



knight's move

In the thinking, writing, acting, dreaming, constructing, construing protocol known as the *zairja* (زايرجة), a more-or-less aleatory way of thinking about something rather than nothing in order to use the nothing over and over again. The critical energetic component is the “knight’s move.” This is easy to explain, since the rules for moving the knight around the chess-board are simple. Up, back, or sideways two spaces, then over one.

In Lacanian terms, the first part corresponds to the Other, the *Autre*, the desire that is, as always, the “desire of the Other,” which is generated by us but not known or knowable to us, except in the form of the Other’s command to “Enjoy!”

Enjoy what? We are never told, just as we are never told whether it will be us doing the enjoying or some other entity, such as language, that is enjoying us. The ambiguity is nothing short of The Human Condition.

So much for the jump over two spaces that looked, at the beginning, to be a kind of bargain. The move to the side is the equally ambiguous commodity in Lacan’s terms, the *objet petit a*, abbreviated as *a* in most cases, generally used to flag a lack, an incompleteness, a doubt, a failure, a lost letter, a missed opportunity. The *a* is what you get when you try hard and everything should have been perfect, but wasn’t — i. e. an inevitably missed mark. As Žižek says, the aim was confused for the target, but no one seems able to remember this, at least not in time to do any good.

Amidst this discontent, the knight’s move is, in *zairja* terms, quite a nice day out. The principle is that whatever you intended to do, despite your excellent planning, has not worked. However, it has got you somewhere. You thought you even got a bonus space in that jump, but no. You are not where you wanted to be. The knight, wisely, nobly, advises you to look around. The

library book you wanted and which the catalog said would be there on the shelf is nothing but a blank spot. No blame. Count six to the left (or right) and use that book. *That* will be the book that changes your life. You would not have found it if your first move had been perfect and reached the goal you sought. With this method you can find what you don't know you should be looking for. This is the logic that Pablo Picasso summarized when he said "I don't look, I find."

This involves two principles, and everyone should learn them. The first is *ex falso sequitur quodlibet*. In terms of logic, where this is such an interesting phenomenon that it is abbreviated EFQ, this means that a faulty premise can be the basis for all statements that follow it to achieve the benefits of truth value. In the arts, it is indispensable as the "Once upon a time" principle. With these words, dragons and fairies can enjoy their time on stage.

Mathematicians, even, use it. In the face of a seemingly unsolvable problem, an "ersatz" methodology is used. A theorem is made up, in the knowledge that it is wrong. It is applied to the unsolvable problem's data and, of course, error data results. The difference is that the ersatz attempt has restructured the problem. A new ersatz conjecture is invented and new error data found. At some point, an insight emerges, a moment called "*Ansatz*" or, the lucky guess.

With the arts and mathematics behind the knight's move, it hardly seems necessary to say more. But, there is one critical feature, and that is the "cause" given the name *tuchē* by Aristotle. It is affordance, a kind of opportunity where the rules of the game as well as the context, the game itself, have changed. *Tuchē* is the human counterpart of *automaton*, natural chance; this should not be sniffed at. Jacques Monod, a Nobel Prize-winning scientist of the 60s wrote a book entitled *Chance and Necessity* that repeated the lesson of all science in terms of biology, that without randomization there can be no such thing as law, which emerges from the apparent mess of non-relations. Monod specifically had evolution in mind, where natural selection is grounded in the necessity *factor* of latent traits — abilities that are unused and unnoticed until the right threat comes along.

What is good for logic, mathematics, and the natural world should be good enough for those who wish to think *apart from* models of success, who specifically wish to encounter new ways of thinking and to ground their satisfaction in process rather than goal-keeping. If you see the value of failure, or are the inevitable victim, the knight's move is for you.

Up and over!