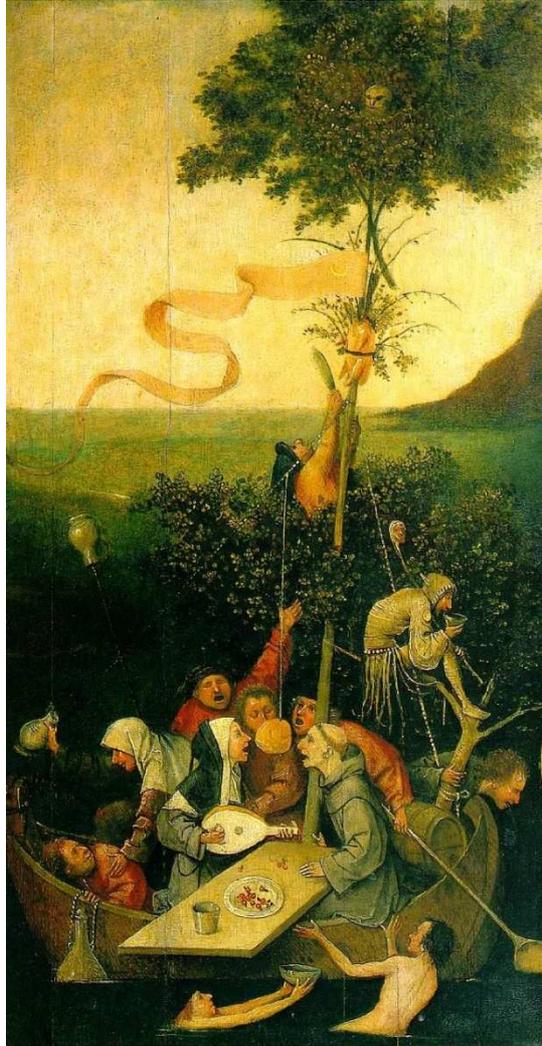


The Traveller's Pathos
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A Clinical Exercise in Byzantine Perspective



Doctoral Thesis

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Στον Στέφανο

Ιδανικός κι ανάξιος εραστής (*Mal du Départ*)
Νίκος Καββαδίας

Θα μείνω πάντα ιδανικός κι ανάξιος
εραστής
των μακρυσμένων ταξιδιών και των
γαλάζιων πόντων,
και θα πεθάνω μια βραδιά σαν όλες τις
βραδιές,
χωρίς να σχίσω τη θολή γραμμή των
οριζώντων.

Για το Μαδράς τη Σιγκαπούρ τ' Αλγέρι
και το Σφαξ
θ' αναχωρούν σαν πάντοτε περήφανα τα
πλοία,
κι εγώ σκυφτός σ' ένα γραφείο με χάρτες
ναυτικούς,
θα κάνω αθροίσεις σε χοντρά λογιστικά
βιβλία.

Θα πάψω πια για μακρινά ταξίδια να
μιλώ,
οι φίλοι θα νομίζουνε πως τα 'χω πια
ξεχάσει,
κι η μάνα μου χαρούμενη θα λέει σ'
όποιον ρωτά:
"Ήταν μια λόξα νεανική, μα τώρα έχει
περάσει"

Μα ο εαυτός μου μια βραδιά εμπρός μου
θα υψωθεί
και λόγο ως ένας δικαστής στυγνός θα μου
ζητήσει,
κι αυτό το ανάξιο χέρι μου που τρέμει θα
οπλιστεί,
θα σημαδέψει κι άφοβα το φταιχτη θα
χτυπήσει.

Κι εγώ που τόσο επόθησα μια μέρα να
ταφώ
σε κάποια θάλασσα βαθειά στις μακρινές
Ινδίες,
θα 'χω ένα θάνατο κοινό και θλιβερό πολύ
και μια κηδεία σαν των πολλών
ανθρώπων τις κηδείες.

I'll remain forever an ideal and unworthy
lover of the distant travels and of the blue
seas,
and I'll die one night just like any other
night,
without traversing the pale line of the
horizons.

The ships will be departing proud as ever,
for Madras, Singapore, Algeria and Sfax,
and I, bent over a desk full of nautical
maps,
will be adding up sums in thick
accounting books.

I will eventually stop talking about distant
travels,
my friends will think that I have finally
forgotten all about them,
and my mother, happy, will be telling
anyone who asks,
"It was a youthful craze, but now it has
passed".

But one night my self will rise in front of
me,
And like a ferocious judge will ask me to
account for myself,
and this worthless, shaking hand of mine,
will get armed, take aim
and fearlessly hit the culprit.

And I, that so much desired to be one day
buried in a deep sea of the far away Indies,
will have a common and very sad death,
and a funeral just like the funerals of the
lot.

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The Traveller's Pathos

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An Clinical Exercise in Byzantine Perspective

Introduction

*Et quid amabo nisi quod aenigma est?*¹

*"In my beginning is my end. In succession"*²

It would be useless to deny that there is some kind of striking categorical dissimilarity between tourism and psychoanalysis, constituting any articulation of the two a quite problematic one. Perhaps this is because the problem of articulation continues being posed, to a great extent, with a somewhat exaggerated exclusiveness, as a problem of transference or exchange, in the best of occasions, between fields of knowledge, and, indeed, often without problematizing the subject of knowledge, and what the desire of articulation, or even articulation itself as desire, has to reveal about that subject. An aim, as much as a motive, of our work is precisely this exploration of the desire to articulate tourism and psychoanalysis. Moreover, if the problem of articulation is posed as a categorical one, this can lead us to the questioning of the boundaries between categories, and, in this case, allow us to challenge the limit between the so called social sciences and the humanities.

It would be possible to form a discourse on articulation within a different frame, especially if this would allow us to discern behind the philosophical and scientific object the emergence of an object of desire; and this in a manner which could very well lead us to the questioning of objectivity as the defining principle of our relation to reality. And, to follow Milner³, in this fashion, instead of obtaining its ideal *from* science, psychoanalysis would rather create an analytical ideal *for* science, one of discourse, by necessity.

¹ "What shall I love if not the enigma?". Inscribed on a 1911 self-portrait by Giorgio de Chirico.

² Eliot, T.S. Four Quartets: An Accurate Online Text – East Coker.

<http://www.tristan.icom43.net/quartets/coker.html>, accessed on 11/09/2009.

³ Milner, J. C. (1995). L'Œuvre Claire: Lacan, la Science, la Philosophie. Paris: Seuil.

In such a perspective, one recognizes moments in tourism that reveal something of the subject, in a fashion similar to the way in which slips of the tongue and nonsense, the subversion of logos, do so not only in the analytical process but also in everyday life.

Could tourism be seen as the traversal of the fantasy aiming at identifying with one's symptom, or at identifying with one's symbolic identification? Within our epistemology and problematic this question cannot function alone, but has to be coupled by its inversed form: Does the traversal of the fantasy, within the analytic procedure, constitute 'a tourism', or what has previously been called 'the touristic'? And, behind it all, we can identify the desire to bring the central issues of both the question and its inversed form, that is fantasy and transference, to the fore, and, through this, to question, not the validity of either analysis or tourism, but rather whether it is not precisely analysis that much further than recognising the modern subject as touristic, constructs one. In this sense, far more than a possibility or consequence of modernity, analysis would become its condition. A psychoanalytic conceptualisation of the touristic would by necessity result in a rupture with the established knowledge within tourism scholarship and challenge the ontological status of the tourist, while, in parallel, proceed to the formulation of a modern subjectivity which is *per se* touristic. Therein, certain issues, relations, and questions arise.

What is displaced onto spatial, corporeal displacement? What is it to say 'I need a vacation'? What is the relation of Tourism to discourse, and what is discursive in Tourism? What is the gaze of the Tourist gaze? Is Tourism a symptom, why does the Tourist always return, and what is of the fantasme in Tourism? Is there a subject of Tourism, and what would its desire be? Why and how can such a subject be identified with the subject of science, the subject upon which analysis is exercised? What is knowledge in Tourism? What is limit, border, and boundary? What dialectics constitute being-out-of-place possible?

Since, in Lacanian theory, which serves as our primary analytic, the subject exists as ex-sistant, the dialectics of being-out-of-place will define not only the horizon of its existence, but existence itself; these very dialectics will become the horizon of every definition. Hence, our insistence that any psychoanalytic examination of the subject will result in the refutation of its ontological status.

Nevertheless, we have to incorporate in our investigation of the dialectics of being-out-of-place its relation to the Dasein, taking into consideration that the significance and fundamental position of the 'da' has often tended to be underestimated and under-examined. What has to be analysed is the relation of being-in-the-world and being-out-of-place, whether

they are the antithetical poles of a dialectic development, and whether being-out-of-place enters the scene as a third pole between Eros and Thanatos.

Although the positioning of being-out-of-place between Eros and Thanatos could easily lead to an analogy between these three poles and the three registers of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary, and, although such an analogy has to and will be investigated – it is far too tempting to omit – there is also a necessity to treat such analogies, and this one more specifically, as a problem. Because if we could simply do away with tourism as a problem by positioning it in relation to Eros and Thanatos, in the manner that we position the Imaginary in relation to the Symbolic and the Real, then we would have at the same time, at once, negated its character as a problem and returned to a conceptualisation of tourism as an economic activity. Let alone that throughout the work of Lacan himself the relations between the three registers are constantly repositioned. Therefore, this work becomes an effort to formulate tourism as a concept capable of theoretically negotiating these relations.

If we can conceive the Cartesian subject as one thriving in a nostalgia for itself – and it remains to be seen if indeed we can – and if the same, modern, subject is the one that can enunciate ‘I feel a Tourist in my own Life’, we are faced with a dialectic development, necessary due to the direction taken here. A touristic subjectivity becomes, more than a reference to the subject in the act or performance of tourism, a digressive or inversed possibility that the modern subject is per se touristic. The concept of distance needs to be investigated in this respect, since the specular relation distances the subject from itself, although a rapprochement of the Ego with the specular image by no means offers a solution to the problems emerging from this distance⁴, and this because the subject itself emerges *in* distance.

This reflects the problematic of the mirror stage and the entrance to the symbolic, the structural moment of the emergence of the subject. A moment in front of the mirror, and a distance that goes far beyond the distance between the eyes and the mirror’s surface. The eyes to be met on the other side of the mirror have an equal distance to it. A distance that is not really there, but is there in the Real. The other scene is already there, and this surface can only materialise as the bar barring the subject. I become a subject by the establishment of this distance as such. Therefore, the quintessential Tourist is Alice when she crosses to the other side, and fulfils her fantasy, which turns out to be as nightmarish as any *jouissance* would be. Along these lines, we may be able to comprehend a series of syndromes, such as the Stendhal,

⁴ Safouan, M. (2001). *Lacaniana - Les Séminaires de Jacques Lacan, tome 1: 1953 – 1963*. Paris: Fayard.

the Jerusalem, the Paris syndrome. And along the same lines, we may be able to position the concept of the travel as it recurs within the analytical process in relation to it. After all, the concept of transference is common to both psychoanalysis and tourism.

Certainly, thus, in the orientation of our investigation towards that which is displaced onto the temporary spatial, corporeal displacement that tourism appears to be, one can, without much difficulty, recognise something more of the psychoanalytical discourse organising our gaze upon it. The displacement of the body takes here the place of the body itself; if something is displaced upon the body in the case of hysteria, for example, there is some sort of legitimacy in an attempt to look for something displaced upon the displacement of the body, in the case of tourism. Because, what proceeds through the opposition between *Τόπος* (the place of corporeality) and *Λόγος* (the word, sense, the symbolic), results in a topology, the practice of which is the treatment of representation with the body, signifying the inscription of this very practice within the totality of our fantasmatic productions⁵. This, of course, in itself, negates the ontological status of a distinct phenomenon of tourism, while, in parallel, justifying the conceptualisation of a touristic subjectivity.

It is in, by and through the discourse of displacement that (touristic) desire will be structured, and the act of placing that desire at the centre of our analysis derives from the study of psychoanalysis, to the extent that the latter has established the discourse of displacement as its central tautology, since if analysis has taught us something, this is that discourse is displacement. Desire is, in this fashion, always a desire to travel, and the desire to travel always incorporates the demand to return – this is also why the dichotomy between travel and tourism is only rhetorical: a travel not aiming at return is no travel at all. Perhaps, the question ‘to return where?’ is not to be taken seriously after all, since the destination of return can only be non other than the returning destiny of subjectivity – an ever incomplete circle. And, perhaps, return is the structure itself of desire.

Desire - constitutively alienated in the desire of the other, for the sole reason that its first object is to be recognised by the other⁶, to be the desire of the other, to be the other’s Phallus, the castration of which gives birth to the subject as such, and which, thus, bars the subject – is produced in the *au-delà* of demand. Because the demand initiating the discourse, driving it, is the communication of two subjects, an impossible task, echoing, if not being identified with,

⁵ Nasio, J. D. (1995). *Les Yeux de Laure: Transfert, Objet ‘a’ et Topologie dans la Théorie de J. Lacan*. Paris: Champ-Flammarion.

⁶ Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil.

the demand to be the Other's desire. What remains of it is the object a, and it is the object a, as object cause of desire, that is produced by the discourse.

Something always eludes the other and within the Other. In tourism studies the question of the Other has taken the form of a debate on authenticity, which could be re-examined under the light of our problematic.

Nevertheless, although the signifier hides the truth of the subject, it is, at the same time, supported by it. It is the signifier that seems to be speaking the truth, to be conveying meaning to the other, to be the subject that acts, although it is but a mere agent, one, moreover, that has no idea about the true meaning of the message it conveys.

In a sense then, tourism is nothing more and nothing less than a reversed symptom, than a symptom turned inside out, not the opposite of hysteria, but rather some kind of hysteria starting from the end to make a circle all the way to the beginning, that is hysteria par excellence. The Hysteric is a tourist of her own life, in her own right; her body becomes a producible and consumable landscape of an unaccountable picturesque. The difference between the tourist and the hysteric is the difference between hospitality and the hospital, and we wouldn't have to go too far to conceive of a 'Hospitel'.

But, still, within the Discourse of the Tourist, the tourist is a mere shadow of the Gaze. It is by the function of the gaze, the object gaze, which is separated from the emerging subject that the 'I' can finally be articulated. Thus, though, it is by definition a Touristic 'I'. Indeed, despite the finest of intentions, and some considerable insight, that the concept 'Tourist Gaze' has so far carried⁷, it has remained within the discourse of the Tourist as the actor of touristic mobility, hesitating to cross a line that would constitute the Tourist another term for the Subject itself. By identifying the Tourist Gaze with the objet petit a, the plus-de-jouir, and seeing the metaphorical quality of Distance as Difference, we might be able to make this crossing, that would situate the Tourist within the Dialectics of Desire, and allow us to discern the Touristic of the Subject.

The tourist gaze is not seeing; it is, on the contrary, showing. It is not the manner in which the tourist appropriates the landscape, the picturesque, let alone the picture, it is, reversely, the manner in which the tourist is appropriated by and objectified within the landscape. The tourist gaze is not understood when I gaze myself in the mirror. I will confront it when, after the introduction of one more mirror, I will see myself being gazed at. It is the shadow of the Gaze, confronted like that, as an object to be gazed upon, that the tourist is. The

⁷ Urry, J. (1990). *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage.

Gaze is what introduces the tourist into the picturesque, regardless of the form the latter may take, something ever outside the picture dropping its shadow - namely the tourist - inside the picture. If tourism is unfinished, or un-finalised, this is because the Gaze cannot return to the subject, because the subject will not recover the Gaze. As Lacan puts it, “We can capture this privilege of the gaze in the function of desire, rolling, if I might say, along the veins from where the domain of vision has been integrated within the field of desire”⁸.

But the object gaze is not the single object cause of desire. We can recognize the object voice, for example, in the call to prayer of the imam, in the way it structures a field of desire of its own – especially when this field becomes the fantasy of a thousand and one nights.

The critical dimension is that of the relation of tourism to the *fantasme*, formulated as $\$ \diamond a$ ⁹. Tourism expresses the latter, given that the supposition of an Other in tourism is the supposition of an incomplete Other, necessary for this imaginary effect to take place. As fantasmatic, tourism seeks to ‘invade’ the Other, like performance would invade a scene, to fill out “a void in the Other”. The picture of the picturesque is the picture including the tourist himself, by means of the tourist’s absence. It functions as Other as long as it includes an offerable void to be filled in by the touristic *fantasme*.

Whatever the tourist may be trying to retrieve, to re-cover, he will always be coming face to face with an always-already covered object. Whatever the tourist gazes is the gaze of whatever gazes back at the tourist, the thing of which the tourist is the shadow. Therefore, the tourist will always re-turn; he will always be a re-tourist. However, the re-tourist will always re-turn as a symptom. Externality, exclusion from the Truth of the - hence lacking - Other, the Truth of whom is that he does not possess my Truth, introduces the subject as an integral part of the Other’s game. My externality is internal to the Other¹⁰. The *objet petit a*, the Tourist Gaze, is this ‘secret’ of the Other, eluding as much the Other as within the Other.

If difference precedes properties, as structural linguistics has it, and offers a foundation for them, or if properties are produced by the signifier, then any desire for the consumption of difference through the establishment of the touristic property would be constitutively non-satisfiable. The question has a dilemmatic character – Do I assume a pre-established touristic property so that a difference will be produced to be consumed, or there is a difference, which

⁸ Lacan, J. (1973). *Le Séminaire – Livre XI: Les Quatre Concepts Fondamentaux de la Psychanalyse*. Paris: Seuil, p. 98.

⁹ Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil.

¹⁰ Žižek, S. (1989). *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso.

will produce a property that can be called touristic? If the emergence of the subject is a property of structure, what can distinguish this very property from the touristic one?

We would wish to conclude with the assertion that what is now, at the moment of the beginning of the text, regarded as a principal issue will not necessarily continue being regarded as such throughout the work, during its development, and there is no certainty that other issues will be excluded and may not emerge to claim a central position in the future. Hopefully, such issues, questions, relations, which have not yet emerged will, indeed, do so. If this work expresses the desire to articulate a word that has thought, and if it is to become a travel itself, as has already been implied, then we would most certainly not want it to be a 'package tour', with every destination and action planned and known in advance. On the contrary, we would like it to be an open experience, some sort of *dérive*, not deprived of surprises, and even impasses from where one would have to return and get on a new track. A map is as useful to follow as it is not to follow, and one should not forget that the map is a representation, and that, perhaps, what is of some importance in a map is what falls out of its horizon, what emerges in the field between space and its representation, the failure of representation. That is our subject.

1.

Mal du Départ

*“So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years—
Twenty years largely wasted, the years of l’entre deux guerres
Trying to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure”¹¹*

“Ανδρών επιφανών πάσα γη τάφος”

Πλουτάρχου: Περικλέους Επιτάφιος II, 43.4

“I’ll always remain an ideal and unworthy lover of the distant travels and the blue seas”¹².

And, save for the unworthy translation, it is obvious, at least in the original, that the speaker never did travel. ‘Ideal’ here is taken to mean in idea, but not in praxis. In other words, theoretically, since we are so accustomed to this quasi-monstrous distinction between theory and praxis, perpetually confronting one with the other, bringing the two in a constant opposition and conflict.

A theoretical traveller, then, or a traveller in/of theory, a traveller in the realm of the idea, expressing a passionate regret for the fact that the imagined, the fantasized, will have never entered the realm of the body. Ideal perhaps, traveller certainly. Little does it matter, if it matters at all, that the distinction between theory and practice is, as a matter of fact, irrelevant, since what really matters is the presence or absence of thought – and, as we very well know by now, there is theory without as well as practice with it. What does matter is the tension, screaming out of the words of the poet, between the idea and the praxis, between the image and the body, the real and the imaginary, giving rise to the symbolic of his words.

Mal du départ, of course. The agony of the sailor that has stayed ashore long enough for this tension to build up, and fuel an invincible desire to get on board once more. No ordinary desire, that is. This is Pathos, a desire so intense, so irresistible that it becomes pain. Any

¹¹ Eliot, T.S. Four Quartets: An Accurate Online Text – East Coker.

<http://www.tristan.icom43.net/quartets/coker.html>, accessed on 11/09/2009.

¹² Kavvadias, N. (1990), Marabu. Athens: Agra. The title of the poem is “Mal du Départ”. Translation mine.

other desire, could, at the end of the day be resisted. Pathos, instead, introduces the enigma of the irresistibility of death on the plains of desire.

This is how one is reminded of Plutarch. “*Ἀνδρῶν επιφανῶν πάσα γη τάφος*”, where the ‘*ἄνδρας επιφανής*’, the famous man, the man that shows, the apparent man – and should one go to much length to relate him to the exhibitionist? – is the man whose Pathos is obvious, apparent, on the surface¹³. For this man of Pathos the whole world is a grave, Plutarch says.

It is in the word itself – *Πάθος* – that desire and pain are bound. We are, perhaps, attempting a pathology, a word on pain as much as a word on desire. And the only way to make this possible, that is, material, is through Pathos. The writing of Pathos can only proceed through the Pathos of writing. Little wonder, then, that it is so difficult to write.

An empty page, in all its whiteness, can, after all, appear as a kernel of death. More than being an unwritten page, it is a black hole of writing, a Hera of meaning – a virgin time after time throughout eternity. Indeed, the empty page, in the eyes of the beholder, is a self-reproducing virginity hymen, and the dread it causes is, at least partially, the awe for its self-reproducing properties. The other part of it is the demand entailed – an empty page has to be filled, with the knowledge, or rather, the certified threat that, in fact, this is absolutely impossible. Filling an empty page is a Sisyphean task; in the end, once the top of the hill is reached, the rock will roll back to the ground. Writing is not the satisfaction of the demand of the empty page.

And this is why, despite all its claims, scholarship will never know anything, because it treats knowledge as an object of pleasure, as the response to a demand, the satisfaction of a mythical need, and craves a certain understanding. An understanding, moreover, which simply means that something has found a position within a pre-existing structure, becoming thus neutralised, a mere assimilation process, that is. The pleasure resulting from it has rather to do with reckoning one’s own to be intelligent. Nothing to do with any sense of a ‘true understanding’, however, since the latter could only have severely attacked the pre-existing structure concerned¹⁴.

If knowledge was possible, at all, it could only mean that the virginity hymen of Hera could be broken. But then, if the latter was possible, all knowledge would collapse, since the

¹³ ‘*Ἐπιφάνεια*’ (Epiphaneia), whence ‘*Ἐπιφανής*’ (Epiphanis – Important, famous) derives, means surface.

¹⁴ “ ‘True understanding’ ... is actually a process which goes beyond the automatic functioning of the symbolic order and involves an incursion of the symbolic into the real: the signifier brings forth something new in the real or drains off more of the real into the symbolic”, Fink, B. (1995), *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jussance*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 71.

true keeper of knowledge is Hera herself, under the condition that her hymen remains not untouched - quite the contrary actually - but successively regenerated¹⁵, that she remains an eternal virgin, without ever retaining her virginity. The more penetrated her vagina gets, the more her virginity is affirmed, the stronger, the fresher her hymen will eventually become. No one can sleep with Hera twice. Every time is always the first. Contrary to being a virgin, Hera is the always-already virgin, and to think that one can fill an empty page is to choose blindness to the fact. The empty page, as Hera's hymen, is, in all eventualities, un-affectable.

So, how can writing happen at all?

It is clear that if a work is to be written, or if there is to be any work at all, it has to proceed through writing, and become a clear demonstration of how writing writes itself¹⁶, of the pathos of writing. A work will either emerge from the place of writing, or not emerge at all. Only writing offers the opportunity of not returning. It can simply remain unread, provided there is free will. If indeed there is, this is the only free will we can have. And yet, writing will still be there. It appears to be the one true perversion, and the truth of travel. After all, Pathos always appears in terms of a displacement of the body, as a 'heroic exit' that could always also be taken as a return, that is as destiny. If desire calls the body away from the surface of the mirror, protecting it from the eventual crash into it, Pathos celebrates this very crash, the later being better known by the name given to it by Lacan: *Jouissance*.

And, certainly, there has to be a certain getting-off in it, which would also explain the intensity of the resistance mounted to it. Could this be a symptomatic writing, or even the writing of a symptom? It is, in any case, however, a circulation around pretexts – tourism, travel, the figure of Lacan. Even the subject appears to be pre-textual and contingent – it is there as something, as an impossibility, to be written. A pre-textual subject striving to make its appearance on the surface of a text, which, if it is to be really a text, and have a surface as texts are supposed to have, has to keep the subject under it; and, on the other hand, an understanding of the subject, that is, in its truth, the response to a demand to stand-under the text.

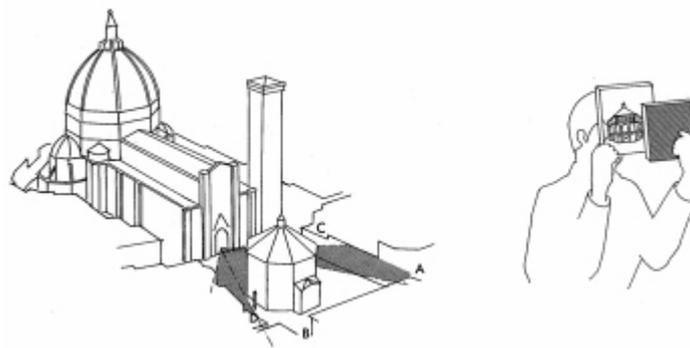
Of course, Lacan, and lacanians of every ilk and conviction, might take issue with what is being written here, most probably with all of it, but especially with a view concerning a subject under the text. Nevertheless, in my language, this is exactly what the subject is, the

¹⁵ Each year Hera's virginity returns by bathing in the well Canathus.

¹⁶ Markidis, M. (1995). *Studies on Signification*. Athens: Plethron. (in Greek)

under-the-text – *υποκείμενο*¹⁷. Not what is outside the text, or hidden between its lines, but what stands or is kept under it. An exercise in byzantine perspective? Perhaps. It would, at least, be interesting to see how the subject of this reverse perspective appears in the perspective of things, and what it is to be a subject which, in the field of the visible, is positioned as the vanishing point, as is the case with byzantine perspective. To be sure, this is something I could never possibly know. If this perspective is reverse, this is certainly not chronological, it doesn't come to reverse something prior to it. On the contrary, chronologically at least, it precedes its opposite, the equally magnificent, scientific, that is objective, perspective of Brunelleschi, that is; which in turn will become, in the historical perspective of things, the material condition of the Cartesian subject¹⁸.

If the subject of Brunelleschian perspective needs to resort to some sort of trickery, and hide itself behind a hole, a small opening at the vanishing point, from where it will have to look in a mirror, and is thus introduced in the field of the visible as what is kept outside it, present and/as absent, in *αφάνεια*¹⁹, then this *αφανές* subject is one that has somewhere to go and somewhere to enter.



Brunelleschi's First Demonstration, according to Damisch²⁰

At the end of the day, there is no other Aphanisis than the *Αφάνισις* of the subject, which, in Lacanian theory, merely indicates a threat realized by the presence of the Other²¹,

¹⁷ 'Υπο-κείμενο' (Hypo-keimeno) means standing under, at the same time as the word 'κείμενο' (keimeno) means text.

¹⁸ Brockelman, T. (2008). Missing the Point: Reading the Lacanian Subject through Perspective. S – Journal of the Jan van Eyck Circle for Lacanian Ideology Critique, 1, 16-35

¹⁹ 'Α-φάνεια' (a-phaneia) means not showing, not making an apparition. Here, it takes its meaning in opposition to 'Επι-φάνεια' (epi-phaneia).

²⁰ In Brockelman, T. (2008). Missing the Point: Reading the Lacanian Subject through Perspective. S – Journal of the Jan van Eyck Circle for Lacanian Ideology Critique, 1, 16-35

and even this seems to be of a rather illusory – imaginary, that is – character. In final analysis, what is kept hidden is that the subject’s eye is positioned at the vanishing point, not unlike the byzantine subject’s eye –

There is the function that is found at the most intimate of the institution of the subject within the visible. What fundamentally determines me within the visible is the gaze that is outside. It is by the gaze that I receive its effect... the gaze is the instrument through which light is incarnated, and from where -...- I am *photographed*.²²

This is already, by definition, a subject-out-of-place. If the vanishing point appears to be elsewhere, then it is the subject itself that vanishes. And it would require some further trickery, such as the anamorphic object in Holbein’s ‘Ambassadors’, as described by Lacan in his seminar²³, and a very specific, from a spatial point of view, positioning of the subject, to reveal that it is, indeed, there – but yet to be written, contingent. And this, to the Cartesian subject, always comes as a surprise, in the best of occasions, and as a shock, in less favourable ones. After all, it is not by accident that the anamorphic object in the scene is a skull. In all eventualities, the subject, uprooted from the visible and mobile as it may be, is unidirectional. This – Death – is the point where destiny and destination become indistinguishable – “and I will die one evening, like any other evening, without having crossed the dim line of the horizons”²⁴.

So, instead of seeing in tourism ‘metaphors of/for’, one could see in the touristic the metaphorical itself, the structure itself of the metaphor, and do away with tourism altogether. Because, if I can say ‘I feel a tourist in my own life’, if, in other words, I see my life in perspective attributing at the same time a spatial quality to it, then it is not the tourist, in the act of tourism, on the symbolic level, that constitutes the positioning of the signifier ‘tourist’

²¹ “The presence of the Other threatens the obsessive with what Lacan calls ‘aphanisis’, his fading or disappearance as subject.” Fink, B. (1999), *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, p.124.

²² Lacan, J. (1973). *Le Séminaire – Livre XI: Les Quatre Concepts Fondamentaux de la Psychanalyse*. Paris: Seuil, p. 121.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Kavadias, N., *Mal du Départ*

within the – all too common – phrase possible, but the signifier emerging in it that makes the act of tourism possible.

What is of particular relevance and value here is the lacanian elaboration of the externality of psychoanalysis in relation to science. So far there hasn't been any treatment of the touristic from a position within psychoanalysis, establishing any connection of the Freudian field regarding the touristic. The few attempts to apply psychoanalytic concepts in the study of tourism have consistently held a position external to psychoanalysis, being presented thus as attempts to constitute tourism a *Μάθησις*²⁵, in the perspective of an effort to 'legalize' its status within the environment of the so called Social Sciences.

A recurrence to what has been called tourism studies reveals, in fact, an attempt to transfer the social to the scientific, to fade out, that is, the subject from history, to transform the organic into the inorganic, dictated by a certain death drive, and, in any case, more obsessive than hysteric. Hence, such an application of psychoanalysis external to psychoanalysis, in the last resort, turns against psychoanalysis, since the fundamental assumption of the presence of two subjects in the analytic situation, each one of them equipped, of course, with an object, the ego and the other²⁶, always remains irrelevant in such treatments, illustrating the Lacanian assertion that science is an ideology of the suppression of the subject²⁷.

It requires no more than common sense, then, to understand why Tribe²⁸ is right when ascribing a pre-paradigmatic character to tourism studies. His allusion to the positive nature of such a character is slightly more questionable, and it would be difficult not to recognise therein an escape in the face of enjoyment.

To say that tourism studies have not attained a paradigmatic status is to confess the absence of a theory that has thought. None of these is too bizarre, albeit they attest to the paradoxical nature of tourism studies. Because, very simply put, for as long as tourism studies remain tourism studies they are also bound to remain pre-paradigmatic.

²⁵ *Μάθησις*: Learning

²⁶ Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil.

²⁷ Lacan, J. (1970). *Radiophonie*. Scilicet, 2/3, 55-99.

²⁸ Tribe, J. (1997). *The Indiscipline of Tourism*. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24, 638-657.

If the object of tourism studies is tourism, and their objective is to understand it, they will always remain in need of tools to do so, which will necessarily have an external character. In other words, tourism studies will go on using theories originated outside them, to understand tourism, and, hence, will never be able to get rid of their applied character. But, although application may, in certain cases, inform theory, it never generates it. If tourism studies insist on tourism, they are condemned to be unable to generate theory. In a nutshell, if tourism studies want to acquire a paradigmatic status, they have to self-dissolve, or just vanish in thin air. And this is the paradox of tourism studies.

In any occasion where tourism would emerge as a *Μάθησις*, we would have already departed from the Freudian field. The elaboration on subjectivity in the body of the work that has taken place within tourism studies is indicative of this. But even just the title ‘Tourism Studies’ that this body of work proudly bears, claiming in all seriousness a recognition that seems to be persistently eluding, and which appears to be necessary for the establishment of a position within the academic environment, can only be taken as a reference to the effort to constitute tourism a *Μάθησις*.

The question is whether it is possible to formulate within psychoanalysis questions on the touristic and with a touristic as the departure point. Can the subject be approached and addressed through the touristic? Because, as far as psychoanalysis is concerned, what is at issue is not tourism, but the touristic.

Let’s not forget the fundamental ‘theorem’ at work here: The subject is the subject of being-out-of-place. Therefore, we are interested in the tourist insofar as he can be paradigmatic of the being-out-of-place, and the tourist is paradigmatic of the being-out-of-place to the extent that tourism presupposes a return. It’s difficult to miss, here, that in the touristic, in that excellent metaphor for the necessity of return, one can see the real always returning in the same position, and, in other words, the theory of repetition. But how is it that the real always returns in the same position? Perhaps, a theory of the touristic could lend a helping hand in answering the question. The obvious answer might be that the real never really left. Perhaps, it is not the real, but the position itself that appears, only to disappear again, that surfaces, goes ‘under’, and resurfaces, in a repetitive manner. Perhaps, it is the position that should receive more conceptual attention, and, perhaps, the idea of a position that has been, is, and will be there should be re-evaluated.

Certainly, it must have been made clear already, that tourism is not taken as a performance of a commercial nature, as a temporary spatial displacement, as a socio-economic and anthropological phenomenon, but as an ‘energy’; the difference that the

function of the signifier incorporates. Only because it is this, can the enunciation ‘I feel a tourist in my own life’ have a meaning – which we could, for the time being, assume that it could reveal itself by ‘translating’ the enunciation into ‘I *feels* a tourist in my life’.

Nor can we see in tourism a discipline, a paradigm, or a field of knowledge. Tribe is not only right when positioning tourism on a pre-paradigmatic stage, but he also misplaces the question²⁹. Nevertheless, a pre-paradigmatic stage would signify the theoretical possibility of a paradigmatic one, such as medicine, sociology, anthropology, psychology, etc. have reached or attained.

However, there will never be a tourismology, a discipline having tourism as its object, like the aforementioned disciplines respectively have the body, society, culture, and behaviour as theirs. This is not because it is inter-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary, or whichever other trendy determination its proponents may like to fashion it after. After all, the body, society, culture, and behaviour can also be examined under different lights, and looked upon from different perspectives, as well, as they are. One is thus bequeathed with the obligation to support and ‘substantialize’ the view of this impossibility, the view, that is, that a tourismology is never to take place.

This work is, among other things, also the expression of an ambition to conduct a reading of Lacan that has thought, through the effort to conceptualise the subject of the being-out-of-place, a *Περιπέτεια*³⁰, with the original meaning of the word, a turn towards the opposite.

The fact that tourism has remained virtually unexplored through a psychoanalytic prism, despite the very few, sporadic relevant attempts³¹, seems, at first sight, and despite what has been previously said in relation to that, to be quite paradoxical. After all, there are

²⁹ Tribe, J. (1997). The Indiscipline of Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24, 638-657.

³⁰ *Περιπέτεια*: Adventure

³¹ E.g. Haddad, A. & Haddad, G. (1995). *Freud en Italie: Psychanalyse du Voyage*. Paris: Editions Albin Michel; MacCannell, D. (2001). Tourist Agency. *Tourist Studies*, 1(1), 23-37; MacCannell, D. (2002). The Ego Factor in Tourism. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(1), 146-151; Kingsbury, P. (2005). Jamaican Tourism and the Politics of Enjoyment. *Geoforum*, 36, 113-132. Of the aforementioned titles, the most important, profound, thought provoking, inspiring, and comprehensive is the first one. Interestingly enough, this is precisely the one that is not the work of any scholar of Tourism, but of a psychoanalyst and an Italianist.

psychoanalytic schools of thought all over the social sciences, except for tourism studies - which currently prefer anthropological approaches.

This could somehow be related to the well diagnosed, albeit somewhat cliché, resistance connected to psychoanalysis. In this case, however, there seems to be a real danger, proceeding through the revelation made possible by the absence of analysis itself, which could only be the absence of its subject. There has been no analyst/analysand relation in the study of tourism, without this meaning that there has been no symptom. From there it proceeds towards its objective to form, or to formulate, the Tourist as a construct only vaguely, and rarely so if at all, related to some, equally vague and rather wanting, conception of the unconscious, since the opposite would signify a Tourist that cannot be confined to the subject of the act of tourism as understood by the 'industry', and a Tourism that could not be limited to a symbolic/realistic activity of a rigidly circumscribed 'external world', which would be a world of objects around. The question then becomes related to the subject who 'speaks of' tourism, and to that subject's desire.

Not only the Tourist, but also the absence of the Tourist as a desiring subject, as the subject of the unconscious, or even as the subject of the drive, within tourism studies, as their symptom, becomes an object within the present context, since tourism studies are evidently, even in their most advanced forms, self-defined by the exclusion of the possibility of a touristic subjectivity, which is not merely the subjectivity of tourists as economically perceived actors.

Only when Tourism as a concept is cleansed of its established 'industrial' references, only through its de-anchoring from commercially imposed 'optics' (in times that merchants and other forces of the market feel compelled to teach us what the meaning of knowledge is), and when it is expanded to such a degree that it finally means nothing, only then will it be able to mean something for the subject. Only when the motion of nostalgia, and the nostalgia of all motion, with whatever nostalgia allows to emerge, this *άλγος* of *νόστος*, the pain of return to a forever lost home, subdues the study of socioeconomic impacts of the temporary displacement of subjects within some industrial or post-industrial structure, we may be able to learn something about the subject from Tourism. Only when Tourism as such is posed as a problem and a request for Truth will its subject surface.

Despite all the labour that has to take place, this work is not identified with it. In fact, this relation can be best described by an analogy, taken from Milner³², between the work and the form of the commodity, allowing us to discern the character of the form in the work. The work is, indeed, a form, not a matter; it is on the level of thought what the commodity form is on the level of things. In this manner, through the presence of this relation, the fetishism of the work becomes ever more apparent, something rather symptomatic can be ascribed to it, and we can position the modern concept of the work within the horizon of the capitalist organisation of production, where what we eventually have is a vast accumulation of commodities and works. The homologous character of work and commodity is further exemplified through publication, at least as regards the written word, where the publication can be seen in its relation to the commercial exchange.

This form then, the work, is a unit, separate from the other units, in the multitude of units which constitute culture, the latter taken here as intellectual culture, not as civilisation or Kultur³³. And in order to be inscribed in the field of culture, publication is necessary. Without an audience such an inscription would be impossible. Milner has related this to Foucault's definition of madness as the absence of work, and we see no reason to disagree. In fact, we could, indeed, see in madness the external delineation of culture, its limit. To be mad, then, would be to be painting without a canvas, to be painting on the air. If in the centre of culture we can locate the empty page, whose function is that of the heroic hymen of Hera, then the braking of the hymen can only take place outside culture; and there the Olympian order has already collapsed. Since this does not regard us, hopefully, the choice to accommodate our aspiration to construct a work in the guise of a production within the university, also bears the meaning of producing an audience.

Then, of course, we are faced with the question of the university itself, and whether what is produced within the university, academic production – or, to attempt a neologism, we could call it 'universitary production' - can be taken as work, be inscribed, that is, in the register of intellectual culture. What we can observe is the difference between two university traditions, and it might not be a gross exaggeration to speak of two separate worlds; two worlds almost isolated from each other, rarely if ever communicating with each other, in a dialogue that doesn't cease to never take place, to paraphrase Lacan. The division is as much

³² Milner, J. C. (1995). *L'Œuvre Claire: Lacan, la Science, la Philosophie*. Paris: Seuil.

³³ In other words, we refer to the meaning that the word 'Culture' has in French. Therefore, if the word 'Work' appears somewhat un-functional in the context of our argument, this is rather due to the fact that we use English. Perhaps, our argument would become clearer had we chosen to use the word 'Oeuvre'.

geographical as it is linguistic and cultural: on the one side there is the Anglosaxon world, whereas on the other side there is the French one. Their answer to whether the production of the academic can constitute a work is, as expected, different. For the Anglosaxon tradition, academic production is not supposed to be a work, whereas for the French one, it is.

We allow ourselves a digression here, to point that this is most obvious in tourism related academic production, whether it be tourism or cultural studies, sociology, or anthropology. It will suffice at the present stage to say that we come across two very different and distinct intellectual traditions, with different and, most often, opposing understandings of theory and the intellect and their position in the world and in history, of thought and science, with different categories, and different languages that allow for different enunciations, and, certainly, different cultures. And, interestingly enough, we can observe that psychoanalysis has had a much more central, profound, and vital role in French scholarship than it ever managed to acquire in the Anglosaxon context³⁴. At the same time the fetishism of the work, of theoretical profundity and of intellectual cultivation - in other words, the fetishism of culture - has also had a much larger space in the French tradition.

For this tradition in which we embed our work, however, science and technology, are not part of culture. There is a structural relation of mutual exclusion between the two systems, between culture on the one side and science and technology on the other, according again to Milner³⁵. Consequently, scientific production, what is produced in the realm of science, does not acquire the form of work. If we choose to pose the question of the work, this is exactly because there is a necessary and compulsory choice of a dilemmatic nature to be made between science and culture, a crossroad of some sort, where we have already chosen which way to follow. And this choice is imposed by the fact that psychoanalysis expresses the choice of Truth over Knowledge³⁶, and only the form of the work can serve this choice, to the

³⁴ In the study of tourism, this is evident by the work of scholars such as Rachid Amirou, Marc Boyer, Olivier Burgelin, Georges Cazes, Joffré Dumazedier, Marie-Françoise Lanfant, Alain Laurent, Jean Michaud, and Michel Picard, to name but a few.

³⁵ Milner, J. C. (1995). *L'Œuvre Claire: Lacan, la Science, la Philosophie*. Paris: Seuil.

³⁶ This is the choice psychoanalysis expresses when it does not deviate to become orthopaedics. And it is in this respect that concepts such as neuro-psychoanalysis will remain incomprehensible to us. One can either be inscribed in culture or in science. The inscription in culture, as in the case of psychoanalysis, would signify the exclusion of science, but if neuro-psychoanalysis claims any scientificity, then it is not psychoanalytical at all. From what position does the neuro-psychoanalyst try to locate the place of the unconscious, that is, which is the subject of neuro-psychoanalysis? It is certainly not the subject of the unconscious, which is, on the contrary, the subject of psychoanalysis.

extent that it is in the work that the emergence of the true subject appears allowed, or desirable. The work, inscribed in the cultural register, in opposition to scientific production, at least, does not found itself by the exclusion of the subject of the unconscious. The quest for truth, rather than the wish for trust and certainty, is the question. Certainty is to be found nowhere, since the elusive nature of truth is such that it will erupt in one's face the moment all phenomena seem to be reassuring. The real question, and certainly the question for psychoanalysis, one moreover that connects the symptom, the work, and the commodity, seems to be the mystery of form: why does the meaning concealed in some form, take this form?

What we see at work in scientific production is an obsessional economy, based to a great extent on the notion of legitimacy. It is exactly this notion that elucidates the precedence of the scientist's lived experience, of his tribulations and tabulations, over any possible abstract discussion. Science's aspiration to truth is centred on the legitimacy of experience in the world of phenomena, and a consequent exclusion of the Kantian Thing-in-itself, which will, eventually, protect from Error. Perhaps, we could, in the same manner, see a hysteric economy at work as regards the work. Nevertheless, "...if the fear of falling into error sets up a mistrust of Science, which in the absence of such scruples gets on with the work itself, and actually cognizes something, it is hard to see why we should not turn round and mistrust this very mistrust. Should we not be concerned as to whether this fear of error is not just the error itself?"³⁷.

The scientific discourse will write itself utilising several strategies, propelled by the Brunelleschian invention, of excluding the subject, offering room only to the subject of the enunciated, which 'tricks' itself into believing it is the subject, whereas it is only the knowing subject, the subject of knowledge.

One such strategy we can read into the reference systems used in the production of academic articles, or else 'papers', written for and published in the - mainly Anglo-American - scholarly publications, journals or reviews. And within the - mainly Anglo-American - university, every production has to follow the same rule. The students' assignments, dissertations, theses have to be produced according to the chosen reference system. Whether it be the Harvard, or Chicago, or APA system, the logic behind them is the same: the exclusion of the subject. This is what has to be introjected by the academic community – there is no

³⁷ Hegel, G.W.F. (1977). *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 47.

other subject than the subject of the enunciated, and if there is, it has to be kept outside the university.

It is not just the obsession with legitimacy and morality that define those reference systems. Certainly, something about them goes much further than accrediting someone with their own work, or even with the appeal to authority that seems to operate through them. There is something more to them than the scientific quest for certainty, accuracy, and proof for one's sayings³⁸.

By their material form, brackets within the text, bearing a content irrelevant to it, there is the interruption of the discourse, which materially disconnects, disassembles the prose. Those elements, external to the text from the viewpoint of signification but materially internal to it, never actually say anything else than 'no subject'. Through the material interruption of the development of a meaningful discourse, the subject, that would otherwise be able to reveal its existence, at least by the subversion of logos, and the apparition of desire, becomes excluded by the technical bars placed in the field of the word, identical, here, to the field of the visible³⁹.

Therefore, if what we aspire to is a work, this cannot take place by writing articles for journals. The model of the journal is by itself the radical alterity of work. It is there to house the form of the paper, to which our conceptualisation of the work presents itself as the opposite. The privileged form of the work is the book, although this relation is not necessary, and although, as Nietzsche so eloquently put it so long ago, "Only distress, only need would allow to mend the cleavage of the uprooted man, retired as he is to his void and, at the same time, congested interior. All that is left is the noise of scientific factories, where the knowledgeable hens lay ever smaller eggs and ever thicker books."⁴⁰

³⁸ Markidis says that if someone is obliged to be accurate and clear, and to offer proof (which in greek is the same word as 'receipt'), that would be his plumber. Then, of course, he apologises for the indecency of saying so, adding that such an indecency was, however, not meant to have a class character. Markidis, M. (1995). *Studies on Signification*. Athens: Plethron. (in Greek)

³⁹ Certainly, there is also an aesthetical level to this: something can be either flashed down, under the surface, or left floating in the waters of the text.

⁴⁰ « Seule la détresse, seul le besoin permettraient de réparer ce clivage de l'homme déraciné qui s'est retiré dans son intériorité vide et en même temps encombrée. Ne reste plus que le bruit des fabriques scientifiques où les poules savantes pondent des œufs de plus en plus petits et des livres de plus en plus gros. » Nietzsche, *Considérations intempestives II*, p 273, in Simonelli, T. (2000). *La Place de Nietzsche dans la Généalogie de la Psychanalyse*, *Revue Internationale de Philosophie*, 211/1, 149-162.

Tourism seems to be enjoying an ever growing importance in modernity, to such a degree that McCannell⁴¹ will be able to discern in the tourist the model of the modern subject. It may not be coincidental that at precisely the same period when tourism begins its historical development, the Victorian era, hysteria would become (re)cognisable in the context of that very discourse of displacement, of *Verschiebung*.

If McCannell is right, and, despite the objections his thesis has raised⁴², the tourist is, indeed, the model of the modern subject, nostalgic of itself as he portrays it, and if, as Lacan⁴³ has, in every possible tone, asserted, the subject upon which psychoanalysis is exercised is exactly the modern, Cartesian subject, the subject of science, it follows that the tourist is also the model of the subject upon which analysis is exercised. If when we speak of a subject of tourism we most frequently have no idea what we're talking about, it is most probably due to the fact that we forget that it is the Cartesian subject, the subject of the *cogito*, that we are concerned with.

However, our analytic cannot be confined to the 'discovery' of a latent content in tourism out of the reach of the tourist's consciousness, to a speculation on the meaning of tourism, which would almost definitely regress from a potential meta-psychological study to the construction of yet another tourist-motivation model.

Even with every single meaning of such an action unveiled, the action itself remains an enigma, simply because the labour to be ultimately undertaken is not one of translation – translating the latent into the apparent. If there is something to be articulated, this would be the question of the form itself, always imprinted in the seemingly simple phrase 'I need a vacation', present as a demand for which no object that would satisfy it can be located. Or, rather, through the repetition of the touristic demand – for pleasure, rest, knowledge, difference – corresponding to a certain need, and mediated by language, desire reveals itself. A desire, however, the object of which remains obscure. After all, there is no object 'vacation', as anything else than what it etymologically implies – a void.

In this we find ever more reason in pursuing the discovery of the real dimensions of the touristic metaphor, and especially as regards the fashion in which it shapes our understanding

⁴¹ MacCannell, D. (1999). *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁴² Kaplan, C. (1996). *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*. Duke University Press.

⁴³ Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil.

of/on the level of desire. We are concerned with the quest for satisfaction, a satisfaction that is not identifiable with the filling up of any void, or that, at least, could not be the result of any such filling up, let alone that the void in question is simply ‘unfillable’. The fantasy of its filling up, the fantasy of fullness, is however a structural necessity of the emergence of a desiring subject, it is, if we may be allowed to put it so, the stage where its desire will be ‘performed’.

Going on a vacation guarantees nothing else, at the end of the day, than that a vacation will be again in order. We know of no tourist who never needed another vacation again. A cycle of demand is always concluded with its repetition, ‘sketching’ the object of desire, as Safouan⁴⁴ sustains.

In his seminar of 1966-1967, titled “The Logic of Fantasy”, Lacan, drawing legitimacy from the psychoanalytic discovery of a “knowledge which doesn’t know itself”⁴⁵, will perform a memorable manipulation of the cogito through DeMorgan’s rules to demonstrate that ‘either I don’t think, or I am not’, later expanding it to conclude that ‘I am where I don’t think, I think where I am not’. This is exactly what is meant by the word Tourism in this work. A touristic subjectivity is the subjectivity of ‘Je suis là où je ne pense pas’, the Tourist being the subject of this enunciation. Material, corporeal displacement will result to a status of a temporary being-out-of-place, equally material to begin with, addressing, however, the question of the subject’s consistency of being-in-the-world, further displacing the latter onto the dialectics of space, in what could probably be an attempt to put a limit to it. One has to keep in mind, of course, that the dialectics of space in operation are not merely expressed by the opposition of here to there, but also by that of internal to external, and that, in the latter case, the external is not given as a projection of the subject’s ‘interior’, void and congested at once, to remember Nietzsche again, or even of the subject’s drives⁴⁶, but rather “as the position or the place where the desire of the Other is positioned, there where the subject will meet it”⁴⁷. The Other referred to is the “field of the truth” that Lacan has defined “as being the place where the discourse of the subject would gain its consistence, and where it stands in an offer

⁴⁴ Safouan, M. (2001). *Lacaniana – Les Séminaires de Jacques Lacan*, tome 1: 1953 – 1963. Paris: Fayard.

⁴⁵ Lacan, J. (1975). *Le Séminaire – Livre XX: Encore*. Paris: Seuil, p. 122.

⁴⁶ Safouan, M. (2001). *Lacaniana – Les Séminaires de Jacques Lacan*, tome 1: 1953 – 1963. Paris: Fayard.

⁴⁷ Lacan, J. (1988). *Le Séminaire – Livre V: Les Formations de l’Inconscient*. Paris: Seuil, p. 272.

to be turned down or not”⁴⁸. And the mistaking of desire as demand is, hence, again at issue. The subject will try to extort the object of its desire from the Other, which is, in any case, unattainable, while uttering a demand, such as ‘I need a vacation’, for instance. In this manner, the subject, of course, starts becoming dependent on the Other, and fashions its desire after the Other, in order to attain the satisfaction of its demand⁴⁹.

A question that could be raised is whether it could not be precisely the reassertion of an primordial position that orients desire. I leave only to return to where I already was, to re-occupy the place that I already occupied, to affirm my identification to my proper place. The resonance to the ‘*Wo es war, soll ich werden*’, where It was must I be, is not accidental, since the *Wo*, the ‘where’ of the dictum, indicates the possibility of processes through which the symbolic construction of space lends itself to metaphoric uses that have supported the psychoanalytic discourse of displacement.

Parallels can also be drawn between this reading of touristic desire to the ‘fort-da’, another metaphor illustrating, if nothing else, how the spatial becomes a symbolic construction: I let go, objectify myself and throw it away, in order to re-appropriate it, to pull it back. I try to recover a unity, to de-alienate myself from my body by displacement. Something hides in order to be found, gets thrown away in order to be pulled back.

In a nutshell, I become a tourist, because I will, by necessity, consequentially also have to become a re-tourist. I may have claims about the reasons of my trip, which will most probably be accurate as regards the subject of the sentence in which they take place. After all, we can always find reasons for our behaviour. And, after all, it is all too proper to psychology to look for ‘the shadows of motives’, as Safouan accurately diagnoses⁵⁰. But, for psychoanalysis, it is the production of a knowledge on the level of the desiring subject, the subject of the enunciation, which manifests itself as Reason, and which will reveal that mastery over the body – by the very act of returning, revealing, as it does, the impossibility of return – constitutes a renouncement⁵¹.

Only the real returns in the same position, and, as we have already guessed, this is most probably due to the position, and not due to the real. In any occasion, the question of the position appears, when it comes to the subject, to be directly related to the imaginary, and its fraudulent character, since, in final analysis, it always refers to the field of the visible, whether

⁴⁸ Lacan, J. (2006). *Le Séminaire – Livre XVI: D’un Autre à l’autre*. Paris: Seuil, p. 24.

⁴⁹ Safouan, M. (2001). *Lacanianism – Les Séminaires de Jacques Lacan, tome 1: 1953 – 1963*. Paris: Fayard.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Kaufmann, P. (1993). *L’Apport Freudien: Éléments pour une Encyclopédie de la Psychanalyse*. Paris: Bordas.

this has to do with perspective – the necessary condition of positionality – or with the emergence of the subject in front of the mirror, through the recognition of that image in there by the (m)Other. Alas, that very recognition, which allows the subject to emerge as such, that gaze of the (m)Other which shows me that I am *there*, also tells me that I ex-cist, that I am *out* there, and burns a hole on me, very much like the hole in the centre of Bruno Catalano's travellers. It is around this hole that the subject is structured, it is away from this hole that the (m)Other's gaze has burned open that the subject attempts to flee, and it is that hole that the subject carries with it. This could even be the void which vacation is a reference to, as well as the hole of the vanishing point from where the true subject gazes in order to construct the illusion of depth and space, and, ultimately, the illusion of a position in it, given that, for Brunelleschi's trick to work, the subject has to stand in a specific position, it has to be, in a sense, tied down. In order for perspective to work, the subject has to stand still. The slightest displacement would instigate the advent of the real, the revelation of the trickery, the collapse of perspective and the illusion of a world that makes any (symbolic) sense.



Bruno Catalano - Le Grand Van Gogh

Had I not returned, had I gone on with the pleasure of being there, this pleasure would turn into a suffocating, painful thing of death, depriving me of any possibility to desire being there; therefore, I return, I cut it off myself, and give myself the chance to have a ‘there’ that is not ‘here’, offering an opportunity to the spatial dialectics of desire to function. It is practically the structural necessity of castration that the produced knowledge reveals: I, as the master of my body, have to be castrated in order to be able to desire and have the ontological status of a desiring subject. In this manner, though, the subject also discloses the failure of mastery over the body - that is castration - which, paradoxically, is also the condition of the existence of any mastery. Here the signifier represents the subject while, at the same time, it makes it vanish⁵². The whole operation of Brunelleschian perspective, in constituting the modern subject, opens up before our eyes.

And, indeed, distance is experienced as traumatically as the alienation of narcissistic identification. It is experienced as a difference, the ‘geographic’ difference between the here and the not-here, the here and the elsewhere, the place of the Other, metonymic of the ‘linguistic’ difference between the subject and its representation. The question of the subject, articulated through the discursive device, is taking up the form – ‘Where is (it) ... missing?’, in which the ‘where’ is the indicating instance of the metonymy of desire, supported by the ‘missing’ of the subject that the signifying question ‘where is (it)’ will be hiding, and only as long as the persistence of the “missing?” will be kept concealed can something be articulated.

There must be something missing which will be desired, something eluding to be run after. This is what has been called ‘object cause of desire’. But this obscure object is positioned as such by desire itself retrospectively, to the extent that desire itself is its own object, identified with its interpretation. Distance, the spatial distance to be covered, to bring the body to the place of the Other, functions as nothing but the metonymy of difference, and, in being so manifestly metaphoric, this *μεταφορά*⁵³ of the – tourist – body is what characterises tourism and perspective at once.

The ‘here’ positioned at the place of the Other, signifies the subject’s externality, its exclusion from the truth of the Other. The ‘here’ must be elsewhere, since what is at stake seems to be the ‘where’. The ‘it is’ is the object cause of desire, the object Gaze in the

⁵² Nasio, J. D. (1995). *Les Yeux de Laure: Transfert, Objet ‘a’ et Topologie dans la Théorie de J. Lacan*. Paris: Champ-Flammarion.

⁵³ ‘Μεταφορά’ (metaphora) means transference (not in the psychoanalytic sense of transference, which has been translated as μεταβίβαση), as well as metaphor. Something is being moved from one position to another.

tourist's discourse, in disjunction with the missing of the subject. Hence, in trying to capture desire, the tourist will be constantly ending up being captured by it.

To illustrate our problematic, this is what is assumed when we read what Freud, whose desire to go to Rome he, in his letter to Fliess of December 3rd 1897, found to be profoundly neurotic, has described, in a letter of 1936 to Romain Rolland, as 'A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis' - one of the earliest accounts of what has later become known as the Stendhal Syndrome⁵⁴:

It is the threat of a pleasure too intense to be pleasurable that inhibits him at Trieste, where he is confronted with the suggestion to proceed to Athens, of a pleasure that will have been no pleasure any longer, because it has crossed a limit that is set by a master constituted in paternal impotence. Freud's being there functions as an interrogation that will bring to light the impossible of mastery, the fact that the master is, indeed, castrated.

Acropolis is an 'unattainable thing of desire', the meeting with which can never take place, an ever missed object. It can only be a limit which can never be reached⁵⁵.

It was as early as the time of Seneca that this knowledge has become available, when he attested that man travels in search of an eluding object⁵⁶. This is what ascribes, in the mind of the young student Freud, the character of the sublime to Acropolis. It is a sublime object that exists only as elusive, the existence of which is guaranteed by its unattainability, the latter guaranteeing, in its turn, the possibility of desire. The object Acropolis seems to be a maternal thing, and as such not only unattainable, but also forbidden.

The knowledge produced by the travel to Athens, and the visit to Acropolis, expressed by the realisation that it, Acropolis, really does exist, is the knowledge that the master, that is represented by the father in this case, could have never attained it, could have never been the desire of the mother. Hence the visit to Acropolis becomes an interrogation of the master, regarding the structural necessity of the master's castration.

In a bizarre way, this disturbance of memory on the Acropolis reflects the problematic of the question itself of the subject of the cogito: it is one thing to think of Acropolis, and another to be there. This is yet another way given to us to approach the manner in which the discourse of displacement gains its existence within the entanglement of what is spatial with what is of the subject. Indeed, what is seen here is the splitting of the subject, finding a

⁵⁴ Magherini, G. (2003). *La sindrome di Stendhal: Il Malessere del Viaggiatore di Fronte alla Grandezza dell'Arte*. Milano: Ponte alle Grazie.

⁵⁵ Žižek, S. (1989). *The Sublime Object of Ideology*. London: Verso.

⁵⁶ Urry, J. (1990). *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage.

support to symbolically emerge, in the presence of what can only be inscribed as absence and cannot be symbolised. The Acropolis keeps the role of that impossible object. It stands there not as an object of reality, not as a symbolic object, but as a Real object, that managed to become inscribed only because there was a failure in the process of formalisation, an object that, had it not been for the question Freud had to pose by his travel, and the failure that travel would evoke, would remain one that doesn't cease not to be inscribed⁵⁷.

In last resort, it was the enjoyment mediating the knowledge Freud the tourist gained, that the master, in the face of his father, is castrated, that was the non-sense of his trip, filled with guilt and pain, as all such enjoyment is. A change in/of perspective, perhaps.

⁵⁷ Lacan, J. (1975). *Le Séminaire – Livre XX: Encore*. Paris: Seuil.

2.

**Discourses of Displacement and Displaced Discourse –
*Tourism, Anthropology, Psychoanalysis***

*“Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
One is no longer disposed to say it.”⁵⁸*

If one wishes to see in the tourist a subject, then it is impossible to confine it to the subject of an act of consumption without negating everything that psychoanalysis has had to say about anything for over a century. But which ethnographer, tourist or pilgrim, which warrior, ever cared to admit that it is a pleasure too intense and guilty to admit that guides the production of knowledge by means of (corpo-real) displacement? Something like libidinal (e)utopias of cannibalistic orgies, for instance. The level of the desiring subject, of the Freudian subject, at issue here, the level of a subject not identical to the self, is not the level of anthropological operations, which require an ‘out there’, a perspective, within which they will ‘take place’.

Indeed, the question that has – not by accident, certainly – never been really asked by anthropology itself is exactly the one regarding the desire of the anthropologist: What does the anthropologist (as an ethnographer, tourist, pilgrim or warrior) want? Interestingly enough, this constitutive omission, or even evasion, of anthropology as a discipline opposed to any philosophico-anthropological understanding of the human condition, of what it is to be human, could be regarded as an attempt to conceal not only the desire propelling the displacement of the anthropologist itself, but also the role of castration therein, and its relation to writing, displacement, and the establishment of a ‘body of (anthropological) knowledge’. As Fink puts it, “The sacrifice involved in castration is to hand over a certain jouissance to the Other and let it circulate in the Other, that is, let it circulate in some sense ‘outside’ of ourselves. That may take the form of writing, for example, or of the establishment of a ‘body of knowledge’, knowledge that takes on ‘a life of its own’, independent of its creator, as it may be added to or modified by others.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Eliot, T.S. Four Quartets: An Accurate Online Text – East Coker.

<http://www.tristan.icom43.net/quartets/coker.html>, accessed on 11/09/2009.

⁵⁹ Fink, B. (1995), *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jussance*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 99-100.

Anthropology has been very successful in failing to formulate and posit the only meaningful question, by means of depositing it in order to confront the epistemological question in its place. By asking whether it can know the other (an object like the self – an objectification of the subject as self), how, how much, and from what position, it displaces the question of its own desire, by the displacement of the anthropologist's body – and on this level at least there is nothing separating it from any other kind of tourism. To be certain, this is the operation of modern science, of the field of the Cartesian subject: the separation, the cut, the breakage between epistemology and ethics (given that ethics, as psychoanalytic experience has shown, is concomitant to the question of desire⁶⁰). By its very constitution as a discipline, anthropology, then, cannot escape, whether it would like to or not, being inscribed in the scientific discourse, where it is destined to remain for as long as it presupposes a self identical to the subject and articulates its desire as a desire to know the other.

In this context, it follows that the positioning of the subject is being equated to the position of the (imaginary) self. This is also why the position from which the 'partial truth' of ethnography is spoken is the position of the anthropologist, of the anthropological self, that is of an imaginary identification. Nevertheless, this is exactly where the subject is not, and nowhere in what is spoken does the subject appear. Those 'partial truths' then, are no truths at all, to begin with. Not that it isn't true that truth can only appear through a half-said (because truth is the truth of what resists symbolisation), but the 'partial truths' of anthropology are no truths at all, they are, on the contrary, knowledge, which is something of a completely different order. In lacanian theory truth is of the order of the real, whereas knowledge, at least in the guise of what we know as understanding, is of the order of the imaginary. In sustaining the identity of the self as identical to itself, anthropology, as ethnography, tourism, pilgrimage or war, is bound to remain confined in a field where the game to be played is one of (mis)recognitions, which will allow the anthropologist to (mis)recognise himself as same, by positioning the other (as same to his own self) as other.

What is at stake, of course, is not whether the anthropological self is same with or other than the other (but always a self identical to itself), something that 'halfie anthropology', for example, is all too keen to position at the centre of its problematic, but, rather, the extent to which it can be understood that the constitution of the self is always, structurally, a process of misrecognition, that is that 'I' is always another, on the one hand, and secondly, that apart

⁶⁰ Lacan, J. (1986), *Le Séminaire – Livre VII: L'Éthique de la Psychanalyse*, Paris: Seuil, and, Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil.

from the level of the enunciated, where the self is found, where an 'I' takes its place, there is also another level, the level of the enunciation, with another, a different subject, and that it is the latter that is the true subject of desire. It is at this point that the distinction between language and speech, as well as the one regarding the level of the subject of the enunciation and the level on which the subject of the enunciated appears, is what above everything else has to take (its) place.

From such a perspective, one could wonder what is really going on when an anthropologist does his fieldwork, a tourist goes on his trip, a pilgrim on his pilgrimage, or when a warrior invades, and it is from this perspective that one could orient his gaze towards desire. Because, in final analysis, if there is to be such a thing as Tourism Studies, it is only within the broader field of a Philosophical Anthropology, enquiring what it is to be human, and whether to be human is really to be 'Homo Viator'⁶¹.

What needs to be recognised in the core of a writing of displacement, of the being-out-of-place, is a thesis, both as a position and as a proposal, and even as a stop, which is foundationally and in principle ethical, and which, in any case, presents itself as a reference to a certain ethos: the writing of the being-out-of-place is itself a writing-out-of-place, de-localised, the displaced writing of displacement.

Perhaps, this ought to be better defined – the reference here is to an honest writing which, if it truly means to be honest, would have to emerge from and proceed through displacement, and, in every occasion, be alert to its recognition. Certainly, such a writing does not locate or position, it does not put in place, it doesn't find anything. Like all desire, it aims at dis-satisfaction. It is being written as passion, sadness, pain and joy. It is symptomatic with what indicates the descent of Eros from Thanatos – *Pathos*.

In all honesty, this is a writing 'on the knees', even a simple desk can be an unattainable luxury, a writing of the foot, and it couldn't be otherwise. This writing is written in buses, trains, ships and airplanes. On narrow, unforgiving tables of more or less hospitable cafés, in stations, ports and airports. A writing at times defying and at times incorporating crowded sounds, visual and acoustic noises.

⁶¹ Haddad, G. (2002), *Le Voyage, Figure du Désir*, Les Actes du FIG 2002: Religion et Géographie, http://fig-st-die.education.fr/actes/actes_2002/haddad/article.htm, accessed on 05/06/2008.

In this cheap and miserable coffee place, that is not even really a coffee place, next to the highway, where truck drivers stop for a small glass of tea – this is how they drink it in Turkey – and for something to eat, it is cold. The Sphinx stands right across me, in her combination of half-bodies, staring at me, waiting, ready to tear me apart. Here the solution to her enigma is a question of life and death, and there's no emergency exit in sight.

- 'What is it that moves? – What is something that moves?'

Strangely enough, the answer is obvious:

- 'Eppure si muove'

This is how what is of the subject, of the true subject, the displaced one, of the being-out-of-place can be told from what is in the sphere of images, fraud, illusion and meaning – whatever is written on the foot, against the knees, is true, whereas whatever has the scent of scholarship, whatever testifies study is of the order of the testimony, of that compulsory lie taking itself for reality in front of the inquisition. If one would look, in vain, for truth in the *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*⁶², for example, he might only find some in Malinowski's diaries, an account which he meant to remain unaccountable for – the traveller's pathos.

First of all, there is no 'anthropological concept of culture', there is only a big misunderstanding. Culture is the one thing anthropology can have no clue about. It certainly is not the webs of significance Geertz⁶³ proposes, the 'bounded thing' after the model of isoglosses Baskow⁶⁴ talks about, what has an unbounded relation to place, in the way of Gupta and Ferguson⁶⁵, the un-fix-ability that Abu-Lughod⁶⁶ would like to substitute with 'discourse', the totality of symbolic representations, Turner⁶⁷ favoured, or what have you. Culture is not even something that is there in relation to an unconscious, and there is definitely no cultural unconscious, an unconscious side of culture, allowing for a

⁶² Malinowski, B. (1922), *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, London: Routledge.

⁶³ Geertz, C. (1973), *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books.

⁶⁴ Baskow, I. (2004), A Neo-Boasian Conception of Cultural Boundaries, *American Anthropologist*, 106(3), pp. 443-458.

⁶⁵ Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. (1992), Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference, *Cultural Anthropology*, 7(1), pp. 6-23.

⁶⁶ Abu-Lughod, L. (1991), Writing Against Culture, in Fox, R. G., Ed., *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*, Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

⁶⁷ Turner, V. (1967), *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, New York: Cornell University Press.

psychoanalytic interpretation of culture, as psychoanalytic anthropology or ethnopsychanalysis enjoy discussing.

Culture is the unconscious. It is the discourse of the Other.

What we are left with is the Freudian subject.

And for that subject, the whisper tells the truth, as long as it is not detected by the all-devouring ears of the inquisitors, under the condition that it will not be heard, as I turn my back at them and walk away, with my egoism in shambles. Why not reflect on the possibility that not only does the truth come in the half-said⁶⁸, but that also the half-heard is its condition? This is why truth is always a whisper, because the social requires that it is the whisper of a shattered egoism. Because only when the ego breaks into pieces can the truth of the subject emerge, and this only in the course of a retreat.

The subject moves, walks away, departs – in the last resort, returns.

The ethical request, as it is positioned by psychoanalysis, is exactly this: ‘Eppure si muove’, or, in other words, ‘Wo Es war, soll Ich werden’ – where it used to be, to hide, to be lost, missed, wounded, ruined, I must be torn apart.

This ‘Eppure si muove’ establishes the necessity of the enigma, just as much as it is the only real response to it. I can imagine Oedipus replying ‘Man’, and turning his back to walk away from the Sphinx, victoriously walking towards his horrible destiny, while whispering ‘and yet, it moves’.

What led Sphinx to her death remains somewhat of a mystery, but one could very well wonder whether Oedipus really escaped the danger she presented. Had we had the chance to look at the Sphinx as Oedipus was distancing himself from her, turning his back and walking away, would we have discerned a smile on her dead face? Because, if we accord it some reflection, even though he thought he was going away, escaping his homeland and destiny, he was, as a matter of fact, returning. Thus we can see how the destination is always the returning destiny of subjectivity.

More than anything else, this reveals the tragic substance of the myth, if not of the paradoxical existence of the speaking-being as being-out-of-place itself – the unknowing return, which has to be as much unknowing, as it must be a return. Isn’t this the Freudian discovery, after all? A knowledge that doesn’t know itself⁶⁹. The myth finds here a subject that is not the subject of knowledge, a subject that is obliged to be returning, while the subject

⁶⁸ Lacan, J. (1991), *Le Séminaire – Livre XVII: L’Envers de la Psychanalyse*, Paris: Seuil.

⁶⁹ Lacan, J. (1975). *Le Séminaire – Livre XX: Encore*. Paris: Seuil.

who thinks it is leaving is just ignorant of this, with this very ignorance constituting what we know as knowledge. In fact, all the myth finds is an empty place. This returning motion, taking itself for an escape, is what we can allow ourselves to call *Pathos*. Pathos positions itself as the quest for the human experience, as the Sphinx has put it, of the human as a subject in motion, as the being-out-of-place.

The Sphinx demands an answer to her enigma, the latter being here perceived both as the enigma posed by her, the one that is spoken by her, and as the enigma of her existence, as an assemblage of bodies. So, it is ‘the answer, or your life’. Much in the same fashion as Lacan’s robber, who will demand (either) your money, or your life, here too there is not really much choice. Ridiculous as it is, the only option in this ‘either-or’ is to give the answer – or the money, in the case of the robber.

If this demand is, in fact, a demand for meaning, as it seems to be, then to refuse the answer would most certainly lead to losing your life, and what good would meaning be to you then? You’d have simply lost both of them. It appears, however, that contrary to Lacan’s robber, the Sphinx could not possibly strip you off the meaning you choose to withhold after you’re dead.

There is a theory of meaning located within the myth. What happens when you fail, one way or the other, to provide the Sphinx with meaning, you die – and provide it thus. It is, effectively, your death that is the answer she is looking for, the meaning she will deprive you of, because meaning and the subject are never at the same place, and only the concealment of the subject will allow the advent of meaning. The world makes sense only when gazed at from behind the little hole opened on the vanishing point. But, at the end of the day, one always meet with their destiny.

Of course, there is something wrong with this (Brunelleschian) picture: an enigma, any enigma, the enigma is never really a demand for meaning – that would be a test, a quiz, or whatever of that order have you. An enigma is always the enigma of desire, the enigma of the subject, and it is through it that the subject and desire meet. The Sphinx is only a monster, an impossibility.

If the victims of the Sphinx, those who preceded Oedipus, fall into a trap, that trap could only be that they fail to recognise the enigma as such, but do indeed try to provide an answer, treating it as a demand with an object that can satisfy it. Well, there is no object that could possibly satisfy that demand, simply because that is not a demand. At least, not from the perspective of the Sphinx. Otherwise, she would have simply stopped. But each time she got what she asked for, this was not it.

A very pressuring question emerges thus: what was it that has saved Oedipus? If there is an answer to this, that would be ‘nothing’.

He went on, being the only one to be able to say that he crossed paths with the Sphinx, and proceeded to his destiny and towards his destination, just like everyone before him, but if someone was saved that was most definitely not Oedipus. Perhaps, it was the Sphinx herself. The answer of Oedipus, on the level of meaning, that is the imaginary, must have had nothing to do with it. What kept him breathing, on the contrary, was his direction, misrecognised as it was. Indeed, what he thought he was, which we identify here with which he thought his direction was, whether it was forth or back, away from or towards, was not what, in fact, factually, he or his direction really was. And, most probably, what this misrecognition, this disorientation did was that in them the Sphinx was able to recognise her own inconsistency.

This is what has killed her, what has turned her from an insurmountable bar to a barred something – what, in the end, has made her *Τόπος*, and what equates her to the holy inquisition, as the keeper of the spirit of the scriptures at the time that something of Oedipus utters through Galileo “Eppure si muove”, which can, in this occasion, be taken as ‘and yet there is a (desiring) subject’.

Well, if indeed there is, then this subject moves. We could even go as far as to say that this subject is motion. Not *a* motion, but *motion*. And certainly, the subject does result from a metaphor(a)⁷⁰. Moreover, this motion, as exhibited in the case of Oedipus, is always the motion of return.

For Lévi-Strauss, for example, it is the quest for truth, rather than the wish for trust and certainty, that is the question. Certainty is to be found nowhere, since the elusive nature of truth is such that it will erupt in your face the moment all phenomena seem to be reassuring. The real question seems to him to be the mystery of form: why does the meaning concealed in some form, take this form? His positioning his anthropological thought between Marxism, Psychoanalysis, and Geology, is most indicative of this. For Marxism and Psychoanalysis, especially, the question is precisely the question of form, and all secrets spring from it: Why

⁷⁰ Fink, B. (1995), *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jissance*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

does commodity take a form, and why does the latent thought of the dream also do so, how, and by means of what?

To name this essentialism is nothing else than a brute misreading, which chooses to miss confronting the core of Lévi-Strauss' thought. Certainly, Lévi-Strauss wishes to investigate what is common in mankind, what is left after the particularity of the particular, of cultural difference has been lifted, the basic structures of myth, for example, common to all cultures. It is easy, therefore, to see the operation of an essentialism on a programmatic level, enacted by his very epistemology and metaphysics.

This argument, though, misses the whole point of Lévi-Strauss' programme – that for him what is at the centre of civilisation, of culture, of the Other, is a radical negativity, that the master meaning, the Thing explaining all other things, is a No-Meaning, the non-symbolisable, and all that is left is the secret of form, the question of appearance. What hides behind the curtain, which the anthropologist makes his vocation to get behind of, is the fact that there is nothing to hide behind the curtain – this is the essence, the Truth – a mere empty place. What culture conceals is that there is nothing to conceal, what a myth hides is that there is nothing to hide, and all that remains in the end is the form as such.

The effort to understand, is an action upon the examined object, producing another object in its place, and the understanding of this second object produces a third one, destroying the objects to be understood in favour of the objects produced by understanding. This process, the (in)famous metonymic sliding of Meaning of the post-structuralists, is not a process *ad infinitum*, however. It stops, or it is anchored, at the point of “the one lasting presence, the point at which the distinction between meaning and the absence of meaning disappears: the same point from which we began (...) we have found nothing new, except -...- so many additional proofs of the conclusion that we would have liked to avoid”⁷¹, a wish or preference that Malinowski, for example, has most definitely not been any tight in manifesting in any possible way.

Lévi-Strauss will insist on the superior validity of Meaning in respect to Ration, as one of degree and not one of category, since, for him the highest form of the rational is the meaningful. Beings and things are defined in relationship to each other, and the intelligibility, the meaningful structure of each is a result of their relationship, in short, Saussurean linguistics' oppositional generation of meaning is the manner in which beings and things can

⁷¹ Lévi-Strauss, C. (1974). *Tristes Tropiques*. Atheneum Publishers, USA, p. 411.

“retain their separate values”⁷². Knowledge, then, for him is not a question of negotiation – ‘renunciation or barter’, as he puts it – but an active process of selection of ‘true aspects’, which are those aspects that coincide with the properties of his thought. And it is at this point that a definite break with any Kantian obsessive economy of doubt, with Kantian metaphysics, takes place: the coinciding demanded is not the result of thought’s influence over things, but the affirming circumstance of thought itself being an object, - the object-gaze, in turn, is a constitutive element of that thought - partaking of the nature of the world. He introduces, in this fashion, in anthropological thinking the level of enunciation, by recognising the subject of the enunciated and its radical alterity to the subject of the enunciation. The thought on the world, or the culture, for that matter, is at the same level as the world, or the culture, of the same substance, hence the production of second and third objects by agency on an object, resulting in understanding. Thought is clearly an object, which also means that there is a subject of the enunciated ‘I think, therefore I am’. The master-meaning is the meaning at the level of enunciation, the true subject the subject of enunciation, or, in psychoanalytic terms, the subject of the unconscious, in its ‘ineffable stupidity’, as Lacan would have it.

Lévi-Strauss presents no softer a critique to Phenomenology and Existentialism, than the one which signified the overcoming of the Kantianism of Neo-Kantians. Although reality, indeed, ‘encompasses and explains’ experience, as Phenomenology asserts, the continuity between the two is illusory, and, again, restricted to the level of the enunciated. There is a distance and a discontinuity between reality and experience, as between form and content, that, instead of being rejected, has to function as the basis of understanding – “to reach reality one has first to reject experience”⁷³. As regards Existentialism his objection to it is one of pure Hegelian dialectics. In overindulgently succumbing to the sirens of subjectivity, what it actually does is to stagnate to the level of dialectic development of the being-in-itself, failing to pass to the stage of the being-for-itself.

If from here we pass to the eloquently expressed reasons of Lévi-Strauss’ choice of anthropology as the study of the culture of/as the Other, this reading of him might as well be considered completed. Why does he choose anthropology, and what does anthropology designate?

⁷² Ibid, p. 55.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 58.

In connecting world history and his own, anthropology as a *form* of history, reveals the rationale common to both, affording Lévi-Strauss intellectual satisfaction. Anthropology offers then the stage of his desire. While Malinowski would exile himself from the West, punishing the fulfilment of his desire to be Western European, Lévi-Strauss, who hates travelling and explorers, finds in anthropology (qua corporeal displacement) the means by which to stage his desire, repressed as it, and reconcile his character with his life. Anthropology (qua ethnography) “appeases that restless and destructive appetite”⁷⁴, by simply offering a stage for it. The question, of course, is: What is this restless and destructive appetite, an appetite for? It could only be the desire to understand, and, thus, as he has effectively identified, destroy the successive objects, until he reaches the point of the obliteration of meaning altogether, at the centre of the Other. Lévi-Strauss has to address the question of the true meaning of his desire, of what he really wants, to the Other, and he has to do it fast. A phone call, one morning, presents an opportunity he has to hurry not to miss. He can’t afford doubt, and anthropology frees his mind from it, as he declares⁷⁵, since it circles around what is common in mankind, around what is at the centre of the Other, putting aside what is particular in all the others. Anthropology, simply, presents Lévi-Strauss with an Other who can receive his question, and in returning it back to him, given that at the centre of the other, towards where the question points, there is only a lack, appease him. Then the Other is not a closed structure, leaving no alternative to the subject, other than its alienation in the Other. This is the meaning of the complicity expressed in the exchange of a glance with a cat.

Therefore, anthropology (qua ethnography) becomes the equivalent of a (psycho)analytical procedure for Lévi-Strauss, and Lévi-Strauss the most misread author in the history of anthropology. The question of what he really wants (does he really want to abandon philosophy, for example) is asked to the Other, but only to discover through that procedure of analysing, that the question he asks is asked *to* him, by that incomplete Other. At the end, Lévi-Strauss will go through the fantasy of the complete Other, to arrive at the point of appeasement, when he realises that the Other is just as incomplete as he is. For as long as he will persist to the illusion of a complete Other, the symptom (?) will persist as well, even after it has been interpreted. Lévi-Strauss’ anthropology starts where therapy - or interpretation - finishes, and only after it has finished, and Lévi-Strauss, finally - from a structural perspective, not a temporal one - in the history of anthropology positions himself as

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 58.

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 58.

the *analysand*. He is the first and only to establish, through the study of form, meta-ethnology, in the manner that psychoanalysis has claimed its position not as psychology, but as meta-psychology. *Tristes Tropiques* is the *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* of anthropological literature, primarily because it will signify a return.

If the difference of psychotherapy to psychoanalysis is, indeed, that the former speculates on meaning, then analysis will start when interpretation arrives at the point where it meets with the un-interpretable, the non-symbolic and non-symbolisable, the traumatic core, the rock against which all signification crashes. And this is what *Tristes Tropiques* is: a going through the fantasy, the fantasy of a complete Other, not any symbolic interpretation - that would be therapy instead – but the articulation of the experience of a given fact, of the fact that this fantasy itself, the desire to understand the object is only there to hide the fact that the object fills an empty place in the centre of the Other.

And then, as another Rimbaud bidding farewell to poetry with one of the most recited phrases ever – ‘Goodbye Poetry, Hello Life’ – the anthropologist will be ready to say “Oh, fond farewell to savages and explorations!”⁷⁶, the latter phrase appearing strangely similar to Galileo’s mythical ‘eppure si muove’.

There is a second writing.

This writing, aiming, at least to a certain extent, to exhibit that the father is himself castrated, a father who seems to be keeping all the jouissance to himself (but, in fact, does not), is not properly modelled after his own writing, although it also fails to resist its charms. No, this writing is modelled as an attempt to acquire its own style. Only then, if it becomes symptomatic, or even a symptom, can it become subjectivised. This here is the only really difficult task that we can take it upon us to fulfil. In this manner, though, this writing also becomes my travel, inseparable from it, neither its effect nor its cause, and this is the ultimate goal.

One could very well think that what is taking place here is the research or quest for a moral alibi to my travel.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 414.

This is how Urbain⁷⁷, for instance, describes, or even defines, the ethnographer and other non-touristic travellers – as tourists with an alibi from a society that has turned against leisure, one that has opposed leisure for leisure's sake, substituting the *otium* with the *neg-otium*, which has drained all the ethical validity out of simply doing nothing, of just being idle. Even if you are idle, you have to show busy. The well diagnosed perversion of capitalism, one might rightfully observe.

This, according to Urbain, explains the disdain the tourist *enjoys*, not least by the tourist himself, in the time of mass tourism. And this is the actual point of reference hidden in the utterly ridiculous phrase 'We're not tourists, we're travellers'. What 'speaks' here is alienation itself. Hence, Wang's⁷⁸ beautiful proposition that we consider an existential authenticity contingent in travelling is fundamentally flawed in that it presupposes a subject for which the return to a 'before alienation' is possible. Little does he know that the only non-alienated subject is the psychotic, and, strictly speaking, the psychotic is not a subject at all⁷⁹.

The presence of tourism in such a reading appears as something like the return of the real of capitalism, capitalism's own impossibility as its condition of possibility, as something like a symptom. And, certainly, the ethical dimension is, from a psychoanalytic perspective, not negligible, since the ethics of psychoanalysis, as posited by Lacan⁸⁰, the 'don't give way to the issue of your desire', runs counter to any protestant-inspired work ethics.

Nevertheless, if our reading of Urbain is not too misguided or misleading, and what he proposes is, indeed, a thesis supporting a somehow 'subversive' character of tourism, and if such a thesis proceeds through a 'love' of tourism, then we could only, plainly and directly, stand in opposition to it. In fact, there could be no thesis proceeding through a love of tourism, no perspective that does not entail an aggressiveness seeking to destroy it, which we could be comfortable with. As Lacan has it, love would be what would allow the condescendence of *jouissance* to desire⁸¹. This is certainly not the case here. In any case, however, Urbain only really tries to articulate that those other forms of travel, and especially ethnography, are, through the establishment of a moral alibi compatible with capitalist ethics,

⁷⁷ Urbain, J.D. (2002), *Les Vacances*, Paris: Le Cavalier Bleu.

⁷⁸ Wang, N. (1999), Rethinking Authenticity in Tourism Experience, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26(2), pp. 349-370.

⁷⁹ Chiesa, L. (2007), *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan*, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

⁸⁰ Lacan, J. (1986), *Le Séminaire – Livre VII: L'Éthique de la Psychanalyse*, Paris: Seuil.

⁸¹ Lacan, J. (2004), *Le Séminaire – Livre X: L'Angoisse*, Paris: Seuil.

just less honest than tourism. In a sense, he treats those other forms of travel as pseudonymous tourism, as rather more ‘polite’ and ‘civilised’ imperialisms. In this, Urbain crosses paths with Hakim Bey⁸², who sustains that tourism is an offspring of war, sharing the latter’s attributes. MacCannell⁸³, on the other hand, prefers to view tourism as a survival and modernisation of pilgrimage.

Although it has remained relatively un-approached and under-problematised, this relation between tourism and ethnography, important and of significant interest to us by way of our experience, which, almost by necessity, doesn’t cease to draw our attention, is, despite its very problematic character, what has to be brought to the fore, if one is to attempt any conceptualisation of the tourist as (the) desiring subject. To be straightforward, it is quite clear that, on the level of desire as such, there has to be a perfect overlapping of the ethnographer and the tourist. To be fair, nevertheless, there have been a few interesting approaches of the issue. Indicatively we can refer here to Galani-Moutafi’s relevant work. To be sure, however, the indicated example suffers all the ills described here, unable to overcome the common anthropological conviction regarding the ethical superiority of the ethnographer in relation to the traveller and the tourist, sustaining that both the latter “may not achieve the type of self-consciousness that anthropologists working within a self-reflexive paradigm attain when gazing at the Other”⁸⁴.

Here, one could probably (and would likely) diagnose aggressivity towards ethnography taking over. Although that would not be completely untrue, it would constitute a misreading. We entertain no more of a negative disposition towards ethnography than towards tourism. We’re constantly and with no shallow consistency within the field of *hainamoration*.

From this field we can state that if ethnography is tourism with an alibi, then tourism is ethnography without a theory. Both the alibi (theory) and its absence cannot, however, account for the traveller’s pathos. This is not to say that the investigation of what produces theory or its absence is a question that has no relevance here. Quite the contrary. Psychoanalysis has something to say about the relation between tourism and ethnography precisely because the traveller’s pathos will produce something – theory, its absence, or loots of war, for that matter – which cannot account for it.

⁸² Bey, H., Overcoming Tourism. <http://www.hermetic.com/bey/tourism.html>, accessed on 13/12/2007.

⁸³ MacCannell, D. (1999), *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁸⁴ Galani-Moutafi, V. (2000), *The Self and the Other: Traveler, Ethnographer, Tourist*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(1), p. 203.

It has to be underlined, parenthetically, that tourism actively produces the absence of theory. This is one of the reasons, a very important one, why we could accord some justification to the thesis relating tourism with war and regarding it as a modernised version of imperialism, but none whatsoever to theses of tourism as pilgrimage or symptom, neither of which we can perceive outside the hysteric's discourse.

Ethnography, on the other hand, produces the anthropologist. It must not be by accident that ethnography and tourism are historically symptotic, although such a chronological consideration would not necessarily signify a lot. The 'armchair anthropology' before Malinowski and Boas made their entrance into the anthropological scene, has been a phenomenon of a different order. On that scene before the production of theory was not preceded by tourism as corporeal displacement to the place of the Other – never forget the Sphinx – presupposing the return to the departure point, which, in this case, is none other than the University, where the ethnography will be written. It is the separation of writing and displacement that creates the space for the advent of modern anthropology. After Malinowski, Boas, and their apostles, there can only be an anthropologist iff such a displacement has already taken place. It is this very displacement that will become the *sine qua non* of the production of an anthropologist, under the condition, of course, that (a) writing will take place after the necessary return to the University. This alienated and barred subject, the anthropologist, being the product of this discourse, constitutes it a University discourse, and this being the case, it would seem that, at this point, tourism and ethnography really do part ways.

Not the least bit, I dare say. On the contrary: isn't it true that the discourse of the University is nothing but the modernised version of the Master's discourse⁸⁵? Hence, we return to Urbain's thesis positioning ethnography as a civilised, modernised, rationalised tourism. What the tourist will acquire or conquer by brute force and an un-accountable will – and that will be surplus enjoyment, or the absence of theory – and which will bring his pathos within the field of the visible, the ethnographer will hide behind knowledge, as if everything is performed on the anthropological scene from the place of knowledge and for knowledge's sake. He will have to position enjoyment at the place of the Other, at the Other place, blind as he is, by definition, to the fact that Place is the Other and that there is no Other place, and interpret, search for meaning. What is thus produced, of course, is, indeed the anthropologist,

⁸⁵ Lacan, J. (1991), *Le Séminaire – Livre XVII: L'Envers de la Psychanalyse*, Paris: Seuil.

a subject alienated within the Other like the rest of us. In this case the Other is Culture⁸⁶, like for the rest of us.

There is only one Other, just as barred by the function of the signifier as the subject itself, whose position across the subject is the position from which the question of the subject's desire springs. This is the symbolic order, or what we can call culture, this treasury of meanings, which the anthropologist, by profession, misrecognises as culture. This is why 'in the beginning there was the Word'. In one single, initial motion nature and culture are created. This motion is none other than the advent of the signifier. The supposition of a nature preceding culture, generally accepted in anthropological thought, is, as a matter of fact, unsustainable. Nature is a symbolisation of the 'outside' of culture, and, as such, a retrospective construction.

And let me not beat around the bush – the Other is universal, the universal condition of the Oedipal, as a presupposition of any possible introduction to the dialectics of subjectivity. Or, to put it somewhat differently, what we are discussing here is the function itself of the signifier, given the breakable nature of the sign, the fact that within the sign the signifier is not bound to the signified. If something can be relativised in this process, that something would certainly not be the oedipal, referring, in fact, to the breakable character of the sign, but the response to it. It is the latter that will allow for the emergence of cultural difference. Take, for instance, the question of circumcision and symbolic castration, as alternative responses to the oedipal problematic. And, as we are reminded by Fink, "Hysteria and obsession are 'structures' that, in a western societal context, constitute a sort of great divide in subjective positions, but they are not universal, transcendental necessities. They are contingent structures based on a particular form of society."⁸⁷

Let there be no misunderstanding. Anthropology is acutely accurate in its conceptualisation of Culture as Other, there is no doubt about it. Moreover, any understanding of Culture as Other is our symbolic debt to anthropology. However, for most of anthropology, the world is a world of Others, and any distinction between Other and other, except for Lévi-Strauss, is not at stake.

⁸⁶ Hence, the thesis that culture and place don't overlap, proposed by Gupta and Ferguson, could not be, in any way, compatible with the theses proposed here. See: Gupta, A. and Ferguson, J. (1992), Beyond "Culture": Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference, *Cultural Anthropology*, 7(1), pp. 6-23.

⁸⁷ Fink, B. (1999), *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, pp. 157-158

Anthropology is a word on knowledge. It is presented in history as the articulation of the knowledge of an Other. And even when it takes a turn orientating its gaze upon itself, this gaze remains an epistemological function; even then it fails to see that when looking in the mirror there is something that remains ever unseen. There still is an Other, cultural or other, to be examined and thoroughly investigated, but an anthropology of anthropology, even, if not especially, when anthropology becomes reflexive, is still to take place. That would be an anti-anthropology, of course. There, in what exists as anthropology, either there is an Other with an Other, a (symbolic) Other of the (symbolic) Other circumscribing the first one, or there is no Other at all, and calls to do away with the notion itself of culture have not been unheard of.

It is precisely this very failure to distinguish an object, other than the object of knowledge, the profound unwillingness that anthropology has exhibited and continues to exhibit to guess an object of desire, which will constitute it as anthropology in the first place. Otherwise, what we would be dealing with would be, as has already been stated, an anti-anthropology. Moreover, the same structural ‘flaw’, that does allow the question ‘what is the desire of the anthropologist?’ to be enunciated, is what constitutes the question, which this text can be partly seen as a response to, possible. Because, in this fashion, the object to be investigated would be the ethnographer himself, he would become his own object of desire qua subject. From such a point onwards it would become impossible to sustain an Other which has an Other, and the truth, with the characteristic utter stupidity of truth, would erupt in his face.

The misleading character of any ethnography whatsoever – except for the one exception pertinent to every rule – as long as it continues to call itself ethnography, is that the ethnographer will never realise which is the true field of his ‘fieldwork’, what takes place during the process, that the Other to be confronted is not the other of cultural difference, but the Other of Culture, the Other posing the question of the ethnographer’s desire. And to be honest, if this was realised, he would no longer be an ethnographer, but an analysand. Or rather, he would stop being an analysand who thinks that he is an analyst. Additionally, he might also recognise that there is a self, himself, which thinks it is the subject. There is an ‘I’ that mistakes itself for the true subject. And, indeed, as has already been seen, this ego is a mere product of misrecognition.

There is no anthropology (as there is no psychoanalysis or tourism either), without or before the Cartesian subject, that is, before a subject in *αφάνεια*.

This is why we support that the fundamental misunderstanding of anthropology is inherent to it, because it is necessary for its existence as anthropology; it is that very

misunderstanding that constitutes anthropology as such. Perhaps, this is also a way to understand why anthropology bugs anthropologists so much, why it is the perpetual object of a fierce debate amongst them, why the debate on anthropology is an anthropological constant.

The discourse of the ethnographer, the tourist or the pilgrim, is most clearly, in this fashion at least, accentuating and fortifying the unbreakable front between truth and knowledge. The ethnographer expects from the Other, demands from the Other, the solution of the riddle of her being. And all the 'emic' perspectives she is so eager to demonstrate, even her 'positionality' on blurred (cultural or discursive) boundaries, proceed through the felt symbolic debt to the Other, from whose place all speech also proceeds. Hence, the only 'emic' possible there, is that of the polemic.

3.

**Destiny and Destination,
Or, Topos and Object in the Emergence of the Subject
and in the Dialectics of Desire**

*“With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion. And what there is to conquer
By strength and submission, has already been discovered
Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
To emulate—but there is no competition—
There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.”⁸⁸*

Whereas for the hysteric the destination will be incomplete and meaningless without her, for the obsessive it is a place where the Other has only limited, if any, access. Condemned, as he is, to be wandering around, in the field determined and defined by the gaze of the Other, his Pathos is destined to keep him yearning for the crossing of the border. If his desire keeps him crashing against the walls, the Traveller’s Pathos urges him to break through them, and pass to the field of no-Other. Little does he know, of course, that there is no-Thing outside the walls, or that there is no Other of the Other. But this may only be an illusion, constitutive as it may be of the obsessive subject qua traveller, since one might very well assume that the gaze of the Other has never defined any field, but has, instead, only burned open the hole around which the subject has emerged and circulates.

Imagine the mother hanging out of the window to see her child as it is being picked up by the school bus, for instance, to make sure that it gets in the bus safely, or to catch a last glimpse of it, as she would presume, when, in fact, all she does by her gaze, regardless of whether the child confronts it directly, is to burn open the hole of her enigmatic desire upon its body, and hence keep it captured therein. That hole will certainly be carried to the school, the playground, the university, abroad, and wherever the body may be displaced; and,

⁸⁸ Eliot, T.S. Four Quartets: An Accurate Online Text – East Coker.

<http://www.tristan.icom43.net/quartets/coker.html>, accessed on 11/09/2009.

perhaps, displacement itself could be thus regarded as the dialectic motion between captivity and evasion with respect to the gaze.

The evident reference here is that of the mirror stage as formative of the function of the 'I'⁸⁹ – and, in a rare occasion, indeed, the English language text offers at this point a double entendre that the French original doesn't. Reflecting the problematic of separation, the separation of the subject from the barred Other, following the initial alienation regarding the object cause of desire (of the Other), that is, after an initial division taking place within the Other constituting the Other incomplete, wanting for something, the mirror stage is there where the subject will emerge, also barred, also lacking. On the surface of the mirror, according to Lacan, the image of a unified body will be recognised as one's own. But still that self, that ego, is somewhere else (in an imaginary place behind the surface of the mirror), and what is somewhere else is, also, someone else. Hence, the 'I is another' of Rimbaud, says Lacan. And, hence, our being-out-of-place as the condition of the subject. The subject is what happens, not outside or without place – no such thing exists – but out-of-place.

No matter how close to the surface of the mirror I may go, that other in there that is me will always remain another, union with that image in the mirror is unachievable. The Ego, when there is one, is imaginary, and so it remains, despite our fantasies of completion, in that Other Place being gazed at from the Place of the Other. There is, of course, no transcendental, pre-existing subject that will make this (mis)recognition⁹⁰. It is simply the gaze of the (m)Other which confirms, if we choose to see it so, or demands that the recognition will take place – 'This is you'. And, certainly, no actual mirror is necessary for the mirror stage to take place. The imaginary facilities offered by language are enough.

See the irony in Catalano's travellers – with a heavy suitcase in hand, on the way, convinced that they are on that way going somewhere or away, when, no matter where they are or go to, they are only going around that big hole in their centre, in the centre of their body. A body, moreover, that is already dead, symbolic. This is but one manifestation of the ironic character of deriving destination from destiny. And, at the same time, it offers the key to understanding how writing is simultaneously an effect and a condition of displacement, that is, of travel.

⁸⁹ Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil.

⁹⁰ The presupposition of such an entity by the mirror stage theory is a point that has invited Castoriadis's rejection of it, or, at least, his criticism. See: Elliot, A. (2002). *Psychoanalytic Theory: An Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave. However, as we will immediately see, no such presupposition is necessary for the theory to function.

If what travels is the body, and if that body is dead, ‘overwritten by the symbolic’⁹¹, then the traces it leaves can only be of the order of the signifier, and, as such, they form a text. A certain significatory organisation, or else, a required structure of the traces, is not at issue, given the presence of a structure anytime we are confronted with *Topos*, albeit not necessarily obvious. Simply put, the traces that the displaced body leaves always form a structure.

The surrealist text, or the psychoanalytic free association, amongst other things, at the end of the day, are always evidence of a travel taking place, that is, they always reveal a solid, material structure, regardless of how discursive that structure may appear to be⁹². And, as Lacan has it, “[A] symbol comes to the place of the lack constituted by the ‘not in its place’ [or missing from its place: *manque à sa place*] that is necessary for the initiation of the dimension of displacement from which the play of the symbol in its entirety derives”⁹³.

Still, if one would wish to be a tad more accurate in speaking about the traces left by the displacement that, at the end of the day, constitutes the subject as the being-out-of-place, and about the texts thereby emerging, one should take into consideration that it is primarily the non-signifying, yet utterly effective face of the signifier that is at play here, that ‘material support’ of the signifier, that Lacan calls *Letter*. Hence the textuality of travel, as the material condition of modern, Cartesian, or Brunelleschian, subjectivity⁹⁴. And it is only because the question of Being, or Being itself, becomes, in the Lacanian perspective, increasingly

⁹¹ “...the body, in neurosis, is essentially dead. It is written with signifiers; in other words, it has been overwritten or codified by the symbolic.” Fink, B. (1999), *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, p.97.

⁹² “The fact that the conscious subject is subjected to the unconscious can initially be explained by answering the following naive question: why does psychoanalysis take the trouble to think about the unconscious in the first place? The answer is to say that an unconscious *topos* separated from consciousness must exist because something which is not conscious tangibly manifests itself within consciousness.” Chiesa, L. (2007), *Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan*, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, p.35.

⁹³ Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil, p.722, quoted in Fink, B. (1995), *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.103. Fink goes on to explain that “It is...the signifier of that loss or absence of being which is behind the subject’s very relation to the signifier: there is no subject at the outset, and the signifier names the as yet empty space in which the subject will come to be.”

⁹⁴ It is rather tempting to say at this point, but still only as a sub-text, that the tourist is nothing more than how Capitalism has interpreted the traveller, or that tourism is merely what capitalism has done to travel, in connecting mobility to a lack of *jouissance*, in turning place into (object) destination, and with the production of a surplus. On the capitalist discourse viewed from a lacanian perspective, see: Declercq, F. (2006). *Lacan on the Capitalist Discourse: Its Consequences for Libidinal Enjoyment and Social Bonds*. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*. 11, pp.74-83.

associated with the Letter⁹⁵, the latter being related to *jouissance*, having ‘*jouissance effects*’, that we can conceive of a Traveller’s Pathos, introducing the dimension of Death in what would otherwise be considered the simple joy of changing views and consuming difference.

The consumption of difference, of course, which is what Hakim Bey believes tourists to be after, is already in-itself no different than the consumption of signifiers that, as with any consumption, after the model of food consumption, leaves traces, material traces; and, as Bataille would have us think, it is precisely the question of those traces that perplexes and challenges our Cartesian organizational structures⁹⁶. The desire of Being, of the being-out-of-place, would pose no problem, no complexity, had it not been for the Letter and the traces in question, and nothing would justify our appeal to Pathos.

Most, if not all, treatments of the subject of the desire of the tourist in tourism studies and elsewhere, seem to be limiting the issue to the symbolic and imaginary levels. Whether this regards the consumption of difference, as in the work of Hakim Bey, signifiers (or markers, as MacCannell names them), or the establishment of a particular way of looking at or gazing, as in Urry’s *Tourist Gaze*, the approaches that are being adopted always seem to be avoiding the order of the Real, with an admirable, if nothing else, persistence. This is not irrelevant, of course to the kind of question, since what is in the centre of such approaches, is indeed, desire, which belongs to the symbolic register. However, an opportunity for an approach to tourism that would take into consideration the Real has been sadly missed, when the debate on Authenticity has taken place⁹⁷.

If the obsessive subject – in other words, the traveller – comes into being once captured by the Other’s gaze, this could be the Pathos we may be able to distinguish in the bronze eyes of Catalano’s travellers. Yearning for his freedom, his craving, his urge to escape, and, in final analysis, the suffocation of the tormenting limitation the obsessive suffers, cannot be

⁹⁵ To such an extent that one could witness the gradual shift of weight or centre in his work from the subject of the unconscious, connected to the signifier, to the subject of the Drive, connected to the Letter.

⁹⁶ Edgar, A. and Sedgwick, P. (2001). *Cultural Theory: The Key Thinkers*. London: Routledge. And to remember St. Augustine, “*Inter faeces et urinam nascimur*”.

⁹⁷ Later on, the debate itself has been considered irrelevant by many, and there have been appeals for it to be abandoned altogether, as is the case, for instance, with a certain article authored by Reisinger and Steiner (Reisinger, Y. and Steiner C.J. (2006). *Reconceptualizing Object Authenticity*. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 33(1), pp.65-86.), in whose perspective the lack of consensus with respect to the content of the concept (of authenticity) deprives the latter of any scientific validity and usefulness, and constitutes it irrelevant. If nothing else, such an approach is indicative of a tendency to not recognize, evade and avoid the Real – ‘It is not useful, and not to be taken into consideration, because we don’t agree as to what it is. We must go on without it’.

understood outside the material, spatial context, and the spatial context – taken here to be that of Brunelleschian perspective – is just as real as the traveller’s body. He is destined to be returning, and every new destination is destined to become the same point. Put in a slightly different way, the traveller roams the realm of Death.

And quite ironically again, this is also how Eros works for the obsessive – the promise of a new destination, beyond the borders determined by the Other’s gaze, is on offer only in the guise of being captured by another’s promising gaze; this is how the obsessive falls in love, only in a vicious, repetitive cycle, in the poetics of textuality. Lured by a gaze that appears to be repositioning him outside the field of the Other’s gaze and inside a promise-land, when, on the contrary, it only chains or anchors him (ever) more firmly to the gravity of his own lack, which is what we take Catalano’s Traveller’s hole in the centre of the body to represent.

It seems to be the exclusion of/from a topos, from a promise-land, which takes place the exact moment the obsessive realizes that the Other’s gaze has been withdrawn. It is then, at that very moment when he would finally be free, that he has nowhere to go. Take Brunelleschi’s demonstration, for example – there is only one position from which it can take place. If the eye is positioned behind the indistinguishable hole on the vanishing point, dictating thus the place of the body, in order to look through the hole into the mirror, to see the mirrored painting as indistinguishable from the mirrored landscape, any displacement, and even the slightest instability, would immediately dissolve the illusion, and allow the truth of the situation of the subject within the Place of the Other, what we could call *unheimlich*, to erupt.

Irony appears to be the obsessive condition itself. At the moment when something is being real-ized, the gravity of his own lack becomes felt the most. The moment of realization is the moment of the withdrawal of the gaze, since, at the end of the day, it was the gaze that burned open the hole upon the event horizon of which the subject takes place, a hole which is never really there, and which the gaze itself took up the role of filling, while, at the same time, it merely keeps it open. The ensuing exclusion from that topos of infinite jouissance, from the promise-land in question, by the withdrawal of the gaze, is castration – “...the function of jouissance is essentially relation to the body, but that relation is not just any relation. It is founded upon an exclusion that is, at the same time, an inclusion”⁹⁸ – and each consecutive

⁹⁸ Lacan, J. (2006). *Le Séminaire – Livre XVI: D’un Autre à l’autre*. Paris: Seuil, p.114.

rem(a)inder of the withdrawal will oblige the obsessive to confront the fact that he has been castrated, that paradise has been lost.

A lot has been said and written in Tourism Studies as regards the gaze, in an effort to construct and deconstruct the ways in which tourists look at things, at ‘toured objects’ as they are called, that is, about what has qualified as the tourist-gaze, and along with the question of authenticity in tourism, the tourist gaze is the most visited concept in the Tourism Studies literature⁹⁹. Nevertheless, it is not the object that will be gazed upon, but rather the object-gaze that presents us with a problematic which introduces us to the psychoanalytic experience, and allows us to envisage not a (perhaps relevant, but not really interesting) toured object looked at by a subject, but a touring subject(ivity).

For us, if the question of the gaze arises at all, this is only to the measure that this gaze is an object which is a remainder after castration, indicating a sacrifice that has taken place, a sacrifice of a part of *jouissance*, which will include the subject in the social, that is, in the symbolic, which is what we know as Place. Thus the object-gaze is hereby identified with the *plus-de-jouir* of Lacanian parlance, referring “not to *jouissance* but to the loss of *jouissance*”, since from this loss emerges “what becomes the cause of the desire to know and of the mobilisation...proceeding through the *plus-de-jouir*”¹⁰⁰. One should not have to go too far to relate this mobilisation to what constitutes the subject as subject-out-of-place. Let alone that to name is to name an absence, and to signify is to signify Death. This relation between signification and Death justifies the accreditation of the character of *joui-sens* to the signifying chain¹⁰¹, as well as the situation of the signifier at the level of the *substance jouissante*¹⁰².

The initial withdrawal of the gaze of the Other in the imaginary, followed by the ‘metonymic sliding’ of the object in the symbolic, upon which desire is founded, is a necessary condition for the development of Pathos. Nonetheless, the object gaze as *plus-de-jouir*, or surplus-*jouissance*, as the term has been frequently translated in the English-speaking

⁹⁹ Indicatevally:

- Gillespie, A. (2006). Tourist Photography and the Reverse Gaze. *Ethos*. 34(3), pp.343-366.
- Law, L. et al. (2007). The Beach, The Gaze and Film Tourism. *Tourism Studies*. 7(2), pp.141-164.
- Maoz, D. (2006). The Mutual Gaze. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 33(1), pp.221-239.
- Urry, J. (1990). *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage.

¹⁰⁰ Lacan, J. (2006). *Le Séminaire – Livre XVI: D’un Autre à l’autre*. Paris: Seuil, p.116.

¹⁰¹ Lacan, J. (2001). *Autres Écrits*. Paris: Seuil.

¹⁰² Lacan, J. (1975). *Le Séminaire – Livre XX: Encore*. Paris: Seuil.

literature, remains within the order of the Real. Once the topos is excluded an entrance to it opens up. The obsessive will develop his Pathos for his hysteric counterpart, for instance, only under the threat of the latter's gaze being withdrawn from him, or, in other words, once the topos of his completion has been excluded. It is the exclusion of the place which allows it to emerge as the obsessive's destination, and as his destiny. And here is a fundamental difference between the obsessive and the hysteric – the hysteric gives meaning to the place, symbolizes it by her presence, whereas the obsessive strives to realize it by his absence. Hence, for the hysteric, place, that is, Topos in/as the symbolic, is always It, while for the obsessive it never is.

The experience of the hysteric is thus the one closest related to the dread of the void; the hysteric's fundamental fantasy is, in fact, an expression of this very dread – she has to become the object that fills in the gap, the one that causes the Other's desire. A silent hysteric is, after all, an oxymoron. A hysteric in silence runs the risk of confronting their own subjectivity, that is, the question of their own desire, and this cannot be tolerated. At the same time, however, what the hysteric's fantasy hides, is that the objective is to uncover and expose that very gap she will try to fill – if there is something to be filled, then this is a gap. It seems that the hysteric strategy is closer allied to metaphor than it is to metonymy, in the sense that something, a signifier has to pass under the bar of signification, to be thrown out of the 'equation' so to speak; this signifier being related to the hysteric's desire. The signifier in question has, in this sense, to be 'kept under'. The symptom of the hysteric is then, at least in textbook cases, always a metaphor¹⁰³. She is frequently afraid that she cannot feel, that she is 'emotionally crippled', that she can't really relate. This is, at least, how she imagines the man to be¹⁰⁴, and, in this manner, it is her womanhood that is really in question.

¹⁰³ In the analytic experience, the effort of the (hysteric) analysand is not to bring down the Other by confronting and defeating him, but to 'master the Master', to bring the Other face to face with the fact of his own castration. Her means are quite simple: that Other is not the Other, after all, he is a mere other, not unlike the hysteric herself. And the hysteric's identification with the analyst is nothing else than the most obvious manifestation of such an effort taking place. If the analysand becomes (like) the analyst, then the analyst is just (like) the analysand, and, hence, simply an-other. Her goal has been achieved, in a reverse direction, perhaps, but in the same vein, definitely. This is a reason why any analysis that sets as its goal the identification of the hysteric's 'weak ego' with the analyst's 'strong' one has completely missed the point, and only played into the hysteric's hands.

¹⁰⁴ Appeals for 'real men' to reappear ('Where have real men gone?'), in an age of an alleged 'tenderisation' of men, of 'metro-sexualism', when men can cry, make use of various cosmetic products, smell good, etc., can be also understood in this way.

On the other hand, of course, the obsessive also, more or less often, has his doubts, concerning his ability to fall in love, or, rather, to really be in love, that is, in Heideggerian terms, concerning his being-for-life. In Lacanian theory, the question articulated by the obsessive is ‘Am I dead or alive?’, whereas the hysteric’s question is ‘Am I a man or a woman?’.

If nothing else, we can begin to understand the idealisation of the hysteric’s counterpart, and the seeming dissolution of the hysteric within the place of the Other – which is also always the Other (as) place – and some kind of alienation of the hysteric’s desire within the desire of the Other. This is a rather traitorous one, nonetheless: if the process is there so that the hysteric will be finally shown what it is to be a woman¹⁰⁵, there is already a knowledge there, which may not know itself, but still knows, in advance, that such a demonstration is impossible.

No other, and, in what concerns her, especially, no Other knows what it is to be a woman, and no-One ever did. In luring the obsessive to attempt to show her, as if he could, as if this is possible, she has initiated a process where the meeting with a limit, with a border, will eventually and inescapably take place, and, therefore, the confrontation with castration will be in all eventualities realized.

In adopting such a strategy in the dialectics of desire, nevertheless, the hysteric appears usually unaware of the fact that the border in question, the finitude of Topos, introduced by castration, is precisely what the obsessive is after in the first place. It is this very exclusion of/from a Topos that allows him to disengage from the torturing identification with the One who supposedly knows what it is to be a woman, or, in optical terms, will disengage him from the fixed position required by the Brunelleschian demonstration. Paradoxically enough, castration makes free.

Parenthetically, perhaps, we should consider here that it was precisely the impossibility of knowing what it is to be a woman that has turned the girl from the mother to the father. Unable to extract an answer from the mother – who, herself, has no idea what it is to be a woman, to begin with – the little girl turns to the father, who, anyway, seems to have what the mother desires, and so seems to know what this is. Certainly, however, at that point, the

¹⁰⁵ This is very well presented in a song by the British band Portishead, titled “Glory Box”, where we can see the whole idea being put quite crudely in the following verse: “Give me a reason to love you, give me a reason to be a woman”.

question of being a (sexed) subject has already been posed as a question of desire¹⁰⁶, whether this is a desire to be (the object cause of desire), as in the case of the hysteric, or to have (the phallus), as in the case of the obsessive. The answer for the boy – to a different question, however – comes in the form of the name given by the father, of the name inherited, at least, in a western cultural context¹⁰⁷.

An earlier reference to the contrast between symbolic castration and circumcision during the phallic stage (in the cultural logic it reveals) is related to this. In the latter case, it is not castration, the sacrifice of a part of *jouissance*, that will leave a remainder, the object as *plus-de-jouir*, but a (real) part that is being sacrificed in order for *jouissance* to be retained, becoming, owing to its sacrifice, symbolic. By sacrificing a small part of the real phallus, the penis, the little boy has actually ‘escaped’ castration, and gained some additional access to an imaginary object¹⁰⁸.

In last resort, it seems that the Name-of-the-Father also regards the continuation indicated by the surname, and, in many occasions of the first name¹⁰⁹. What is expected from the girl, however, is to lose that name, or else to substitute it, which also corresponds to the predominance of metaphor in hysteria, in opposition to the predominance of metonymy in obsession, which is more in line with the expected continuation¹¹⁰.

In fact, the obsessive merely resists integration, to the extent that he interprets the Other’s desire as a demand for his incorporation, in the very literal sense of the term, that is, as a demand to be (re)absorbed into the (m)Other’s body. If it is desire that motivates the subject, this is the desire of the Other, which has no object, and does not thus lend itself to

¹⁰⁶ Verhaeghe, P. (2005). *Die Sexualität in der Formierung des Subjekts (Sexuality in the Formation of the Subject)*. *Texte – Psychoanalyse, Aesthetik, Kulturkritik*, 25(3), pp.33-53.

¹⁰⁷ “Hysteria and obsession are “structures” that, in a western societal context, constitute a sort of great divide in subjective positions, but they are not universal, transcendental necessities. They are contingent structures based on a particular form of society.” Fink, B. (1999), *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, pp.157-158. My experience of a non-western cultural environment, having lived in Turkey for a number of years, has convinced me of the accuracy of such a thesis. Indeed, what I have personally observed and concluded, regarding the predominance of given subjective structures in different cultures is in complete agreement with Fink’s relevant argument.

¹⁰⁸ see: Lacan, J. [1991]. *Le Séminaire – Livre IV: La Relation d’Objet*, Paris: Seuil.

¹⁰⁹ In Greece, for example, it is almost canonical that the first born boy takes the name of the father’s father.

¹¹⁰ On a very personal note here, I have to admit that my initial, automatic reaction to learning that my baby to come was going to be a girl, regarded a feeling of failure to pass the family name: ‘And what am I going to do with the Name-of-the/my-Father now?’

being satisfied. Here we have the source of an agonising anxiety for the subject, which, unable to understand what the Other desires, prefers to interpret this desire as (a) demand, which, at least, has an object, and can be answered.

The obsessive's desire is structured as a resistance, as the desire to not go back, to not return, to not be the object that would satisfy the Other's demand, and, definitely, to not be that object that would cause the Other's jouissance, despite the guilt entailed in his pervert-like fantasies. In this sense, the opposite pole of obsession is not hysteria, but perversion, given that the pervert's fundamental fantasy is to be precisely the object that would cause the Other's jouissance. On the contrary, hysteria seems to have a lot in common, or, at least, seems to share a direction, 'a certain affinity' as Fink puts it, with perversion, since the hysteric's fantasy is to be the object that causes the Other's desire¹¹¹.

Very simply put, the obsessive is the one who has escaped the mOther's body, and his desire takes the form of a fight – till death, if necessary – to not be taken back. This probability of death is what aligns his desire to his Pathos, and makes any distinction between the two nearly impossible¹¹².

The presumed lack, and its exposure, become an offerable object. The hysteric's strategy involves the arousal of the desire of the obsessive to give It to her, only insofar as the moment of the offer will be regarded as an opportunity given to her to say 'I don't want it'. Whatever the offered object actually is, whatever symbolic form it may take, whether it be

¹¹¹ "A subject position, like a symptom, is fundamentally a solution to a problem...the pervert's solution bears a certain affinity to the hysteric's solution...There is, nevertheless, an important difference in register between the two: whereas the hysteric tries to be the object that causes the Other's desire (symbolic), the pervert becomes the object that causes the Other's jouissance (real) – that is the object by means of which the Other obtains satisfaction." Fink, B. (1999), *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, p.271.

Nevertheless, there is, perhaps, some room for the proposal of a hypothesis, according to which perversion could be envisioned as a kind of masculine hysteria, as a position in which Pathos recovers its (real) object, regardless of the objections such a hypothesis would definitely raise from every direction. However, the ascension of Socrates to the 'perfect hysteric' (Soler, C. [2007]. *L'Hystérie, Les Hystériques. L'Évolution Psychiatrique*. 72, pp.43-53.), for example, could still lead us there. Wasn't Socrates the one who lured the Other into articulating the Law in the most direct and permanent manner? This is another way to comprehend his refusal to escape.

¹¹² Lacan, in a scarce reference to Pathos, in one of his most influential texts, 'Kant with Sade' [Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil.], almost declares such a distinction, a regard on desire that tries to defy its pathos, an effort to see desire without its pathos, futile, and certainly antithetical to Truth, founded on a specific, crippled, if I may say so, conceptualisation of science. Perhaps, it is here where we can recognise the essence and spirit of the discomfort and discontent with the concept of authenticity in tourism.

flowers, chocolate, the narration of a very personal story, or a dream, the very moment it is being turned down, denied, it becomes the phallus. The hysteric's 'I don't want it', functions not so much as a refusal of the object itself, but rather as a denial of its existence in the hands of the obsessive. It can be read as 'you cannot give me what you don't have', an undeniable invitation to the real-ization of the obsessive's castration. What, on the other hand, the obsessive has offered, is just as well his displacement from the position of the Other, and this is the only position from which the hysteric expects the question of her desire to proceed.

As a result of the hysteric's 'I want you to want me', the obsessive has given up his position in the gaze of the hysteric, which not only introduces him in the Place of the Other, but is in itself the very gaze that places him in the position of the Other, as the one who possesses the Phallus; the latter taking the form of power, genius, knowledge, understanding, and what have you, to the extent that it will always be superlative. In this fashion, the more or less frequent presence of a feeling of being a fraud in obsession could be better understood, since if the obsessive knows something well this is that he doesn't have it¹¹³.

He has been displaced, given that the obsessive's desire, as a function of the Law¹¹⁴, is structured upon the fantasy of the Other Place, and is inhibited in the Place of the Other¹¹⁵. The obsessive enters, therefore, the dialectics of desire in motion. He has to move, to be displaced, in order to respond to her appeal to want her. Nonetheless, the hysteric's desire is the desire of the Other, and not the desire of another. Hence, they will never meet on the plane

¹¹³ Let alone that there is one more thing that the obsessive knows with some certainty, which is that, despite appearances, he is not the Other.

¹¹⁴ "The neurotic desires in relation to the law: the father says the child cannot have its mother, and the child thus unconsciously desires her. The pervert, on the other hand, does not desire as a function of the law – that is, does not desire what is prohibited. Instead, he has to make the law come into being. Lacan plays on the French term perversion, writing it as *père-version*, to emphasize the sense in which the pervert calls upon or appeals to the father, hoping to make the father fulfil the paternal function." Fink, B. (1999), *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, p.181.

¹¹⁵ This might as well explain the proliferation in the past of a series of romantic comedies, in which the man hides his identity as a prince, or a very rich man, in order to be loved for who they 'really' are, for themselves, and not for what they have inherited, for their title or money (the Place of the Other). So, he employs a fake identity, and presents himself as a poor working class geezer (the Other Place), with whom the girl will fall in love. In a slightly different vein, Lacan writes: "...the subject designates its being only by barring everything it signifies, as evidenced in the fact that it wants to be loved for itself...". Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil, p. 693.

of desire, given that for both desire is always a reference to the Other, always in relation and with respect to the Other.

The question of the hysteric's desire, addressed to her from the Place of the Other, will become of importance to the obsessive only when it is articulated by him from the position of another. That is, when he can articulate it from the position of a mere other. But to the hysteric the question is only being posed as a demand, and to satisfy it would be to close the gap, in which occasion the whole prospect of desire disappears¹¹⁶. Let alone that she will never be able to accept it from the position in which he moves in order to articulate it – and for this she will do her best to see him 'punished'.

In all the suffering of his Pathos, entailed in the development of such a dialectic, however, the obsessive has achieved the initiation of a process in which the dialectic field constructed is one in which what has been, in final analysis, signified is the absence of the Other. By his displacement, he has managed to evade the presence of the Other, or, at least, so he tried. The 'You are not the Other', that the hysteric will finally address to him, simply signals the departure from the Place of the Other, the absence of the Other, or that the Other has been muted. And it is in this sense that, in his relation to the hysteric, the obsessive loses every single battle, but wins the war. Not unlike an escape artist, he has to be incarcerated, tied down, shackled, in order to escape, while, as the Traveller, he has to keep on moving from Other Place to Other Place, as a structural necessity in which we can evidence the predominance of metonymy.

Indeed, we can see this function in the case of the anamorphic object. As Lacan reminds us in his analysis of Holbein's 'Ambassadors' in his eleventh seminar¹¹⁷, the anamorphic object in the painting, a skull, can be viewed as such only when the viewer – the subject – looks at the painting, stands, in a specific position, in a specific angle in relation to it. From any other position it is incomprehensible, un-readable. This specific position, in which the

¹¹⁶ In "Sweetest Taboo", Sade sings: "If I tell you now, will you keep on loving me? If I tell you how I feel, will you keep on bringing out the best in me?" What is described in these delightfully direct lyrics is the hysteric's constitutional fear of the foreclosure of desire (of the Other) if satisfied. Indeed, "...desire is a constant search for something else, and there is no specifiable object that is capable of satisfying it, in other words extinguishing it. Desire is fundamentally caught up in the dialectical movement of one signifier to the next, and is diametrically opposed to fixation. It does not seek satisfaction, but rather its own continuation and furtherance: more desire, greater desire! It wishes merely to go on desiring." Fink, B. (1995), *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jussance*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp.90-91.

¹¹⁷ Lacan, J. (1973). *Le Séminaire – Livre XI: Les Quatre Concepts Fondamentaux de la Psychanalyse*. Paris: Seuil.

presence of the object introduces the dimension of death, is what the obsessive subject will try to not be captured within. This is the place of the Other, whereas any Other Place will do. Moreover, if the obsessive becomes obsessed with an object, this is definitely not the anamorphic one; and his obsession emerges not despite the castration the denial, refusal, or rejection involved will accentuate, but, rather, because of it. This is his Pathos and its object.

And once again, we see here the functioning of the logic of Brunelleschian perspective in the obsessive strategy. The subject strives to be excluded from the Place of the Other, to remain invisible within the field of the visible, to have a view of the Place which is cleansed of the subject. This is how we understand the necessity of hiding the eye behind the hole right on the centre of the vanishing point. What emerges thus is the Other Place, the Brunelleschian plane, which, one shouldn't forget, is, in essence, a mirroring, and, as such, a 'reversive' function. The Other Place, in front of the subject's eye, the place of fantasy, is but a mere reflection of the Place of the Other, which includes the body of the subject. Any motion towards the Other Place, any effort to enter it, even if it was possible to keep the relation of the mirrored (imaginary) painting to the mirrored (symbolic) background fixed, and it is not, would only bring the subject in a greater distance from it. The subject would only be further away from the field. If in front of Holbein's 'Ambassadors' there is only one position forbidden to the subject, if the subject has the liberty to keep moving around and gazing at the painting from all but one positions, in avoiding the truth of the Place of the Other, when it comes to the Brunelleschian plane, at the moment of the vision of the Other Place, there is nowhere to go, no way to enter, the subject has to remain still in order to retain the vision.

The hysteric subject appears as much more Byzantine, in its structure, at least on the level of desire. It is the Place of the Other, in which she will be projected, or even included, qua vanishing point, completing and making it meaningful by her presence, by her gaze, which structures her desire.

It should be, perhaps, considered at this point that the history of obsession proceeds through and as an effort to appropriate the elusive object cause of desire through the signifier of knowledge (S_2), thus isolating the discursive apparatus, and securing the subject against the possibility of Truth erupting in his face. This could be observed in the obsessive preference for mechanisms such as intellectualization. Definitely, though, if one is to regard obsession under such a prism, one would also have to consider that this history of obsession is not only rooted, but also finds its peak in the Brunelleschian device, and even much more so than in the Cartesian Cogito, since it is there where the object cause of desire appropriated through the signifier of knowledge is the object gaze. Or, better put, if the Cogito unveils the role of

knowledge, Brunelleschian perspective reveals its object. Moreover, this is an appropriation-procedure that persists till our days, constitutive as it is of Modernity, whether it is evidenced in an increasingly iconic economy, the society of the spectacle, the panopticon and the psychiatric gaze, the tourist gaze, etc.¹¹⁸ Hence, the characterization of the discourse of the University as the modernized version of the discourse of the Master¹¹⁹. In addition, it is precisely this discourse of the University that most closely approximates the obsessive experience¹²⁰.

The process takes, in fact, the form of an effort to neutralize the function of an ever eluding object, to stabilize and fix the horizon, since fixing is exactly what is necessary for a horizon to be crossed. Nothing could be more welcoming of such an operation than knowledge, given that, by its very definition, knowledge is what ‘pins down’, what finalizes at any given moment¹²¹. S_2 is there to ‘pin down’ S_1 , and to put it geometrically, a second point is necessary to limit infinity, the infinity of possibilities, and define a line, to finalize, in this manner, a unique possibility. This is a Euclidean geometry, to be precise, but, on the other hand, the Brunelleschian plane is a Euclidean experience, and so is ours. The fact is, nonetheless, that crossing over or beyond requires a line.

In the discourse of the University, the S_2 in the position of the agent is there not just to act upon the object, upon the α which finds itself in the position of the other, in any odd way, but to pull it in, to appropriate, incorporate and, probably thus, annihilate it, or, at least, neutralize it. This is meant to become a destitution of the object, and, in this fashion, the discourse of the University can be seen as constituting an antithesis to the analytical discourse, since for the latter what is at issue is the destitution of the subject, that is, the subjectification of its cause¹²². Indeed, it seems that psychoanalysis is not for the University.

¹¹⁸ To the extent that the same procedure persists, regardless of the different facets it may appear under, any claim regarding a shift from Modernity to post-Modernity remains unconvincing. We are still pretty much within Modernity, or, as Hakim Bey (Overcoming Tourism. <http://www.hermetic.com/bey/tourism.html>, accessed on 13/12/2007.) puts it, in many ways, we still live in the 19th century, that is, in the age of travellers. We still function with Brunelleschian vision.

¹¹⁹ Lacan, J. (1991). *Le Séminaire – Livre XVII: L’Envers de la Psychanalyse*, Paris: Seuil.

¹²⁰ Fink, B. (1995), *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

¹²¹ Here is yet another way to comprehend the discomfort with the concept of Authenticity.

¹²² “...by getting the analysand to subjectify the cause (the Other’s desire upon which his or her own desire depends), the analysand’s desire is radically transformed and ceases to inhibit the pursuit of satisfaction/jouissance. The relation between desire and jouissance, whereby desire is but a defense against

Of course, if this discourse could really stand the ground of its imaginary, if it could really fulfil its promises and proclamations, much in the same way that our society couldn't fulfil its own¹²³, no professor, absent minded or otherwise, would have ever fallen in love with any student in the history of the University; and, thus, no professor would have ever given up on his authority, which, à propos, is, not surprisingly, always established as an authority against the Other – the official version of history, established bodies of knowledge, common sense, etc. Whatever the professor may enunciate, this is always a 'Forget everything you knew, about...'. Again, what is evidenced is the exclusion from the Place of the Other, some kind of auto-exile, in fact, for the sake of the Other Place. The gaze of the student body – and this is a real body – has to be appropriated through knowledge, its effect has to be neutralized, while, this very gaze is at once what positions the professor as such and invites his displacement from his position. This is a challenge that the professor is there to (both) invite and defeat himself.

Under this light, we could regard the demand of the hysteric towards the analyst to reveal her truth to her, to tell her what is 'wrong' with her, what is the 'real' problem, to explain to her the 'true' meaning of her symptom, as an effort to transform the discourse of the Analyst, one which is devised to allow her to confront the question of her desire, and which should cause anxiety, into the discourse of the University, which she knows all too well how to deal with. This is exactly why it is her that positions the analyst in the Place of the Other, as the supposed-to-know-subject. If the analyst accepts, and this is very often a quite tempting prospect, then, indeed, the analytical process stops, and what is left is the discourse of the University.

The moment she has constituted her gaze as constitutional of the Topos of this (non)relation, and it becomes important to the counterpart, the very moment her gaze has placed the other in the Place of the Other, the game for analysis is already lost and she has become a counterpart, as he ought not to, a mere other like her. She has achieved, in fact, to turn her gaze into what makes the place meaningful, and, therefore, there is no place left for the emergence of any new meaning, of any master-signifier S_1 .

Far fetched, as it may be, but perhaps we can realize in this fashion the importance of the analytic spatial arrangement, with the analyst sitting behind the head of the analysand,

jouissance, is thereby altered." Fink, B. (1999), *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, p.241.

¹²³ See: Castoriadis, C. (1975). *L'Institution Imaginaire de la Société*, Paris: Seuil.

there where he cannot become entangled in an unfitting discourse by the latter's gaze. He becomes 'actively absent'¹²⁴, in a Topos not accessible to the hysteric's tempting gaze.

And while the obsessive tries to appropriate and neutralise the object, the hysteric tries to neutralise the signifier, which is what has to emerge in the analytic procedure. For the hysteric the collision is between S_1 and α . If she needs the obsessive this is because he can offer the mediator of the relation between S_1 and α , namely the S_2 , which will then have to be retracted in order for the collision to take place, meaning that the obsessive will have to be collapsed from his position. Quite Byzantine, indeed.

¹²⁴ See: Alexandridis, A. (1994). Ed., *The Active Absence of Sigmund Freud*, Athens: Exantas. (in Greek)

4.

Towards an Archaeology of Travel –***Thesis, Topos, Pathos***

*“And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate”¹²⁵*

“En fait il ne s’agit pas du sein, au sens de la matrice, quoiqu’on mêle à plaisir ces résonances où le signifiant joue à plein de la métaphore. Il s’agit du sein spécifié dans la fonction du sevrage qui préfigure la castration.

Or le sevrage est trop situé depuis l’investigation kleinienne dans le fantasme de la partition du corps de la mère pour que nous ne soupçonnions pas que c’est entre le sein et la mère que passe le plan de séparation qui fait du sein l’objet perdu en cause dans le désir.”¹²⁶

There is something in travel that constantly permeates us, that constantly confronts the subject with the enigma of desire, the enigma of the surface as a border which cannot be crossed, whether this surface is the surface of a mirror, the surface of the body, or the terrible surface of a page. Only traces are possible; the scratches on the mirror, the scars on the skin, the letters on that piece of paper. Even mnemonic traces are only that – traces, scratches, scars, letters. A picture is a chemical scar on a piece of paper, and a tattoo a letter on the skin. The surface remains the ultimate border, the one that cannot be crossed, there where the enigma of desire finds a stage to be played as drama, a comedy or a tragedy, in that the surface, not excluding the surface of experience, is what arises at the intersection of the symbolic with the real, perhaps, as the truth of every articulation.

Only traces of culture remain to convince the subject that something has indeed taken place. Sculptors desire to bring forth, or to bring out of the rock (of real) the dormant figure

¹²⁵ Eliot, T.S. Four Quartets: An Accurate Online Text – East Coker.

<http://www.tristan.icom43.net/quartets/coker.html>, accessed on 11/09/2009.

¹²⁶ Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil, p. 848. « In fact, it is not a question of the breast in the sense of the mother’s womb, even though people mix as they like resonances in which the signifier relies heavily on metaphor. It is a question of the breast specified in the function of weaning which prefigures castration.

Weaning has been too extensively situated since the kleinian investigation in the fantasy of the partition of the body of the mother not to suspect that it is between the breast and the mother that passes the plane of separation, which makes the breast the lost object at issue in desire.»

by leaving on it the traces of their instruments, to reveal by forging a new surface. One more pounding on the rock and the whole figure will end up in a rumble of meaningless stones. At the end of the day, his desire is only the desire of not delivering the blow that will shatter the surface, the desire to not cross that border.

There is a point at which the traveller has to stop moving, and what guarantees his stasis is his own desire. The desire that behind the surface he is confronted with there is something else, something more, that there is another land after the border would have been crossed. Not unlike the figure in a film by Angelopoulos¹²⁷, with one foot hanging over the border, perplexed, unable to decide whether to step or not. Or like the hanging steps of Greek folklore dances, abundant in stases in the course of movement, when the foot lifts up only to be placed where it was before.

What appears to be an unwillingness to decide whether to proceed, to move forward, bears the protective seal of desire. It is this hanging step, this stasis, that allows desire to proceed, to continue, to go on.

In this sense, the hubris of Oedipus has been crossing the border, shattering the surface when confronted with the enigma of desire. With the enigma of the Other's desire, to be more precise, since, if there is a (m)Other par excellence, that is no other than the Sphinx¹²⁸, the composite monster, with the female face, the motherly breasts, and the body of a beast, ready to devour the traveller and terminate the travel. That magnificent monster, whose beautiful face, from which the symbolic enigma of the human as traveller will be articulated, will not hide the real of its bestial body and of the hunger inhabiting it.

What would, perhaps, not be so easily accepted in psychoanalytic circles is that the desire articulated by the monster, the (m)Other's desire is the subject's jouissance. We know that desire is the desire of the Other, but, although this localises desire, it does not answer what that desire is. So, this can be taken as a hypo-thesis, as what is under the thesis, veiled under the thesis and supporting it: the desire of the Other as the Other's desire is the jouissance of the subject as the subject's jouissance. Only in this fashion can the position of Pathos, as it is being conceived here, in relation to a desire of which it forms a part, be understood.

¹²⁷ Theo Angelopoulos, 1991, *The Suspended Step of The Stork* (Το Μετέωρο Βήμα του Πελαργού).

¹²⁸ A very intriguing reading of the Oedipal myth, and not terribly dissimilar to the one arising within the present text, at least in spirit, is the one made by Cocteau in his play "The Infernal Machine", staged for the first time in 1934 – Cocteau, J. (1992), *La Machine Infernale*, Paris: LGF.

In this manner, Oedipus has already committed his hubris by answering, by responding, that is, to the Sphinx; it is there and then, at the point where he gives the (correct) answer to her, an answer that can only be 'I am that', the answer to her enigmatic desire, since a question always asks for something, that he crosses the limit. The killing of the father, which has preceded the encounter with the Sphinx, can never be the hubris, after all. What has followed the encounter with the Sphinx was contingent on it, if not a mere elaboration or reflection of it.

In that sense, there is no oedipal as anything else than the confrontation with the (m)Other's desire, and, therefore, no discourse on a pre-oedipal stage is justified. To the extent that the posing of the question of the Other's desire is the ultimate prerequisite for the emergence of the subject as such, which, in turn, acquires a structure according to the response it gives, according, in other words, to the fundamental fantasy it develops, the oedipal is itself the always-already of subjectivity itself. One should never defy the fact that the (m)Other's desire precedes that of the son. Left unhindered, unobstructed, the only condition for the son will be jouissance.

And if Oedipus could, as he did, provide the Sphinx with an answer, an answer that should have never been given, the 'I am that' that he unashamedly uttered, the 'It is man', coupled, as it usually is with the 'eppure si muove', the reason is that, being on the run from his destiny, which is what he knew, and running, at the same time, towards it, a knowledge that doesn't know itself, he didn't consider the Other's question as one of desire. A 'that' that moves is, in last resort, either the object or the phallus, depending on whether the question is desire or jouissance respectively.

To Oedipus what seemed to be taking place was the confrontation with the Other's demand, which he could, as he did, fulfil, precisely because he had to keep on moving, whereas the solution to his problem was right in front of his eyes. All he had to do was to refrain from answering, to not solve the enigma posed to him, and the hubris he was striving to not commit, to avoid, would not be committed. He would have never fulfilled the foretold destiny. But scared of meeting (with) the (m)Other's desire, on a fugue, a fugitive of his own will (which, indeed, turned out to be a will-to-jouissance), he fails to recognise the Other in that monster of inconsistency – part woman, part beast, obstructing his way out.

The Other always appears somewhere else, as something else, unrecognisable and inconsistent, and when the subject arrives at a confrontation with the Other, the confrontation had had already taken place. One will opt for every kind of small death in order to avoid the big one, which, however, is, at the end of the day, unavoidable. And each kind of small death

is small not because it's less of a death, but because it's but a mere reflection of and on the big one, of and on the ultimate hubris. What forms there, between one death and the other, is the Topos where the traveller, that is, the subject, roams, and, although always-already dead, 'si muove' (eppure). This is the Topos of Pathos, of that part of desire that has no reason to act as a defence to jouissance.

After all, what constitutes this wonderful phrase, this glorious 'eppure si muove', equally magnificent as the Brunelleschian demonstration or the Cartesian cogito, the reason why the traveller is present when Galileo, allegedly, enunciates it, is because in it the subject is represented as missing somewhere in that 'si'. The traveller is there when the subject is displaced. In final analysis, the very motion of the phrase, its meaning, only signal that the subject is somewhere else, that it is out-of-place. What remains therein is the 'si', to remind that there might have been a subject. And, certainly, a subject-out-of-place is a subject that might-have-been, with the rem(a)inder of its potential presence being as well a 'yes', a cataphasis.

In this the subject is not unlike the Other – once the confrontation with it takes place, it had already taken place. Hence the diarrhoeic parlance of the hysteric, attempting, in fact, to keep the subject moving, in order to avoid the confrontation, or the pseudo-enigmatic, constipational silence of the obsessive, trying to anchor it, to retain it, and evade the threat of aphanisis upon confrontation with the Other. At least, as far as the Ego is concerned, that Ego of speech, the subject aligns the oral and the anal, or even condenses them, in performing the function of the excrement. For that Ego, the excrement is the signifier par excellence of the subject. This should offer some clue concerning the repulsion with which our civilization regards the excrement, and give some additional validity to Bataille's cultural theory, which, nonetheless, it has no need for.

In any case, however, a subject whose condition is that of the being-out-of-place, is a subject in exile, one not to be retained, not in the sphere of history, but rather in the sense of what might have been. The theme of exile itself is quite universal, whether it concerns the exile of Adam and Eve from paradise, the exile of the Jews, the exile of Mohamed from Mecca, or the exile of Deganawitha, in the Iroquois federation constitutional myth. It is also present in the claustrophobic mis-appreciation of philosophical environments of Lévi-Strauss, and in Catalano's travellers' hopeless gazes.

As a matter of fact, to be somewhere can only signify one thing to the subject – that it is somewhere else, which is a reason for the sheltering of hysteria and neurosis under the common roof of neurosis. This, at the end of the day, is the whole rationale of the

conceptualisation of a mirror stage. If something is being recognised at the mirror stage this is nothing else than the subject's displacement, its constitutive condition of exile, and, in short, not only that 'I' is someone else, which will allow Lacan to write on a board "I think 'therefore I am'", but also that it is somewhere else.

The Topos on the Other('s) side, the one behind the surface of the mirror, is not only a very dangerous, quite silly, and rather nonsensical place, where one runs the risk of becoming a pawn, as Alice found out¹²⁹, not only the dwelling of all kinds of lurking demons, but also an impossibility. An impossible and forbidden Topos, at the same time. And yet, this also seems to be the Topos of all (e)utopias. Or rather, (e)utopia and dystopia together, that is, the Topos of Pathos. On the other hand, it is definitely not the least bit accidental that utopia actually means 'non-existent place'. Behind the surface there is nothing, but in this 'nothing' the 'I' sees the lost paradise, as well as the promised hell.

This is not to say, of course, that the Real is not real, that it doesn't have very real consequences, or that it is a mere figment of the imagination. This is, rather, to say that the Real as such, is a retrospective reconstruction, and here one is faced with an epistemological question. And this question doesn't regard the gestalt in the sense that the whole may be more or less than the sum of its parts, but in the sense that the whole is other than the sum of its parts. After all, "... it should be emphasized that the part has nothing to do with the whole."¹³⁰

If there is an primordial condition which, for whatever reason, at a given point, breaks up, becomes fragmented into parts that can be named, that is, signified, that signification can only take place after the fragmentation in question. It would be a grave methodological error to recognise parts in the whole before the fragmentation takes place, as anything else than what could have become. In other words, no parts exist before it, and any consequent addition of parts can only be unidirectional and incapable of reproducing the primordial whole.

Hence, there is no gravity before something that could in retrospect have been called gravity breaks from an primordial whole, before a big-bang, nature is but a retrospective reconstruction of culture, a borromean knot is an impossible object that can be conceptualised only after a ring has been broken, and, finally, there is no Other before alienation¹³¹. We should, perhaps, consider the possibility of a Real before the Real, in order to refer to a condition before the emergence of the object, the lack of which will create the fantasy itself of the complete Other, to a primordial condition of One-ness, as imagined by psychoanalysis.

¹²⁹ Carroll, L. (2003), *Through the Looking Glass and what Alice found There*, London: Puffin Classics.

¹³⁰ Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil, p. 843.

¹³¹ Alienation is the first division in the Other, a realization that the Other is not whole, but lacking in something.

This ascribes the character of retrospective reconstruction to any idea of a maternal oceanic to which the subject yearns to return¹³². If, indeed, there is any desire to return to the sea, the inorganic, the elementary, or the maternal womb, that is a desire functioning, as desire does, as a defence against jouissance.

The sea is a but a metaphor, albeit a terribly potent one, serving the extraction of Pathos from desire, trying to neutralise that part of desire that does not resist jouissance, as metaphors are there to do, an attempt to purify desire. If there is a subject of desire, that is most certainly not our traveller. Because desire is the purifying metaphor, the purifying catalyst at the heart of the metaphoric, originating from the paternal metaphor, from the very function that generates desire as desire for something else, someone else, and somewhere else. This is what will constitute the neurotic symptom meaningful – its metaphoric quality, this function of purifying the subject's desire from its Pathos, by displacing the subject within its Topos of suffering, in last resort, by metaphorizing the subject itself.

Any attempt to discover meaning in a manifestation of psychosis, on the other hand, would most probably result in the realisation of its futility, given that no such displacement is possible therein. On the contrary, the psychotic will try to construct a Topos in which a position, a Thesis, would be possible. Any lucid enough psychotic becomes aware of the fact that what makes sense 'inside' doesn't make sense 'outside', and that is simply because a Topos where displacement could be taking place is absent, and because, at the same time, the existence of an unconscious comes along with "...the impropriety of trying to turn it into an inside."¹³³ All a psychotic has is a Thesis, a 'here' without a 'there', that is, a Thesis without a Topos. The only reason why this is not a mere absurdity is because, in the emergence of subjectivity, Thesis precedes Topos.

But, to return to neurosis and the purifying character of the metaphor as regards desire and Pathos, we can see how the metaphor of the sea, of the 'distant travels and the blue seas', functions in relation to the desire of the 'ideal and unworthy lover' of Mal du Départ.

It is easy to read his Pathos for the sea in his pain, a Pathos that will turn against him, finding no outlet but the naval maps opened under his thick accounting books, the latter being heavy enough to constitute the anchors he could not lift, punishing him for the weakness of

¹³² "Freud wrote, in 'The future of an illusion', that there is nothing like an archetypal 'oceanic feeling' related to the originary relationship to the mother; on the contrary, the most originary feeling, he thought, was the 'Fatersehnsucht', the longing for the father, which was so strongly expressed in religions." Sauvagnat, F., *Fatherhood and Naming in J.Lacan's Works*, <http://www.lacan.com/fathename.htm>, accessed on 13/11/2008.

¹³³ Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil, p. 838.

his coward heart. There is the man who didn't follow his heart, who didn't answer his calling, who chose to hurt himself, in order not to hurt the Other. There is the man who didn't give into his pathos, his true Pathos. One could even be tempted to think that there is a man who, contrary to Freud, decided not to visit his Athens, not to go beyond his father, not to lift the leaf covering the Master's castration. There is, in final analysis, a man who by never crossing 'the pale line of the horizons', refused to give his mother what she desired, refused to become it. In many ways, that man, giving up on his Pathos, appears to be the opposite of Oedipus. This is the true hero, the true anti-Oedipus, ready to suffer the punishment of an unforgiving Pathos, ready to pay with his own life, in order not to commit the hubris, not to cross the forbidden border, not to return to the (maternal) sea, the sea of the mother.

But it is precisely this sea of the mother, the sea of the (m)Other, the holy sea of the Real, that as a retrospective reconstruction, as a metaphor, plays the role of purifying his desire from his Pathos. So, in opposition to whatever one might be tempted to think, rather than giving up on his Pathos, he gave into it, he staged his desire upon the fantasy of the sea as a defence against his Pathos, against the jouissance of his Thesis. The metaphor of the sea, offering meaning to his existence, the return to the maternal oceanic, his desire, veils the jouissance of his Thesis at the maternal bosom. How else could Kavadias title his poem *Mal du Départ*, a condition experienced by sailors, and other travellers, who have stayed ashore for quite a long time and crave a new departure, when it refers to someone who has never departed in the first place? No, the maternal oceanic is on the side of (purified) desire. What is at issue here is not any maternal oceanic, it is the maternal bosom.

It is the maternal bosom that is the mine, and, potentially, the minefield, of Thesis, Topos, and Pathos. And this is the exile that one will accept or not, be subdued to or not. This is the place of the making of a being-out-of-place. This is the 'I' of God, and the eyes of the mother one will confront again on the surface of the mirror. Perhaps, it is not the breasts with their staring nipples that look like eyes, looking at you, with a welcoming or a frigid, a confirming, capturing, repelling, or reassuring gaze, but the eyes that bear a certain similarity to the breasts. And, perhaps, this is how in the field of the visible, the field determined by the gaze, there where any Topos emerges, I am being gazed at, 'photographed', as Lacan says.

Perhaps, this is what has constituted Brunelleschi's demonstration possible, and what makes any surface so central to our human experience. A Topos, and a being-in-Topos, are already present in front of the mirror surface. There the being meets once more with that gaze, only now that being confirms its exile, it is somewhere else. Indeed, the meeting with the

Other had always-already taken place, and, if nothing else, if there is anything human about the Sphinx, that is her face, the surface of her eyes, and her breasts.

Moreover, there is something fundamentally humanising about those breasts. Something that, even before the advent of the subject, before the entrance into the symbolic, constructs a connection to a world that can henceforth be called human, in that it performs an 'explosion' in which what will have become the drive is being forged. The instinct will have less and less of a place in what will become the drama of a human dimensional existence.

And, indeed, some sort of instinctual knowledge is present for the infant of other species as to where the connection is to take place, offering a specific direction, even if the infant has to climb or fall to be there. A 'there' is already there for it, and its locus, its Thesis, if in this case one may call it so, is an instinctual given. It can only be this and nothing else, there and nowhere else. And this is the reason why some animals have the ability to use signs, but never signifiers.

If there is something instinctual about the human infant, on the contrary, that is only the opening of the mouth and its sucking motions. No direction is present, no there or here, and no climbing or falling is possible. For the human infant the connection can potentially take place everywhere, come from every direction, up, down, right, or left, which, at the same time, means that no direction is there, since no opposition is present. This is to say that for the human infant there is no Topos, that the instinctive Topos of the animal is fundamentally different than the human Topos as it will later develop.

For one thing, for animals, Thesis and Topos form an unbreakable unity, whereas the human infant has to be placed, positioned, localised in relation to the breast. Thesis precedes Topos. Thesis precedes and the emergence of Topos follows. And there, before Topos emerges, is where what will later be called jouissance is born, as the condition of Thesis.

This Thesis, however, bearing the character of a certain permanence, is to be lost forever, and to be replaced by a Stasis, a temporary stop or placement in relation to the breast. Since, nevertheless, there is only one such position, what has taken place is the emergence of (a) Topos, that is, of every position around it that are not it. In this we may also see the material condition of language, before language claims the being. The material conditions of the alienation in language that will later follow, are already present in the displacement inherent in the relation between Stasis and Thesis. Hence, Topos has emerged due and as a reference to the lost Thesis, the big death, and Stasis, a series of small ones, is left as a rem(a)inder of it.

Topos will emerge after Thesis has been constituted impossible. The permanence of the lost Thesis suffices to comprehend the death drive, excluding any necessity to envision any possible return to a certain inorganic condition. The latter could even be considered as a fantasy of a minor importance, which, like every fantasy of return, including that of returning to the womb, or to the maternal oceanic, serves to veil the primary fantasy of returning to a permanence, which, despite whichever maternal desire, has never been there or possible anyway.

Specific consequences are connected to this (hypo-)thesis.

First, it becomes clear that a death drive viewed under this light, turns into the womb itself of life, since the will to return to the permanence of the Thesis at the maternal bosom requires the constant motion of the subject in its quest, being identified, in this fashion, with what we could call desire, without any longer distinguishing from it the Pathos inherent in it.

In the same direction, it also becomes clear that fantasy will precede desire, and structure it respectively. The primary and dominant fantasy of Thesis will be covered up by the fantasy of a Topos, within which Thesis will be constituted possible, of an initial, or primordial paradisiacal condition, that is, whereby Thesis and Topos are not mutually exclusive.

However, the rem(a)inders of jouissance, its rags, if such an expression may be excused, the scattered within the dimension of the mobile body metonymic objects that structure the desire which places them, as well as the metaphoric representations of desire on the surfaces it itself constructs, position the Topos in question in a beyond, aligned with the experience of a speech without cracks, that is, they construct it as a lost paradise, the return to which is also posed, not without an interesting sense of humour, as an ethical question, as a stance of maintaining the forbidding posed by the word (*Λόγος*) itself. This is the *Λόγος* to which the forbidding of the Thesis will be attributed, with the obvious consequence of overlooking its very impossibility.

In any occasion, the subject is no other than what has been subjected to castration, than what is determined by the absence of the phallus, than what befalls in the place of the lack. Desire will be defined, in this manner, as a desire to lift subjectivity, since there is no other desire than the one desiring the return of the phallus in the Thesis in which it is missing, and which is covered for by the subject. Hence, desire itself bears, by a certain possibility for its fulfillment, the threat of aphanisis.

The Thesis at which the phallus is missing is, nevertheless, identifiable for the subject to the Thesis which the subject has lost for good, and to which it strives to return. Therefore,

albeit paradoxically, the subject occupies a position which it has lost, the location of which it fails to recognize. In this fashion, the subject is found where it is not, in a paradoxical Topos, of which the horizon is none other than the subject's Pathos, while its condition of exile must, at all cost, be sustained, since a return to the primordial Thesis would most certainly result in aphanisis.

The subject, then, is what might-have-been in its place¹³⁴, at the same time desiring and being threatened by the coming of the phallus, which keeps both the subject and the phallus moving. We encounter here once more the Death drive running through the Pathos of return to the Thesis, the Pathos, that is, for a de-subjectivication of the subject, which, in all this, functions towards nothing less than its very mobilization.

Here, of course, it is writing that represents, par excellence, also through the letter, the possibility of a Thesis, and, mainly, Pathos as the horizon of the Topos of the subject, precisely because *scripta manent*, even if the desire that invests it with signification is somehow modified, or even flies away, since the presence of Pathos does not necessarily presuppose desire, whereas desire is never completely deprived of Pathos; despite the various attempts, especially on the issue of writing, and more particularly in the context of a very narrow and obsessively understood scientificity, of which the primary concern appears to be the veiling of its hystericity, of its de-pathologization.

The subject is thus constantly inscribed as non-inscribable, never seizes not to be written, as Lacan says about the Real, within the horizon of a Topos, and in a position that it owes not to occupy, in that singular position, the Thesis, that it is due to have lost.

It is in this perspective that the symptom doesn't reveal anything but the threat that the subject coincides with its Thesis, that the condition, if one could not call it a regime, of its exile will be lifted. What the symptom reveals is that the Topos of the subject is in danger of being constituted superfluous, and, as such, meaningless, a situation to which the advent of the symptom is an effort to attribute signification to Topos, to generate a new meaning through metaphor. In final analysis, "The metaphor is but the synonym of symbolic

¹³⁴ «Produced in the locus of the yet-to-be-situated Other, the signifier brings forth a subject from a being that cannot yet speak, but at the cost of freezing it. The ready-to-speak that was to be there – in both senses of the French imperfect 'il y avait', placing the ready-to-speak an instant before (it was there but is no longer), but also an instant after (a few more moments and it would have been there, because it could have been there) – disappears, no longer being anything but a signifier.» Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil, p. 840.

displacement, brought into play in the symptom.”¹³⁵ At the end of the day, what is evidenced in the symptom is the fact that a metaphor is always meant to be a metaphor(a) of the subject.

And, in other words, the subject being confronted with the threat of aphanisis concurrent with the coincidence with its Thesis – a threat and a danger as real as the maternal breast – it prefers to confront it as a danger of the eclipse of Topos, as a gradual narrowing or nearing of the horizon, to which it responds with the development of the symptom; with a metaphorization of either the body, or of Topos itself, and, especially, of the Stases possible within it, protecting, in this way, its dimensional existence. There is no better manifestation of ‘taking a stance’, particularly in the ethical dimension carried by that phrase, or of ‘standing one’s ground’ than the Stasis of the symptom, especially considering the Thesis which this Stasis will try to resist.

The real threat to the subject, however, a threat that persists in its truth, is not the threat of aphanisis, and much less, of course, is it the threat of castration, hence, it is not the threat of a loss and the adjacent to it fear; even if every lack is to be considered by the subject evidence of a loss, the subject itself included as a ‘missing in its place’.

The real threat is the threat of losing the threat of aphanisis itself, of losing the fear, of the lifting of the dread of the empty page – that is the real terror.

The Real lacks in nothing but lack, and this is really terrifying. Therefore, if the subject insists on a Stasis, on a symptom, for instance, this is not only to be taken as a, more or less futile, attempt to reproduce the primordial condition of Thesis, but also as its opposite, as a, perhaps much less futile, attempt to sustain the threat lacking in Thesis, the very threat that has produced a body and a Topos in which that body can be positioned.

In the same vein, it is not the loss of desire or meaning that the subject is truly petrified by – also in the literal sense of becoming a stone – but, rather, the loss of the fear of such a fear. In last resort, if you’re going to turn into a stone, there had better be a Topos where you can be thrown, and there had better be an Other to receive this stone as a gift, or get hurt by it. “Similarly, our subject is subjected to the vel of a certain meaning it must receive, or petrification. But should it retain the meaning, the nonmeaning produced by its change into a signifier will encroach on this field (of meaning). This nonmeaning clearly falls within the Other’s field, although it is produced as an eclipse of the subject.”¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil, p. 260.

¹³⁶ Lacan, J. (1966). *Écrits*. Paris: Seuil, pp. 841-842.

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