

orthographics to orthopsychics

Don Kunze • September 26, 2017

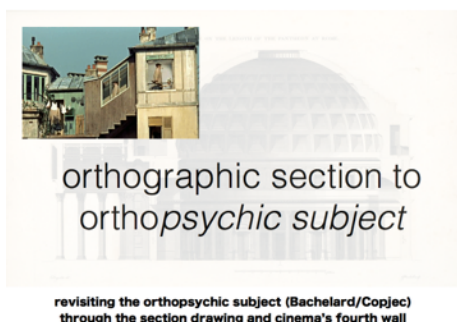
Todd McGowan tells an interesting story in his book on psychoanalytic film theory. It's about Joan Copjec's single-handed revolution, reversing 30 years of film criticism done in the name of Jacques Lacan. "No no," said Copjec, in a single essay that showed how Michel Foucault had hijacked the idea of apparatus — *dispositif* in French — from Gaston Bachelard's science writings to create the idea that the subject was completely trapped by ideology. The emblem of this entrapment was the Panopticon, a building made famous by a guard tower shielded with venetian blinds so that prisoners couldn't tell whether guards were present or absent. Foucault claimed that the result was behavior "as if" guards were always present, but this was not the case. Copjec called out Foucault for misrepresenting the idea of *dispositif*, but she left intact Foucault's take on the Panopticon.

If she had gone one step further, I claim, the Panopticon itself would have an interesting story to tell, and this is the story of the orthographic drawing, a section cut where building interiors are shown in a 1:1 scale consistent way. The Panopticon is essentially a section drawing turned into a building, with the IDEA of ortho-graphics turned into the IDEA of ortho-psychics — "self-correcting."

I want to reconnect the dots by taking the step Copjec did not take. Because section drawings are not limited to architectural drafting boards, because the idea of a section drawing can be found all over popular culture, literature, and ethnological practices, I hope to show that there is more to the Panopticon than meets the blinded eye.

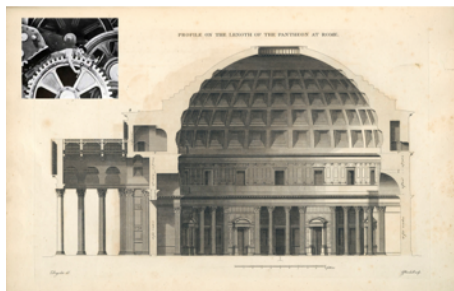


1. This is about a kind of architectural drawing called the "section," but I thought I should introduce it in one of the many forms you've seen already, since the section drawing is more of an idea than a technical way of drawing buildings. The section juxtaposes two kinds of structure. In this animation from Jacques Tati's *Mon Oncle* (1958), the eccentric uncle lives in an eccentric building, eccentric because we can clearly see a fully disclosed composition of forms in the façade, nearly flat to the street plane, but the internal passageways the Uncle is making suggest a bizarre labyrinth behind. The space we can touch and almost measure 1:1 is "orthographic," because it relates immediately to the picture plane that structures our view. The space beyond, that appears and disappears unpredictably, or "contingently" — let's call that perspectival, since it is more like the 3-d space we see in photographs and realistic paintings.



2. The section drawing becomes really popular as a style of architectural representation at the same time other Enlightenment institutions get into full swing, so it's tempting to make the same mistake that is made (according to Mladen Dolar) with the uncanny, that it's a response to the repression of unreason by reason. The section drawing is a type of "orthogonal" projection, one that uses the scale and position of the picture plane to enable direct measure, a kind of 1:1 or "truth," that is unavailable in the continuously changing scale of perspective drawings, whose photographic semblance makes them seem authentic and more representational. The section presents itself as a cut, but its alliances with

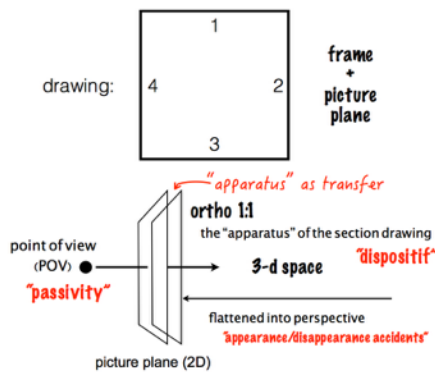
anatomy dissection, the folklore of shadows, and the magical use of profiles suggests that it is not just an Enlightenment fantasy about instrumentality.



thesis 1: the section = shadow, soul, truth
("orthotics" of between-the-two-deaths)



3. The sudden popularity of section drawings comes with a striking practice — the juxtaposition of the orthographic 1:1 precisely scaled drawing with the perspective projection shown behind and within it. Nothing in perspective is directly measurable, because each object is positioned and distorted by a geometric triangulation of the positions of the point of view, the vanishing point, and the picture plane. If you remember the famous scenes in Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, where the vertical views of the church tower and street scenes are squeezed and stretched by balancing a telephoto action by camera movement, you will get the idea of what happens in perspective. It is the symptom in its most "objective" materialization. It is pure *jouissance*, and in it the key to the way the death drive provides an under-painting for the pleasure principle.



4. The buy-in to the jargon architects use to describe the basic spatial divisions drawings make, after Alberti compared the paper to an imaginary window, is easy. The plane dividing the viewer from the viewed is BOTH a frame and a transparent plane, beyond which objects are constructed to appear the way they are imagined to appear on the retina (this is a fib). In the section drawing, however, the same plane is used to make an imaginary and impossible "cut" through solid materials, showing their interior relations. This plane seems to be the same as the picture plane, but there is a slight difference that can only be represented as a thinness, but it has an ontological significance in that measuring

the section is a 1:1 procedure, while nothing can be measured in 3-d space without triangulating viewed objects with information about the picture plane and the POV's distance from it — with effects analogous to wide-angle and telephoto camera lens. At the same time, there is the fiction that lines that are curved to the eye are straightened by the drawing. So in some sense the incommensurability between the spherical aspect of vision and the flat medium of the drawing is carried into this issue of the infra-thin distance between the section drawing's measuring surface and the "pictorial" aspect of it as just another drawing.

5. Because the picture plane is itself a section of space dividing a presumed 3d space into two distinctive types of space, conditioned by the viewer and the viewed, an architectural section returns



andreas vesalius, De humani corporis fabrica libri septem, 1543

drawing to a kind of native position, that of the pure distinction. Simultaneously, the distinction indicates a space that it frames and the space required for the framing.

Section drawings started to be popular around the time that anatomy became the principal graphic means of exploring the human body. The section's CUT was analogous to cuts made on the anatomy lesson corpse. The same contrast shows up in Vesalius's classic graphics of flayed bodies, shown to be still living despite their sectioning, living out the classic Lacanian "interval between the two deaths." The anatomical corpse "does not yet know that it is dead." We can take this back to the territory that generated it. The section drawing "does not yet know that it is dead." It has died literally but not symbolically. The small fictive distance between the two planes, the 1:1 section cut and the window of perspective plays out the logic of this interval, a soul traveling from literal death to re-settlement within the Imaginary.

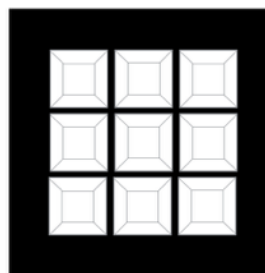
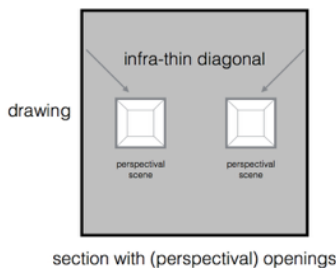
The section drawing's semantic field, according to Paul Emmons, includes the profile, the ruin, and the shadow — all of which are associated with death, delayed or not yet recognized. It is the ambiguous quality, of not knowing you're dead, that makes the section a kind of immurement of the viewer.

6. Even in modern section drawings, the section plane is funereal, orthographic, and classically dark. The space within and behind this plane is "lively." The line between them is just one line, but it represents the infra-thin distance between two contrasting ideas. The section line is an example of the Freudian "contronym," one word with two opposed meanings. We're looking inside the contronym, and in this sense the section drawing is a means of visually exploring the archaic practice of saying two things at the same time, as in the contronymic words "sacred," both revered and reviled, altus (both high and low), and cleave (joined and severed).

7. A model of this infra-thin "between-the-two-deaths" spatial difference (*differance*?) has to be drawn as a diagonal. It has to connect the orthogonality of the section cut with the converging vanishing points of the perspectival spaces beyond. It's not just an X or a Y, so to speak, but an XY. The diagonal is a graphic contronym.

thesis 2: the dead are diagonal

... that is to say, they move in their own spectral dimension *at the same time* actions within perspectival space move within visibility/invisibility



section with (perspectival) openings

There is a whiff of the relation between consciousness and the unconscious, particularly in terms of timing. As consciousness moves in an X direction, the unconscious registers a Y that is a case of the

“spooky entanglement” of quantum physics. Its temporality is variable, blending pasts and future with presents that are more than present, or “over-present.” **The orthopsychic, for Bachelard, is also this relationship of standing before a presentational screen, in a realization of extimity. The subject is happy with its alienated Other, visible within, beyond, and simultaneous with its 1:1 relation with the screen.**

8. An interesting thing happens when the section plane reveals its connection to the grate, or grid. Each frame has its own vanishing point, emphasizing the ability of the *poché* of the grid to create temporal and thematic divisions within its created spaces. One passes beyond the grid, as one passes beyond a frame into a vision field, but the frame structures relations between framed scenes, as in Giotto’s Arena Chapel frescos.



9. The religious scenes set up with wood and wax models inside the small compartments of the classical buildings on the hill behind Orta San Giulio and nearby Vatolla were set up as “Sacro Monte” for pilgrims who could substitute this local destination for the more arduous trip to Jerusalem. It is hard to find photos of these that show the heavy iron grates. Tourist press their cameras close to the grates to “get inside” the perspectival illusion inside the cells. But, these screens are analogous to the pilgrims’ imagined mountain ascent, from a base entry to a temple top.



In the classic model of Purgatory, the path is orthopsychic, the obstacles/encounters are orthographic: TESTS of the soul’s “authenticity.”

The contronymics of this model is that, at the pinnacle’s temple (*templum* = to divide) the soul is made alive, the body is the dead.

The Purgatory mountain is a contronym machine for converting the seven deadly forms of love — from PERVERSION to EXCESS by means of a middle term, DEFECT.

10. It’s clear why pilgrims require a mountain metaphor. The base is material, the tip is spiritual. As you ascend, you purify, mortify, your flesh on behalf of salvation. I think it’s also useful to think of this process as a kind of drying out, a *desiccation* that is a process of “rheonics,” a flow of a liquid into a solid mold, and a subsequent solidification of that liquid thanks to a double negative, the negative of the mold and the negative-of-the-negative of the casting process. Think of James Bond’s number, “007,” as another way of notating his status as having “license to kill,” representing British values by being the handsome rogue who

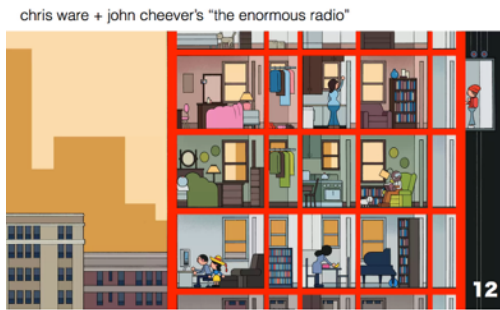
violates the rule of castration. This is one way of getting to the top of the mountain, into the temple of wisdom.



11. The grate is also a materialization of the penance done on such mountains, pyramidal versions of the interval between-the-two-deaths. The diagonal and the triangular structure of the mountain of trials and errors (and punishments) are the same thing. We move along an X, but at the same time it’s a Y.

This is the idea of the casting process, where a fluid is injected into a solid mold. Perceptually, we inject ourselves through the grate into the solid mold of these religious scenes, we are strained, filtered, desiccated.

12. Note that in Chris Ware's drawings we see a cut-away section of apartment, each apartment has its own perspectival space, i. e. they don't share a vanishing point. This makes the frame different from a true slice through a physical 3-D building, as you might see if a bomb tore off the façade. John Cheever's story



orthographic / orthopsychic / acousmatic

“The Enormous Radio” proves the point, that within the frames acoustic privacy is maintained, but across the frames sound travels “acousmatically,” requiring assistance by devices such as Cheever’s magic radio. In the same way, psychoanalysis is acousmatic: an “over-hearing” that invades the privacy of the “orthopsychic” subject. The diagonal aspect, the “you buy an X but you also get a Y thrown in,” is the incommensurability of the lives lived within the frames, how the frame allows a privileged viewer to “try” (in the sense of a tri-al) the simultaneity and antagonism of the collective.

“Ortho” refers to Bachelard’s idea of proprioception of science, rescued by Joan Copjec in her book *Read My Desire*: it is both “objective” and self-regulating. The subject of science finds itself in the objective world, already present, the method of inquiry already imbedded. This is the “commensurability” of the section cut. But, at the same time, the scientific subject — the one who “wishes to know” — finds the diagonal; that when s/he moves in one direction, another direction changes at the same time. This change is always related to the temporal, to a pro-ject, and hence the powerful alliance between the section cut and the idea of anthology.



13. In the ingenious arrangement of miniature figures and toys in Tinker Town, near Albuquerque NM, a Giotto-esque section is cut through a western town, appearing to be “simultaneous,” but as we move along the cut, we see duplicate figures acting out several stages of an action that begins, like all civilizations, with the basic needs of settlement, and ends, like all lives, with some version of judgment, execution, and burial.

Again, we have a kind of Purgatory filter in operation, and this “self-correction” *dispositif* requires the section cut that lets us “see into” the life of the Western town and temporalize our view by sliding along a time scale, just as the tracking camera view of Renoir’s *The Rules of the Game* uses deep focus in a way that differs from Orson Welles’ use of it in *Citizen Kane*. I owe Todd McGowan thanks for his accurate observation about how the layers of masters and servants is preserved by Renoir’s deep focus, a matter I will take up again in a few slides. We still call our presentations by the old technology, “slides,” for some interesting reasons. Let’s slide along.



13. Thus, at critical moments, representation shifts into a different gear. I suggest that this gear is a 1:1 gear where “truth” becomes the ethnographic correlate of Bachelard’s “orthopsychic subjectivity.” The Shroud of Turin, a great fake if there ever was one, so fake that it is Real in spite of itself, is the 1:1 transfer of Jesus’s face to the cloth that St. Veronica used to cover it. The tell of the cloth, so to speak, is that it’s a perspectival view re-made to have the authenticity credentials of the section drawing.

The cloth slides along the skin, but at the same time it enables a depth perception, a layering that combines two ideas of truth: one as the 1:1 direct contact of the cloth, a propriocept, the other as a seeing-beyond — propriocept as a basis of spatial depth’s permanent “vertigo” condition.

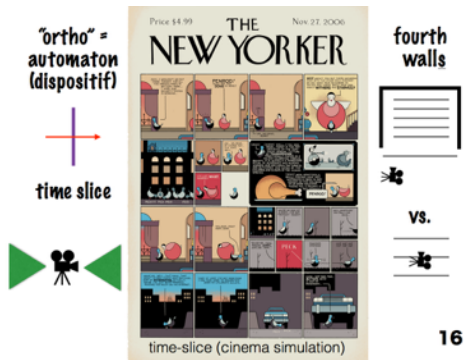
It’s possible that the “wrap” of the cloth captured a presentational/perspectival likeness of Christ’s face. The real magic occurs when you experiment with looking *at* the face. The shroud becomes an icon in the way Pavel Florensky described, that the image of the face radiates a kind of anti-perspective or reverse perspective logic. A slow fade, using PowerPoint or Keynote, shows that the face goes through many different expressions. At one point the eyes open, then close. This reverse action, a Y that comes along with the X of the viewer’s direction of view, is the direction of the gaze, which comes from a blind spot within the visible. As Copjec emphasizes in her essay, this means that the picture plane is not like a mirror (reproducing the perspectival aspect of the scene) but more like a screen — something where opacity mediates an inner and outer motion, just as the *dispositif* of Bachelard mediated an inner, subjective, motion correlative to an outer objective motion.



15. Thus, at critical moments in other key works of art, such as Book 6 of Vergil’s *Aeneid*, we find the boundary becomes the issue, and representation itself is put on trial just before Aeneas’s own version of between-the-two-deaths. Aeneas stops before the gates donated by Dædalus, the first architect, who portrayed the story of the Athenian youth ... Minos’s punishment, Pasiphaë’s passion for the bull, the birth of the monster hybrid man-bull, the Cretan labyrinth to imprison him, and Dædalus’s escape, resulting in Icarus’s fall. The tiling of the storyboards, representing the puzzle relationship of the separate episodes, is the clue to Aeneas’s own maneuvering in the underworld. If he can solve the puzzle, this “key” unlocks the gate. It is the diagonal. The diagonal is the same thing as the hinge function, and the grate is the gate, the orthogonal, the test of truth.

16. But, as we as Lacanians know, the truth is not a content but a return. Thus, the two meanings of automaton in relation to the unconscious: its aspect as a machine and its relation to chance, the ancient contronym of the goddess Fortuna, cousin of the goddess of hinges, Cardea.

16a. Drawing from McGowan’s discussion of the use of deep focus, simultaneity of different levels can be shown as a kind of “proprioceptive” indication of an interiority that is not perspectival. Compare the painting, *Good Government in the City* (Sienna), with its rings-within-rings of autonomous but



interlocking social-cultural systems. Deep focus is an extension of proprioception in that it denies a perspectival ordering based on figure/ground distinctions; the fourth wall thus makes the camera's horizontal movement key into proprioception conditions layering the interior of the frame.

17. The *dispositif* is the blue-green area that we can assign fully neither to the diegetic (story) interior that shows space in perspective (the mirror analogy) nor the apparatus of production which, to be shown at all, pretends to be in the story interior but clearly relates to the orthographic screen. "This is the girl" is the positive presentation of the Cretan Paradox, which is a circular, self-critiquing statement in Bachelard's

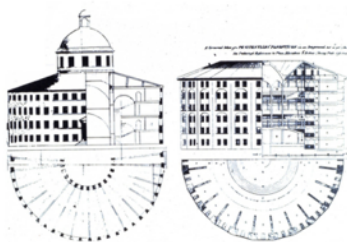


idea of science as *objectively* self-critiquing. (Imaginary is subjectively self-critiquing). MY POINT IS THAT THIS BLUE-GREEN AREA IS THIN AND THICK AT THE SAME TIME. THE DIAGONAL THAT RELATES ITS THINNESS TO ITS THICKNESS PLOTS THE X MOVING WITH Y "EXAPTED" SILENTLY WITHIN IT, WHICH ACCOMPLISHES THE GATE FUNCTION AND IS ALSO A TEST OF TRUTH, A PASSWORD.

18. (no index image) The orthographic drawing conditions of the section apply direction to the idea of a screen as a reticular division able to serve as a fine tissue ("lamella") over the visual but, at the same time, as a temporal/thematic grid anthologizing materials that are independently presented in each "sub-frame" of the grid.

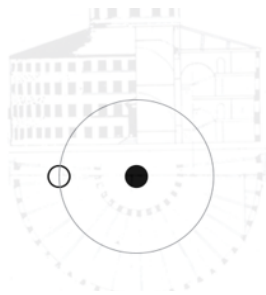
19. (no index image) Because the section drawing becomes popular at the same time as the Enlightenment and craze for anatomy, it is impossible not to consider its relation to Cartesian thinking, especially with its X-Y-Z idea of space and time. But, here I want to take a Bachelardian turn in relation to the function of the section as *dispositif*. The drawing technique is *orthographic*, so the question is, does this *ortho-graphics* relate to Bachelard's idea of the orthopsychic subject? In short, this was the self-correcting function of subjectivity as it operated within the domain of objective knowledge. It was the presence of the subject within objects and objectivity. It closely correlated to Lacan's idea of the extimate, the notion that the Real is "out there."

jeremy bentham, panopticon (1843)



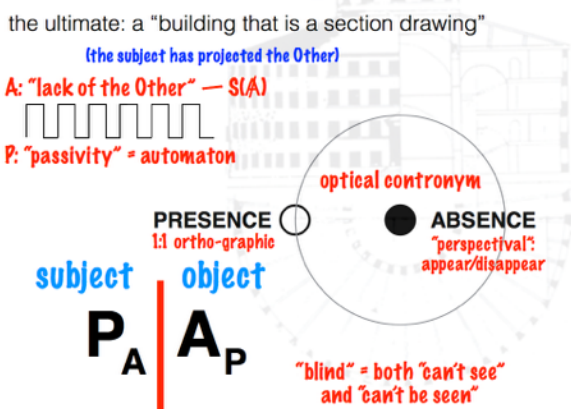
20. A literal coincidence of the ortho-GRAPHIC and the ortho-PSYCHIC was Bentham's Panopticon, the building that was the poster-child for Foucault's critique of Enlightenment rationality. Bentham's brother was the source of the idea that a building could work as an automaton to bring about a desired result — that of the *correction of subject*, a kind of precursor to the ortho-psychic idea.

21. (no index image) The Panopticon was the idea of the orthographic section made into a building. As the plan shows, the location of each prisoner on the periphery was cut as by a section cut. This visible 1:1 cut was authoritative because of its visibility from the central position of the guard tower.



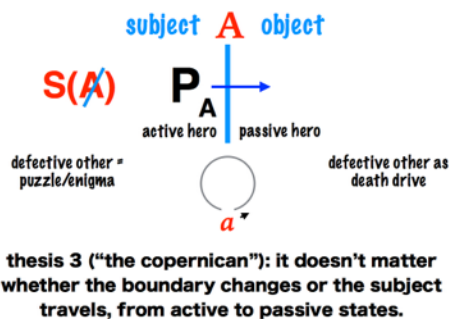
But the tower was fit with blinds so that prisoners could not tell if guards were present or absent, so Bentham, and Foucault after him, reasoned that the prisoners would behave at all times AS IF THE GUARDS WERE PRESENT.

22. It was the “at all times” that became the take-home message of those who followed Foucault into linking the tower to the omniscient gaze of power. Feminists in particular took this message to heart, going further to say that they carried panopticons around with them, that the tower surveilled not just 180° of their subjectivity but 360°.



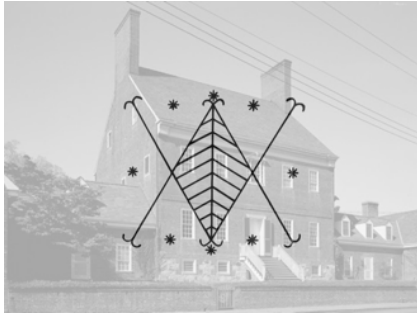
23. True, the panopticon was a building version of the section drawing, but its orthopsychics came not from the projection of 100% presence of guards in the tower, lacking further information, but rather from the VACILLATION between positions of presence and absence. Because the prisoners literally projected their idea of the Big Other, and because the defect or lack in the Big Other was this vacillation, passivity played out on both the guards and prisoners side of the equation. As the chance form of automaton, it was the unpredictability of guards’ presence. As the mechanistic aspect of automaton, it was the perpetual motion machine,

the energizer bunny. The optical contronym of presence/absence led to the cross-inscription. In the direction of the prisoners’ projection, the object’s absence was infused with a subliminal presence. In the direction of surveillance, the prisoners — who were present by definition (what else is a prison for?) were injected with the specter of absence, presumably the interpellation effect of the guard’s presence/absence.



Converting from the cross-inscribed pair, presence and absence, to the subject and object has the advantage of considering how the subject, moving across the boundary generated by the binary, converts the boundary itself. The boundary becomes the automaton, seemingly acting auto-nomously, the magically opening, such as the narrow passage in the mountains to Shangri-La in the movie, *Lost Horizons*. The section cut provides the key to how this self-activating boundary works. The subject subtracts itself from the visual field with the assumption of a point of view opposite the vanishing point subsuming all things visible. The 2d plane subtracts a

dimension, and this missing dimension becomes the wild card, related to proprioception — the function of touching that is the topological logic of form — so that the visual uses this missing dimension as the



correlate of what is lost when we can no longer grasp objects but only see them at a distance.

Cosmograms constructed by Yoruba slaves in America indicate that the section's alliance with secrecy and souls operated precisely along this perceived "hidden dimension." For the idea of a representational picture plane, the Yoruba substituted a performative plane to which those to be cursed or blessed would be led along the meridians set up by object concealed beneath the floorboards and paneling of the house.

Concluding, the section's infra-thin orthography gives us the graphic diagonal, the contronymic simultaneous change of an unconscious Y along with any conscious X, to connect ethnographically to the traditions of shadows, foundation rituals and beliefs, passivity, the role of desiccation in burial, and the visual representation of depth in cinema and painting. The ethnographic evidence, both ancient and in popular culture, becomes the "clinic" for psychoanalysis as an experimental science. Here, the dispositif, the subject's self-correction within the objects that subjects have formed, opens a new inquiry into the meaning of the orthopsychic and the orthographic, the subjects of science and their self-empowered objects.