THE HIEROGLYPHICS OF TRAVEL

Travel as a 'hieroglyphic' follows the Lacanian design of the gapped circle of desire. The object of desire (a) is the basis of a gap in a circle whose shape describes both a motion of return and a concealed identity of opposites. In the case of travel, return is the 'fractal' structure of the travel experience — its susceptibility to structures of the fantastic (travel through time, story in a story, contamination of reality by the dream, the double). The identity of opposites is the ability of travel to organize experience by dividing the travel world from the traveler, where the distance separating them is epistemic (gnostic) and 'locational' as well as practical. The gap created by desire maintains the travel experience as one that is 'face to face' (and, hence, stereognostic, or characterized by a left-right structure) and extimate (inside-out, where the landscape functions as a 'gnostic', or teaching, body.

The travel hieroglyph reflects the 'uncanny' (*Unheimlich*) structure of desire in general by repeating the main themes of the Freudian uncanny: the double (the internal frame made by the gap) and optical themes (the organization of the travel world through representations).

Hieroglyphic Categories: **CONTROL/ACCUMULATION**

These work as a complementary pair; control adjusts the relationship of the viewer to the viewed (an 'artifact' of the travel experience) while accumulation is the totality of representational experiences that constitute travel by making it available to memory (Reflection), subject to exposure (Suffering) and failure (Saturation). Control is powered by interpellation (obedience to invisible and unspoken mandates) and interpolation (the drive to complete an 'ordered set' of occasions/*topoi*). The Control/Accumulation dyad are supported and defined by three sub-categories of travel, Suffering, Saturation, and Curiosity. They generate additional 'point of view' issues that include Reflection, Solitude, the Personal, and Naïveté.

Saturation: The collapse of the artifact (strategies of adjustment) on to the vector of representation, destroying the distance necessary for representation (detachment of the point of view). Saturation resembles closely the gap, which is not a category of travel but a condition that affects all categories and is the requirement that space be kept open between the intentions (control) of the traveler and the self- and public representations of the travel experience, which become a part of the travel experience *at the time they are conceived/constructed.*

Suffering: The anxiety of the 'interpolation' process, that the travel experience both has an ideal of completion that can be unmet and a possibly strategy that can done in error.

Curiosity: Maintenance of proper alignment of the observer and observed, and their necessary detachment, affords a productive interest, 'curiosity', that is the drive behind the project of accumulating travel experiences as representations within a matrix that has a finite goal of completeness. Yet, curiosity has an 'anamorphic' feature that resists settling the point of view in a too-fixed position; in this sense it is supported by Naïveté and opposed by the Personal. Curiosity produces a square wave-form that oscillates between Accumulation and Saturation.

Point of View issues: the matrix of travel experiences is a goal to see everything that opportunity has afforded, without missing any significant element. After this matrix has been completed (cf. the travel photo album) has been completed, however, there is a residual that corresponds to the gap of the travel hieroglyph — a 'voice' of the trip itself, which is an element that, though itself unrepresentable, gives unity and meaning to the matrix of separate experiences.

Point of View Categories: **Reflection**, **Solitude**, the **Personal**, **Naïveté**

This set of categories repeats the divided structure of (1) travel representation and (2) the traveler's side of the travel equation. Reflection and Solitude consider the paradox that the traveler is both alone and with an imaginary (at least) audience. Reflection is the requirement that the traveler be able to give an account (this relates to the 'voice' of the travel experience); Solitude includes all aspects of 'positioning' the traveler within the travel domain. The Personal and Naïveté work as a pair: the Personal, the

need for a guide, also affects positioning, and runs the risk of over-constraining the project of Accumulation. Naïveté is a restraint on positioning strategies, a built-in opportunity for noise, ignorance, and luck. Naïveté and the Personal are opposed in the function of Curiosity. Reflection, which requires an audience, even if an imaginary one, and Solitude, which emphasizes singularity, are opposed in the function of Suffering.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">TRAVEL

Authentic/Degenerate

Travel is distinguished from other kinds of motion in terms of the 'authenticity' of the relationship between the traveler and the travel environment; travel is related to knowledge and representation and both are related in turn to pleasure as a surplus/lack or 'gap' that cannot be closed. Travel requires a 'construction' of the representational experience, made by two 'vectors', one representing the artifacts that support representation, another standing for the structure and result of representation.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Accumulation

[representation]

completing the travel 'picture album'</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Control

[artifact]

infrastructure, planning, strategy</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2"></td><td colspan="2" align="center">Saturation

[the collapse of travel]

artifact overwhelms representation

'wild travel'

The 'gap'

[the surplus/remainder of travel]

the relation of travel to desire

the ambiguity of 'completion'</td><td>[Saturation amounts to having the gap separating the subject from the project of completion filled accidentally or from some outside source; for travel to remain travel, the gap must be kept open to prevent 'automatism' or premature completion of the series of travel experiences.]</td></tr>
<tr></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">Suffering

Anxiety over completion

risk / sacrifice of control

[positioning commanded by the view]</td><td colspan="2" align="center">Curiosity

Square-wave function

oscillation / anamorphosis

[finding unprescribed points of view]</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">Reflection

Ability to give an account (audience presumed)</td><td align="center">Solitude

Necessity for a solitary point of view (an 'impossible audience')</td><td align="center">Naïveté

Resistance to too much instruction</td><td align="center">Personal

Need for instruction</td></tr>
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