Autoerotica of the Portable Point of View

Maestro mantovano (?), *Morte di una religiosa* (Caterina da Siena?), 1500 ca. Ferrara, Pinoteca Nazionale, inv. 48. Christ and two other angels appear out a cloud-lined background that arcs across the secular space-time of the bed chamber, while a second ceiling of clouds provides the nearly-deceased a catenary line of communications attended to by a dark winged demon (static on the line?), while sanctified spirits attend the Virgin Mary as she seems to intercede for the prone *religiosa*'s salvation. While the space of the rooms is strictly perspectival, the spirits and demon are strictly otherwise.

Thought 1: In the illustration circulated by Claudio Sgarbi to an appreciative circle of friends, it would be useful to apply an idea from recent critical analysis theory, where the point of view is shifted from the conventional mandate, standing in front of the "frame" constructed by the narrative, to enter into various objects inside the frame, as if one could tell the story of *Madame Bovary* in terms of what her maidservant or even her dining room table might have witnessed.[1] This is the ultimate "reverse perspective" although in terms of the icon's reverse perspective, where a "God's-eye view" is involved, it would seem to be low on the ladder of critical expectations. To tell the story of this illustration using Lisa Samuels' and Jerome McGann's notion of "deformance," a subset of "algorithmic criticism," takes the viewer of this scene from a position in front of the plane of the picture to content inside the "space sandwich created by the picture plane and the apotropic do-not-trespass sign at back, where the vanishing point, like any good black hole, sucks in all visible reality.

In the practice of deformance, we might be the dying holy saint, the attending priest, the praying/kneeling figures on the lower left, Jesus or other celestial beings standing on a cloud, the tiny angel coming out of a cloud between them paired with a colleague below the main cloud line, or the praying figure seen through the door. We might take the term "reverse perspective" even more seriously by taking up the point of view of the winged demon who seems to deflect the line of the dying prone *religiosa* with Jesus into a catenary, just to see what kind of gravity is involved with saintly perfection at the point of death and transfiguration.

Deformance OKs what Pavel Florensky seems to have advocated with the idea of reverse perspective — that in getting inside the space sandwich we bring along the making as we proceed inside the made: we take our detachment (is this Florensky's term for spiritual pride, "prelest" — the false claim to be objective, to be able to simply see objectively by *separating* spaces and assigning them to be "subjective" or "objective") — into the impossible space (because it lacks any real thickness) and finding ourselves inside the dimensionality of death and judgment is not representational but Real. We are doing what we have shown others to be doing, we are giving up our pretense of detachment.

Thought 2: Once inside, we have options. One of these is to find out what it means "to see with the eye of God" in light of the possibility that God's eye is actually positioned at the point of the little devil, connecting to the Aruba

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term "juke," which literally means "to see with the eye of the devil," the spiritual goal of the *candomblé* Macumba ceremony depicted in *Black Orpheus* (1951), a summons of the dead by a dancer who becomes the god Echú.[2] Smoking a cigar, holding a small ax, the slow-moving Echú revolves, watching other dancers, one of which will become an opening to the realm of the dead through convulsions that show her body being overtaken by the spiritual Other. The look liberates her from mortal obligations, just as in the Parsi ceremony of *sagdid*, the gaze of a dog is required to free the soul from the near-to-death body. Dogs and devils, old friends. Vico's borrowed formula, *aut deus aut demon*, should free us from the fear of having to choose the winner of the binary of God and Devil. In the binary-negating contronymics[3] of the unconscious mind and the memory that saves everything by excluding time and space markers, it won't matter anyway.

The little black winged devil will be good enough for any internal point of view that needs to pivot inside the thin space of the representation. Clearly, the dæmon "has an angle" on the death/life binary and makes the straight line (the binary) into a curve whose physics is that of a chain. Thus does the "arrow of Eros" reveal itself to be a curved line that curves into itself, an "Eigenform" as defined by Louis Kauffman in an essay sent to me from out of the blue by Alireza Moharar.[4] "In an observing system, what is observed is not distinct from the system itself, nor can one make a complete separation between the observer and the observed."[5] The catenary line re-defining the binary of (mortal) life *versus* (eternal) life-through-death is indeed an Eigenform if ever there was one, the "if ever" being nothing less than the gapped circle of the autoerotic, the curved line we thought was the straight line, the self-defining reflexive vector we thought was the linear distance between the two goalposts on the playing field of life, where every advance of one team requires the retreat of the opponents.

Nothing to do in this situation but watch the clouds, noting perhaps how the cloud is the pictorial convention for "coming out of nowhere," a hole in the surface of the representation that leads to an Outside representation where the representing gets done. We associate such holes with the "Pop!" and "Wham!" of comic strips, or even more precisely the heart-annotated blow of the brick thrown by the ever-antagonistic Ignatz at the head of the ever-amorous Kat, Krazy. True love, it seems, is the vectorial situation that goes past the binaries of antagonistic erotica: the lover-beloved, the boy-girl, the love-you/hate-you. In the physics of the autoerotic, the Eigenform is the arrow of Eros, bent around to hit itself in the ass that thought itself exempt. Thus, *cul* in French is both an end and a cunt, or as Laurence Horn points out, cunt and cock are "simultaneous" in many systems of slang, and it takes only a little digging to see how "ass" is the most thoroughly contronymic part of the body as far as ethnolinguistics

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[2] Eshú is described as a "black devil-god" in the character list of Aimé Césaire's 1969 play, *Une Tempête*, and is mentioned briefly by the Master of Ceremonies in the Introduction. In the actual text of the play, Eshú is not mentioned nor invoked by any of the characters.

[3] A contronymy is a single term with two opposite definitions. See note 6.

[4] Louis H. Kauffman, "Reflexivity and Eigenform: The Shape of Process"; online text accessed February 2017, https://www2.gwu.edu/~rpsol/preconf/wmsci/kaufman2.pdf. "The paper discusses the concept of a reflexive domain, an arena where the apparent objects as entities of the domain are actually processes and transformations of the domain as a whole. Human actions in the world partake of the patterns of reflexivity, and the productions of human beings, including science and mathematics, can be seen in this light." In other words, Kauffman aims to define "thirdness" as moving beyond the binary of appearance/reality, especially as it is considered in the contrast of Form/Content.

[5] Louis Kauffman, "Reflexivity and Eigenform: The Shape of Process," Online text: https://www2.gwu.edu/~rpsol/preconf/wmsci/kaufman2.pdf.

is concerned.[6] We are not allowed niceties of gender binaries inside the Eigenform of reverse perspective. Neither may we enjoy any I-thou dynamics or "*je-moi*" narcissisms. There is not enough of a subject to be reflected in a mysterious mirror to attract our admiration. The space inside the representation is not spaced; it doesn't allow *spacing*. Say goodby to the ethics of Levinas, and the dynamics of transference. The autoerotic is pre-subject, and the only access road is *via* the discourse of the Hysteric, where location is relocation and time is not-yet and nevermore.

Thought 3: Eigenform is about the non-locality of "spooky correspondences." "Local" is what happens in space and time. The limit of the local is the speed of light.[7] The non-local seems not to care about this limit, adopting instead an eternal standard, namely Eternity. This abolition of time is also a rejection of the use of spatial dimensions. What is close is also far, what is far is just as good as what is close. Strangely, this was the method of Raymond Roussel's *procédé*, something not mentioned in architectural theory writings on Roussel, possibly because these writings did not take into account Ford's excellent study of Roussel's life and tricks.[8] Roussel would insert, within an ordinary scene, a telescopic or rather microscopic plunge into smaller and smaller scales, from a room to a table in the room, to a bottle of Vichy water on the table, to the label on the bottle, to the ship shown (on a distant horizon) on the label, to a trip to that remote ship, to the identification of the captain on the ship, to a discussion of the condition of the captain's beard …. Although this impossible voyage would seem to endorse the catenary of spaces inside spaces as drawn from the "causal order" of symbolic chains in general, the fact that this "powers of 10" accordion view finds all levels of reality equally deserving of attention short-circuits space/time's power of subordination. The arrow that carries time from initial causes out to subsequent effects is "reset," allowing effects to be the result of "as many causes as possible."

Roussel forces us to examine the phenomenon of "the tricky guy." The tricky guy plays out option 2 of the Cretan Liar's Paradox. He knows in advance you will discover that a truth-telling Cretan ("All Cretans tell the truth!") is bimodal — that the medium and the message, the container and the contained, the form and the content are not going to stick to their rules of parallel-but-separate. Euclid's postulate about this will broken each and every minute of life within the Subjective, but they will be broken "at the expense of" a victim trapped within the trick. In other words, the truth-telling Cretan (option 1) expects his "mark" (victim) to stay quiet on the matter, even well past the moment he realizes the game is rigged against him. The lying Cretan takes option 2 to offer artistic sympathy to the form of swindle known as the con. "I'm conning you but you are going to benefit in the end, if only from the knowledge that your participation in this all-too-human situation makes you more of a human and less of a subject!"

Roussel does the long con, that is a con involving the willing participation of the mark and at least several stages and levels of complicity. At short distances, his jokes backfire, he exposes himself to ridicule. He is the first to confess to being a simple confidence man. But, this good-natured self-criticism cannot account for his long-

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[6] A contronym is a word with two opposite meanings, a self-negating word. Sigmund Freud claimed that children and primitives used more contronyms because of their "autoerotic" and "megalomaniac" view of the world, where words and things, wishes and actions, objects and subjects freely interchanged. See Laurence Horn, "Etymythology and Taboo," https://www.bu.edu/isle/files/2012/01/Laurence-Horn-Etymythology-and-Taboo.pdf.

[7] John Lancaster, "Can We Escape from Time?" Review of James Gliek, *Time Travel, A History*, *The New York Review of Books* (November 24, 2016); see also James Gliek, "When They Came from Another World," review of *Arrival*, *The New York Review of Books* (January 19, 2017).

[8] Mark Ford, *Raymond Roussel and the Republic of Dreams* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

range ambitions. So, in *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*, he reveals how he does the long con. He takes a phrase, seemingly out of the blue, presents and develops its apparent meaning in a conventional way, but at the same time constructs an antipodal meaning, equally convincing, as the end-point. The novel's trick is to work its way between these two opposites, but here he gives us a lesson in the binary. Unlike the wintery day following the summery day, when winter and summer slip and slide in their tug-of-war to see who wins March or April, each meaning is shadowed over by its opposite, but the shadow itself is shadowed, and that shadow is shadowed, etc. etc. The same *mise en abîme* that cast the reader's eye into infinite distance in the Vichy water bottle version of the *procédé* takes the winter day into the summer day into the winter day *of* a summer's day, which turns out to be a summer's day but with a chill and touch of gray …. In other words, we are not allowed our binary, we are not given the peace of the distance maintained by the parallel lines of Form and Content. The beginning and end generate a palindromic *tonos* that, unlike an alternating *tropos*, creates a harmonic that becomes melodic.

This makes an important point with respect to the theme of "reverse perspective" defined by Florensky. Where it would be easy and obvious to see the lines converging on the viewer as a token of God's eye view from an equally opposite position in relation to the visual representation, the point is that the lines converge on the viewer who must take up the role of a "god-or-dæmon" and endure *palintonos harmoniē* without imagining a construction of visual inspection on the other side the image. The I as | becomes a Λ, and then a double I, ||, which from the same point of view must admit its double nature. *Mnimosti* (Мнимостии) is not just "not of this world" (requiring us to imagine some other realm, not our usual "reality") but "deceitful, intentionally trick." That is, in saying that the present world is not up to accommodating the kind of project the trickster has in mind, *mnimosti* also says that a con is involved. *All Cretans are liars*. Option 2.

Ricky Jay, the famous magician and con artist, has noted that any audience member who believes in magic should be ejected from the auditorium. You can't be tricked if you believe there is no trick. It has to be done "against your will," in *the face of your skepticism*, so to speak. Jay is making a claim identical to Roussel's in the *procédé*. Jay essentially says that the audience member must be a co-conspirator, or rather *imagine him/herself* to be a co-conspirator. The "mark" (the victim of the deceit) must be fully aware of the presence of the con project. This is the difference between simple theft (taking something without being detected) and Hermetic theft, which involves the participation or even cooperation of the victim. This is as true for romantic seduction, where the victim is just as aroused to think of just how the seducer will accomplish his/her task of winning a resisting heart, as it is for picking pockets, where the thief must create pockets of anesthesia/catalepsis in which the victim will "know without knowing" that the pickpocket is moving freely to steal goods off their person ("body loading"). Hermetic theft has been linked to the primary cultural institution of "silent trade," where two parties assign an equally "anesthetic" (dark) site where one will be allowed to steal from the other, while attributing the theft to a god named Hermes, represented by a pile of inert stones. The pile of stones signify a mountain's ability to connect an underground treasury with a gem-like pinnacle touching holy æther.

The knowledge of the victim is *kenosis*, "knowing without knowing." The creation of the anesthetized space, where something may be taken or inserted or replaced, is *askesis*, a contraction. Both *kenosis* and *askesis* figure prominently in Florensky's spiritual manifestos involving reverse perspective. The concept of *dæmon* serves as the animating force of *askesis*, but although it first seems that retreat is an escape motivated by the threat of the *dæmon*, "in truth" (i. e. as a revelation function) the *dæmon* may be equally seen to be *the result of* the contraction. This complex energy system is also present in the Lurianic dynamic of *zimzum*, the contraction God makes "in order to make room for" creation. If God retreats in the face of his own created world, then negation is the

underlying efficient cause of all reality! We see the palindrome in this primordial non-parallelism, a true *palintonos harmoniē*, which offers meditation the chance to glimpse its structures at any point. It involves the meditator as the flim-flam man involves the *mark* in the short con: it gives him/her an "insider's privilege" to see the positive and negative at the same time, with a couple of conditions.

Inverter gates regulate autoerotic "circuits" by allowing continual interchange between binaries such as cause/effect, subject/object, temporal/eternal. Angels use "inverter gates" to appear from an autoerotic domain (heaven is the perfect example) to constitute an analogous point of crisis or miracle in "reality." Because reality is dominated by the binary appearance/truth, the angel's appearance, fitting neither, constitutes a singularity.

The first condition is that, while "reality" (perspectival point of view) must be negated in the process, it cannot be abandoned as the field of play. In Florensky's analysis of the religious icon, perspective must be used as a standard *against which* breaking its rules creates an effect. That is, the mark must be "in on the con." The con still goes on. The second condition comes out of the structural relations of *askesis*, *dæmon*, and *kenosis* — retreat, emergence, and knowledgable cooperation undertaken even though the mark knows that the scam is going on. This latter element of "knowing without knowing" is akin to the "Stockholm syndrome," the willingness of the captor to go along with and even enthusiastically undertake the POV of his/her captors, as in the case of Patty Hearst, who became a willing participant in a bank robbery of the Symbionese Liberation Army although she was technically their kidnap victim. The difference between Hearst and the mark who enjoys the magician's/trickster's show lies in the nature of the different kinds of enjoyment they experience. Hearst enjoyed the pain of her capture within the dynamics of the death drive. The audience member of the magician's show enjoys the pain of not knowing how the trick is done through the circuitry of "autoerotics," which allows momentary re-adjustments of object-subject, cause-effect, and other binary relations to accumulate within a register of suspense, "fuel" for an ultimate emergence — the "rabbit out of the hat," the object/prop that will appear from "nowhere."[9]

We must allow that this "out of nowhere" is the key to the idea of *kenosis*, that it is the generating cause and guiding physics. Just as angels appear in Giotto's paintings, tokens of a "space beyond space" and "time beyond time," we simultaneously allow a Real to exist *both inside and outside reality*. We simultaneously allow this inside/outside situation — extimity (from Lacan's *extimité*) — to emphasize the intimacy of what first seems to be alien or external or the alien quality of what is most internal to the subject, i. e. its kernel of Being. The angel is neither internal nor external, although it appears to be presenting itself from without, from a realm "impossibly distant" from reality. In fact the angel springs from an interior that is positioned as a hole in the fabric of reality space. The angel (*dæmon* in the *askesis* formula), ties the spatial hole to the temporal event, the "miracle" that is akin to the spooky faster-than-light simultaneity of the non-local. This time is *simultaneously* the past and the future, the key to why Tiresias is both blind and a prophet. Outside of perspectival reality, the a-temporal becomes evident when

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[9] The autoerotic circuit is a closed system "powered" by a "gate" that inverts binary values in such a way that each is inscribed within the other as a concealed kernel, experienced as a void. In the uncanny for example, the binary life/death becomes two symmetrical cases: the living person pursued by death and the dead person who continues to live past the point of literal death. The inverter gate is inevitably "contronymic" in that opposites are seen to depend on the negation of the other, as in the home that is uneasily alien and the temporary foreign dwelling that seems "at home."

the seer sees in a palindromic way, in an inside-outside way. The parallel registers of Form and Content create a *palintonos harmoniē*, a vector that is a void, a "hole in space," that in remaining silent and still, allows all other vectors to change. Technically speaking, this vector is a point, in that it lacks dimensionality of any kind, including temporality; but because we cannot *speak of* something without engaging temporality as a condition of that speaking, we call the point a force and allow it to borrow the quality of a vector, a movement, a force. This vector will always be the line of travel of anything that appears out of nowhere, of anything with a message (*mi-dire*) that cannot be understood, at least not in any conventional way. In the film *Arrival*, this is the Ur-language of the septipods who squirt calligraphic circles without reference to a spatio-temporal matrix of possible verb actions. The devil is pulling the chain.

Thought 4: More about the long and short con: Hermetic theft/seduction involves the "knower who doesn't know." Magic acts depend on this, also meditation, which creates *askesis* to suck a *dæmon* into the vacuum, a rabbit out of a hat, an angel out of Nowhere. Florensky says that reverse perspective is precisely this "not knowing," this *askesis*. Into the realm of ordinary light that has been "broken," a new non-local light, the "light of Tabor," a *non-created* light, shines through the light of ordinary day, like a darkness that is brighter than anything because it shines in a palintonically reverse direction or, rather, two directions at the same time.[10] *The knower can't know about this but must be a knower just the same*. Thus, the short and long con are significant in playing out just how space-time is "troubled" by reverse perspective and how "trouble" is similar to but different from the "trouble" of anxiety that constitutes reality within the Symbolic, within Subjectivity.[11] The Symbolic is held together by the dynamics of anxiety created by the detection, at a distant locus, of the desire of an Other whose messages about this desire are *indecipherable* although presented *in the form* of a cipher. My definition aims to short-circuit the many complex issues about anxiety that would require us to formally object to the "standard" ordering of anxiety within the triad of *Angst*, fear, and fright, each with decreasing distance between the victim and the threat. Lacanians know, even if they do not always understand, that Lacan sees immediately that anxiety/*Angst* involves a collapse of dimensionality that is held from further collapse by means of a "theatrical space arrangement." The obvious engagement of architecture at this point has never been noted, although the consequences are, quite obviously, enormous.

Imagine a distant threat, such as the comet approaching earth in Lars von Trier's *Melancholia.* Was there ever a film more appropriately named, particularly in Lacanian specifications, since it shows precisely how a gradual

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[10] See Victor Bychkov, *The Aesthetic Face of Being: Art in the Theology of Pavel Florensky*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (Crestwood, NJ: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1993), 30–33. The "light of Tabor" is light that, faster than time, is uncreated and pure beauty as well as revelation. *The light combines Form and Content*. It is the light that surrounds the ascetics who have achieved a perfect relation with the "created world" in its natural simplicity. There is no binary opposition of created/uncreated. Flesh is not rejected but potentially available for elevation to a divine state, anticipating the Resurrection. A Byzantine monastery church of the Transfiguration, at the base of the mountain, holds a festival on August 19, the day of the Transfiguration of Christ. Hesychasm (ἡσυχασμός) is the related doctrine of stillness, which focuses on the "Jesus prayer" that is coordinated with breathing and employed most famously by worshipers at Mt. Athos. Inhale: Κύριε Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ, Υἱέ τοῦ Θεοῦ, Exhale: ἐλέησόν με (τὸν ἁμαρτωλόν). The "I am a sinner" finish is considered to be not original.

[11] In a weird way, I am arguing for the demolition of the Subjective in the same way that speculative realists call for an ontology that resists subjective contamination. Their demolition, however, reinstates objects that are "more subjects than subjects themselves," but without the autoerotic circuitry that is maintained by the pre-subject human who sets up then abandons object/subject, cause/effect, figure/ground, and other "stabilities" only to abandon them. The logic of the con is to continually reverse figure/ground stabilities, to have the mark inside, then outside, then inside the "game," so the art of the con is particularly relevant in investigating the autoerotic as a "hysterical" construct taking the form of a circuit regulated by a single "inverter gate" that can be set up at any point along the series of exchanges.

approach of a remote *dæmonic* threat causes this immediate self-centralizing perspectival construct, where space-time is re-arranged to form a *theater*, or more precisely a "theater within a theater," a theater$_2$, since in watching the film we are already in theater$_1$? The concentricity is important: von Trier essentially shows us the structure of the suspense we expect in any movie theater, the deliberate postponement of what we refuse to know yet expect to find in exactly the way we expect — an end. The gradual approach of the celestial *dæmon* causes the ascetic restructuring that will constitute a temporary pause in the process of collapse. We will construct fronts and backs (auditorium and stage and back-stage), lefts and rights, zones where actors may step forward to deliver soliloquies that other actors cannot hear, but which audience members can hear *only if they conceive that they are the only ones being spoken to*. In short, the theater is the *cosmogram* required for the appearance of singularity, just as the "staging" of the Virgin Mary at her lectern puts up a last-minute defensive fortification in the face of angelic threat. She can temporalize the erotic/Hermetic "theft" of her virginity if she can see, in an act of lectomancy, the forward and backward of this prophecy.

Such is the anxiety provoked by Hermes, the pickpocket who sets about numbing the spaces around our body where it intends to operate with impunity.[12] Staging for an *askesis* — a retreat of *consciousness*, to create an "artificial unconscious" that is both objective and accessible by the Other — where a *dæmon* will "take us for all we are worth" (literally!), even allowing us to know what's going on without being able to do anything about it (*kenosis*). This anxiety, we should note, goes in two directions at once. It is palindromic. It starts where it ends. The first moment we see the comet head for earth, we set up our body-loading protocols, we build a theater.

Vico: this is the first architecture: the first clap of thunder; we clear circular dancing grounds in the forest, the altar-stage, that with a bit of blood becomes a way of seeing the future by recognizing an origin, an Eigenvalue (fixed meridian relationship, a *templum*).[13] Those familiar with Vico's account of the emergence of a fully human mentality may have to shift gears to see the connection with Lacan's and Freud's theory of the same emergence of subjectivity, which they characterize as from a state of "human mentality," including use of symbols and language, socialization, etc., to a full and functional "subjectivity" defined by the Symbolic, which converts all human functionalities in light of the (imagistic) Ideal Ego and Ego Ideal of the super-ego.[14] This is to say that in the Symbolic, the Other offers an impossible mandate overwriting the human's desire. The subject's desire is never his/

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[12] Norman O. Brown, *Hermes the Thief: Evolution of a Myth* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, 1947). Brown elaborates the seemingly incompatible multiple functions of the god Hermes to show structural links between trade, theivery, eschatology, cosmic structure, and erotic love.

[13] *Templum* takes on a numerical meaning with the "look-and-say" interpretation of Cantor's "diagonal argument." *Wikipedia*: "Cantor's diagonal argument is a mathematical method to prove that two infinite sets have the same cardinality." The series 11; 12, 21; 13, 22, 31; 14, 23, 32, 41; … is another way of writing Cantor's original fractions, 1/1; 1/2 2/1; 1/3 2/2 31; … etc. The last line where numerators and denominators are one digit only, 19 28 37 …, yields a "look-and-say" numerical pyramid grounded by a row of nine 1's, on top of which are stacked eight 2's, seven 3's, and so on: 1111111111, 22222222, 3333333, 444444, 55555, 6666, 777, 88, 9. The the fact that the horizontal "one 9, two 8's, three 7's … etc. based on Cantor's number series 19, 28, 37, 46, 55, 64, 73, 82, 91 can stack vertically means that there are two numerical palindromic lines that cross at the number 55: (1) Cantor's "horizontal" and (2) the pyramid's "vertical." The number 55 is the center of a concentric series of squares beginning with 46/46/64/64, then 37/37/73/73, then 28/28/82/82, finally 19/19/91/91. The squares can be divided vertically or horizontally. Choosing the *cardus* or vertical divide, a 37/73 "base" allows the triangle to flip so that the apex of 37 goes to 73. With a *decumanus* or east-west horizontal, a triangle base of (for example) 46/64 allows a vertex to flip from a northerly 46 to a southerly 64.

[14] 7Giambattista Vico, T*he New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, NY: Cornell, 1948).

her own. It is a voluntary and mostly unconscious recognition of desire as that of an Other whose demands are presented in untranslatable ciphers.

Lacan has formalized this transition as the Mirror Stage. For Freud, it was the general passage from the autoerotic mentality of childhood into stabilized positions of the ego in relation to others, as exemplified by the Oedipus complex's featured misrecognition of the subject. But, the transition is as basic and easily demonstrated as in Helen Keller's famous conversion from sign use to realization of the full dimensionality of language when her tutor, Ann Sullivan, signed the word "water" while pumping water over Helen's hand. This was not a materialist demonstration. Rather, Keller was able to see the relationship to the maternal Other, Ann, through the immediacy of the water's sensation as simultaneous to the signed representation. Form and content had not been separate before that point, but in this act they were perceived to be unified "retroactively." Just as the young subject before the Lacanian mirror realizes that, before that moment, it has been a "body in pieces," a *corps morcélé*, but only retroactively, Keller realizes the difference between form and content retroactively at the moment when they are presented simultaneously.

This moment takes place at a *staged encounter*. The Mirror Stage is, literally, a stage. Keller's pump constitutes a stage. The distant threat that appears on the horizon *immediately* provokes a staging of anxiety. The edge and the center are in perfect synchronicity (in time) and (in space) aligned along a significant Eigenvector, a meridian. This was the logic beyond the Medieval and earlier belief that specific maladies came with specific winds, which in some systems were differentiated into 16, or even 32 or 64 specific directional types. Note that the horizon and center, connected by an Eigenvector/meridian, constitute a non-locality, a faster-than-time and brighter than light uncreated Eternity.

Thought 5: Speculation requires us to ask, just as vampires have a "special exemption" that allows them to escape being reflected in a mirror, does Jesus have a similar "exemption" in relation to light, particularly the light that is subject to the perspectival/pictorial rules of representation? This would be a kind of hold-over of God's exemption, honored in particular by Jews and Muslims, that forbids any representation. This exemption is a part of the First Commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," a curious request, since it seems to engage the logic of the "borrowed kettle."[15] If God is the only true god, why is it still optional to have other gods? How can there be more than one god, and should it be up to humans to retain the option, even theoretically, of preferring them to JVHV, putative author of the Ten Commandments? As in the case of Lucifer, particularly in God's wager with Lucifer about Job's dedication and the resulting cruel experiment testing that dedication, God seems to be somewhat insecure about His Position.

The Jewish and Muslim prohibition of images generalizes the idea of idolatry (a doctrine specifically against Form, as false to Content) to include representations that intend to "honor" the worship of God — religious paintings, statues, and even verbal descriptions. This puts the asceticism associated with these "desert religions" up against expansions *via* pagan converts, whose ornate and complex symbolism represented a myriad of spiritual

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[15] The borrowed kettle paradox can be summarized: (1) I never borrowed a kettle from you; (2) I returned it to you unbroken; (3) the kettle was already broken when I got it from you. Each succeeding statement affirms what had been specifically denied by the previous statement. This, in Freud's view (*Interpretation of Dreams*, 1899), exemplified the *Gegensinn* of dreams and their relation to the unconscious's inability to recognize negation. The fact that the First Commandment employs a standard "Jewish Joke" form could be the basis of the idea that the *Witz*, the essence of Jewish self-contradicting humor, proves that Judaism in general is "metaleptic," in that it questions the frame rather than the content. Don't overlook the connection of the First Commandment to Wittgenstein's advice to remain silent. Possibly this connection could be called the "*Witz*-genstein Factor"?

entities without restriction. In the Orthodox icon, this matter is addressed specifically by making a representation that "refuses to represent" in the standard "theatrical" way. (Florensky cites Vitruvius in identifying perspective representation with theater set design.)

Whoa! If we take Vitruvius seriously and credit Anaxagoras with the invention of perspective, we must pay attention to Florensky's comment, that this is "the same Anaxagoras who tried to turn living divinities, the Sun and Moon, into burning hot stones, and to substitute for the divine creation of the world a central whirlwind in which the heavenly bodies emerged; and that he locates its invention specifically in what the Ancients called scenography, i.e., theater decoration."[16] Does Florensky ever have it in for perspective as a form of apostasy! Even though Anaxagoras is dissing pagan gods, Florensky finds him reprehensible. His sin is "against the light," in opposition to the "pro-light" miracle of the saints represented in icons, whose paradigm exemplar is the only miracle that had Jesus himself as the object and not the agent: the Transformation on Mount Tabor. You would expect to see a sign, "photography prohibited," for this event but, curiously, representations of the Transformation constitute a kind of *Ur*-icon, an icon of icons on several counts. First, Christ is identified with the light of Mount Tabor which, as "uncreated," shines out a geometry that is sometimes circular, at other times a *vesica pisces*, the shape of the "mandorla" or vulva of Mary. Another constant of representations of this event are the reference to Mt. Tabor as involving both an underworld into which the apostles are seeming cast, contrasted with the mountain's peak, which is identified with the azure *cœlum*, the pure part of the sky that, above the clouds, communicates with perfect light. Two apostles stand on adjacent peaks, while three are specifically cast down.

It is time to involve another of Vico's contronyms, the *cœlum*, which Vico says is both "heaven" and "a wedge." The firmament/plenum of heaven is simultaneous with what breaks through this firmament, and we see it directly represented in the icon as a circular or sometimes almond-shaped hole. Like the holes from which angels appear in Giotto's paintings, the negation creates the "entity" and the condition where the entity is to be known through this contronymic revelation. In other words, the borrowed kettle logic of dreams and the unconscious, the self-negating *Witz*, metalepsis in its most spiritualized form, reveals itself as a light-form exempt from the limits of travel imposed on light by physics. This is light that is "faster than time," light that makes "spooky action at a distance" (non-local "entanglement") possible. That would be, if you think about it, the necessary basis of any miracle worth its salt.

The comedy element in all this has to do with the "borrowed kettle" aspect of the First Commandment relating to representation, and more generally the light that is subject to the laws of perspective. In the formula, Light (of reverse perspective) => transfiguration => mountain => contronym (heaven+breach) => *palintonos harmoniē* =>

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16 Pavel Florensky, "Reverse Perspective," in *Beyond Vision, Essays on the Perception of Art*, ed. Nicoletta Misler, trans. Wendy Salmond (London: Reaktion Books, 2002), 209.

metalepsis (erasure of the distinction between Form and Content), we have a partial answer to the original question about why Jesus, like vampires, has a "special exemption" when it comes to perspectival light. A lateral move is required here. When Wittgenstein advises that "about that which we cannot speak, we should remain silent," there is a similar "borrowed kettle" element of gratuitous metalepsis.[17] That is, if we can't talk about it, why are we *advised/warned* NOT to talk about it? Wouldn't the first negation, that of impossibility, take care of the

whole business? Why, after ruling out the possibility of talking about something, are we then given this possibility back, as an option? Isn't this an "option that is no-option? Isn't this the introduction of a "contingency" that is in fact not a contingency, but from the very start an Absolute?

The situation of the borrowed kettle should be examined closely. In Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), the retired police detective Scottie Ferguson is persuaded to follow the "spooked" wife of his ex-friend Elster, now a shipbuilding magnate in San Francisco. He can't really follow the actual wife, Madeleine, because in fact Elster has hired a shopgirl, Judy, to play the part of his wife to lead up to the murder Madeleine by throwing her from a convent bell tower. The green Mark VIII Jaguar, can both be followed and not be followed. That is, the "impossibility" of following Madeleine is extended to an entire series of contingent choices given to Scottie: to remain invisible as a spy, to intervene in "Madeleine's" staged suicide, to fall in love with Madeleine after having to remove her wet clothing in his apartment, to follow up this Diana-Actæon event with romantic pursuit, and finally to overcome his vertigo only to witness the real Madeleine's death.[18] The scam of course is to get Scottie — a reliable witness if there ever was one, because he "knows but doesn't know he knows" and has the reputation as an honest policeman.

Scottie is a mark, the victim of a long con. He is given what seem to be "choices" that are not really choices but really set-ups in which his actions will play into the con. The con, in this use of free will that is not free will, is totally Hegelian in its necessary linkage of the Absolute to the mark's radical contingency. "You can't do it" is

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[17] For no particular reason, let me cite the original German: "… *wovon man nicht reden kann, darüber muss man schweigen*." The extension of choice in a seemingly choice-less situation seems impish, if not demonic. "Who are we to exercise the right to speak about the unspeakable?" Isn't this akin to our rich uncle, after refusing our request to borrow his Mark VIII Jaguar, walking out of the room but leaving the keys on his desk? Isn't this the same "con game" that has Scottie (James Stewart) given the job of following the haunted Madeleine (who drives a Mark VIII) without knowing that it is "impossible" to follow Madeleine because in fact she is the actress Judy? And, is it not important that Scottie's discovery of his entrapment by this con brought about by finding the jewel used by Judy to impersonate *Madeleine's impersonation* of Carlotta?

[18] Scottie's chase of "Madeleine" creates the literal form of the death drive's (and autoeroticism's) gapped circle. He circles around on the self-created object of desire which he must convert (*via* an inverter gate) to the woman he was "really" in love with, which was the "Judy that was/wasn't Madeleine."

converted to "Be my guest, you can choose to do it if you like." This is the "Wittgenstein option." This the contronym at its best. Heaven with a hole in it, and naturally the hole is shaped as the opening to a vagina and, eventually, a womb (= *matrix*, i.e. "maternal" and originary correlation of everything with everything, a self-identical, *non-created* creator principle. Are we beginning to "step into the light" that is the "coincidence light" of the icon, the reverse perspective light that dæmon-vampires enjoy — night!

Thought 6: This is a non-trivial question, for it connects the deepest matters of religion Why do both the short con and long con rely on the willingness of the mark? Why does the "Wittgenstein function" allow the Absolute (the inevitable trap of the con) work *if and only if* the mark seems to be given complete free choice?[19] More seriously, how is this free choice related to the seriously theological issues of created *versus* non-created, the humiliated Son of God who must die to be eternally alive, the God who affirms His Being by asking us to "pay no attention to those other gods behind the curtain." What's *light* got to do with it? And, as a side question that seems infinitely inferior to all these theological issues, why did *Vertigo*'s Madeleine drive a *green* Jaguar, why was Judy shrouded in *green* light, and why was the jewel that revealed that Judy's *transfiguration* into Madeleine was "truer than anyone could have possibly imagined" also *green*? Do we have to answer further questions about why the Emerald City was emerald?[20]

It would be healthy to take another side step into the 1939 film where this question comes into focus. The emerald is a jewel that, like all jewels, combines the lapidary quality of stones with its opposite, pure light. The jewel is a crystal, and the question about crystals is how, exactly, do they form? Heat and pressure seem to be universal starter conditions, but since crystals end with structures that seem to be absolutely perfect in their lattice-matrix arrangement of molecules allowing light to pass, the crystal seems to be both "uncreated" (hence its relation to the light of Tabor) and *necessarily* created, that is, by an additive process, one molecule after another. In fact, the crystal mathematically constitutes the contradictory relationship of the linear–temporal series with the spatial perfection of the crystal's structure: Form and Content are indistinguishable. A crystal is a "mathematical contronym," in that the structure final product (simultaneous perfection) runs contrary to the idea of a partial, staged accumulation.

The linear and temporal are *countable*, because of their sequential accumulation. But, the resulting emergent jewel is *uncountable*, in that it is "pure structure," i.e. rock that is "not rock" — a contronymic phenomenon. The mark counts, the con artists are not counting. The mark, because he/she is counting, is attracted to a sure thing, a chance to cheat or steal. The con feels free to fake his own fakeness, to be weak, to offer his believers the

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[19] A related question is central to the application of the architectural section drawing to actual architectural conditions — a case of Form and Content merging to reveal the inner ideology of drawing. In Jeremy Bentham's design for the ideal prison, the "Panopticon," prisoners' cells were sectioned to expose them to the view of a solitary central tower fitted with blinds so that prisoners could not detect the presence or absence of guards. With the issue of privation (presence/absence) transferred to that of prohibition (prisoners conclude that they must act "as if" guards are present at all times), prisoners became, in theory at least, self-regulating.

[20] I have never been satisfied by Daniel Willis's otherwise witty account of why the Emerald City (*The Wizard of Oz*, 1939) has to be emerald. The problem is that the approach is centripetal, not centrifugal. Instead of asking about the greenness of green, Willis interrogates the other colors and, finding green to be the "last color standing," gives it the prize, confirming this judgment with related notifications about its suitability (green *connotes* this and that nice thing that allows it to beat back all competing colors and substances). Willis seems to miss the Wizard's essential coupling of the powers of a wizard and a con man. In the First Commandment, do we not find the same *coincidentia oppositorum* we found in the Wittgenstein option? Daniel Willis, *The Emerald City, and Other Essays on the Architectural Imagination* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999).

opportunity to "look around for some better gods." So, why is the emerald green, and why do the Emerald City, ruled by the con artist, and the long con of *Vertigo*, rely on green as the material light of contingency's *necessary* relation to the Absolute?

Thought 7 (The Long Con): Here is the *Wikipedia* account of the long con.

> The dealer and shills [accomplices] act as if they do not know each other. The mark will come upon a game being conducted in a seemingly clandestine manner, perhaps with somebody "looking out" for police. The dealer will be engaged in his role, with the first shill betting money. The first shill may be winning, leading the mark to observe that easy money may be had, or losing, leading the mark to observe that they could beat the game and win money where the first shill is losing it.

> While the mark is watching, the second shill, acting as a casual passerby like the mark, will casually engage a mark in conversation regarding the game, commenting on either how easily the first shill is winning or how they are losing money because they cannot win at what appears to the mark to be a simple game. This conversation is engineered to implicitly encourage the mark to play, and it is possible the second shill could resort to outright encouragement.

> If the mark does not enter the game, the dealer may claim to see police and will fold up the operation and restart it elsewhere, or will wait for another mark to appear on the scene.

> If the mark enters the game, they may be "had" (cheated) by a number of techniques. A common belief is that the operator may let the mark win a couple of bets to suck them in, but this is virtually never true. In a true Monte scam, the mark will never win a single bet, as it is not necessary. There are too many ways for a well-run mob to attract the marks, suck them in, and convince them to put money down.

> When the dealer and the shills have taken the mark, a lookout, the dealer, or a shill acting as an observer will claim to have spotted the police. The dealer will quickly pack up the game and disperse along with the shills.

With just a little risk of sounding heretical, let me compare the dealer-and-shill trilogy to the upper arrangement of Christ and the two supporting apostles on His left and right. Why are there two shills? There first needs to be a shill who is actively engaged with the dealer, "inside the frame," and another who counsels the mark "outside the frame." The pair personifies the function of the frame, and the frame is critical; it is what the mark must *voluntarily step over*. One shill plays a push function, the other is a pull. Together, they facilitate a movement across the threshold into the game. After this happens, the pair work as a binary, playing out any reservations the mark may have by arguing between them the pros and cons, ending of course on the pros.

At the base of Mt. Tabor are three figures that portray three stages of the victim. The first is entry into the con, facilitated by the push/pull function of the shills. The middle stage is the binary greed matched to imagined opportunities set up by the dealer and discussed by the shills. The third is the retroactive realization of the con, which reaches back in time to realize how the mark had him/herself participated willingly and even enthusiastically in his/her own downfall. In the film *House of Games*, a recently published psychologist is drawn into the plight of a suicidal analysand who has an enormous gambling debt. Sure that he has been duped, she follows him to the backroom of the bar where he has been playing poker for weeks with older men who are surely taking him for all he's worth. She effectively pressures the game's leader to release the younger man from his obligations, at the expense of being obligated to help them out on an impending scam. Once "in," she finds that she has been drawn in, step by step, to a point where she is criminally liable and trapped to pay out. Thinking back, she realizes that her analysand was himself a shill who, spotting her recently successful publication, has become her client in order to portray himself as suicidal. The entry, the binary period, and the retroactive realization constitute

a kind of "time sandwich" of the mark, which Lacanians will recognize in the *matheme* for the University discourse: $S_2/S_1 => a/\$$. Or: the shill team, S_2, run by the dealer, S_1, offer ambiguous recognition to the mark, /$\$$, in the form of a prize that was lost (the analysand's gambling debt) but which actually never existed but was, like the MacGuffin of a Hitchcock mystery, sufficient as an object-cause of desire.

Thought 8 (It's Not Easy Being Green): Green may be the color of growth and money, as Willis enumerates, but what of the *greenness of green* that makes these colors good for such material investments? Isn't this answer-through-associations like giving a question for a question, postponing the matter, or circular evasion? I contend that green in its *newness* is the color of appearance and especially *emergence* — appearance through transformation — that re-makes, out of some old at-hand parts lying about, an emergent beauty whose light, unlike the light around it, shines *eternally* and, to prove the native and originary value of what has freshly appeared, *Real* despite its completely "mortal" and "created" antecedent conditions. This may seem to be a tough sell, but the basis of the claim lies in the *Witz* of the First Commandment, *Exodus* 20.3, "You shall have no other gods before Me." I'm the only God, however, ignore those others, they don't know what they're talking about that! Ignore the man behind the curtain; he's only a con-artist from Kansas.

Really! God's first official appearance as a rule-giving God comes off as the Marx Brothers gag. "You look like Emanuel Rivelli!" "—Well, that's not surprising, I *am* Emanuel Rivelli!" "—Then it's not a surprise that you look so much like him." God presents Himself as "looking like himself" by placing Himself in competition with other Forms. This vaudeville theism is really about the presumed subordination of Form to Content, posing two questions: (1) how can we speak of Form/Content in terms of the contronym and (2) how does the "impossible/Real" (and, in Wittgenstein's terms, unspeakable) condition allow Content the *option* to "take a holiday" from itself? In *Locos: A Comedy of Gestures*, Filipe Alfau, the Catalan novelist who lived and wrote in New York, is interrupted at the beginning of writing the novel by a knock on the door. While he is away from his desk, a character in the book takes the opportunity to present directly to the reader the objections he has concerning the author's plans for him. After a short preamble, the story takes off with the rebel character in control. Of course the reader has been conned by the same con involved in the First Commandment; form takes over content, Rivelli's image threatens to be "more Rivelli than Rivelli himself." This is nothing less than the "detached virtuality" that allows shadows and mirror reflections to become the "things in themselves," the Real Article that they had been hired to represent.

We can now see how Florensky's reverse perspective (*obratnaya perspektiva*) is central to issues of theology, semiotics, philosophy, and poetics. Reverse perspective is nothing less than detached virtuality, which itself is nothing less than God's self-alienation in the Vaudeville Commandment, "Pay no attention to those other gods behind the curtain — I'm the only One you should be talking to!" The *Witz* of reverse perspective is that in its no-time, no-space jewel structure, it is *green* in its emergence of truth out of the retroactive Real-ization of the simultaneity of Form and Content. When Form is allowed the right to go out on strike, we realize it has been content all the time. The Icon is not a representation; it *is* the Form that is the Truth, in the super-Platonic sense of being an originary, a mother, a matrix. What after all is a jewel other than a matrix/mother/womb? Not surprisingly, Florensky himself borrows the terminology of "mothers" from Goethe's *Faust* (Part II, lines 6210 ff.):

MEPHISTOPHELES: I unwillingly reveal a higher mystery,
                            Goddesses, enthroned in solitude.
                            No space round them, much less time:
                            There is no way to speak of them. They are the Mothers.

Michael Chase notes:

> It would take us too far afield to show how profoundly consonant this Goethean theory of the *Urphänomen* is with Florensky's views on nature, form, symbolism, and even the ultimately unknowable nature of the Absolute Principle, a view Florensky also found in Cantor. Here, let us simply note that what Florensky found important in Goethe's Mothers, custodians of the *Urphänomenen*, is that for them, space and time mean nothing ("*Um sie kein Ort, noch weniger eine Zeit*"), and that they dwell in the depths ("*Nach ihrer Wohnung magst ins Tiefste schürfen*"). According to Florensky, these characteristics make them ideal candidates for identification with Plato's world of Ideas.[21]

The other aspect of reverse perspective is its contronymic quality, a connection that is itself contronymic in that the standard contronyms (*sacer* as both sacred and reviled; *altus* as both high and low; *cœlum* as both heaven as a firmament and a break penetrating that firmament; Vico's *verum* and *factum*, as the convertibility of the true and the made) set up an opportunity for reverse engineering that considers how the most theological aspect of the contronym is present in the most trivial example. This undermines the binary approach that looks for some mediating "middle ground" to resolve the antagonism of polarized entities. We should replace the Golden Mean as

a point on line midway between two opposites with the mandorla, where Christ appears, transfigured. Like *Through the Looking Glass*, this opening doesn't simply transport us to a *verkierte Welt*, an upside-down reality, it converts the idea of passage itself. The renegade character of a novel doesn't just rebel, he becomes the author. Form (icon, frame) becomes Content (holy presence, transformation). Thirdness is really Firstness that is inside Secondness and Secondness that had already been inside Firstness — in effect, Thirdness is the "inverter gate." Thirdness activates the autoerotic's circular economy. In a simple and direct way, the Venetian architect Carlo Scarpa did this when he switched the colors of the enameled tiles of the *vesica*

pisces he used as an entry-way into the Brion Cemetery's main yard. Entering the site, the blue circle is on the left, red on the right, but looking back at the same entry from the inside, the colors reverse so that blue is still on the viewer's right, red on the left. In our context, Scarpa's specific reference to the *vesica* and the "thirdness" of the inverter gate function — at the very location of the gate — suggests that the entire project has an intentionally autoerotic design, where the visitor plays the role of the mark in a time sandwich.
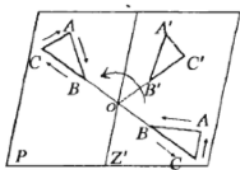
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It is worth considering that the opening in the sky where created light meets the uncreated light of truth is sagittal in the sense that passage is *en enfilade*: "one at a time." What appears at this entry is singular, it defines and then surpasses time through its singularity. In a similar way, Florensky's "event dream" example explains this situation and depends on the relation between a one-dimensional "accumulator" and the pictorialized narrative that seems to emerge "in an instant." A French nobleman already in fear of capture by revolutionaries is awakened by a part of a metal bed-frame that falls on his neck. He awakens suddenly, aware of a seemingly long and complex dream. He has been pursued by the revolutionaries and, after many detailed and seemingly long episodes, is captured. He is assigned a day of execution and taken in a cart with other prisoners to the courtyard where a guillotine is set up. He is led to the fatal instrument of mob justice, set upon the plank, the blade drops —

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21 Michael Chase, "Pavel Florensky on Space and Time," *SCHOLE* 9, 1 (2015): 74.

he awakes. The coincidence of the external stimulus which provoked this dream with the dream's concluding episode provokes Florensky to speculate that the dream has "flown in a reverse direction" from the "Kantian sense of time," *turned inside out*. The dream time runs in "imaginary space" but by this Florensky means *mnimoi* space, the alternative domain described in his book, *Mnimosti v geometrii*. Here, Florensky describes a duality through the analogy of a triangle that is flipped in two ways. First, it is rotated along with an axis that pivots from a single point. As the triangle and axis pass through a plane separating the realm of "reality" from *mnimoi* space-time (which effectively is, as a "space of the mothers," ignorant of space-time distinctions) the triangle reveals its chiral nature. Its area, measured by "walking around" the perimeter in one direction, changes when this walk reverses direction. Otherwise, the triangle is the same. What are we to make of this?

Anya Yermakova's study of *Mnimosti v geometrii* offers some insights, and Victor Bychkov's *The Aesthetic Face of Being* correlates these points. Inside this *mnimoi* region, perspective is reversed but also light has changed. Instead of the light of mortal vision, we encounter the luminosity of Form that has abandoned its obligation to be subordinate to Content in ordinary space-time "reality." We see Form as such. This is Florensky's "thirdness," which corresponds to the philosopher/semioticist C. S. Peirce's thirdness: an awareness of representation that includes the *acts* of representation. The medium is "folded into" the message, so to speak.

The unconscious accumulates. Accumulation is sequential, yet the structure of the unconscious is notoriously a-temporal. Early events and later events are mixed. The dead do not die. Negation is negated, a subject Freud attempted to understand through the concept of "autoeroticism," the tendency of children and primitives to animate objects and the world in general with spiritual qualities. This magical endowment, for both children and primitives, correlates to megalomania, the belief that words, thoughts, and ritualized behaviors can influence these animate objects and the cosmos in general. This autoerotic mentality precedes and is the necessary preparation for the emergence of subjectivity, where object/subject relationships are stabilized around systems of signifiers ordering such things as space, time, causality, social order, genealogy, etc. But, subjectivity is able to "overwrite" the autoerotic human only gradually.

In the same way the unconscious must accumulate in a linear way, subjectivity must appropriate its domain sequentially. But, subjectivity, like the event dream, seems to appear *suddenly*. In Vico's fable of the thunder, the first humans are so astounded by the loud claps of thunder that they are forced suddenly to realize the "mantic" quality of sensation: its relation to a time where the future is unknown. This new mentality requires divination as a ritual and structuring belief. In children, this *sudden moment* is formalized (by Lacan) by a Mirror Stage, a *staging* in every sense of the word, where space and time are given the attributes of a theater where identities are re-assigned and outcomes are formed within standardized sets of expectations, which we might sketch in as tragedy, comedy, irony, and romance.

The event dream suggests how the linearity of the unconscious and the sudden emergence of accumulated contents actually happens, both for primitive humans in ancient cultures and young pre-subjective humans in contemporary times. Florensky would annotate this staging of subjectivity as one where the *binary* of perceptions *versus* realities is conditioned and constructed, not given. In the autoerotic, as in the unconscious — palindromic *mnimoi* space — the binary does not exist in any permanent way. Representations, forms, images, and even shadows are able to usurp power from their "originals." Objects can capture the mentality of those who observe them and resist or assist, hate or love, on their own. The binary that holds reality at a distance that is approached through multiple and often competing "subjectivities" — different and competing points of view — ending in the Kantian "thing in itself," is an illusion of constructed, perspectival reality, which requires the model of the theater

to create an economy out of fear/anxiety. In this regime, the old structure of the autoerotic are preserved but put to different purposes. The "eternal light" of autoerotic perception is, as it were, "broken" into shards; the original crystal is shattered.[22] Within the autoerotic there is no "consciousness" in the sense that there is no anxiety relationship to an externalized ("extimated") Other, a relationship that will be maintained for the life of the subject through continually mistranslated/misunderstood half-commands (*mi-dire*) to "Enjoy!" — desire as the carrying out of the desire of the Other who serves as an ideal for the desiring self (the ego) as well as an image to replace the disorganized body of the pre-subjective human (*corps morcélé*).[23]

For the event dream to connect a first stimulus to a concluding event, the dream must have been present in a "crystalline" form at the time of the stimulus. An analogy? The (apocryphal?) story of how Mozart composed: "The story commonly told about Mozart's genius — widely popularized by Peter Shaffer's play Amadeus, and later by his Oscar-winning film of the same name — portrays the composer as a divinely inspired idiot savant, who could see the piece whole in his imagination, like a painting or a statue, and who needed only time to write it down."[24] The story of how a radically temporalized linear "accumulator device" such as the unconscious is at the same time capable of crystalline structure is another story, but one told by psychoanalysts (Lacan) as well as mathematicians (Georg Cantor, John Conway, Louis Kauffman); writers (James Joyce) as well as quantum physicists (Richard Feynman); jokers who are logicians (Lewis Carroll) as well as logicians who are jokers (George Spencer-Brown).

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[22] This imagery lies behind Gnostic accounts of the origins of consciousness, according to George Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981). The broken crystal metaphor can be considered as a "portable, ongoing event," however. The crystal is always realized "retroactively," through attempts of recovery following loss or destruction. Thus, after destructive disasters such as tornadoes, relief workers make every effort to allow victims to return to their destroyed houses as soon as possible, so that small objects — photograph albums, jewelry cases, music boxes, etc. — can be salvaged to serve as a means of restoring mental equilibrium.

[23] The inside-out world of subjectivity is split into two authoritative standards, an "ego ideal" that sets standards through the (Lacanian) Symbolic to define subjectivities in terms of *placement* and *deportment*, and an "ideal ego" working through the (again, Lacanian) Imaginary to use scopic and auditory means of achieving personal identity. It is not necessary to "Lacanify" Florensky, but it is necessary to show what the consequences of *mnimoi* space are in relation to the emergence of the subject from the human, the evolved dominance of the Symbolic over the autoerotic and binary-rejecting mentality that, in negating negation, allows Form to be encountered directly. The lack of consciousness in the autoerotic is known primarily through the sudden awareness of consciousness — akin to waking up from a dream — where a prior Real is recognized retroactively but only grasped in fragments. Such events take the form of a "paradise lost," where "you don't know what you got 'til it's gone," as Joni Mitchell would put it. Retroaction (*Gegenstoss*, literally a "going to one's ground") plays a large role in Hegel's sorites-dependent account of thirdness, the realization that a sought-for "synthesis" has "been there all along," inside the antagonism between the thesis and antithesis. Thirdness is the retroactive realization that, inside the contingencies of Firstness and Secondness, the crystal was already and always present. See Slavoj Žižek, *Absolute Recoil: Towards a New Foundation of Dialectical Materialism* (New York: Verso, 2015).

[24] "Mozart and the Keyboard Culture of His Time," *Cornell University Library*, online text (accessed March 2017) http://rmc.library.cornell.edu/mozart/compose.htm.