



Figure 1. Castor and Pollux, in the act of making a sacrifice to Persephone before their contractual separation, alternating times on earth and Hades. Identified as “The San Ildefonso Group,” ca. 1 BCE. 161 cm. Museo de Prado, Madrid. The couple have been alternatively identified as Antinous and a sacrificial daemon, Hypnos and Thanatos (dream and death), Corydon and Alexis, and Orestes and Pylades (Winkelman). But, the identity of the couple as Castor and Pollux, the twin gods, has stuck. Although this would be the last time the sons of Leda, born of different fathers (Zeus, Tyndareus), would be together, the story of Simonides’ invention of artificial memory alludes to the possibility of exceptions made for special occasions (for example, the sparing Simonides’ life during the collapse of the banquet hall where he had entertained guests of the wealthy politician Scopas during a *sitesis*, a type of banquet for honoring citizens. Before the collapse, a messenger told Simonides, Simonides had included a peon to the twin gods in his *encomium* to Scopas but Scopas, not amused with this religious insertion, had refused to pay for that part of the poem. Presumably, the gods decided to reward Simonides directly by having him step outside just as Scopas and his guests inside were crushed beyond recognition.

## One and One

One and one, but not the same one. Or, as in Woody Allan’s definition of a monster known as “The Great Roe”: “the head of a lion and the body of a lion, though not the same lion.”<sup>1</sup> Then, there’s Groucho:

**Captain Spaulding:** Say, I used to know a fellow, looked exactly like you, by the name of ... ah ... Emanuel Ravelli. Are you his brother?

**Ravelli:** I’m Emanuel Ravelli.

**Captain Spaulding:** You’re Emanuel Ravelli?

**Ravelli:** I’m Emanuel Ravelli.

**Captain Spaulding:** Well, no wonder you look like him ... But I still insist, there is a resemblance.

**Ravelli:** Ha, ha, ha, ha ... hey, he thinks I look alike.

**Captain Spaulding:** Well, if you do it’s a tough break for both of you!

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<sup>1</sup> Woody Allen, “Fabulous Tales and Mythical Beasts,” *The New Republic* (30 November, 1974), accessed 26 November 2016: <https://newrepublic.com/article/113901/fabulous-tales-and-mythical-beasts-woody-allen>.

## *The Symbolic*

Twins and self-resembling Ravellis distill the essence of what is uncanny about “the Symbolic,” Lacan’s name for the networks of relationships that tie individuals into families, groups, cultures, nations, and subjectivity in general. The Symbolic is what confers subjectivity proper. Without assimilation into the various “chains of signifiers” (causality, temporality, affiliation, etc.) that constitute the Symbolic, we would be humans *but not subjects*. The transition begins with the young human’s realization that, in comparison to the image reflected by the mirror, s/he is not-whole, sh/e is a shambles, a “body in pieces” (*corps morcélé*).<sup>2</sup>

The contrast is important for our discussion about the trash-heap aspect of the unconscious. The “projective” order of the mirror image, like the O1 optics of the ordinary photograph, is good for the point of view (POV) that the view necessitates and implies; but at the same time the point of view can be said to construct the view. Construction, as an act, works “from the middle,” so to speak, outward to build the reality of the two zones, subjective and objective, it retroactively calls into being. Before there is a distinction at the center, the peripheries did not exist! The point of view is simultaneously itself and the scene it admires in the distance. Its step back was a negative projected forward, as the positive view.

Spectation/reception “takes a step back” from the visible in order to be its witness. At the same time this step back is metaphorically an elevation to a position “above” the scene it frames, even though the relation of witness to the witnessed is lateral, “to the side,” “beside.” The symbolic elevation of the point of view has to do with the epistemic superiority implicit in any “plan view,” which presumes to see around the corners to view the hidden sides, able also to appreciate the geometrical relationships and balances that would be invisible on the ground, where horizontality of things side by side blocks the point of view’s actual visual access. The POV claims the authority of the plan view once it sees itself as *significant* and not just contingent; once its seeing becomes knowing, a way of knowing what it cannot know (the hidden sides of things).

In Lacan’s famous Mirror Stage, the young child comes to it *already* in full possession of the plan-view sensibility. It has an “autoerotic” mentality that allows free exchanges between pre-subjects and pre-objects (“pre-” because permanent subjects and objects do not yet exist). Things are *called* into being. Play allows the child to switch rapidly between the modality of the subject and the object, the powerful and the power-

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<sup>2</sup> There seems to be no end of literature on the Mirror Stage and its relation to subjectivity and the Symbolic. I recommend restraint for those unfamiliar or skeptical about the strategic importance of this developmental pivot point. A good handbook to read while waiting in the station for the Real train to come along would be Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). The Mirror Stage, though principally an optical feature of the Imaginary (Lacan specified three inter-linked registers of subjectivity: the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real), is actually the key to transforming the human into a fully *Symbolic* subject, subject *to* the rules of affiliation that begin with sexualization. Lacan did not endorse any version of the man/woman binary. Rather, he used the relation to affiliation itself as the determining factor. Those who would call themselves men would accept affiliation fully, allowing for one case of exception, while women (without exception) would not. From this point onward, Eros diverts its flight path “from the front to the back,” so to speak, of relationships, making every case of “falling in love” subject to retroactive recognitions that allow time to over-run the present in the construction of an apocalyptic future (Lacan’s *futur anterior*). The path of Eros looks longer but in fact is the shortest distance between any two points because, in fact, it is not a distance at all, but a case of entanglement. See Mladen Dolar, “Beyond Interpellation,” *Qui Parle* 6, 2 (Spring/Summer 1992): 75–96. Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20685977>. This non-distance is key in understanding the “faster than time” aspect of the vector that connects the lover with the beloved, shining through the “trash-piles” of pure contingency.

less, the god and the demon. It imagines power over nature through spells and wishes (Freud's term: "megalomania"). Suddenly, at the Mirror Stage, it is confronted with the shocking presence of an Other who has stolen his/her semblance and usurped its magic powers. This Other has not simply taken charge of identity and become the authentic center of a new self; the new "it" — a neuter object because of its alliance with the impulsive animal Id — will trade the new subject's autoerotic powers for a seemingly privileged position within the Symbolic — a bad bargain if ever there was one! The surprised young being standing in front of the mirror is conscripted by the Confederacy of the Symbolic, pulled into the domain of the mirror, but membership there will never be fully authentic. There are blank lines in the contract. The deal is not durable. Membership can be easily rescinded. The subject, as subject, lives under the threat of exile, with only a thin insulating cover of mis-recognition, of *pre-tending* to be the image in the mirror.

The *immanence*, or hidden presence of potential action or meaning, is directly related to the feeling of *imminence*, that something is "just about to occur." Immanence is a defect *attributed to the object* because of the subject's position within projective/horizontal space, with its hidden sides and vision-limiting horizons. Yet, it is generated entirely from the subject's immersion into the horizontal space; immersion has not fully abdicated its royal position of the point of view, as above the scene. Regency is the claim that, although the point of view is one position among many, no better no worse than any other, that it has a claim of validity that is not just a privileged point in relation to an *authentic view* of the scene, but that any other who occupied this point would see it in precisely the same way and on the same terms.

What has been subtracted and elevated (the point of view as plan-view) is returned with a *subjective regency* — to have some "relation of knowledge" to that which cannot be seen from the horizontal position

— that generates in the object a "defect" or shortfall that is given a demonic agency that, from its position behind and within the visible faces and clear edges of things, has the status of an *animus*, an independent spirit and will.

#### *Stand by Me*

Within the Symbolic's domain, we are all misrecognized — re-assigned identities that sustain and extend various signifying chains, where identity is a matter of functionality within the network. Twins are a short-circuit of the semblance system that demands that, like phonemes, meaning be based on difference. This rule is so pervasive, argues historian and literary critic René Girard, that even cases of rivalry, where literal semblance is displaced into functional and symbolic duplication, violence is the only alternative.<sup>3</sup>

Twins undercut Hegel's criticism of the banality of A=A



Figure 2. "Stand by Me," DVD, Jerry Leiber, Mike Stoller, Ben E. King, Playing for Change Foundation, Venice, California, 2009. The video compiled performances of 19 artists in as many locations to make it appear as if they were performing at the same time, literalizing the song's title, "Stand by Me." The song's tempo created entanglement effects in the face of the production's clear "local effects" methodology.

<sup>3</sup> René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); *To Double Business Bound": Essays on Literature, Mimesis, and Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

by providing two fully developed A's, "the one on the right" and "the one on the left."<sup>4</sup> If anything, this alerts us to the key fact that *chirality*, handedness, is the last residuum of identity in either the Hegelian problematic form of a thing resembling itself, like Emanuel Ravelli, or two actors playing one character or two characters played by one actor, as in David Lynch's 2000 film, *Mulholland Drive*.

Identity might as well be defined as "that which is exposed to challenge." Photographs do not look like us, sound recordings do not sound like us, and those who say they do must also hold the heretical opinion that we look and sound like *that* — in effect either making the reproduction the fake or making *us* the fake. If votes are taken, authenticity falls on the side of popular opinion, leaving us as individuals being out-sourced to the media as the imposter capable of giving birth to copies that will be the only Real Thing. This is our "camera" function. We are the negatives, the prints are the only "originals," and though we are single and they multiple, the print trumps the negative in that each instance of reproduction is, like the stamp of the royal image on newly minted coins, makes Real what was just a minute before unformed material.

If we specify that art becomes art through encounters when it is being received as such, then what is obvious about film — that every "original" must take place as a show before an audience — is true about any work of art, including texts: i.e., that they are essentially performative; and that the material texts, strips of film, canvasses, etc. are simply the material supports for the *events* that constitute the "originals" of any and every work of art. In this sense, authenticity is a matter of connecting in the right way, in comprehending, amidst the clutter of contingent circumstances and unpredictable peculiarities of any given performance/reading/enactment, what is the work *in essence* — what *needs to be present* in the right configuration for the parts to make sense in relation to each other and to the whole, which must include the audience *in the face of* their own contingencies and peculiarities.

This sheds a new light on the role of the entanglement camera, whose O2 optics focus on the invisible in order to "steal the scene" from those who are blind to it. If the O1 camera produces the print, say, of a film, it is because contingency has been controlled in every sense. Scenes have been planned, shots have been storyboarded, actors have been cast and directed, their lines have been coached. But, for what is subsequently shown in a movie theater in the normal way, the O2 camera will be that device that inverts the role of contingency. The material cause comes in a can (or, now, a CD case), aided by the formal cause which projects light in a regular way on to the screen. The audience is accommodated; external stimuli are filtered out. Contingency is now stratified and channeled to focus on the event of the film and its reception by the audience. This is contingency at the maximum degree, since the audience is an "anyone-everyone" construct — "the public." The entanglement camera uses the audience as a pile, and focused rays from the work of art beam through the debris to form particular profiles. The rays are "faster than light" because they depend on a specialized form of twinship that the riddle of Castor and Pollux may be able to unravel.

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<sup>4</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, George Lichtheim, and J. B. Baillie, trans., *The Phenomenology of Mind* (New York and Evanston: Harper Torchbooks, 1967), 79. Note Hegel's famous statement about the idiocy of  $A=A$  as the principle of identity: "To consider any specific fact as it is in the Absolute, consists here in nothing else than saying about it that, while it is now doubtless spoken of as something specific, yet in the Absolute, in the abstract identity  $A = A$ , there is no such thing at all, for everything is there all one. To pit this single assertion, that 'in the Absolute all is one,' against the organized whole of determinate and complete knowledge, or of knowledge which at least aims at and demands complete development — to give out its Absolute as the night in which, as we say, all cows are black — that is the very *naïveté* of emptiness of knowledge.