situation, it’s a *topology*, like a Möbius band, rather than a condition we can project on to map. Combining a < combined with a > is the inside-out signature of the defective narrator. The philosophy major occupationally engaged when she cites *Matter and Memory* as “mame mo memelay,” gives us an over-knowing from a less-knowing situation. The speech defect, <, leads to the > of understanding how the scholarly references relate directly what she is doing as a mimetic character in a novel — plus what the novel is doing in the “diegetic” employment of ekphrasis to break its narrative-causal chain. This >< is a real structure that makes things happen! It is like an internal do-loop, an infinite regress where the time escapes inside itself, ⊥, a “moment of reflection” so to speak where the past folds over on the future to “know more than it should be able to know.”²⁷

When memory enacts the double fold of *anamnesis*, we get a convergence of the past, diagrammatically, from the left and the future from the right — a view of time as “chirality,” a symmetry of odds and evens. Chirality is the curvature Einstein had discovered to be not a

property of space but, in “reversed predication,” so to speak, a curvature whose secondary accomplishment was the creation of space–time.

Puzzles existing in plain sight are metonymical outliers, fragments escaping the unconscious, where they existed as singularity. These are like keys without doors, passports that carry whoever should possess them across unknown terrains in search of the site that will except/accept them and only them. This is the meaning of singularity, which we find in the internal symmetries within the terms host, hostility, ghost, gast– (taste), and *Geist*.²⁸ This collection cannot be pressed flat into the economy of a schema. Rather, we have a topology, a permanently uncanny condition, something like an imaginary number, “more than and less than,” inside–out (“extimacy”).

How are we at home in the thin space between greater–than and less–than? This is a question of what hospitality really means. Thin spaces are traditional in architecture: the *poché* of utilities and structure, the narrow passageways used by servants, the *iconostasis*. A victim is buried between the walls of the foundation to protect the *firmitas* of the walls above. The grotesque folly that faces the villa protects beauty with ugliness through perfect chirality. The thin space is not the face–to–face but rather, like the Magritte painting, *Not to Be Reproduced*, where a young man looking in a mirror sees his back rather than his front, a seeing *of* the seeing *in* seeing — embodying perfectly the Hegelian dictum, “At the same time that ‘I’ am the content of a relation, ‘I’ am also that which does the relating.” Hospitality makes room for hostility, for the ghost, the ghastly. It does so tastefully, *gastronomically*: between the two walls we can hear the *mur-mur*-ing of the voices in the street outside, like a sea-shell that seems to carry the sounds of its former ocean home.²⁹

David Lynch’s Ghost Story

Now we know that when the subject disappears from architecture theory, the remedy is to look at how the subject disappears *into* architecture. Besides the victim sacrificed within the double wall, $\gt\lt$, greater than and less than actions can be seen in the broad strokes of popular culture. David Lynch’s ghost story *Mulholland Drive*, for example, uses ekphrasis in the form of doubles (one character played by two different actors, \gt ; one actor playing two characters, \lt) to locate a site of exception, “Club Silencio,” a mur-mur where a blue-haired *doyenne* presides over lip-synched performances, where *No hay banda!* carries the additional sense that we are all in some way dummies caught in a ventriloquist’s act.³⁰ We say more than we intend (as material beings), although we were defective by definition, just a matter of wood and wire. There is no band, no orchestra; unlimited semiosis comes out of the pure *anamnesis* of material sensation, time out of time.³¹

Mulholland Drive constitutes a textbook of ekphrasis because it rediscovers all the rules. Lynch is not interested in architecture theory, but because he is interested in the integrity of the work of art in film, *Mulholland Drive* constitutes a kind of scientific “control.” It allows us to claim experimental validity in our investigation of the self-sustaining order of ekphrasis.

The Architecture of Divination: the Call of Chance, the Response of Exactitude

Ekphrasis, as a means of “topologizing” the architecture of sites of exception, is related to two key types of exception, divination and epiphany. Both of these, like ekphrasis in its Hegelian–Bergsonian aspect, have to do with creations of spaces within spaces and times within times. But, neither divination nor epiphany survives well in the attempts to restore a lost poetic past, where the forced choice of the poetic–instrumental can offer only a metaphoric middle ground. In this concluding section, I would like to salvage these two key ideas on behalf of architecture’s theory of the subject, to see how they are permanently resistant to ideology, polemics, and romanticization.

At first, “divine” did not refer to any god or gods. Divination preceded the idea of theistic powers with personalities, worshiped as specifically named willful beings. Divination was a response to a world that was generally and generically dæmonic: a dæmon for every object and occasion so to speak.³² Because divination addressed a dæmonic totality, its structure was “synchronistic”: a slice taken out of time as an index of a *causally integrated instant*.

Divination, Cicero advises, comes in three forms: a formalized practice, a professional talent of augers and oracles, and the unpredictable and unkempt events of personal frenzy.³³ Ancient divination as a practice was highly ritualized; nothing important was ever undertaken without augury, and predictions were treated as absolute mandates. The codification of results became the first laws, whose severity provoked a gradual move away from religion based on prophecies to judgments tempered by mercy. Fools and madmen were held to be sacred because of their sudden fits; heroes were associated with prophetic madness. Modernity extends this attribution to artists and poets.



Figure 7. Divination employs the logic of reversed predication to allow the past to overtake the future in an instant of “pure semiosis,” a 1:1 *certum* where the adjacent contingencies of the causal chain are broken to allow a synchronous alignment akin to the vertical “quilting” of metonymy through horizontal metaphoric chains of semblance.

Despite the diverse means of divining, there are three essential parts: some sort of sacrifice, a randomizing component, and a symbol system for formalizing and comparing results. Ancient divination procedures were literal: sacrifice of a living victim, a medium given over to random speech or writing, and a specialized system of signs to record interpretations over time. When divination is individualized by prophets, heroes, and madmen, it still involves this triune logic: a past, a future that the past “overruns” in a magic instant, and a concealed middle working as both a randomizer, a hinge, and recording field that is often vividly visual or auditory (Fig. 7). Where cultures formalize their recording procedures with elaborate symbology, individuals redeem their experiences in the form of (traumatic) visions, which artists and poets convert into the sublime.

In formal divination, the middle hinge breaks with the contingent present by terminating a victim’s future. This sacrifice cuts vertically through the horizontality of metaphoric cause and effect, severing the continuities of adjacent, everyday reality.³⁴ The “now” becomes a field, a screen.³⁵ The forward momentum of the past across this field connects to a global dæmonic, where “the past devours the future.” For the artist to claim as Picasso claimed, “I do not seek, I find,” the present cannot be a simple atomistic “now” but, rather, a *matrix* (field as womb) cleared of ordinary experience (which must be “killed,” i.e. cut off from all circumstantial, everyday contingency), over-run by the unexpected, the miraculous, a space within a space that is simultaneously a time within a time.³⁶

Divination accomplishes its three-part symmetry by *expanding* its middle component, the gap.³⁷ This activation deploys the symmetry (“chirality”) of self-negation. The middle is not just silent or invisible. It is *silenced* and *occulted*. Summing up, divination, both formal and personal, (1) breaks with its surroundings through quantitative exaggeration of the mediating gap, which (2) activates the negative, and then (3) polarizes the negative as necessity–through–chance. How architecture does this has hardly been recognized. In its specific *placement* of living materials, the building “kills” their future as objects of nature. Stone, wood, cement, glass, etc. are *muted* by placement, and this *mutos* becomes *mythos*. Materiality is the “defective narrator” of architecture, a < that allows the > of prophecy, revealing “that which ought to have remain concealed.” Consider that the defect of placement and muteness, <, and the > of divine truth are *functionally related*. Consider, as well, that this >< combination causes the sudden *forward movement of the past across the future*, leaving traces over an imagined field of chance. In this pure instant, momentum becomes the element of the divine (pure sensation, already memory, 1:1). This is the certainty of a overflowing, pulsating “now.” The chance component of formal divination, <, is absolutely essential, even in cases where, as Cicero says, divination occurs as the clairvoyance of oracles or frenzy of madmen.³⁸ The past is not definitive. It is dependent on points of view, which can be established retroactively, even fictionally. The past “signalizes” its meanings. Its effects are *stochastic*; weak signals are amplified by noise (*mutos* as defective narration).³⁹ We say that the meaning of architecture as experience is a resonance — a space filled to overflowing with a signaling surplus, >, arising from a paucity, <. This surplus

demands a translator, a principle of exactitude, that is the procedure of divination and, later, the basis of epiphany.

In the modern concept of the 1:1 as empirical correspondence, we have Borges' parody of the country discovered by (fictional) explorer, Suarez Miranda — a country where the art of cartography reached such perfection that every space, every object, was covered by its life-scale map.⁴⁰ This is a false exactitude, but it give some idea of how the original exactitude of divination produced severe mandates that, as laws, led cultures to soften and civilize themselves by secularizing divine judgment. The ratio 1:1 is severe in any case, as mythic traditions testify. This is what Giambattista Vico called the *certum* — the need to limit and define the overpowering significance of nature-as-dæmonic, which led the first humans to devise divination as a *reductionistic procedure*, reducing signification to a restricted symbolic, systemic order.⁴¹ Vico's *certum* brings the surplus of the pure present into an echo chamber — a place to optimize stochastic resonance — where the true (*verum*) and the made (*factum*) are shown not as equivalent or interchangeable but as chiralistic (Fig. 8). The *certum*, the certain but also the *act of making certain* through the rituals of divination, particularizes immediate experience in a way that the past, overrunning the future, creates a *pure present* in which sensation is already memory. The “call” made by self-negation elicits a “response” of the dæmonic divine.

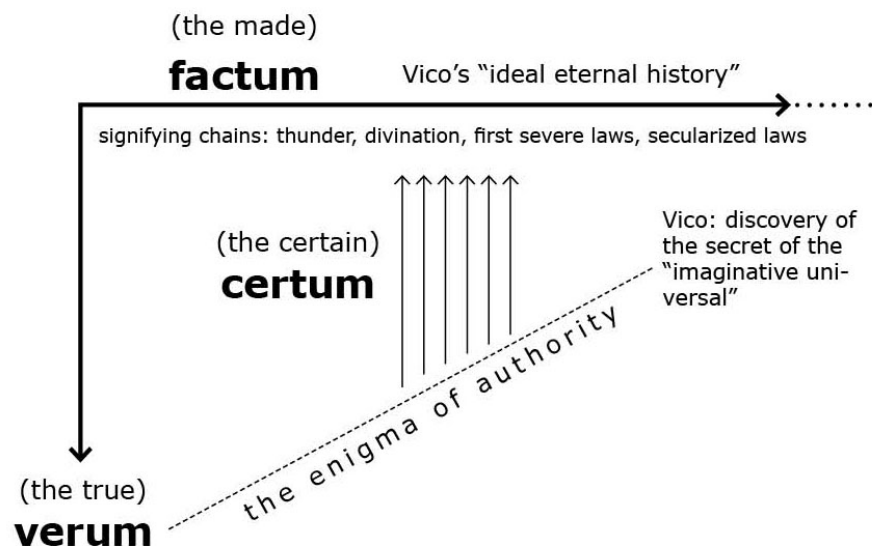


Figure 8. Vico's *verum*, *factum*, and *certum* reveal themselves within the charged field of ekphrasis once *verum* is understood as the metonym that haunts the metaphoric chains of signifiers that constitute cultural production, the *res humana*. The first humans unconsciously author the demonic element behind fierce nature. What is feared in the thunder is not just its threatening sound but the intentionality perceived that makes this sound an enigmatic word. Like Narcissus, the first humans are attracted to the dæmonic element, converting this attraction into the Eros of nature's horror and beauty (i.e. the sublime). Their attraction is to their own occulted identity, the “in+of” of metonymy that charges divination and, later, epiphany, with the power of self-knowledge, *kenosis* through *ananmesis* of the primary occultation.

You Who?

The pairing of signifiers (sensation) to divine intent (dæmon) in a construct of the *certum* is not simply a forgotten ancient practice. It is the construction of internal mirroring, a.k.a. the “inside frame,” “nested virtuality” ... in other words, ekphrasis. Back to Murakami’s philosophy student: That which relates is also the content of the relation ... [to allow] the future to be overrun by the past in a pure present, which is simultaneously sensation and memory. Rather than re-run the detailed double narratives of *Kafka on the Shore*, allow me to refer to what I believe to be the root *mythos* of this Murakami novel, the fable of Diana and Actæon. I rely on Leonard Barkan’s insight that Actæon is one of six Thebans transformed by *seeing that which they should not have seen*.⁴² The main characters of the novel, the boy Kafka and the idiot-savant Nakata, have seen what they should not have seen, and this experience draws them together into a topology of knowing without knowing. This deploys the uncanny as Freud defined it — “[something] that was intended to remain secret ... and has somehow come into the open.”⁴³ What is “intended to remain secret” if not the occulted signifier, the basis of metonymy and source of the dæmon who appears in a *certum* of 1:1 within the space of divination?

Cadmus and Tiresias saw serpents and realized themselves in what they saw. Cadmus became a serpent but Tiresias mirrored the copulating snakes with his two predication reversals, from male to female and back again. Pentheus, the King of Thebes, changed, like Actæon, from pursuer to pursued. These reversible Thebans make us realize how fundamental this formula really is. In the story of Narcissus, for example, a mortal sees a reflection he takes to be a god, but it is really his own. That this occultation of the self is the essence of the uncanny is fundamental, not just for mythic thought but our own. First, it is the key to Vico’s “imaginative universal,” whose primary occulted signifier is the self-nature of the first humans who see nature dæmonized by their own ferocity. Second, it is the occulted signifier of the policeman’s “Hey, you!” which interpellates subjects by implanting the Other in an empty center: *mythos* of *praxis* in a nutshell.

Actæon, a hunter, stumbles across Diana bathing. Like Actæon, Diana is a hunter; but, she wishes to protect her own uncanny *harām*, “that which should not be seen,” and is outraged by Actæon’s violation; she splashes him with water (baptism?), transforming him into a stag. Actæon’s own dogs misrecognize their master and run him down. Ovid recognizes the significance of this internal super-symmetry and “signalizes” to the reader the nature and history of each of Actæon’s *thirty-three* dogs, tedium in the midst of the chase scene. Thirty-three connects the living with the dead, earth with Hades. Thirty-three is the “call,” hidden meaning is the “divine response.”⁴⁴

The call of *Kafka on the Shore* comes with literally occulted signifiers. First, the runaways: the boy, Kafka and his mother and sister meet without recognizing each other; he compounds maternal incest with an imagined rape of his sister, an identity theme common to all cultures. Kafka visits to the underworld — the ultimate occultation — through an entry concealed in the folds of a friend’s remote mountain retreat.

What is the complementary divine response? This is supplied by a truly defective narrator, the idiot–savant Satoru Nakata, a Hermes in that he is the only one able to open and close the passages to the underworld at the right time for the required 1:1 contacts to make necessary time corrections. By these, Miss Saeki is able to resolve the loss of her devoted young lover earlier in her life, and justify her act of incest.

Nakata’s story occupies the even chapters, Kafka’s the odd. Like the ancient game of morra (odds and evens), the novel is a stereognosis, a chirality (handedness). Shuffled together, the two sides construct a “time outside of time,” when certain deeds may be accomplished. The 1:1 is not just a match, it’s the creation of a space–time inside a Λ . A novel itself fits inside this space–time, where we are instructed through divine response, meaning nothing and everything. Murakami himself revealed that the identity issue goes all the way up to the level of reading: “[the novel contains] several riddles, but there aren’t any solutions provided. Instead, several of these riddles combine, and through their interaction the possibility of a solution takes shape. And the form this solution takes will be different for each reader. To put it another way, the riddles function as part of the solution.”⁴⁵ The chirality of reversed predications, the ironic radical reversal of identity at the center of the work, and the chiasmic relation of the two narratives uses the ancient logic of the Cadmus family heroes: in reading the novel we “see that which we should not have seen” and are transformed. Our brains change. Hegel: the “I” that is contained by the distinction — the “I” that is occulted, *il vero* — is the same “I” that makes the distinction, the *factum*. Their meeting is a meeting of the 1 and the 1, or the 1:1 of the *certum* (Fig. 9).

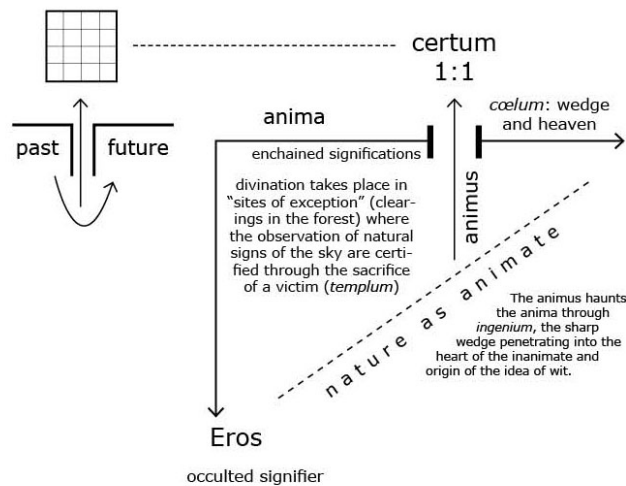


Figure 9. Divination’s site of exception is a reversed predication, past onto future, with the gap expanded into a field of “cathexis” or re-investment in a super-symmetrical coincidence bound by the necessity of Fate. Vico informs us that the *certum* of divination is carried forward into the phenomena of ingenious thought, a (vertical) penetration of a horizontal chain of (horizontally) contiguous signifying chains. Metonymy, as Eros, is the principle of self-realization, confrontation with the “self as Other” that haunts those who “have seen what they should not have seen.” The “I” that is the content of the relation is also the “I” that does the relating: extimacy.

Epiphany

Ekphrasis, as the architecture of sites of exception, is about meanings that come about in specific places and time. Ekphrasis is not just a location or container. It constructs a distinctive medium where meaning’s transactions are material, definitive, and certain. The model for this merger of place and meaning is epiphany, the sudden appearance of intensified, usually spiritualized meaning, specific to a place and time. I would rely on Joyce’s scholarly development of epiphany’s poetic value, begun in *Stephen Hero* and carried into *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (the title is already an ekphrasis) to introduce the idea of epiphany. Joyce saw epiphany as “a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself.”⁴⁶ Epiphany, like divination, arises from a substrate of the abject, the accidental. It is the element of chance that connects with the artist-diviner’s mind. These were almost Freudian in their relation to “unconscious slips of the tongue”: “little errors and gestures — mere straws in the wind — by which people betrayed the very things they were most careful to conceal.”⁴⁷

The idea of epiphany is that something of great spiritual value has been *stolen*, usually stolen from obscure material details, and that this act of theft transforms the identity of the thief. Joyce’s literary voyeurism was famous. He carried a notebook with him at all times, recording potential epiphanies observed in passersby, shop-keepers, barflies. Like Tiresius, Actæon, Cadmus, and a parade of other informal diviners (don’t forget Lucius, who is transformed into an ass for spying on his cousin’s magic in Apuleius’s *The Golden Ass*), Joyce sees what he should not have seen, hears what he should not have heard. Then, he *makes certain* (Fig. 10).

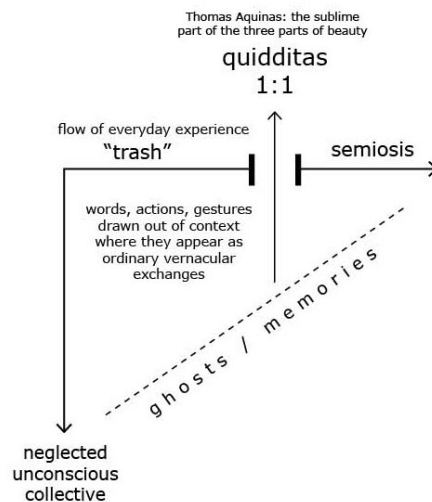


Figure 10. James Joyce’s idea of epiphany, based on the aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas, emphasizes *quidditas*, the third element: “First we recognise that the object is one integral thing, then we recognise that it is an organised composite structure, a thing in fact: finally, when the relation of the parts is exquisite, when the parts are adjusted to the special point, we recognise that it is that thing which it is. Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The

object achieves its epiphany.”⁴⁸ Joyce’s epiphany, in following the structure of divination’s site of exception, allows us to compare the *animus* of Vico’s *ingenium* to Aquinas’s light metaphors. Epiphany, as what glows from the inside, is the presence of the sublime *within* an internally constructed frame, a nano-oracle “lofted” from the trash-heap of the everyday.

Unseen Seens, Unknown Knowns

We must distill critical-philosophical meaning from epiphany’s romanticized associations with religion; thus we look to the uncanny.⁴⁹ Life and death cross-inscribe each other, producing the conditions of life determined by fate (the usual idea of divination), or death that “refuses to die” (the past overrunning the future, as in Bergson’s apothegm). We see what ought to have remained unseen, the copulating snakes of Tiresius (the caduceus of Hermes, to guide us across forbidden boundaries, into the ekphrasis of time of/in time and space of/in space). No, we didn’t intend to violate Diana’s *harām*, but it happened and, what the Hell (thirty-three), we reverse-predicate our identity. The dogs are faster than us anyway, their histories overtake our futures. Moses got his horns by talking with God, so too Actæon gets his antlers through a vision of the space between the forest and the trees, a slight parallax shift in point of view that reveals what is seen and not seen in the forest.

It’s not the content of the frame, it’s the slight shift in meaning that comes from the shift in the frame’s position. Thus, it is not the interpretation of the quotes from Hegel and Bergson but the slight shift that comes when we hear it from a philosophy major working as a prostitute in a scene in Haruko Murakami’s novel, *Kafka on the Shore*. Location, location, location. From inside ekphrasis, a defective narrator signals the function of (dis)placement by giving us precise philosophical coordinates. In Bergson’s “past devouring the future” sensation converts directly to memory before our very eyes — not just recollections of any private memory but a collective and public “space of reading” of *Kafka on the Shore*. The “trick” of ekphrasis involves constructing a frame that inverts the world and its rules. In flipping between the world outside the frame to the world inside (*extimacy*), we enter into a gap that becomes a womb, a *matrix* — the gap between the two predications activates a parallax, like that of our two eyes, to construct an interior dimension, a depth within which appears before and after, insides and outs, unseen seens and seen unseens.

The parallax shift in point of view is what is expressly forbidden by ideology. Shift the point of view, cause a break in the causal chain of signifiers, throw a defect into the narration? No! You would have an unthinkable revolution — in politics, science, philosophy. This is why ekphrasis, the 90° turn into the Nowhere of the frame inside the frame, is also tacitly forbidden. Ekphrasis shows the way to a divinatory and epiphanic reading of architecture. It is a cure for *aphanisis* and foil to the pedagogical machine that has terrorized subjectivity and its unconscious. Ekphrasis pulls the subject out from beneath the signifier, it shows how, in thirty-three dogs, metonymy gives Echo an extra tip to sing to Narcissus in 1/1 time. Ekphrasis provides an escape route from the binary signifier’s metaphors of mediation, its system of semblance set-up to insure misrecognition (more *aphanisis*). But, best yet, ekphrasis provides a

matrix — a womb, a forest of mysteries, a treasury of signifiers liberated from fetish — where desire converts to the acousmatic voice of divination and epiphany, word made flesh.

I have been hard on those who milk the binary signifier for its mediating middles, and hard on those who have jimmed texts, ignored key evidence, posed pseudo–ethical mandates. It is time to ask for the Real Thing, not Coke’s “it,” but the material *muthos* as a defective narrator allowed to mur-mur, within the walls, about *mame mo memelay*, where sensation is “already memory.” The ideology we must fight is between our walls, where discourse has been replaced by captioned photos and digital fly-throughs. This shameful situation has ignored a rich heritage that should be ours if only we begin to “listen architecture.” Like the child called out of Mary after her number of completion, the forty weeks of gestation, the words made flesh, we must hear you, my architecture, *mon amour invisible*.

Thirty-three getting in, forty getting out ... ingestion then gestation then engendering. Happy rebirthday to the uncanny, whose “coming to light of that which should have remained hidden” informs divination (both formal and personal) and the myths of epiphany (with special thanks to the Cadmus family). Numerology should not be an issue, unless more inclusive methods of counting are invited back: breaths, heartbeats, footsteps, and all of the poetic displacements (*strophes*, tropes, curses) that take the architecture of walking, ichnography, into wording. The one-to-one *certum* of divination matches its right hand, disciplined procedure, to at-first-sinister Eros, that is our certain proof, *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden* — where it was, I shall be. My subjectivity will match the objective correlative of divined presence and, in the immediacy of sensation, shall ask, like General Lowenhielm in *Babette’s Feast*, “mercy and truth” to meet and “righteousness and bliss” to kiss for the sake of theory: “Everything we have chosen has been granted to us. And everything we rejected has also been granted. Yes, we even get back what we rejected.”⁵⁰

ENDNOTES

¹ My thanks to Elaine Kunze for her close review, editorial suggestions, and inspiration throughout the development of this essay.

² See “Acousmatic sound,” Wikipedia; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acousmatic_sound, accessed August 2014.

³ Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1968). Vico’s position on the role of metaphor has been radically misunderstood by those who would use mythic thought as a paradigm exemplar for moderns in need of an alternative to instrumental thinking. The first metaphor, in Vico’s view, is the “imaginative universal,” which externalized human qualities in the form of dæmonic dimensions inside/behind natural phenomena. This metaphor was unconscious, not a “poetic mentality” in any modern sense. The dæmonic element operated through metonymy, not metaphor. It is entirely inaccurate to say that the mythic consciousness is contemporaneous in any way with modern, conceptual thought; but we do have some access. The mythic mind’s strangeness, which Vico says cost him a good twenty years to discover, demonstrates the need for a metonymic account of an unconscious that works within subjectivity as an “occulted signifier.” We can find our mythic substrate by understanding and using epiphany as an “opening” to critical thinking (theory) and personal experience (constructing architecture).

⁴ Douglas Spencer has demonstrated that theory's demise has been no accident but, rather, a carefully planned project to (1) consolidate extant philosophical interests around deconstruction (Derrida, Deleuze) while (2) preparing to neutralize this connection by converting relevant philosophical-critical content to polemics to support architectural practices. "The New Phantasmagoria: Transcending the Violence of Financial Capitalism," in Nadir Lahiji, ed., *The Missed Encounter of Radical Philosophy with Architecture*, Bloomsbury Studies in Philosophy (New York: Bloomsbury, 2014), 79–94.

⁵ Slavoj Žižek, "The Structure of Domination Today: A Lacanian View," *Studies in Eastern European Thought*, 56 (2004): 383–403. The logic of the binary signifier is critical for the understanding of metonymy in that the continuity presumed to exist between the polar terms, a continuity that seems to demand some "mediation position" balancing the interest of "both sides," is based on the suppression or "occultation" of one term, which fuels the continuity of the signifying chain with its enigmatic resistance to definition as an "empty signifier." Online version can be found at <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/slavoj-zizek/articles/the-structure-of-domination-today-a-lacanian-view/>, accessed July 23, 2014. Polemics prefers to "retail" the binary signifier without its occulted (metonymical) supplement.

⁶ Roman Jakobson, *Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances*, Part 2 of Roman Jakobson and M. Halle, *Fundamentals of Language* ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton & Company, 1956). For insights into scholarly obedience to Jakobson's original error, see Wendy Faith, "Schematizing the Maternal Body: The Cognitive-Linguistic Challenge to Poststructuralist Valorizations of Metonymy," *Metaphorik.de* 54 (June 2004); <http://metaphorik.de/en/autor/faith-wendy.html>, accessed August 2014.

⁷ Russell Grigg, Dominique Hecq, and Craig Smith, *Female Sexuality: The Early Psychoanalytic Controversies* (New York: Other Press, 1999). Lacan's *aphanisis* addresses the way the subject is "castrated" by the symbolic chain, given an identity that is essentially a misrecognition. Semblance assigns identities, within systems based on rivalry and mastery.

⁸ See, for example Simone Brott, *Architecture for a Free Subjectivity Deleuze and Guattari at the Horizon of the Real* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011) and Nadir Lahiji, *The Political Unconscious of Architecture Re-Opening Jameson's Narrative* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011).

⁹ Raymond Carver, *The Stories of Raymond Carver* (London: Picador, 1985).

¹⁰ My "dæmon-Eros" is drawn from Paul Friedländer's *Plato* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), with the intention of acknowledging philosophy's debt to love as dæmonic. Giambattista Vico was the first to see the relation of Eros to metonymy, but this has not before been developed. Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1968). For an example of the application of the idea of the "occulted (metonymic) signifier," see Elizabeth J. Bellamy, *Translations of Power: Narcissism and the Unconscious in Epic History* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1992). Note: I use the spelling "dæmon" to distinguish the general spiritual aspect from the modern sense of "fiend."

¹¹ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1992); Sigmund Freud, David McLintock, and Hugh Haughton, *The Uncanny* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003); Ernst Jentsch, "Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen." *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift* 8, 22 (August 26, 1906): 195–98; and 8, 23 (September 1, 1906): 203–205. Jentsch's primary "cross-inscribed" terms were life and death, which we might align with architecture's protected interior and the unprotected exterior as wilderness. These two primary conditions can be abbreviated as A_D, the living person haunted/pursued by death, and D_A, the dead subject who refuses to die, i.e. the necessity of literal death to be followed by a symbolic death. That all cultures recognize both this "left" and "right" versions of the uncanny is evident in the calibration of the period of mourning to match a conventionalized "drying out" of the corpse, from flesh to bone.

¹² See Ed Pluth, *Signifiers and Acts Signifiers and Acts Freedom in Lacan's Theory of the Subject* (Albany: State University of New York, 2007) for a clear distinction between metaphor's lateral transfer of meaning contrasted by metonymy's dependence on absence and negation.

¹³ For all things pertaining to this interesting element, overlooked completely by phonemic linguistics, I rely on Mladon Dolar's *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT, 2006). The term, *la voix acousmatique*, was coined by Michel Chion.

¹⁴ What I have in mind here goes past the *déjà vu* experience to the way the past, in temporarily foreclosing the future, reveals its concealed contents. We remember what we forgot, but forgot that we forgot.

¹⁵ Jacques Lacan, *On Feminine Sexuality: The Limits of Love and Knowledge; Encore 1972-1973* (New York, NY: Norton, 1999), 107–136.

¹⁶ See the considerable expansion of this idea in the work of René Girard. See especially *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1977).

¹⁷ In brief, this is the *impasse* of the demand for recognition, which the Master can satisfy only through the role of a Servant who has opted out of the system. The servant's metonymy is literal: exile to the "invisibilities" of service entrances and back rooms. Paradoxically, the externalized Servant has access to the most internal space, a *poché* surrounding the Master's body and daily activities.

¹⁸ I would describe this flip of effect into cause as "reversed predication" in order to allow generalization that goes beyond causality to include, for example, shifts in relations of contained/containing, ruled/ruling, accidental/intentional, etc. Symbolizing the "flip" of reversed predication, between a generic > and <, graphically emphasizes the hinge role of the gap (metonymy) that facilitates the flip.

¹⁹ Fredric Jameson, *Signatures of the Visible* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 26–27.

²⁰ Slavoj Žižek, "The Superego and the Act," Lecture, European Graduate School, August 1999; <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/slavoj-zizek/articles/the-superego-and-the-act/>, accessed August 2014.

²¹ The philosophy student, her mouth occupationally engaged, gives the Bergson source, *Matter and Memory*, as "mame mo memelay." Haruki Murakami, *Kafka on the Shore*, trans. Philip Gabriel (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), p. 273. The understandable speech defect qualifies her as a defective narrator.

²² My shameless appropriation of Slavoj Žižek's is intended as a *homage* to Žižek's extensive restoration of Hegel as a philosopher of ekphrasis, evident in Chapter 10, "Objects, Objects Everywhere," 649–713.

²³ Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009).

²⁴ For Vico, muteness is the key to myth (whose etymology is derived from *mutos*, mute), which "says more by saying less." Vico, *New Science*, §401, §429, §431.

²⁵ I cannot too strongly contrast this structural explanation with the standard humanist "defense of poetry" based on a plea to modern consciousnesses to employ metaphor to return to a "mythic" primitive state.

²⁶ This comes close to Plato's idea of anamnesis, an interesting angle too complex to take up here.

²⁷ Haruko Murakami himself develops this idea in another novel, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, trans. Alfred Birnbaum (London: Vintage Books, 2003).

²⁸ Irina Aristarkhova, *Hospitality of the Matrix Philosophy, Biomedicine, and Culture* (New York: Columbia University, 2012).

²⁹ Hopefully this will not sound like a silly example. By converting ambient sounds into white-noise “echoes,” the sea-shell provides us with a means of “hearing inside of sound” that is akin to the stochastic resonance amplification of barely audible signals. This kind of hearing is a paradigm for the deployment of epiphany as an artistic practice, defined by James Joyce in *Stephen Hero* and *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*. James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, ed. T. Spencer, J. Slocum and H. Cahoon (New York: New Directions, 1963); —, *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014).

³⁰ Lynch, David, Angelo Badalamenti, Peter Deming, Mary Sweeney, Naomi Watts, Laura Elena Harring, and Justin Theroux. *Mulholland Drive*, DVD (Issy-les-Moulineaux, France: StudioCanal, 2005). The main narrative is a “death dream” of Diane Selwyn, whose suicide we witness in the opening seconds of the film.

³¹ *Mulholland Drive* constitutes a formal example of *apophrades*, the speech of the dead, since the POV character, Diane Selwyn, commits suicide in the opening seconds of the film. The return of the dead was a day dreaded by the Greeks, who set aside specific activities (the trials of accused murderers) and specific spaces (corners, edges of fields, narrow thin places) to accommodate the voice that connects stochastic resonance with Michel Chion’s *voix acousmatique* as well as the idea that metonymy’s “meaning of negation and distance” is also the voice of the True, true prophecy.

³² Ernst Cassirer has pointed out that the gradually evolved notion of gods — at first many and disorganized, later grouped, and finally centralized around a single all-powerful entity — developed only gradually from the dispersed and specific idea of *dæmon*, not the other way around. Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms 2, Mythical Thought*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University, 1955), 157–158.

³³ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Senectute ; De Amicitia ; De Divinatione*, trans. William Armistead Falconer (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1923). I am grateful to Carolina Dayer for pointing out this useful comparison of formal divination to individual clairvoyance. In my view, both types cited by Cicero require some “randomizing function” that detaches divination (her term, “presaging”) from the causal chain. In the case of the artist–poet, this can be cultivated by developing what Picasso called, “finding without looking.” Carolina Dayer, personal correspondence, August 9, 2014.

³⁴ By rotating Jakobson’s metaphor–metonym vectors 90°, I am able to link metonymy’s effects with the “zenithal” as such — the identification of the divine with the azure *caelum* — as well as the abysmal nadir, the heart of darkness, made memorable by Dante’s inverted angel, Satan. Everyday reality, allowed to flow horizontally across landscape of affordance, give a clearer picture of how signifying chains “slide past” each other, creating opportunities for metaphoric “quilting.”

³⁵ My favorite popular culture example comes from the 1945 film *Dead of Night*, Michael Balcon, *et al.*, DVD (Troy, MI: Anchor Bay Entertainment, 2003). In one episode, a woman gives her fiancé a mirror she found in an antique shop without knowing it originally had hung in the bedroom of an invalid intent on murdering his adulterous spouse. From its new position on the wall of the fiancé’s apartment, the mirror converts from giving an “honest” reflection of reality to capturing the new owner’s mind, transporting him to the original bedroom scene. His jealousy intensifies to the point of attempted murder until the mirror is smashed.

³⁶ Attributed by Graham Sutherland, “A Trend in English Draughtsmanship,” *Signature* 3 (1936): 7–13.

³⁷ In Vico’s account, the first humans realize the *dæmonic* potential of nature in a loud and prolonged clap of thunder. This theory allows that the components of human thought and perception already existed in some form before they were *quantitatively* converted into a *qualitatively* different phenomenon. Vico, *New Science*, §9, §62, §195, §301, §377, §379, §383, §387, §389, §§447–449, §491, §502, §504, §506, §508, §516, §§586–587, §680, §689, §712, §734, §786, §§1097–1098.

³⁸ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De divinatione*, 1, 67. Add Shakespeare’s trilogy: “The lunatic, the lover, and the poet / Are of imagination all compact.” Theseus, in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Act 5, Scene 1.

³⁹ Weak signals undetectable at low-noise levels become audible when white noise is increased. Mark D. McDonnell and Derek Abbott, “What Is Stochastic Resonance? Definitions, Misconceptions, Debates, and Its Relevance to Biology,” *PLoS Computational Biology* 5, 5 (May 2009), e1000348, <http://www.ploscompbiol.org>.

⁴⁰ Borges, “On Exactitude in Science,” in *A Universal History of Infamy*, trans. Norman Thomas de Giovanni (Penguin Books, London, 1975).

⁴¹ Giambattista Vico, *New Science*, §321; —, *On the One Principle and One End of Universal Law*, trans. John D. Schaeffer (Atlanta, GA: Emory University, Institute for Vico Studies, 2003), 90–91.

⁴² Leonard Barkan, “Diana and Actæon: the Myth as Synthesis,” *English Literary Renaissance* 10, 3 (September 1980): 317–359.

⁴³ Freud, *The Uncanny*, 132.

⁴⁴ My unconventional reading is a-synchronous. Actæon, is a shaman of the forest who visits the underworld where he is allowed to view divine mysteries. The dogs are token of this initiatory journey, a *katabasis*, as the number thirty-three suggests. Run the narrative backwards to get a true (divine) picture. Ovid, *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, trans. Allen Mandelbaum (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1993). Bad translators leave out the dogs.

⁴⁵ “An Interview with Haruko Murakami,” *Book Browse*; https://www.bookbrowse.com/author_interviews/full/index.cfm?author_number=1103, accessed August 2014.

⁴⁶ James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, 211–213.

⁴⁷ John Stanislaus Joyce, *My Brother's Keeper: James Joyce's Early Years* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 2003), 124.

⁴⁸ Quoted from James Joyce, *Stephen Hero*, 211–213.

⁴⁹ For an example of an expanded account that attempts to connect epiphany to a presumed religious origin, see Richard Kearney, “Epiphanies in Joyce and Proust,” *New Arcadia Review* 3 (2005); <http://www.bc.edu/publications/newarcadia/archives/3/epiphaniesinjoyce/>, accessed August 2014. “The haecceity of a thing is that radiance of its internal being as created and apprehended by God. It discloses itself — mystically, poetically, spiritually — in terms of a certain sacred perception.” Kearney nonetheless establishes the principle of identity as central, although he sees Joyce’s development of the “shout in the street” in the Nestor episode of *Ulysses* as religious, despite the tenor of the text and in difference to the rather explicit references to Giambattista Vico’s anti-theistic *New Science*, documented by A. M. Klien, “A Shout in the Street,” *New Directions* 13 (1951).

⁵⁰ Isak Dinesen, Stéphane Audran, Birgitte Federspiel, Bodil Kjer, and Gabriel Axel, *Babette’s Feast*, DVD (New York: Orion Home Video, 1989).