

Edmond Wright
The Neglected Technique of the
Witticism: A Philosophical Inquiry

Lacan recommended the addition of poetics to Freud's list (Freud, 1926, 246) of those disciplines needful for the student of psychoanalysis to study, and in particular as specific aspect, "the neglected technique of the witticism" (Lacan, 1977a, 76). Is this merely a continuation of Freud's own emphasis on hidden meanings in dreams and slips of the tongue? Not so. Lacan's own parodic evocation of Erasmus's *Praise of Folly* reminds us that truth is something bound up with fiction, riddles and lies:

Whether you flee me in fraud or entrap me in error, I will reach you in the mistake against which you have no refuge. (Lacan, 1977a, 122).

It is indeed in the "most grotesque nonsense of the joke" where truth shows itself. Erasmus's Folly herself said of the rhetoricians:

They owe much to folly, for often what can't be refuted by argument can be parried by laughter, unless anyone supposes that raising a laugh by witticisms according to plan has nothing to do with folly. (Erasmus, 1976 [1509], 147)

On the contrary, it may have little to do with folly. Might there be a plan, a technique, that is common to species such as witticisms?

riddle: it is through you that I communicate

(Lacan, 1977a, 122)

Alexander solved a riddle when he cut the Gordian Knot, for King Gordius' prophecy, as he tied the knot, was that whoever should release the chariot would become ruler over all Asia. The question was what the tying of the complex knot really communicated. What was going on when the knot was tied? The answer will be at the end of the story.

For Lacan a knot is tied between Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real. Imaginary is the Order of mirror-images, fixed identifications. It is the region of the delusions of permanence, themselves enduring

enough to have effects in the Real, a region where the subject prefers to suppose that his gestalts are guaranteed by the recognition of the Other, demands that meet with no failure. But Lacan insists that the subject is the creation of the Symbolic, that the order of language reaches down unseen within that very creation, establishing the unconscious as the site where the body's needs are inevitably alienated, and the gap in being, the *manqué-à-être*, comes into being. For language cannot encompass the Real, within the body or outside it: it 'murders' the thing, the entity, be it subject or object, Lacan here borrowing Hegel's metaphor for the banishment of the concrete from the universal, the production of a Symbolic absence from a Real presence. A radical otherness remains at the heart of any identification that escapes the conscious self, including that of its own self-recognition; this otherness is the unconceptualized flux of experience, hiding itself within subject and object, and irrupting in the Trauma. The truth of the Real emerges in puns, errors and "misapprehensions" (Lacan, 1977a, 122); the Real is only characterizable within the Symbolic as inaccessible, unattainable, lying impossibly at the infinite end of an asymptote, forcing language always 'to say something quite other than what it says' (Lacan, 1977a, 156). Truth

necessarily partakes of the fictive: it cannot be equated with any of the three orders alone. When a subject at the mercy of a narcissistic identification rigidifies the Symbolic, whether that subject is in a minority or a majority, it is led to nonsense, to paradox, to being a Cretan Liar, unable to see that "I am lying" can be meaningful (Lacan, 1977b, 139). There is something "laughable" in the fact that the Real has already "cast its dice" (Lacan, 1988, 220).

Philosophers are often self-confessedly at an impasse, flummoxed by paradox, sometimes producing inconsequence without knowing it. Edmund Husserl, for instance, in his *Experience and Judgment* (1973), was drawn to the riddle situation, clearly wishing to tidy up such inconsequence. He was challenged by the fact that someone could be passing a showwindow and be momentarily at a loss as to whether a figure standing within it was a man or a mannequin:

They [two "apprehensions" imposed on the same "sense data"] stand in mutual conflict; each one has in a certain way its own force, each is motivated, almost summoned by the pre-ceding perceptual situation and its intentional content. But demand is opposed to demand (Husserl, 1973, 92)

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The riddle of demand in this situation fascinated him and he returned to it, trying to get some clarity by comparing it to what he considered was not a riddle situation:

Each ego-act has its theme; and the theme of a doubt, like that of a question, is either a problematic singularity, whose disjunctively opposed members then remain extrathematic, as when I merely ask, "Is this a wooden mannequin?". . . or the theme is the whole problematic disjunction, as in the question "Is this a mannequin or a man?" (307)

In Husserl's view there are thus two questions: one in which no illusion is present ("Is the mannequin made of wood?"); the other in which illusion is present ("Is it a man or a mannequin?"). For Husserl there is a single 'theme' in the first (Mannequin) and a double one in the second (Man or Mannequin?). It is the purpose of this article to show that both cases are equally problematic and in the same way. For Speaker and Hearer to converge on the predication (' . . . is wooden') of a mutually agreed logical subject ('The mannequin . . .') is open to a riddle analysis in the same way as in the case acknowledged to be illusory.

Had Husserl as philosopher really examined what it was that produced the confusion of entities Man and Mannequin, he would have been able to begin the analysis of 'intersubjective logic'. Lacan, as psychoanalyst, could not avoid bearing witness to the fact that subjects and objects are split, that entities are not unities.

At the core of the witticism is an entity that is not a unity. The following playground joke will illustrate this.

A: Knock, knock!

B: Who's there?

A: Amos.

B: Amos who?

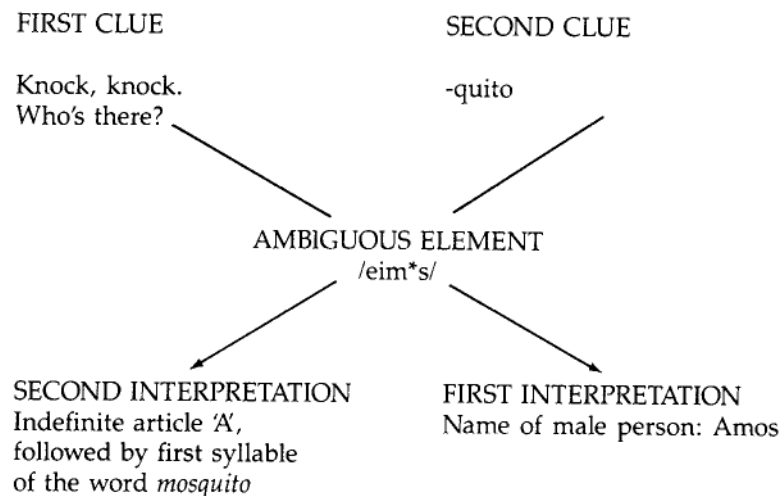
A: A mosquito.

Notice a first philosophical and psychoanalytical point, that the ambiguous element changed from being one entity, the name Amos', to one-and-a-half entities, the indefinite article and the first syllable of another word. There is no preservation of entityhood. The presupposed fixed identity is only illusory; that is why in the following diagram the ambiguous element is in phon-

etic script. Strictly speaking it should not even be expressed in phonemes, themselves entities, because it is obvious that a joke could play on a shift between two languages that used different phonemes, or between a word and a non-verbal noise. In a joke there is no logical requirement that the initial division has to be preserved. Jokers can cross Saussurean boundaries with impunity. Thus Lacan:

The Real is ready to overwhelm with its upheavals what the 'Reality Principle' has built within it under the name of the external world (Lacan, 1966, 388)

A diagram will illustrate how the ambiguity of the above joke is created, revealing two clues, namely, the 'preceding perceptual situations and intentional contents' (Husserl), that induce the rival interpretations:



The arrows symbolize the power of the clue, the indicator of intentional context, to transform what is heard. It suggests the appropriate interpretation either by a reminder of a relevance already established in the past or by some hint of an entirely new one.¹

A further point: the Speaker already knows all five positions in the diagram, aware of the double meaning of /eim*s/, and of both sets of clues to those meanings. The Hearer's interpretation is moved from one diagonal to the other by the Second Clue.

In this first example, the order of presentation was First Clue, Ambiguous Element, Second Clue. In others the two rival contextual clues are presented first and the Ambiguous Element follows: For example,

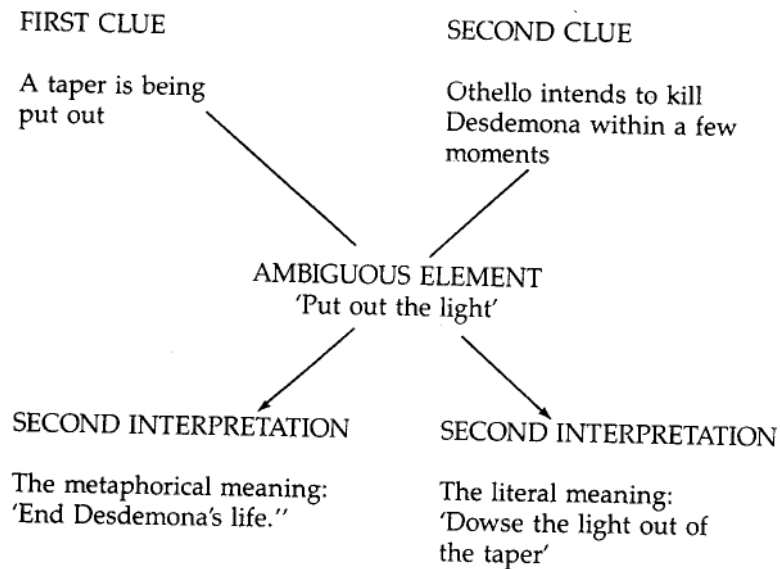
What did the chimney-sweeper say when he was asked why he liked his work?

It suits me.

The First Clue is *chimney-sweeper* turning the ambiguous element into "soots", which also has a powerful metaphorical suggestion that the work is demeaning and alienating. The Second Clue is the whole of the first sentence, since its theme is the chimney-sweeper's view of the suitability of the work, which gives the interpretation "suits."

In these jokes the rival meanings were different in their affective charges, one unpleasant (*mosquito, soots*), the other by contrast harmless (a name [*Amos*], *work being amenable to the worker*). Pleasure is here gained from the saving of psychical energy required for repression (Freud, 1976 [1916], 167). As Freud points out, in jokes there is movement from anxiety to security, from *fort* to *da*--the child's game with the cotton-reel in which he enacts the disappearance and reappearance of his mother or himself (Freud, 1920, 9).

In a tragic situation, on the other hand, we have the Reverse of the Joke: the shift is in the opposite direction, the psychical cost of acknowledging the 'wit' of the two interpretations being too great. Thus Othello, on entering the bedroom with the intention of killing his wife, puts out the taper he is carrying with the words, 'Put out the light, and then put out the light.'² If this is analysed in the manner above the result is as follows:



The move here is from a harmless affective charge (the extinguishing of the taper) to an unpleasant one (the extinguishing of a life).

When Husserl considered the case of the Man or the Mannequin, he never asked himself how an affective charge might influence choice of interpretation. If he had, he might not have fallen into inconsequence. The way in which he did offers a promising trace for the present argument. The title of his book *Experience and Judgement* gives its focus: he wishes to explore the labyrinthine relations between them, to interrelate the *hyle*--the sensory flux--to the concept. He thinks the answer can be found by going back "to the relation between the act of judgement and life-experience in the wholly concrete sense" (Husserl, 1973, 59). The *hyle* is in Husserl's view "pre-predicative", existing in its initial state as free of conceptual selection as the experience of a new-born child. The problem is not only how that experience relates to the material of the world, but also how it becomes objectified, how we can come to recognize together with another what we call "an entity" in the world around us, whether "it" be classified as "object" or "other" or "self." Husserl acknowledged that we return again and again to the *hyle* (the sounds, the feels, the smells, the warms, the colds, the shapes of color) in order to confirm or adjust our objectifica-

tions. We seek, he writes, "new determinations of the same thing" (32), a clear commitment to the separate existence of an entity. He repeats the same belief in the logical separateness of entities many times, speaking, for example, of "natural things . . . that maintain themselves as objectively stable entities" (65), and of the world as "a totality of existents" (137). What is significant here is his use of a plural, his view that there are given countable things. He believes that a "self-same thing" remains during the changes that occur to it, and this he names the "pure determinable X" (Husserl, 1962, 337-340).

Yet elsewhere he is insistent that experience is an "open horizon" (32), that for each observer there is the opportunity to discover more from it than has been known before. But if experience is an open horizon, if the sensory can surprise us with new determinations, this is no guarantee that entityhood is preserved: the word "determinable", read as "able to be determined", does not necessarily imply "apt for determining." To allow the drawing of new boundaries for entities contradicts his earlier claim that "the self-same thing" remains.

Husserl's dilemma is enacted in the following story of two people not realizing that they are not looking at the self-same thing at the

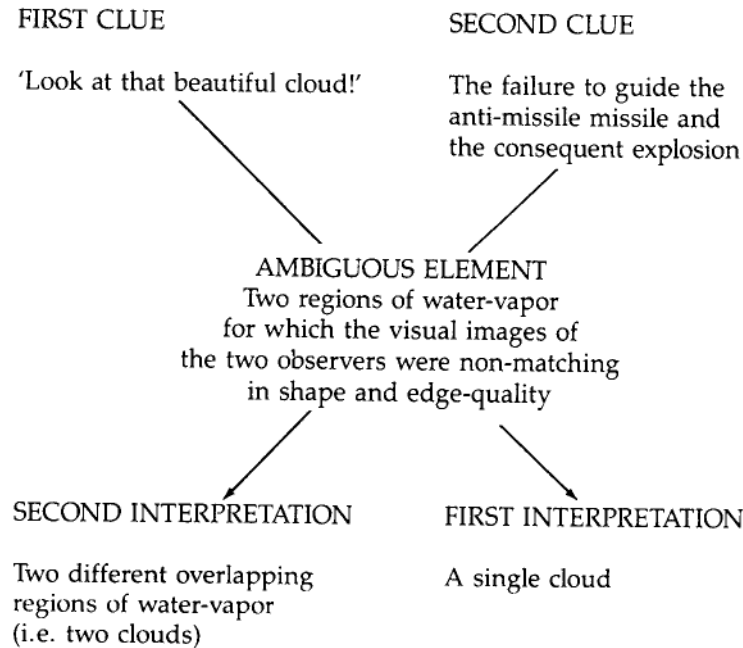
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very moment they are identifying it. They are contemplating a cloud at sunrise. One says to the other "Look at that beautiful cloud!" The other agrees. The fact that the first sees clearly and the other is short-sighted is concealed in the interchange, for the actual case is that the cloud thins out at the edges into delicate tracery spreading out into the sky. The first (let us call him Sharp) with his good eyesight was admiring that tracery; the second (let us call him Short), being short-sighted, was admiring the tint of the cloud. However, since in both cases pleasure was attendant, the mismatch remained hidden from them both. They believe with Husserl, that they have "referred to the same entity, the same natural thing".

The same pair now turn to the task, which is that of soldiers on the watch for missiles. Short is the one responsible for the final aiming of the anti-missile system. Now Sharp calls to Short "There's a missile at the edge of the cloud on the right!" But where Short looks for the edge of his cloud-entity is quite different from where Sharp takes the edge of his cloud-entity to be: Short misses the target. End of Short and Sharp. Thus there was *méconnaissance* in their confident co-referring which did not become salient until there was a change in the context. Selections are only viable, and never final. The example brings out the relevance of human desire and fear to the selection being made from the *hyle*.

The intersubjective logic of this dialogue and its outcome in praxis is precisely that of the Reverse of the Joke (as in the example from *Othello*). There is an Ambiguous Element, and, just as in the case of Amos 'A mosquito', there is no secure match between the entityhood selected by one interpretation and that of the other.³

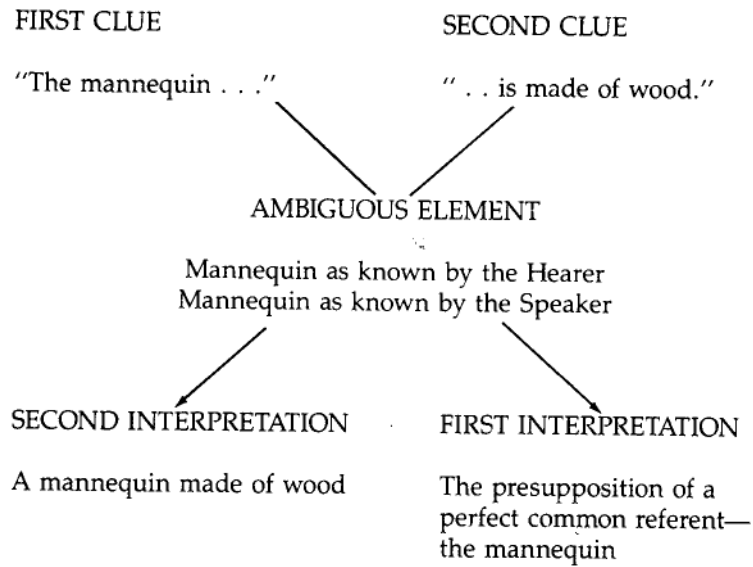
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Each body has a different perspective on the flux of experience. First, as is the case with Sharp and Short, bodies differ as to the character of their sensory access: some have greater ranges of response; some have different degrees of fidelity to the input, distinguishing what others cannot. Second, they differ as to their intentional perspective: where one person sees a white ball fall into a hole, another sees the sinking of a putt (Austin, 1970, 201); one sees an extended sequence of events, the other a restricted one, each a different interpretation. Moreover, the flux itself is not fixed; indeed, rather than describe it in Husserlian terms as "a totality of existents", it would be better to regard it as a series of flows of varying viscosities, some as slow-moving as a mountain, others as rapid as a spark from a fire. Human beings are thus faced with the problem of how to co-ordinate gestalts which do not match.

Language provides the means by which this co-ordination is endlessly adjusted, an adjustment that is brought about by way of the Statement. An informative statement begins with a co-reference which is hypothetically taken to be pure. Consider a situation in which a Hearer is aware that a Speaker is about to tell him something about a mannequin about which he already knows

something. In the statement with which the Speaker responds, "The mannequin is made of wood", what happens is as follows: first, both Speaker and Hearer presuppose a common reference in 'The mannequin', which establishes the Logical Subject of the Statement; then, with the Logical Predicate ('. . is made of wood'), the Speaker openly subverts that presupposition. The intentional perspective of the Hearer is changed: his desire is altered; just as in the Joke or the Reverse Joke, the affective charge moves hopefully from something harmless to something threatening or vice versa:



Recall how the teller of a joke is apprised of All five positions before the Hearer: similarity with the Speaker of the Statement, for he knows that his Hearer does not know how the entityhood of the mannequin is to be corrected, and it will be his pleasure to bring that correction about.⁴

The presupposition of a common referent is essential as a method in order that the Hearer's concept of the referent can be changed; his selection can then be moved about on the Real so that a better purchase can be obtained. The Real is the ontological base upon which is projected the tentative mutual hypotheses of things.

The Logical Subject and Logical Predicate of a Statement cannot be equated with the grammatical subject and predicate. This can be readily seen with the example above, for imagine that the Hearer

had asked "What is it that is made of wood?" In that case, the assumption of a common referent, the logical subject, is a something made of wood,⁵ and the adjustment of it, the predicate, is its being a mannequin.

The logical subject enacts the reassuringly secure synchronic perfection of a representative portion of la *langue* in order to change it with the diachronic *parole* of the logical predicate. All speakers are Cretan Liars, changing the language even as they speak it.⁶ A security of match is projected between "the world of words" and "the world of things" (Lacan, 1977a [1966], 65) with the sole intention of improving that match.⁷ Speakers have to project the existing deliverances of "truth" in order to allow language to perform its real function, that of updating the Hearer's concept and thus improve his subsequent action.⁸ This sidesteps the illusion of fixity The child playing "fort/da" was enacting the pattern of All communication.⁹ He was learning that the faith that brings a hopeful mastery is not one that guarantees perfect freedom from slavery; or that the Father's "spoken word" and the Son's "word in the speaking" must be kept in illusory pre-established harmony so that each can be Master in turn by breaking that

harmony (MerleauPonty, 1970, 197).¹⁰ We make the Thing to murder it, write the Letter to purloin it, polish the Looking-Glass to go through it. Husserl's "determinable X" is nothing but the method we use to effect a mutual convergence upon the shifting flux of the Real, a hypothetical narcissism in which individual subjects imaginize their identity. This is Folly's "plan" and Lacan's insight, that we need the ironic notion of the entity in the mirror to begin the process of obtaining a provisional hold upon the Real. The Imaginary has an invaluable use, however dire the consequences of its misrecognitions. Without it the Symbolic could not function.

However, this is not a warrant for believing that, when current "reality" is adjusted, the Real will inevitably smile--that is why Lacan spoke of the "grimace of the Real" (Lacan, 1990, 6). The joke can be a pathetic or tragic one. The relief of laughter cannot always ease the pain of castration. Malvolio fled with "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you!" and Alceste with "Trahi de toutes parts, accablé d'injustices, le vais sortir d'un gouffre où triomphent les vices."¹¹ Lacan departs from Hegel here in rejecting any guarantee of an optimistic outcome to the dialectic. The idealized Absence of the Logical Subject may or may not be happily adjusted by the idealized Presence of the Logical Predicate: this performative Truth is not always "felicitous."

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Why are philosophers deaf to such claims as those of Lacan that "it is only with speech that there are things which are--which are true or false, that is to say, which are--and things which are not" (Lacan, 1988, 228), and that "the paths of truth are in essence the paths of error" (263)? Recognizing that without faith in the Symbolic Order there would be no communication, they mistakenly turn the needful exhortation to project it into a false demand that it be believed in. The Laws of Thought that have to be enacted to engage our differing concepts are dangerously transformed (as a result of who knows what psychological or ideological pressures) into props for received opinions of what constitute the favored "referents." Naturally we must maintain that "X is X", "X is either *B* or *not-B*" and "X is not *not-X*" so that projections will coincide enough to effect the necessary adjustments. But it is equally true that we cannot wholly rely on any of the references so achieved, for such rigidity would block the way to the utterance of every statement. In Lacan's words, "we would not be able to make it signify *something quite other* than what it says" (Lacan, 1977a [1966j], 155), which is what we have to do every time we wish to inform somebody of something. The next time a philosopher gives the counsel that "All indiscernibles must be identical for both of us", or that "natural kinds" are parts of the enduring furniture of the world, or that we must cleave to "the Principle of Charity", which is to acknowledge that speakers generally agree on "what is the case", one response would be to say that, exactly, these all must be *taken for granted*, which is as much as to say we shall never in truth grant them at all. These philosophers may be granted the commonsensical notion that any entity agreed on exists, but not the philosophical notion that it is exactly the same portion of the Real that is agreed on. Recognition, whether of a self or an object, can never reach its goal.

Their rigidity is thus well captured in Lacan's phrase "formal stagnation":

Now this formal stagnation is akin to the most general structure of human knowledge . . . that which constitutes the ego and its objects with attributes of permanence, identity and substantiality, in short, with entities or "things" that are very different from the *Gestalten* that experience enables us to isolate in the shifting field, stretched in accordance with the lines of animal desire. (Lacan, 1977a, 17)

As Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen has said, such formal stagnation is a narcissistic refusal of the Oedipal dialectic (Borch-Jacobsen, 1991, 32-35) The Joke reveals the pattern of that dialectic because it shows

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how the Father may be imitated and not imitated in every statement, in every identification. One can neither take "Reality" in the notion "Reality Principle" to mean what the *père-version* makes of the "world of things", since Desire in one subject can correct the identifications made by the Other. Nor can "Pleasure Principle" be taken as that which inevitably runs counter to a Reality Principle, since it may have been an access of *jouissance* that enforced a new and valuable interpretation.

This digression on the philosophers can best be concluded with Dame Folly's dismissal of them:

Though ignorant even of themselves and sometimes not able to see the ditch or stonying in their path, either because most of them are half-blind or their minds are far away, they still boast that they can see ideas, universals, separate forms, prime matters, quiddities, eccencies, things which are All so insubstantial that I doubt if even Lynceus could see them. (Erasmus, 151-152)¹²

To believe that there are Real objects and Real subjects is to turn necessary faith into a superstition. It is to remain at a mirror-stage for All entities, at the mercy of the unconscious. Existence and objectivity logically come apart: Sharp's "cloud" exists and Short's "cloud" exists, but they are not the same entity, even though Short and Sharp have to call them the same entity to speak at all. All objects and all subjects are such superimposed, but never matching, clouds. *Credo quia absurdum* is the dictum to be adopted with regard to subjects and objects. It is the very habit of taking the referent to be single that will reveal that it is not. The danger for the subject lies in turning what is no more than a practical procedure for achieving co-ordination into a complacent belief. It is tempting for him to believe that his Desire, is exactly the same as that of the Other, or, in other words, that he is wholly recognized by the Other.

Such narcissistic security ignores the throws of the dice that the Real may have already "laughably" cast down (Lacan, 1988, 220). The "sliding-away" (*glissement*) from that security "conceals what is the true secret of the ludic, namely, the most radical diversity constituted by repetition in itself" (Lacan, 1977 [1973], 61). The endless adjustment of the Symbolic upon the Real is a mutual performative act that must take on the ludic mask of the True in order to find the temporary *points de capiton*. The danger that cannot be escaped is that, having grown into history, the subject's viscosity settles into molds that slow down its capacity for change, till its

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congelations become part of the Real themselves, the source of the Trauma. Lacan insisted that the illusions of the Imaginary can have effects in the Real. The temptation to turn that ludic performance of the constative, the play of truth, into something eternal then becomes relentless. The mask may then grow on to the face, from the outside in, as in Othello's case, or from the inside out, as in Antony's. This of course contradicts the naive enactment of the (inescapable) Symbolic order, that the faith is that All will obtain the Phallus, fill up the lack, clinging to their *objet a* as earnest of that fulfillment. Subjects are indeed constituted and constituting (Lauer, 1967, 171), but the degree to which they and the Symbolic Order succeed in their respective

constituting is another matter: *méconnaissance* can never turn into a pure *connaissance*, however pursued. Lacan traces Hamlet's tragedy to his desire to make the Symbolic Order constitute his whole identity and thereby banish death, but the idealization at the core of the Symbolic has to be seen to be an idealization that can only be acted, never believed. There are two key ironies in the play: that Hamlet was skilled at punning; and that, though a good actor able to advise other actors, he could not take his own advice.

And now for the end of the story. Those who had patiently tried to loosen the bark ropes of the Gordian Knot were trapped inside a riddle. They had heard King Gordius say, as he tied the knot, that whoever should free the chariot should rule over the whole of Asia. They assumed, seeing the knot being tied (First Clue) that "Whoever frees the chariot . . ." could only be by the untying of the knot itself, that the knot was the riddle they had been set. Knots are material riddles, presenting Ambiguous Elements: which of those tight loops will effect release and which will but further tighten the knot? But Alexander, as Master, perceived that the purpose of a knot was to tie up the chariot, and hence the loops of the knot were not Ambiguous Elements at All, that the Ambiguous Element was actually the very instruction of King Gordius, "Whoever frees the chariot . . ." The Second Clue was then clear: to cut the knot.¹³ The Gordian Knot was a riddle within a riddle, as language is, since it is enacted by those who are riddles themselves.

"In this matter of the visible," says Lacan (1977b, 93), "everything is a trap." The Borromean Knot that ties the Real, Imaginary and Symbolic can be cut through when we least expect it.

Notes

1. The joke is enriched by the fact that "a mosquito" can be read metaphorically, suggesting that the person at the door, or the teller of the joke, is someone who will tease and annoy the listener. The literal meaning of "mosquito" has all the familiar past uses as the first clue; the whole of the joke up to the last line, together with the actual joke situation, are the second clues, giving the rival meanings "mosquito" and "person deliberately out to tease and annoy." A similar five-position diagram could therefore be drawn for it.

2. William Shakespeare, *Othello*, V, 11, 7.

3. For the theory of perception that underlies the present argument, see Wright, 1990; for the epistemological implications, see Wright, 1992a; for relevance to the philosophy of science, see Wright, 1992b.

4. Kojève might have found here what he called "the revelation of the Real by Speech" (Kojève, 1969 [1947], 171), though he added that for Hegel it was a "progressive revelation", a qualification we should not be ready to agree to, since the notion of a human purpose, the direction of a desire, indeed, the very formation of an ego is as problematic as that of any other entity: the consequence is that any "progress" in the ensuring of the continuing satisfaction of a desire cannot be guaranteed, for "the ego" concerned may no longer identify itself with the original demand, which is as much as to say, a part of the former ego.

5. This would be referring in Keith Donnellan's "attributive" sense (Donnellan, 1966), when a reference is made in the situation where one knows of the existence of a referent but does not know of its actual instantiation (as in "Smith's murderer must be insane", in a case where we know that a murderer exists but do not know who he or she actually is). According to the present analysis, this is an attribution imagined by both interlocutors as belonging to an entity unknown but taken to exist: it is not difficult for them to perform this dramatic feat when they already imagine pure co-references on whatever "entities" they have observed together, including themselves. Incidentally, it was an Oxford logician, John Cook

Wilson (1926), 123-126), who was the first to insist on a distinction between logical and grammatical subjects in the Statement, and attributed the failure to recognize this to traditional logic's ignoring of context. His view of the logical subject chimes in with the view here, that it is the entity as conceived by the Hearer *before* he has heard the predicate. He insisted that knowledge was there to be known before anyone achieved it, but within the present theory that would become the acknowledgement that our entity-selections are indeed selected from viscosities in the Real, though there can be no final perfect selection. The logical subject and predicate can move radically away from the grammatical subject and predicate: take the case in which the Hearer had asked "The mannequin is made of what?" or, a more surprising example, "Which mannequin is made of wood?" (to

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which the answer would be "*The mannequin*", that is, one that was already salient--out of a group, of them--to both speakers; here intonation marks the logical predicate, which is only the indefinite article before the grammatical subject-word).

6. The linguist Alan Gardiner (1944, 209) points out, in an early debate on Saussure, the characteristic of a living ox alters the definition of "boeuf" at the moment it is referred to by two speakers, making a new, even if infinitesimal, contribution to *la langue*; this is to see the contribution the Real makes to the Symbolic without taking note of the intentional perspectives of the speakers. For how endeavoring to maintain a perfect rigidity in the Symbolic Order produces the paradoxes, see Wright, 1979.

7. A *question* is then a "fort" wanting a "da". It is an indication to a possible Speaker that one believes that one needs one's concept updating. Questions therefore contain as far as possible directions to the Speaker as to what feature needs updating: if it is the time something occurred, then we ask "When did the tire go flat?"; if it is the manner in which it occurred, we ask "How did it happen?" and so on. We also indicate the level of the assurance of our concept, for where we are fairly sure what the updating will be, we say "It did go fiat, didn't it?" if we think the car does have a fiat tire, and "It didn't go fiat, did it?" if we think that it didn't.

8. The "as if/als *ob*" can be traced, via Vaihinger (1924) to Kant's notion of heuristic fictions.

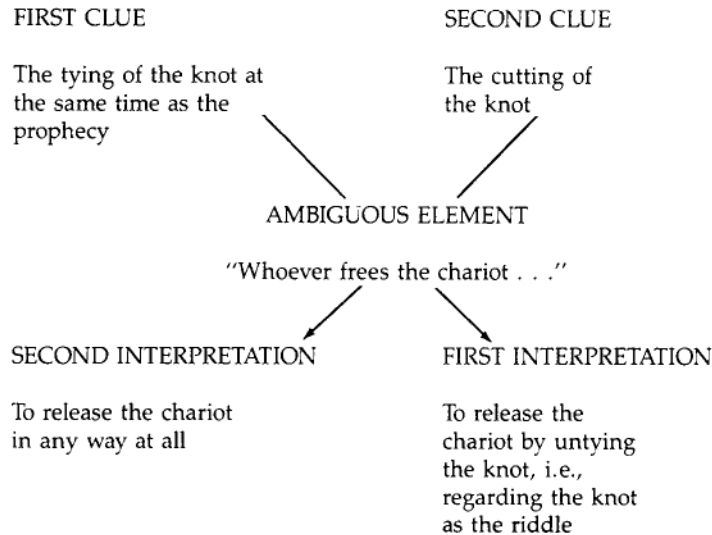
9. The *fort/da* was a game. Games can be defined by the joke pattern also. To quote from an earlier article: "Wittgenstein contrasted chess and tennis, yet they are similar in precisely this riddle feature. In tennis, don't we particularly applaud how that well-placed lob was neatly transformed by *means of its very placement as a lob in that very spot* into an even more dangerous backhand? Is not the force and the direction of the ball 'purloined'? What kind of ball control delights the crowd in soccer?--surely when the brilliant centering shot by one of the attacking side is transformed into a header, say, *which adapts the very energy of the shot to its own purposes* to make it a pass to an attacking forward of the defending side. In judo isn't the trick to use your antagonist's effort to make him defeat himself? In Patience doesn't the zest lie in the reading of the right gestalt from the random selection that appears? And here one's only competitor is chance, as it is for that child bouncing the ball against the wall that Wittgenstein mentions. He also cited 'Ring-a-ring o' roses': we need not quote the presumed origin in the rosy rash that heralded one's catching the plague--'Atishoo! Atishoo! We all fall down'--in order to find rival interpretations" (Wright, 1981-82, 473-474). This is no family-resemblance: the Game, like the Story, has the structure of the Joke. It is worthwhile for a parallel here reading Antony Wilden on strategy (Wilden, 1987).

10. Merleau-Ponty compares the "word in the speaking" to "a wave" that, in re-iterating itself, "hurries beyond its own limits" (Merleau-Ponty, 1970 [1945], 197).

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11. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, V, i, 377; Moliere, *Le Misanthrope*, V, iv, 135-136 ("Betrayed on All sides, burdened with inequities, I am going to get out of an abyss in which the vices triumph").

12. Lynceus was an Argonaut who had preternaturally sharp eyesight.
13. This is the diagram for Alexander's solution:



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