

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: CHI-THINKING: CHIASMUS AND COGNITION

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The treatise proposes chiasmus is a dominant instrument that conducts processes and products of human thought. The proposition grows out of work in cognitive semantics and cognitive rhetoric. These disciplines establish that conceptualization traces to embodied image schematic knowledge. The Introduction sets out how this knowledge gathers from perceptions, experiences, and memories of the body's commonplace engagements in space. With these ideas as suppositional foundation, the treatise contends that chiastic instrumentation is a function of a corporeal mind steeped in elementary, nonverbal spatial forms or gestalts. It shows that chiasmus is a space shape that lends itself to cognition via its simple, but unique architecture and critically that architecture's particular meaning affordances. We profile some chiastic meanings over others based on local conditions. Chiastic iconicity ('lending') devolves from LINE CROSSING in 2-D and PATH CROSSING in 3-D space and from other image schemas (e.g., BALANCE, PART-TO-WHOLE) that naturally syndicate with CROSSING. Profiling and iconicity are cognitive activities. The spatio-physical and the visual aspects of cross diagonalization are discussed under the Chapter Two heading 'X-ness.' Prior to this technical discussion, Chapter One surveys the exceptional versatility and universality of chiasmus across verbal spectra, from radio and television advertisements to the literary arts. The purposes of this opening section are to establish that chiasticity merits

more than its customary status as mere rhetorical figure or dispensable stylistic device and to give a foretaste of the complexity, yet automaticity of chi-thinking.

The treatise's first half describes the complexity, diversity, and structural inheritance of chiasmus. The second half treats individual chiasma, everything from the most mundane instantiations to the sublime and virtuosic. Chapter Three details the cognitive dimensions of the macro chiasm, which are appreciable in the micro. It builds on the argument that chiasmus secures two cognitive essentials: association and dissociation. Chapter Four, advantaged by Kenneth Burke's "psychology of form," elects chiasmus an instrument of inordinate form and then explores the issue of Betweenity, i.e., how chiasma, like crisscrosses, direct notice to an intermediate region. The study ends on the premise that chiasmus executes form-meaning pairings with which humans are highly fluent.

Key terms: chiasmus, rhetorical figure, cognitive rhetoric
cognitive semantics, iconicity, Kenneth Burke

CHI-THINKING: CHIASMUS AND COGNITION

by

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PREFACE

On an otherwise uneventful day in 2005 a friend telephoned to bemoan that her brother-in-law had decided to accept a new job in a city two thousand miles away. The upset traced to her unhappiness over the coming loss of his companionship and emotional support.

Downhearted and distracted, she remarked of the relationship, really more to herself than to me, “We’re fric and frac.” Then, with only the barest of pauses, she continued, “We’re frac and fric. Always together.”

What this brief story has to do with the text before you will become evident shortly. But first I want to share a second anecdote. In 2006, I received a birthday card from a different friend. The outside of the card had this salutation: “Like a great wine, we get better as we get older!” To this statement, the inside contained a corrective: “Or rather, as we get older, we feel better with lots of great wine!”

These two communications—one glum, the other merry; one spoken in the spur of the moment, the other purposeful and dreamed up for commercial sale—bear, despite their considerable differences in purpose, context, and origination, a strong structural likeness. Both the *fric–frac* vocalization and *wine–better–older* message repeat and reverse linguistic items within the small compass of their respective wholes. These types of occurrences, whereby linguistic constituents double and crosswise (i.e., backward) arrange over the span of a stand-alone articulation, has a name. *Chiasmus*.

The name may seem exotic, and, thus, suggestive of rarity. Indeed, some dictionaries or thesauri deem it not worthy of an entry. However, the linguistic phenomenon to which the word refers is not the least strange, nor is it at all uncommon. The chiasmic examples are not

provisions from friends intent on articulating or sending me chiasma to fill a treatise on the subject. I am gifted in my friends, but not in this particular regard. Neither the *fric-frac* speaker nor the birthday card selector, who are long-time personal friends, but not professional colleagues, know the term *chiasmus* nor have any concept about what it has to do with.

Despite their unfamiliarity with the word and with any of its formal attributes, they exhibit a fluency and taken-for-granted preference for chiasmus. These ideas lay a cornerstone for the project ahead. The project takes as its suppositional foundation that chiasmus is not a specialty exclusive to rhetoricians, literature elitists, language adepts, or even those with the flair, now and again, for a clever turn of phrase. Rather, we all use and understand chiasmus, because it is a major conductor of human thought, reasoning, learning, and expression. To erect and establish this idea is the major goal of the pages that follow this one.

Over the course of this enterprise, I would ask that you, my reader, keep tucked in a corner of your mind, the *fric-frac* speaker and the greeting card selector. We will want to think on them as we examine chiastic performances that range from the humdrum to the virtuosic. The reason why? Because, they are us, originators and receivers fluent in and entirely up to the masterminding performed via chiasticity.

DEDICATION

Richard W. Weisbeck

For the ‘funnies,’ tightly-laced ice skates,
parades and licorice sticks,
and the strength of hammer and nail construction

Elizabeth J. Weisbeck

For grace and favor, elegance and art,
gentle selflessness,
and gardens for beauty and dreaming

Margaret J. (Lissner) Cartwright

For non-berating berating,
patient impatience, and uncompromising belief

Christopher R. Lissner

For Chris,
without whom

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I take as true that accomplishment rests in passion. No better exemplifier of this truth is my academic advisor and guide, Mark Turner. What I was quick to learn about Mark is that his greatest investment, in enthusiasm, interest, participation, and time, is in that which intrigues others and prompts them to further inquiry. This project of multiple fascinations, with a tendency to grow like Topsy, found in Mark unstinting encouragement and intellectual support. Any portion of the treatise that might happen to capture a reader owes to Mark Turner's willingness to allow those under his tutelage to take intellectual risks and follow their mind's leads. On the personal level, his suggestions and counsel, always kept to a minimum, never failed to be that looked for, but seldom found combination of the carefully reasoned, the scrupulously fair, and the practical. It has been and will remain a privilege to call myself a student of his.

Professor Jeanne Fahnestock opened the intellectual world of rhetoric for me and did so, I strongly believe, as no one else could. This belief is founded in classroom experience. The first weeks in Jeanne's "Contemporary Rhetoric" graduate seminar found me, at first, recalcitrant to a subject I felt to be foreign. But well before the semester was over, I had redirected my scholarly interests, having gone from a resister of rhetoric to a convert. Jeanne Fahnestock's depth of knowledge and her thoroughgoing, balanced examinations proved to be their own persuasive devices. Her ability to get to the quick of an issue, its rhetorical tipping-point, in whatever field astounds. Her mindfulness and considered approach carry over into her person. Jeanne is genuinely kind, caring, and delicately mindful of others.

I was most fortunate to have Dean Elizabeth Loizeaux's careful reading and assessment of the treatise. The exemplary scholarship Beth carries so lightly has furthered understanding. Despite a taxing administrative and teaching schedule, Beth has been a steadfast supporter of my work, encouraging me in large and small ways. I am indebted to her for her remarkable geniality and good graces. Appreciation is due to Michael Israel, also of the Department of English, for the vigor and earnestness with which his recommendations were detailed. Michael was kind enough to commit time and intellectual energy to a graduate student whose interests range outside his scholarly sphere. Professor Richard Klank of the University's Art Department and Art Studio brought welcome lights to this project: a perspective from outside literature and linguistics and a readiness to seek out alignments between disciplines that tend to remain segregated in the academy. His insights, opinions, and questions added greatly to the conversation. Richard's zest for discovery and challenge are infectious. I am pleased to have this new friend in the visual arts who shares several intellectual interests, Henri Focillon among them.

It was a tremendous honor to have Professor Per Aage Brandt elected as a special member to the defense's Advisory Committee. That Dr. Brandt should entertain my ideas and work, read the treatise with such a fine, deeply versed interest, and travel from Case Western University to attend the dissertation's defense was a scholarly act of exceptional generosity and intellectual gallantry. His probing of topics within and related to the project excited much of the debate at the defense. He has left behind brilliant fuel for thought.

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The preparation of the text would not have been possible without the various editing tasks, the graphics resource work and manipulation, and the general manuscript management performed with such diligence by Susan Cowles. Susan was far more than my younger eyes and faster fingers. She was my patient archivist religiously organizing and monitoring books, files, and manuscript iterations.

Volunteering as my all-around cheerleader, she never lapsed in her heartfelt encouragement or in her belief in the project and its worth. Most of all, she was unflagging in the job of keeping me on track. Susan made me see realistic means of approach, which was a full-time job in itself. The small recognition here does not do justice to her prodigious contribution to the project's completion.

I am grateful to the University of Maryland's librarians and staff. Without their assiduous, vital work, this project, like so many others, would not come to fruition. Those in the Interlibrary Loan Department enabled receipt of long-distance critical materials. I would like to point out the Art Library and the Architecture Library, where I spent many long, but satisfying hours. These libraries aided in everything from helping to trace down books that had strayed from their rightful shelf locations to finding a source for materials not easily procurable. I would like to give special thanks to Louise Greene, Head of the Art Library, and to Amrita Kaur, staff member of the Art Library, for their extra assistance. Louise helped me with two special research searches. She shared my excitement over the search results, which were more complete due to her perseverance and reference know-how. Amrita took me under her protective wing for those times I needed an extra pair of eyes in the library. I always left the Art Library happier for having been in her positive presence. Anita Jackson, of McKeldin Library's Circulation Department, must be acknowledged. She, like Amrita, is a library patron's godsend.

For many years, Dr. Simon Auster has helped me stay in the ring fighting the good fight. Simon, who loves the practice of medicine and the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins, invites, for he loves, challenges. By personal example, sage advice, and his most comforting aid of all, medicine dispensed with realism, he spurs others to take on their own wanted challenges and dreams.

Lastly, I wish to thank my family. Chris and Margie never allowed me to give up on this "dream deferred." They have been patient beyond words. They have stood behind me semester after semester. Chris, far more than anyone else, has done without so that I could be done with this goal of a lifetime. We both appreciate that this accomplishment has depended on the love, dedication, and sacrifice among three. It has truly been with us, "all for one and one for all." And, so we remain.

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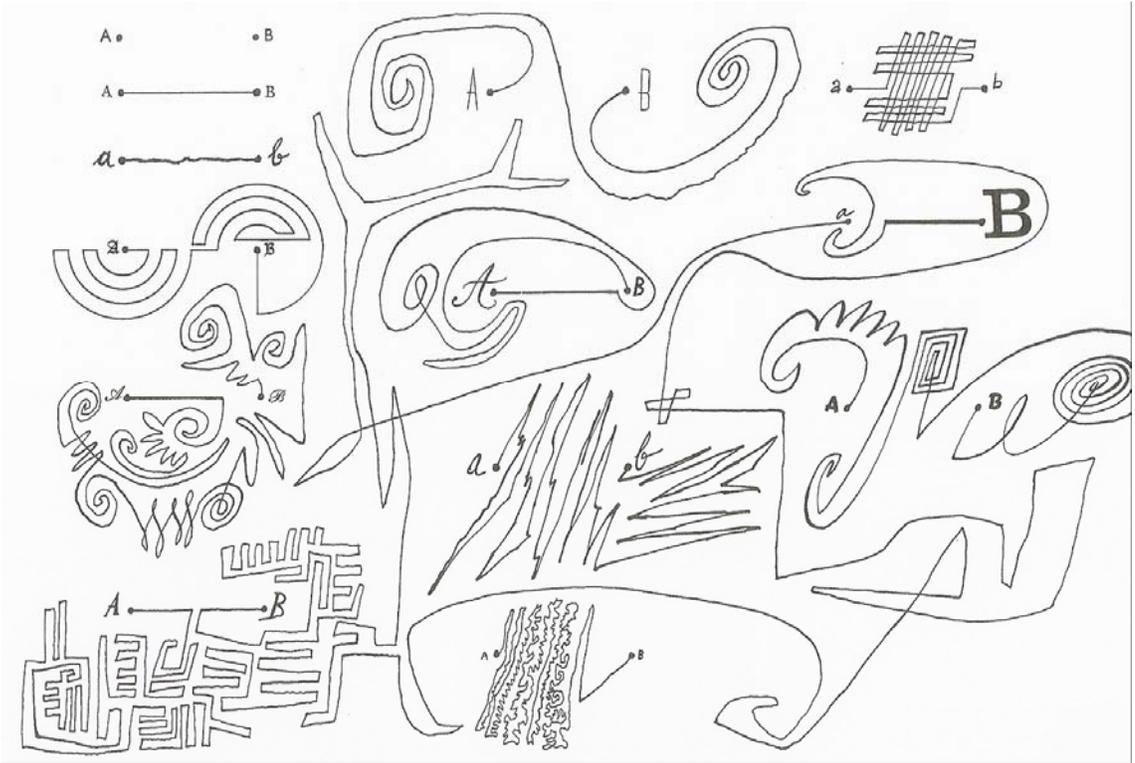


Figure 1. Saul Steinberg. A few of the innumerable routes to transit from A to B.

INTRODUCTION

No matter what position we take, it is eventually
to form that we must always come.
—Henri Focillon, *The Life of Forms in Art*

The mind [...] knows not what it knows deep.
—Reed Whittemore, “The Mind.”

On a date unknown to us, Emily Dickinson wrote the following:

That Love is all there is
Is all we know of love,
It is enough, the freight should be
Proportioned to the groove.

In their formal execution, the first two of this poem’s four lines honor an age-old pattern. At its simplest, the pattern juxtaposes two members, each of which has two items duplicated in reverse order. This particular configuration and its conveyance along the horizontal sequence a transverse symmetry. As with all symmetries, this linguistic one presumes an axis about which likenesses are uniformly disposed. Mathematicians refer to such dispositions on the different sides of an equilibrating axis as a state, effective or executable, of *superposing*. By custom and for purposes of simplification and convenience of reference, the superposable pattern in language, whether it is spoken or written, whether it is conveyed in poetry or prose, is abridged to *AB:BA*. The singlets *A* and *B* stand for the arrangement’s inverted items; the *AB* and *BA*, for the members generated from the combination and sequence of the singles. *Chiasmus* is the name given the *AB:BA* arrangement in English. The designation anglicizes the Greek letter chi (χ), but far more importantly, memorializes the letter’s essential crossing outline and shape. Although it takes some imaginative liberty, the name is apt, seeing as the physical reversing of items within a chiasm’s aligned or horizontal bi-membership is a linear version of a graphic

crisscross.¹ The conceptualizing conducted by the chiasmic pattern, what I call chi-thinking, depends on our very basic perceptual and experiential understanding of crossing and natural projections from that understanding. Therein is the importance of keeping this crisscross visual analogue before us as we investigate chiasmus and its lexico-syntactic operations and semantic and rhetorical outcomes—the subjects that are the focus of this disquisition.

Particulars as to the chiasmic mechanics conducting Dickinson's proclamation on love will be taken up later. The present value of her chiasm to these introductory remarks inheres in its relation to her message of the last two lines. The "freight should be/Proportioned to the groove" has about it the same defining and advisory quality and also the same telegraphic style as does the poetic decree on love. Dickinson's thumbnail definition advises that content or "freight" (here, specifically, love) should correspond (be an equivalent proportion) to the form or "groove." When correspondence or proportioning tenders between content and form, "It is enough." Presumably, sufficiency of content to form and form to content fulfills a desired, as well as inevitable consummation. In a lover-like imitation and concluding, the two come out even, in perfect unanimity. At this consilience of groove and freight, form and content reach a salvatory and presumably a beautiful accord: the two gathered fully as one.

It is not by accident that the form elected by Dickinson to speak on supreme love and this love's mysterious unity and autonomy exemplifies, as it simultaneously presents, the opening lines themselves. The poet correctly intuits that by its formal properties, a chiasmic arrangement is the ideal rhetorical choice for a digest to configure her love message—a message that, in turn, exemplifies, as it expounds on a form–content accordancy. Among its innumerable fashionings, chiasmus can self-style the recondite, adumbrate the *sui generis*, and insinuate that which is sufficient unto itself, this last a quality identified with the divine (Burke, *Religion* 2). What's more, this linguistic apparatus can accomplish these feats tirelessly, succinctly, and absent words to its direct effects. If that weren't enough, chiasmus is, bar none, the form to leave readers with the conviction 'enough said,' a message that operates at several levels in the small poem under consideration, but also and more widely, as to methodology, style, and attitude, over the entirety of the Dickinson canon. And thirdly and metaformally,

chiasmus realizes in its formal execution (i.e., in its formal pattern) the exquisite balance and conciliation, the honed synergy and condensation intimated of the freight–groove association.

Dickinson's selection of *groove* as a touchstone for form is a marvel in miniature—like chiasmus itself, as we hope to show. The poet has made the word nearly her own,² for although poetry has groves aplenty, its grooves are fewer and farther between.

Betweenness, as it happens, double-sidedness, and the channeling of some 'freightable' (transportable, variant, ultimately embeddable or containable) matter along a scored, formulating furrow—these are what grooves are about. And the same goes for chiasmus. The shared qualities inherent to the genera of grooves and the genera of chiasms are reasons why I savor how the former works as a wonderful descriptor for the latter. Allow me to explain.

The word *groove* prompts an image that activates the mind's eye, the mind's kinesthetics and dynamics, and, for some, the mind's ear. The mental imagery possesses, in the nature of the imagistic, physical and spatial qualities.³ A groove involves a physics of movement, progression, and constancy along a natural furrow, a fabricated champfer, or an artificially engraved channel. By its rigid verges and by certain salient serrations and indentations, the furrowing, champfering, or engravature directs and regularizes the conduction of the freight, be it real or supposed. Regularization, in combination with a trajectory, generates recurrence and rhythm. Movement, rhythm, and a host of additional dynamics notwithstanding, a groove also prompts a kind of statics: a strong and firm hold, a channel or line that, by its embedding or embanking, narrows, limits, and even keeps securely in place. This is the image of a trench, with its accompanying notions about entrenchment, fixation, and stasis. With this alternative reading, a groove adjusts, confines, pressures, and outright checks along measured, pre-formed, rigidifying and entrenching lines.

How does chiasmus relate to the materiality of a groove? and how do we explain these contrary readings?, to which Henri Focillon has allusion in the opening of his magisterial work on forms (4). The answer, I believe, goes directly to the adjectives *physical* and *spatial*, ideas about which run implicitly throughout the preceding paragraph. Not parenthetical is that dynamism and staticism are space quotients (Talmy, *Towards* 171–172). A response to the

questions leads, as well, to contemporary theory about the body's role in thought.

In the last three decades, the cognitive has revealed a new fold. You could rightly say, an enfolding to the body itself. Building from the landmark work of Mark Johnson in the late 1980s, cognitive studies have argued that the mind is not a privileged, sequestered realm, absent the body. To the contrary, the mental engrafts from the body. Dramatic anatomical alterations to the hand of our distant hominid predecessors as well as their fortuitous adoption of an upright posture and bi-pedalism, three changes preliminary to the genesis of *Homo sapiens*, are evolutionary biology's furtherance of the argument that our mental exercises do not develop or function free of bodywise exercises (Wilson 286–288). We cannot not think without that which the body imprints or has imprinted on it as the result of its in-the-world inspections, encounters, and transactions. This inward 'printing' contains embodied feelings and memorizations that structure the mind's attenuations from these. Said differently, the mind reasons through appropriations from latent somatic intelligences—visual, tactile, aural, kinesthetic (e.g., neurological, muscular), locomotive, etc. The content of embodied intelligence is predominately, critically spatial. This spatiality cannot be emphasized enough. Equally relevant is the integrality of space to chiasmus. Integrality has to do with the fact chiasmus erects, evinces, and convinces in the mental scene through an inconspicuous foundation. What is the 'material' of this foundation? It is the holdings in memory of the body as perception registrar of and mobile actor in space. In a sentence, embodied conception is space-based and chi-thinking is thinking in kind to embodied conceptualization. The treatise develops these claims with two purposes: (1) giving credit to chiasmus as a capacitor of thought, and (2) providing a preliminary look at the role of space in chi-thinking. The creditation and the provision are co-dependents in that chiasticity and the cognition wrought by it depend equally on factors of space. If this development is successful, it will show that chiasmus should be esteemed one of Space's firmest little believers and evangelists.

SPACE-FORMS MATTER

Space "insists on being sought, not 'once in a lifetime' but all through life."⁴ This dictum

flows from the pen of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the twentieth-century philosopher who put body at the center of human conception. According to this follower after the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, humankind perpetually seeks space because it is always there for the seeking; space never stops being relational, enigmatic, and, therefore, unsolved. Space is not resolved or isolable in itself. But happily for us, that's not the end of it. Not by far.

We are able to put bids on this forbiddingly undifferentiated penumbra. By isolating sectors of space, things can come to be thought on. Though space remains elusive and irretrievable, aliquots of it can be scooped up not by abstract intellectualizations, but rather by the most commonplace of somatic activities. In the course of the body's everyday 'taking part' in space, we unknowingly perform a kind of differential calculus segregating (taking apart) limitless space. Things spatially relegated and determined—things figured out (of space)—possess figure or form. That which has a spatial reality (a separate form) is realizable to the human mind. In simple, form nets meaning.

The paradox that space is out of mental bounds (past our understanding) and, yet, can be bounded to give smaller reason (form) invites triangulation performed by the astute analysis of Susanne Langer. In *Feeling and Form* (1953), she testifies that:

There are spatial relations, but there is no concrete totality of space. Space itself is amorphous [...]. It is a substrate of all our experience, gradually discovered by the collaboration of our several senses—now seen, now felt, now realized as a factor in our moving and doing—a limit to our hearing, a defiance to our reach. When the spatial experience of everyday life is refined by the precision and artifice of science, space becomes a coordinate in mathematical functions. It is never an entity.” (71–72)

Sounding much the disciple of phenomenology and Merleau-Ponty, Langer goes on to describe an inscrutable space, perpetually aloof. She implies that space is illimitable, neutral without exception, and hence never ever a given. Notwithstanding such knowledge impediments as space presents us with, mankind tackles this nonaligned substrate by way of his sensorial and other somatic aptitudes and feelings. Through these aptitudes and feelings, he acquires what I like to call virtual 'holds on space.' Consequent to the body's sense data and its physical and psychological involvements in this interminable fluidity that is home to his every moment and

move, man detains space and, so to speak, gathers up and holds to view and consideration sensible spatial allotments. With spatial detention and the specificity that devolves from it, he can orient himself and further divide and organize a fluctuant universe, its events, and its occupants, himself not least of all. In arguments that proceed almost in tandem, Langer and Merleau-Ponty separately describe how we comprehend the opaque spatial continuum by seizing and compassing it through sheer, sure shapes or patterns, structures that are comprehensible by virtue of having simple, regular, sensible organization. The compassed, organized spatial article, by its articulate unity, releases a thing self-sufficient, in-formed, and detached from an indifferent, otherwise undifferentiated substrate. Forms make a difference where there wasn't any, and this allowance (a word rife with spatial ramifications) bestows meaningful difference. The advent of space parted, resulting in a differentiated, comprehensible spatial unit, ushers in that which is related and relatable (Langer 74).

Here, Langer steps right up to the edge of and all but names the figure/ground theory that constitutes phenomenology's principled system. Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* maintains as theoretical and empirical commencing moment a perceiver whose embodied perceptions release from a continuous ground "a unit of experience" (3). Compact, solid-to-perception, and organized and outlined enough to sever from an obscure ground region, the experiential-spatial unit offers up significance. The shape unity is precious in that it "exercises a cognitive function" of the first order of epistemological and ontological magnitude (13). By virtue of its autonomy, the experiential-spatial unit becomes a thing to think on, to think about, and to think with. A shape that frees itself from the protyle lures the sensor by virtue of its "expressive unity" (206), that is, the unity, by its perceptual allure, makes needed as well as good, differential sense. It also carries its own formal legitimacy. Said another way, the shape unity bears itself out, self warrants its meaning; it is logically aligned or formally true to itself. The unfettered shape is suggestible, able to liberate significance and lift to thought by taking upon and 'holding' to itself spatial matter discernable (graspable) to the embodied subject/sensor. With these attributes of form toted up, we can better appreciate how it is that "Psychologically, [shape unities] are realized with preference" (Goldmeirer 73).

The shapes or forms that are most immediate and most certain (i.e., of greatest “preference”) in their address to human perception and feeling must be innately “coherent” and “articulate,” words that crop up over and over in Langer. This proposition, bedrock in *Feeling and Form*, is tantamount to creed among Gestalt theorists, such as Wertheimer, Rock, Goldmeirer, and Metzger,⁵ and it reigns as a sovereign article of faith in the perceptual studies of Merleau-Ponty. Of these most elementary “non-discursive” forms, Langer explicates that each is the lucid, expressive delegate of its own simple, yet individual “sentient pattern” and “logical arrangement” (29, 53). For Langer, the Gestaltists, and Merleau-Ponty, *logical* refers to an indispensable quality possessed by forms that are easily sensed and, thus, easily made sense of. Fluency devolves from forms whose internal parts and relations are simple and coherent, and whose organization is unqualifyingly articulate because all of a piece. Gestalten are fully, because structurally, lucid “whole qualities” (e.g., parallel lines, circles, spirals)⁶ that preclude “irrelevancies that might obscure [their elemental] logic” (Langer 59). With logic that is entire and entirely unambiguous—what we might call ‘stand-alone’ because that term points up their qualities of assertion and complete relief from ground—, gestalts retain and model a self-sufficient, singular order and outline. Accordingly, these most elementary forms congenial to our spatial intuitions (spatial feelings) do us this favor: they exhibit “significant function,” Langer’s phrase for the exudation of significance (26).

Merleau-Ponty and Langer in independent corroboration determine that our mindedness, which is always a search for meaning, is rooted in our embodiedness. On an assisting loan from Mark Turner, an intellectual founder of cognitive semantics, the body is the protagonist of the “basic stories we know best,” the “small stories of events in space” (*Literary Mind* 13).⁷ We process these space stories spontaneously, for they are too easy to tell: too simple and far too commonplace to recite to ourselves, much less others who’ve ‘heard’ them all before. Our super acquaintance with these stories is immediate, intuitive, transparent, and altogether unmindful. Yet, they are fundamental to cerebration. We must have these unwritten miniature stories because each is an essential narrative in itself and in the aggregate they comprise an anthology of ourselves as body protagonists in space. It is by metaphoric projections and

metonymic connections made from this invaluable, continually thumbed story anthology that conceptualization presses on and affords higher consciousness.

We cannot opt out of space. We cannot know aside from space; there's no skipping out of it. Forms are in the same bind.⁸ But while confined to space, forms endow it. They attain and abide spatially and for as long as they gather, befit, and hold tight onto space. Man is obliged to form for its seeing to and being of space. He is literally as well as poetically be-holden to these uniquely holding articles. That which cuts and shapes space, although seemingly spelling a demiurgic ethos, fills an interest that while primordial, is far more basic and crucial to the individual: emitting thought. It has been said that to space is to cognize (Langacker vi). If this is correct and if to form is to space, as our pair of commentators insist, then reason and syllogism would have it that to form is to cognize. This deduction is the very notion Merleau-Ponty and Langer have all along.

We come near to concluding this section of the Introduction with another Merleau-Ponty observation. The philosopher of phenomenology and perception remains instructive on the subject of what he calls "form-spectacle." Though hardly necessary to point out, *spectacle* is more than etymologically and empirically related to speculation. The form-spectacle, in my words now, is spatially and functionally self-possessed, fair (shape-full) and intelligible enough in and for itself to be made sense of by us. These are vital properties asserted by chiasmus, properties that are inceptive to its rhetorical force and that redound to universal patronage.

Furthermore, form-spectacle relates to what Merleau-Ponty calls the "autofigurative," meaning that formal structure "is first of all a spectacle of itself before it is a spectacle of something outside of it."⁹ Langer accentuates, as well, that "form is first, and [its] representation function accrues to it" (70, emphasis original). Form's self-demonstration as prior to its bestowal of form and, hence, form's meaningful modeling to some export (representation), sets forward what Langer, under the influence of Kant and Schiller, calls 'semblance.' For Langer and Merleau-Ponty a form must be entire in itself, which is to say that it must be logically immaculate (i.e., self-sufficient) in its spatio-physical pattern and in its pattern's inspiration of an intuitive feeling in humankind, if it is to assume its job as a formal

prototype with the means to exemplify for derivative forms of greater structural complexity.

Merleau-Ponty and Langer's notions of space-form relation, being and knowing (perceiving) through structure, and auto-figuration directly bear on chiasmus. By means of its own spatial attributes—parallelism, symmetry, internal consistency, logic, self-framed contour, etc.—, chiasmus performs as it does. Put more directly, chiasmus is a structure that structures. It structures beyond itself, but in performances that, more or less, enact its structural self, its meaningful blueprint with its 'instructions' as to the building pattern. This self-reflective (auto- and inner-reflective) figuring knocks at the well-beaten door of Erich Auerbach. Mimesis, or, in the contemporary vernacular of Norman Bryson, the "idea of the *vraisemblable*" (*Word 9*, *passim*), is a concern inseparable from man's most sublime cognitive trait: structuring (forming) representations. Mimesis, semblance and *verisemblance*—these are key to appreciating chiasmus and in their combinant role we will attend them shortly.

CHIASMUS: FULLY COGNIZANT

In his slim but invaluable work *On Knowing*, Jerome Bruner references our dependence on the various "operational techniques" by which we reason, or rather more specifically, by which we synthesize, arrive at, and represent understandings and by which we come to and symbolize knowledge (72). I regard chiasmus as just such a *modus operandi*. It deserves recognition as a core operator within the mental environs of humankind. Chi-reasoning and chi-representing have stood permanent cognitive residents in the tenure of humans. I maintain that this longtime residency follows directly on chiasmus being inordinately formed, that is, with a loan from Dickinson, deeply grooved and, thereby, deeply guiding, impressing, and in-forming. Chiasmus marshals and energizes, compels and controls the articulations (the freight) educed from its conceptually compelling grooves. In its physical and spatial grooves, chiasmus wields its representational entrenchments. In the fashion of grooves and forms, chiasmus both 'holds' and releases. Then, too, in the diffident way of grooves and forms, chiasmus can disappear into the action it guides and patternizes.

But, how do you unearth a groove and arrive at it alone? free and pure of that which it

channels? Doesn't form, in effect, vanish under our fingers, either crumbling by our meddling examination or retreating according to its usual disappear-into-content act? This is one of the greater challenges facing any inquiry into the influences of form. It is the perennial form-content conundrum humans have been plagued with from the start; but, yet, the very one that chiasmus tantalizes us with, as much as it did Emily Dickinson.

Writ large, the treatise navigates in linguistic and rhetorical waters. It rows within the vicinity of that vast continent that deals with the structure- semantics relation. It keeps that continent in near constant sight, but any full-scale landing is left to those with more daring. As writ, the focus of the treatise restricts to a quest that is narrower: a single discourse structure and its facility for patterning thought consonant with that structure. The patterning exercises along recurrent, identifiable lines. The phrase 'identifiable lines' is another way of saying that chiasmus, the specific thought structure under analysis, directs meaning. Accounting for the meaning affordances chiasmus systematically sponsors is a major task herein.

I hypothesize that the chiasmic pattern channels an impressive roster of cognitive outcomes. This hypothesis contests persisting notions that the device is parasitic in that it limits to a subsidiary stylistic item or ornamental feature that if scuttled wouldn't really matter other than for the possible loss of taffeta's glitter. Under dismissive rubrics, chiasmus has been judged a mere 'figure of style' with perhaps only local and, then, of passing worth. Lowly chiasmus: no impressive 'figure of thought,' no trope of the first order, and certainly no competitor in the league of metaphor, synecdoche, and metonymy.

In contradistinction, I maintain that if these prejudices are set aside we shall find chiasmus evinces a major pattern in human thought, one that is impressively contributive to reasoning, argument, learning, and expression. Evidence of this can be located in the device's utility and vitality. The degree to which this small, seemingly simple device of finite pattern propagates widely over human cognition owes, considerably, to a near infinite permutative capacity. But proliferation ultimately has much more to do with what chi-ception is good for. Chi-thinking guides for and outputs a prodigious range of concepts and conceptual processes and outcomes. Just as fascinating is that chi-thinking proceeds, in the main, along one of two

opposing ways. As the discussion will demonstrate, the representation and conceptual typology of chiasmus turns out to be inordinately dichotomous.

Our involvements in chi-thinking constitute the general thrust of the discussion. Identifying and discriminating, but also giving explanation and systematization to some of the primary and various uses to which we put chi-thinking are tasks that occupy many pages to come. Describing chiasmic uses and differentiating among them begins to lay open the dominance and diversity of chiastic cognition. To suggest the paramountcy of this appliance in the cognitive arsenal requires an imparting of its phenomenal semantic and rhetorical adaptability, variability, richness, and complexity. By attributing to chiasmus what I believe is its honestly earned, but widely overlooked place within that arsenal, the project aims to make reserved addition to understanding cognitive devices in the aggregate. At the same time, and more generally and more reservedly still, the project aspires to make addition to the arts and sciences working to plumb that deepest, most secretive of all dominions: the human mind.

FROM THE GROUND UP

Chiasmus acts as a premier appliance by which humans think and, as such, it deals in humankind's "ways of being and behaving" (Arnheim, *Dynamics* 263). It runs the gamut of meaning-filled human involvements: the conceiving of entities, states, conditions, and events as well as their concretization in representational assemblies; categorization and identity; causality and interaction; alterity, development, reversal, and change, to name some. Within its cognitive repertoire chiasmus counts other essentials, such as likeness and difference, partitioning and totality, duality and reciprocation. Placement, displacement, and replacement, and implicit in these, the equally critical performances of movement and directionality are other cognitive facilitations. Chi-thinking obliges, as well, ideas of coordination, subordination, overlap, intersection, and integration. Gifted in these and a crowd of other cognizing operations, chiasmus shows a flair for juggling several at one.

Determining the capacities of any cognitive mechanism requires that its measure be gauged with respect to the current yardstick of human conceptualization. That yardstick

encompasses, but is not by any means exclusive to, studies carried out in contemporary cognitive studies. This non-exclusivity shouldn't startle. To the contrary, it accords with the converging evidence indicating that across the mental spectrum, including the mind's highest high-wire inventions and achievements,¹⁰ humans draw on a non-depleting, ubiquitous source with which they are intimate: the body's corpus of basic knowledge gathered from ordinary physical and psychological forays in the world. This embodied knowledge is pansophic. It is also schematic, preverbal, and imagistic. This last term should not be mistaken to mean the visual only, although embodied schemas heavily rely on, as they document and provide for, what the eyes register. *Image schema* connotes gestalts with spare content about inhabiting the physical world and interacting with it as bodied creatures. The primitive content of these gestalts is indispensable exactly because it is unexceptional: acultural, ahistorical, and nonverbal.

Whether entertaining passing or very familiar, plain-Jane thoughts or, instead, bogged down in complex exertions of apperception, mathematical computation, memorization, discovery, or fine discrimination,¹¹ humans manipulate mental schema that are elemental, yet seldom conspicuous. Instinctively and inveterately, we set to interpreting and learning with schema such as SOURCE-PATH-GOAL; FORWARD-BACK, SIDE-TO-SIDE, and RIGHT-LEFT; PART-WHOLE; INTERIOR and EXTERIOR, BOUNDARY and ENCLOSURE; CENTERICITY; ADJACENCY; BALANCE; VERTICALITY/UPRIGHT, HORIZONTALITY/LATERAL, and DIAGONALITY/ASLANT. Then, too, STRAIGHT and CURVED, MOTION, DIRECTION, ENABLEMENT, CONTRACTION, NATURAL and MECHANICAL FORCE DYNAMICS, IMPACT, CHANGE, and CAUSALITY are vital schematic tools.

An illustration will be gainful. For ordering and construing the world, symmetry is sainted. Summarized (i.e., schematized) as a balanced arrangement consolidating around a center, SYMMETRY partners with, because it presumes ADJACENCY, BALANCE, and CENTRICITY. Syndications between schema are the norm and they, like schema themselves, are not remarked upon as we go about thinking.¹² In the case of di-symmetry along the horizontal, LATERALITY has an exceptional involvement. Humans obtain essential schematic meaning by the two-sided

symmetrical correspondence inherent in the body and the body's balancing acts, which are innumerable, obligatory, incessant, and discharge at microscopic and macro levels. Man has an innate need to "connect the right and the left," Turner professes (*Reading Minds* 69).

Sensing something at a point to the right had better not be fundamentally different from sensing the same thing at a corresponding point to the left. Performing a movement to the left had better be very tightly connected to performing the mirror movement to the right. We would be fatally inefficient if we had to learn everything twice, once to the left and once to the right [...].
(69–70)

Congruence between right and left makes for efficiency. It also makes excellent sense to us, because it is like (onto) us. Bi-lateralism mimics and does right by, for it arranges equivalent to, the body that must move about, touch, respond to, interact with, and 'take in' (i.e., sense) our amorphous surround. We are perpetually on the look out for regularization and recurrence and, handily, symmetry orders up both and bids notice. Bi-lateral symmetry, in fact, is in the eye of the beholder, the fovea a slender, but neuron-crammed axis to either side of which acuity of the retinal field's sense data falls off laterally the farther the micro-distance from this visually sharp, anatomically- and physiologically-defined medio point. To "make report of things," it is not just "the ear and the eye [that] must have their logic," as Langer suggests (55, emphasis original). The hand must, too. Automorphic arrangements (e.g., Fig. 2) obviously catch and cater to the sighted. But these self-agreeable arrangements are also taken in and understood by the blind, who, in order to know and "report of things" in their environs, instinctually and habitually proceed to gather information by tactile explorations that are bi-laterally symmetric in their physical execution.¹³

Sensitivity to right–left relations is such that if we keep our heads still and then close our eyes and think of space, say, first to the left of us and then to the right, we obtain "something far stronger than an idea" of movement and direction. Those who try this, explains William James, will experience "an actual feeling, namely, as if something in the head moved" (*Principles* 137–138). James's in-the-head experiment evidences how lateralization is registered at the level of pure body sensation and occurs absent any external object that displays

and, therefore, actually stimulates bi-lateral symmetry.¹⁴ Immanuel Kant, who made up his own experiment about blindfolding and orientation in thought and in space, concluded that our bi-lateral bodily existence, “the distinct feeling of our right and left sides,” determines the horizontal plane, which, in turn, effects the “regions which we designate by the terms above and below.” If this directional and spatial supremacy weren’t enough, right–left constitutes what Kant identifies as “the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Regions in Space,” which is the title of his important essay on space and man’s orientation within it. The Kantian eschatology works out that the intelligibility of the world proceeds from and, therefore, depends upon the corporeal template for left and right that we simultaneously exhibit and inhabit (Kant qtd. in Casey, *Fate* 206–209).¹⁵



Figure 2. Leopard-head ornament, Edo peoples, Nigeria.

This special side-by-side symmetry, which is physically inscribed on and in our body and which is projected by us onto the factual as well as the counterfactual, exacts, compacts, and secures significant relations through its systematizing and inherent logic. It is this systematizing and logic that confers upon bi-lateral symmetry extrapolative and predictive values; it is paramount as a standard by which we instinctively judge material and non-material fact.

Mimicking humankind's embodied structure and large quantities of man's states of being, bi-lateral symmetry has occupied, perennially and across all cultures, the seat of order for art and architecture, decoration and design (Fig. 2). In fact, the earliest artifact found to date (and in large quantity) reveals our predilection for bi-lateral design. The *Acheulian* hand axe, regarded as man's first technological–artistic triumph, was a common aesthetic as well as practical tool-making/tool-using 'program' for peoples living across Africa, the Middle East, and southern Europe.¹⁶ Our fascination and reliance on this symmetry has never known obsolescence.

In the external world, it is a fixture, a familiar, and a preoccupier. We presuppose it at every turn. Even though science generally presumes an elite impartiality, Einstein favored and sought an almost classical symmetry in his hypotheses concerning the universe's mechanics and grand ordering schemes. This remarkable conceptualist shares our natural psychological, perceptual, and aesthetic prejudice toward symmetry. Literally, bi-lateral symmetry turns with us (our bodies) and hangs on our every motion, even our mere thought of motion. Right–left symmetry, which for Kant orients the cosmos and everything it contains, is the preeminent, unquestioned structuring mechanism for “our perceptions, actions, and imaginings” (Turner 70).

Of the longer excerpt from *Reading Minds*, you are likely to have caught how Turner lexicalizes (with his *right to left* and *left to right*) and grammatically performs the mirroring, back-and-forth movement of chiasmus. Chiasmus is ever the willing party to the conduction of bi-lateral symmetry, including acting a demonstrator–authenticator of the topic itself. A mirror instrument, sideways connector across a vertical axis, a registrant of handedness, and a sequencer of reverse likeness within a self-realized spatial confine, chiasmus readily exploits bi-lateral symmetry's natural hegemony in human conceptualization and, by this exploitation, substantially comes into its cognitive own and attains its cognitive influence.

Image schemas, those discussed in an earlier paragraph along with others not enrolled there, retain the recurring essentials of human embodiment. They archive the rudiments of the body's physical sense registrations, undertakings, intuitions, and realizations and catalogue these rudiments according to non-propositional, yet meaningful spatial digests. In *The Body in*

the Mind (1987), Mark Johnson enumerated the embodied gestalts he determined the more important (126). In 2004, William Croft and D. Alan Cruse (45) and, in 2006, Vyvyan Evans and Melannie Green (171–191) sorted image schema nominated and assayed in the relatively brief interval since Johnson’s publication.

Investigations into human cognition conducted over this thirty-year period conclude that whatever the endeavor or echelon, thinking materializes from this ground of embodied understanding. Investigators emphasize the level of generality consistent across image schema and the minimal number of parts and relations that make up an individual schema. Generality and spareness enable image gestalts to “structure indefinitely” (Johnson 29), that is, to predicate a virtually limitless variety of projections. Johnson and other pioneers in the field of the incarnate or fleshed mind, George Lakoff, Giles Fouconnier, Mark Turner, and Leonard Talmy, established early on that image schematic primality correlates with its unnoticed background. To detect the influence of image schemas and our projecting from them requires conscious extraction and descriptive belaboring. Highly effortful deliberations are necessary for detection because we little heed the *a priori* mechanisms, structures, and constraints founding higher cerebration. Our habitual disregard of these bare-boned imagistic catchments is advantageous for it greases the wheels of automaticity and insures facility of processing.¹⁷ These investigators determined that schematic content is chiefly composed of the body’s activities, proficiencies, and solutions. They further found that content limits to the spatial-physical realm and to routine perceptions and commonplace understandings of that realm garnered in the course of what humans have presumed to be the body’s unremarkable spatio-physical engagements and performances. Thus, the necessity for the succinct spatial stories both encapsulating and consequent of our embodied experience in space.

Embodiment holds the *prima materia* of conception. In the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty, the external world “pivots” on body since the corporeal is the sole “medium” through which we can make out or make anything, that is, any unity (structure) at all (*Perception* 82, 203). W. H. Auden’s abstruse, one-time cagey profession that “Only body can be communicated” grows prescient, given that we can never not have body in mind.¹⁸

THE IMAGE SCHEMATIC RELIANCES OF CHIASMUS

Far from my body being for me no more than
a fragment of space, there would be
no space at all for me if I had no body.
—Maurice Merleau-Ponty,
Phenomenology of Perception

With respect to cognition, the body may not be disowned and neither may its spatial perceptions or responses to and practices in space. At birth (and likely before that), the body signs on to an apprenticeship as spatial engineer/activist. This apprenticeship lasts a lifetime. From ostensibly unremarkable somatic engineerings and actions, our “primitive bodily feelings” comprise none other than mental registrations of spatial relations. This is what William James astutely judged in his magnum opus *The Principles of Psychology* (148). The body’s empirical “sense-feelings,” on James’s analysis, are not just comparable to “space-feelings” and “space-perceptions” (268–269): space is what sensing senses, meaning what it measures, experiences, and records. In several regards, the self-professed “radical empiricist” who became America’s first phenomenologist got there ahead of contemporary theory’s credo that the mind’s simplest to most elaborate processes and productions grow out of our embodied, spatial being.

Cognitive theory italicizes that we don’t just flesh things out now and then. Rather, thought, reasoning, emotion, language, representation, belief, exploration, and revelation as well as the ‘lesser’ mental affluence that supports them are rooted in the flesh, and because fleshed, are predominantly spatial. The upshot of these observations with respect to the present project has already been named: that the measure of the chiastic enterprise cannot be sufficiently understood minus space. The import is that chiasmus, both as a general cognitive instrument and in its individual instantiations, devolves from the contributions of elementary schema summarizing existence in space. Despite the essentialism of this reliance, it has not been noticed, much less evaluated.

Schemas come bearing space. They are the small, unremarkable spatial stories that Turner speaks of. Through effigizing spatial organizations and relations, schemas are available

for the spatial programs of chiasmus as they guide our percipience of those programs. To make this point, let us select a single sample from the schematic roster provided above.

BALANCE is a schema of chiastic reliance. Chiasmus has been described as a “balanced passage whereof the second part reverses the order of the first part” (Shipley qtd. in Fetzer 233). Although accentuating chiastic balance, this description or, more specifically, BALANCE itself implicates PART-TO-WHOLE (balance, in theory and in practice, is an affair between two) and FORWARD-BACK. These last schema, in concert with BALANCE, implicate and collaborate with other schema, such as CENTERING and ADJACENCY. To reiterate, it is the nature of schema to come together and work cooperatively. The description’s mention of order reversal induces DISPLACEMENT. The citing of “passage,” which invokes a path-like situation, summons the exceptionally influential schema of PATH.¹⁹ The chiastic PATH arrives from the idea of a language line, the extent of which we know to be comprised of discourse. With respect to chiastic linearity, the linguistic order notably takes a forward followed directly by a back DIRECTION, which fuels ideas relating to change and alteration. Since the DIRECTION schema obtains between the two constituent parts of a chiasm, it dynamizes and thus further accentuates PART-TO-WHOLE and the condition of BALANCE. Due to the actuating of opposing directions, POLARITY and MOTION are implicit. As the result of entertaining polarity, interchange, and opposition, SYMMETRY and GROUPING automatically self invite (Turner, *Reading Minds* 86–87). These last named schema, the projections from which are exceptionally privileged in human cognition, intimate containment as they reinforce gestalts already invoked, FORWARD-BACK, PART-TO-WHOLE, ADJACENCY.

With only a cursory sketch of one definition for chiasmus, we discover we’re swarmed by image schema, only some of which we took aim at just now, and, too, we’re alerted to their syndication and reinforcement of one another. As you might suspect, the swarm is irrespective of a given definition for chiasmus; rather, it is liable to the particular item under analysis, an item profoundly vested in space.

To start to understand this investiture we can look to an appreciation that chi-ception consists of two main types: the associative chiasmus and the dissociative. Name just about any

mental activity, including those that don't require language—for instance, putting a jigsaw puzzle together, listening to music, playing cards, deciding the direction from which a sound originates—, and it is evident that associating and dissociating are towering capacities. Space is the organizational condition behind association and dissociation practices. It requires but a single step back etymologically to confirm that this association–dissociation dichotomy is, at base, spatial. Jean Piaget confirms that first lessons in the child's mental primer involve this most basic dichotomy to which we are perpetually indebted: specifically, putting like objects together and realizing them connected or involved with one another and, conversely, separating out the unlike and realizing them to be heterogeneous rather than homogeneous. As a young lesson taker gains more familiarity and competence with spatial association–dissociation, the world, its goings-on, and its objects, herself among them, grow more lucid, space wise and, consequently, otherwise. No matter that grownups like to appraise themselves the intellectual superiors of children, we never stop being cognitively enjoined (!) to this pair of space-based primes.

On account of its unique spatial architecture, chiasmus patterns both association and dissociation. Any specific chiasm, within its own orbit, facilitates some quantity of the associating-dissociating practices of the genus. Chiasmus in general and chiasms individually come by its/their patterning facility innately: which is to say, autofiguratively. These autofigurings induce more fine-grained conceptualizing, as, for instance, determinations along a spectrum that ranges from synonymous to homonymous.

Three of the four chapters that follow enlarge on the auto-forming conceptualizations that chiasmus potentiates. We shall explore how chi-ception generates everything from the most prosaic of associating-dissociating productions to those of fabulous nuance. Before we journey to these areas that invite exploration, two orchestrating principles operant across the conceptualizing board, including chiasmic cognition, must be dealt with. They are iconicity and profiling. These are basic instruments of human cognition and they are part and parcel of thinking through space and, consequently, thinking through chiasmus.

SPATIALITY: THE BEST OF ICONIC INTENTIONS

Coined by Charles Morris in *Signs, Language and Behavior*, *iconicity* designates an analogy between an object, situation, action, or idea and an alternative with features in common with the signified. Through its formal (featural) demonstration, the icon bears witness to the object, situation, action, or idea provoking the analogy. Provocation arises from a want to identify, signify, or entify. The want makes itself known through the icon itself, which materializes or more or better materializes the article to which the icon lends spacio-physical form. The icon's resemblance is only ever proximal. In the way of all proxies, iconic signs or references "simplify and abbreviate what they stand for" (Haiman, *Natural Syntax* 11; see also *Iconicity and Syntax*). Since the unicity of iconicity exists strictly in theory, actual semblance remains a matter of degree. The "strength of the iconic sign" lies in its relative "ability to present for inspection what it signifies" (Morris 191). With the notion of re-presentation, we find ourselves having navigated a full circle, arriving back at the individual, but neighboring doorsteps of Auerbach and Merleau-Ponty.

Eric Auerbach privileges classical works of literature in his justly celebrated iconicity program, a program with future connections to Jonathan Culler's stance on the dominance of tropology.²⁰ Morris proclaims that the extent to which iconic procedures proliferate in literature—Auerbach's verisimilitude in description, image, figure, symbol, and expression—distinguishes this area of human endeavor beyond the iconicity that is natural to language as a whole.²¹ Literature and the iconic are fast friends, the former seeming unable to do without the latter. The same holds for pictorial art. Morris explains that an individual painting functions as "a single compound icon" (Culler's trope, pictured large) materializing out of a variety of smaller iconic signs (Morris 193). The minuteness of signs reduces even to the delicate verisimilar brushstrokes that telegraph an artist's larger message.²²

Morris neglects that iconicity in the visual and verbal arts has an early ontogeny. How early the onset is evidenced in children's picture books and in their own art productions, which come paired with accompanying explanations to admirers or to themselves only of what 'happens' in their drawings. Pictorial and discourse iconicity includes masterworks and a huge

field of the lesser than.²³ Appreciation doesn't have to be sophisticated in the way we usually take that word. Iconicity need not be arty. It can be as simple as the repeating of the same word for the repeating of the same action in a game of dice and as down home as a diagram for assembling an outdoor grill or for hanging a shelf.²⁴

The simplification and abbreviation of the icon bring to mind the Gestalt and figure/ground detection systems. These perceiving systems, which I estimate to be non-optional, presume a vernacular of simple, cohesive, unmistakable forms. Merleau-Ponty insists on the figure as unitary. It is that which in the perceptual sphere exhibits a fully organized spatial structure such that it juts clearly apart from that sphere's less organized or undifferentiated sprawl. This same unity defines the pure forms of auto-figuration, these forms being the first to make their appearance known and to cut loose from the confusion of the ground. As the result of an elementary, but meaningful structure that ensures a spatial whole of exceptional legibility, the unity structure has that sharp, presenting edge, the one that can slice itself decisively free of the surrounding randomness. By command of its irrefutably unified structure, the elite (pure) form or figure can and does make bold: that is, perceptible and, thereby, cognizable through a sure presence of spatial holding. The bold structural footing self-afforded by this select group of simple, legible, take-as-read forms supports greater formal complexity. Because immaculate—clear-cut, intelligible, formally and meaningfully (logically) complete in themselves—they are made to pattern and package more involved structure.

The procedures guided by simplicity, proximity, and order, those procedures the Gestalt and figure/ground domains insist upon as primary in human perception, mobilize what we might dub the first generation and close-on-its-heels second generation of space forms. Topological elements (Gen-1: attachment, grouping, addition, succession, subtraction, separation, enclosure, etc.) and the elementary shapes of geometry (Gen-2: circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, etc.) function as the first tier for down line spatial constructions.²⁵ Icons, which tie down a signified through having a perceivable presence, automatically look to the spatial primacy and logic of topology and geometry for their representing tasks. For instance, a greater physical distance between the subject and object in sentences iconize the relational

difference (e.g., psychologically or emotionally) between the items represented.²⁶ Iconic lengthening at the syntactical level is conceived and expressed to readers through separation, a Gen-1 property. Iconicity, the incalculable worth of which rests in making present or making more accessible to the corporeal needs of our senses, orders up its materializing from the spatial data summarized and repositied in the embodied mind. The icon successfully communes (means) because its representations prove fluent in and, thus, influential of space.

Chiasmus is a *spectacle* in the manner of Merleau-Ponty's use of the term. It carries a visual presence born from spatio-material unity and by means of this perceivable unity chiasmus has the spatial know-how to figure meaning, identity, and being beyond itself. The individual chiastic spectacle owns an exceptional meaning advantage in that it conducts spatial relations several times over. The unique architecture of chiasmus and the cognitive operations emitting from its spatial multiplications contain vast sums of iconic signification.

At this commencing juncture, we can just hint at the prodigious spatiality belonging to chiasmus. A way to broach the issue is through a nomenclature that discriminates at a finer spatial level than the standard $AB:BA$ formula.

The nomenclature's A and B symbolize for phonemic, lexical, phrasal, metrical, or other linguistic features, so long as they are identical or are near identical across the formula. With partial notational cue from a cognitive grammar systematician, the n-dash (–) in the formula below represents one order of combination between items; the single m-dash (—) represents a higher level of combining and accounts for a more complex structure.²⁷ The parentheses and square brackets better capture, or at least make more plain, the framed precincts that generate a more than fair share of spatial meaning. This elaboration to $AB:BA$ is as follows:

$$([(A) - (B)] — [(B) - (A)])$$

Through visual articulation (as Langer would say), the formula points up topological space relations of proximity, distance, connection, likeness, grouping, difference, division, separation, and alternation. It is a gross understatement to say that humans put store in constructs of boundary and enclosure. These two topologic notions, which can be classed under

frame operations, are underlined for us through the formula above. By this more nuanced notation to the $AB:BA$ formula, factors of a Euclidean or mathematical nature obtain greater pronouncement: parallelism, antimerism, bi-lateral symmetry, equilibrium, double polarity, centricity or axially, horizontal lineation, the counter positioning of observe and reverse, and an inward or centripetal pull. The extended formula, due to its enhancement of ideas about part-to-whole and part-to-part, recovers levels and relationships of chiasmic space. It underlines movement, the choreography of which arises from the segregates (A) and (B) duplicating and crossing an axis of symmetry, an axis that they, in fact, foist through replication and reversal. The over-axis ‘movement,’ which naturally incurs the concept of displacement, orders an exchange between a primary and a secondary position within a bracketed set. Further, we easily envision how a [(A) – (B)] half ‘wants to’ fold/cross/carry over onto the second [(B) – (A)] portion or, we envision, the just as applicable reverse, how the second half [(B) – (A)] ‘seeks to’ fold/cross/carry over onto the original portion, the [(A) – (B)]. This envisioning proceeds according to the dictates of symmetry: specifically, the conduction of operations of congruence. But, to these alternate operational exercises, a third possibility exists: namely, that the two halves, as though *en face*, fold simultaneously toward one another in a kind of physical meeting, upright and face on. With this tandem inward turning, the congruence garners a somewhat different character, of a perfectly met compromise. Folding, an action strongly identified with the human hands, elicits several issues. Some are obvious: isomorphism and, relatedly, mirroring; some, less obvious: orientation and direction, like face to face. Handedness is very much a corporeal underwriter of chiasmus, a figure devoted to ideas and representations of ‘on the other hand.’ And, finally, the extended formula brings forward a geography of juxtaposition, contact, and separation, which, along with other chiasmatic properties (enclosure, boundaries, face-to-face situations, mirroring or reflection, likeness, difference, return, and so forth), can index psychological attitudes and feelings (e.g., isolation).

This topological, geometric, and geographic précis offers but a first pass at the lengthy, altogether impressive spatial resume of chiasmus. Notwithstanding the insufficiency of this gloss, it can be stated that chiasmus volunteers its personal pattern as a cognitive role model

good to emulate—where *good* is largely taken in the sense and import of Gestalt sensory recognitions. Emulation steers by way of spacio-physical iconicity. In the organic world, the physical replication of a critical function in nature better ensures the successful function and survival of the organism and, thus, species perpetuation. The organism survives by morphologies that fit and conduce to respective functions. Chiasmus endures similarly; that is, by being a good fit for certain ideational functions. This is but another way of saying that chiasmus actualizes its own small display. Depend upon it, and we do, figural validity rests on self-spectacles of forms, what has been identified as Gestalten. Little surprise then that the highly formalized chiasmus persists through imitation worthiness. To quote a popular adage, chiasmus leads by example. And, just as with mentors in various social spheres who, for others, exemplify—model, conduct, and idealize—in themselves a certain behavior or sought outcome, chiasmus does likewise. It figures morphologically, by good, fitting example.

A general claim made by this treatise is that chiasmus underwrites semantics through its exemplification of formal meaning. “Form is feeling,” as Henri Foucillon famously wrote. And space, as discussed, is protogenic to feeling. Chiasmus is ever the spatialist. The device doubles, at the least, its rhetorical bets by enacting in itself, in its spatio-physical form and the feelings derivative from that form, major or critical aspects of the message(s) it conveys. Closeness of message to the message’s form shapes a production that gains clout variously. Iconic presentations have an increased chance of getting the message over, of bequeathing greater import, of being or seeming more notable or dynamic, psychologically intense, and aesthetically appealing. “The iconic force in language,” explain Geoffrey Leech and Michael Short, “brings realistic illusion to life” and “dramatizes meaning” (236, 243). The language scholars contend that iconicity in language affords “a new dimension” (236). Any one or any combination of these factors tends to motivate a memorable, twice-is-nice (imitative) production.

The chiasmatically-rendered production generally convinces as ‘a thing in itself,’ a full presence. This facet of chiasmus may have already come through for you in Dickinson’s poem. The device plots out, enfolds, and commands a restricted locality. It appears to gather and

concentrate its own miniature domain. This domain, as is characteristic of chiasmus, is a two-in-one arrangement. A perceptual-kinetic field and a syntactic-semantic field overlap within the chiasmic domain. Articulations of the chiasmic pattern incline toward the creation of a totality (a domain) with those rhetorically positive convictions of a thing with presence and, better still, a thing fully, inwardly formed and, therein, complete in itself. The outer parentheses of the alternative formula produced above attempt to capture that completeness and to suggest the envelopment that is a critical attribute of chiasmus, which is sometimes referred to as the ‘envelope pattern.’

We are now ready to take up our second term, *profiling*. Our escort is Ronald Langacker, expert in the mental complexities and uniformities that abide in linguistic structuring, especially as these relate to space. He avers that for any entity or “designatum” some elements will be cognitively discriminated, but others will not (187). That which stands out and is attended to, Langacker nominates the *profile*; the unattended of the designatum, he nominates the *base*. Borrowing not only Langacker’s terminology, but his general approach, I maintain that some portion of the entire panoply of chiasmatic affordances (what we might call the ‘chiasmatic base’) will be profiled in an individual chiasm, while others remain uncalled upon. They are reservists that, for a present occasion, are detained in the inclusive affordance base. The activating of one cognitive routine innate to (i.e., a meaning property of) our elected reasoning/representing operator may well evoke other properties. And, too, different degrees of activation are likely across the potentiality span. On the subject of profiling and relations between routines or properties that are the components of some thought-about entity (e.g., a grammatical entity), Langacker requires citing in full.

It cannot be expected that precisely the same group of relational routines will be achieved on every occasion, or that all of them will ever be activated on the same occasion. We can suppose, however, that some relational routines have sufficient centrality [...] that they are activated virtually every time the symbolic unit [or entity] is invoked. In fact, some relational routines (representing more intrinsic properties) are plausibly analyzed as components of others, making their activation essentially obligatory. (163)

Langacker’s comments have far-reaching ramifications across studies of cognition. For

instance, since a profile is a salient substructure or sub-feature ceded prominence out of a base of greater magnitude, the relation of profile and base comprises one instance of figure/ground organization. If we cast an eye back to our earlier sketch of image schema in defining chiasmus or to the *précis* directly above, we readily admit how one spatial property can automatically evoke others, especially when they belong to a related category. Profiling also has to do with iconicity. An icon can be a vital and substantial communicator of meaning, but none is ever “all-sufficient” to or an “absolute criterion” of the meaning for which it offers itself (Morris 193–195). The iconic sign is more or less isomorphic with respect to meaning, but it is never isogenous. In other words, the icon selects as special (it profiles) a dimension or dimensions of base. Finally, Langacker authorizes us to forecast that *chi*-thinking will profile some properties for a given chiastic entity, but disregard others. All cognitive, including iconic enterprises drive hard bargains of discrimination.²⁸ How else to make a difference? to get a fix on or to gain any assurance of things? Profiling takes place without conscious effort as it coalesces with other apposite mental involvements. Automaticity, as I have noted before and will again, is in the vein of conceptualizing and semiotic systems and activities within these systems. We are life-long addicts of the automatic. Profiling and iconicity are instances of that addiction.

TOEING THE LINE

Human conceptualization heavily relies on normative, in-the-world, somatic engagements with paths and physical transversal along them. Our species’ corporeal traces through space and over time have extension, taking up beginnings, intervals, and ends in the manner of the ordinary empirical path. Sensations and experiences of extension—felt as early as the newborn’s tentative reach of fingers—attain summary, memorial form in a schema nominated SOURCE-PATH-GOAL.

The content of this schema includes basic-level embodiment involvements, construals, and recordings, the familiar aspects of which relate to distance, motion, direction, light and shadow fluctuations, energy expenditure, temporal duration, and more. The PATH schema controls for event possibilities, such as interruptions and diversions (positive or negative),

detours and turnarounds, landmarks and obstacles, scenery solidity or, more typically, scenery change. These events spur psychological responses, including prospects of growth or gain (e.g., security). An organism's responsiveness to its environment achieved by internal and subject movement and the critical dynamics of change (e.g., adaptation) are of utmost concern in the bio-evolutionary world. For reasons of nature as well as for reasons of psyche, that each human is a Diana perpetually on chase with some object(ive) in view, path-as-movement-to-a-goal (goal a difference in place and, latently and commonly, a change in condition and, thereby, even identity) asserts as our pre-eminent image schema.²⁹ All the same, I believe that this Taj Mahal of schema builds from conceptual groundwork even more fundamental. What our schematic notion of paths 'knowingly' (intuitively) taps into is the spatial wherewithal of the so-called simple (congruent) line.

My remarks on this topic are not confined to the tangible line, of the sort drawn in the sand or executed on a blackboard or sketchpad, though each physical line, howsoever it manifests, issues from the abstract line I do want to focus on. This abstract, quintessential line subsumes, by its motivation of them, all of its descendants—the natural, hand drawn, ruled, calligraphic, machined, arrowed or not arrowed, virtual, would-be, imminent, real and unreal line. The progenitor line declares, in the abstract, as spatial structure composed of a concatenation of sublimated points, the mathematical equiform of seriated extension without breadth. I submit that it is this ur-idea that essentializes and subtends all image schema, including the premier SOURCE-PATH-GOAL.

Select this named schema or any of the aforementioned ones and imagine, if you can, this cognitive gestalt without a line construct. Can you envision in your head a PATH that is non-linear? that dispenses with the guidance of reference and ground lines? How do we make sense of the CONTAINER schema, with its closed loop and resultant enclave, should contour and boundary lines somehow go absent? make sense of BALANCE, lacking lateral and axial lines, linear segmentation, and the inexorable influence of gravitational lines? conceive DYNAMICS, ENABLEMENT, or RESISTANCE, devoid of lines of force and energy and devoid of line rivalry? Each schema appears to be a condition of linearity, whether in the abstract or in league with a

line motivated from the abstract. As a necessary (though not sufficient) condition, the line theoretically submits its spatial donation *pre statu nascendi*. Yet, because the embodied organism never ceases to summon and procure the phenomenological world through the revitalizing of schema incorporated into the surmising process, linear donation is that most golden of gifts, the one that keeps on giving.

Within texts produced in cognitive studies, this linear dependence is graphic, quite literally there to see in diagrams that depict the bare outlines of schematic spatial relations (see, e.g., Johnson). Dependency is also in plain verbal sight of the reader, though taken for granted by authors who lay out image schematic structure in their books, chapters, and articles. Talmy is illustrative and typical. This painstaking investigator constantly elicits line and linear function, without credit or qualifying comment, to detail the spatial operations respective to the many path variants of SOURCE-PATH-GOAL that he identifies.³⁰ Talmy's elicitation cannot be written off as language's impoverishment when describing space. Nor can one hedge that the diagrams put forward in cognitive disciplines mislead by reason that they are too simple and too reductive, since reduction and simplicity, basic tenets of Gestalt perception and recognition, are the very point.

No, what these visual and verbal depictions from the annals of cognitive study strongly suggest, especially when placed alongside our thought experiment of schema structures imagined as non-linear, is that line, perforce, informs image schematic structure. If image schemas are the bare bones of cognition, then line qualifies as the bone marrow. It follows, then, that if we conceive a thing is on the line—a life possibly?—we had best attend and take it to mind. Lines are close to god-like—divining (creative), sticklers (strictures), and the aboriginal able to take that first slice into space. Humankind remains drawn to the premier line. It bears space and, thus, thought.

Robert Long's captivating "Cornish Slate Line" (reproduced below in Fig. 3) visually substantiates, in several regards, how lines are ways or courses, indeed causeways, for showing, being, and having, before paths are.³¹ Long's 'outdoor' installation in the beautiful neo-classical museum space demonstrates the dynamism (the forward drawing) of a path. That said, Long's

“Line” also tutors in how a path is ‘slated’ to materialize within, by conforming to the preemptiveness and hard policing of the quintessential line. The abstract line is symmetric in that it displays no partiality as to direction, whereas a path is asymmetric. Path presupposes an arrow with a pointed tip, because it ‘runs’ from a beginning point and ‘progresses’ to a presumed end. By exhibiting directionality (not to mention intentionality), path has detail absent in line. Path is a devolution of line.



Figure 3. Robert Long, “Cornish Slate Line.” Long creates colossal ‘textworks’ that seldom appear other than in outdoor environments. This indoor textwork, installed in 1997, at the Tate Art Gallery, London, enabled museum visitors to become more conscious of how line controls for and is the progenitor and prompter of path.

Beyond this artistic demonstration, we might adduce the priority of line to path from children's drawings, which start with rectilinear lines and only later develop (by about two years or more) general ideas of movement along a path (Arnheim, *Visual Perception* 182–187). Furthermore, when the child does execute the developmentally delayed graphic path, she will 'find' (i.e., derive) its shape through the suggestion accorded by the single straight line. This species election of the straight line, a choice that conforms to the overarching law of simplicity in Gestalt psychology, records the most elementary visual line (187). The very young child, still new to the grasp of crayon, pencil, paint, or chalk, intuitively asserts what was succinctly asserted by E. H. Gombrich and, ever since, oft repeated: "A line can stand for anything"—and any thing includes that familiar, the lineate path. The child's intuiting and her representing of the superlatively simple, spatially indispensable line, what Arnheim considers an undifferentiated or "unchanging unit" of space, accord with the Gestalt law of the simple (consistent) as precursor to the less consistent. It is evident in line-before-path that the invariant spatial structure organizes and stabilizes for and, thus, is the protogenic structure and conceptual default of the varying structure, in the identical way that symmetry (a form of invariance) precedes asymmetry.³²

Individual image schemas have roots in an even more elemental, even more reductive space unit.³³ I believe granting the SEMILIFORM LINE this elementalism within our background schematics will contribute to understanding cognition at large. But, more relevant here is that highlighting linearity opens up a crucial view to the cognition the chiastic form instrumentalizes. The parsimonious space quotient of the SEMILIFORM LINE bears directly on the cognitive organizer at the heart of this discussion. To fully grasp the spatiality of chiasmus and how that spatiality plays out in chiastic reasoning and representation, neither PATH schema nor LINE concept can be omitted. The PATH image schema and LINE are not synonymous, notwithstanding certain salient and vital features in common.³⁴

I anticipate some readers might resist that the pristine, ruley SEMILIFORM LINE is somatic.³⁵ To give proof to the idea, we cannot improve on the erudition of William James. By the lights of America's first psychologist, man's spatial comprehension of space, at its most

elementary, is an interval, an interval that conducts space. James insists that our sensation of spatial extension is the interval between and including two sensed points. The points and the space lying between them mount the possession, which is a sensation, of line. Sensing, by James's analysis, is, no more but never less than, to experience a lineated, spatial interval. He evaluates the threesome of sense, space, and line as extensions of the same. Space, sensation, and line are necessarily relational, because they are the body's trace between—its remark upon and incarnation of—a set of paired, spaced points. Though we mostly take it for granted, line is sensational.

James's account of space perception as conjoint with sensed line gives explanation for the essentialism of the SEMILIFORM LENGTH in human thought and representation. The integrality of lineation to our sensing and memorializing of space indicates that LINE functions at an even greater level of generality than do image schemas.³⁶ Modern research on perception, with archeology's recent weigh-in, a "touching" reach to human prehistory and its art, relate that the contour line is a readymade, a constituting line known to the untrained human and animal eye.³⁷ A PATH constitutes one version and, hence, one category of the SEMILIFORM LINE. Paul Klee once mused that the later "can seem like a path" for walking on, but only if it is "an active line" (emphasis original) and the matters of goal and "impetus" are worked out and favorably qualified for. The meister of form gives authority to the position that any line with action, real or other than, is a derivative (a down line) category of SEMILIFORM LENGTH.³⁸

These distinctions of LINE and PATH, several of which the supplementary endnote (31) spells out in more detail, have a significant impact on chiasmus. The reason goes to the fact chiasmus draws on both of these two dominant cognitive schemes. Between them, LINE and PATH conduct the two- and three-dimensional (2-D and 3-D) space relations at the core of chiasmus and its muscular conceptualizing. Those relations belong under the giant umbrella of crossing.

CROSSING IN THE BODY OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

The predominant feature of chiasmus is the crossing it performs. Chiastic crossing occurs

over the span of a discourse duplex in which at least two smaller lexical components (either single words or larger lexical units) transverse one for one. Given its import to the *AB:BA* pattern, you would expect the topic of crossing would have demanded major attention in studies devoted to chiasmus. Strangely, however, the chiasmus literature slights crossing as worth deliberation, when, as is more often the case, it isn't skipped over entirely. I believe this oversight persists for the very reason that crossing is considered so familiar that it simply doesn't warrant notice. Crossing exemplifies what the philosopher Michael Polanyi identifies as "tacit knowledge" and the anthropologist Edward T. Hall, "silent knowledge." That crossing has been widely taken for granted and presumed not worth comment, in chiasmus and in other regards, qualify as strong evidence that it is embodied understanding of the image-schema variety.

In my view, crossing should belong to the same category of non-propositional, backgrounded schema nominated by scholars in earlier work on cognition. As is true of all image schema, *CROSSING* serves as an experiential corollary to physical engagements so humdrum that we must strain to pull them up into cognitive foreground. It is straining due to the ubiquity and inurement of crossing objects and events and because all of us are laureates gifted in crossing and intersection and fluent in the ramifications of crossing and intersection. In this, as in so many respects, we stand upon the shoulders of our infant and toddler sensorimotoric selves.³⁹

Crossing and intersection are indigenous to the organic and physical realms.⁴⁰ From nature's crossing habits, we project, *ad infinitum*, intercrosses of every imaginable kind. Crossing qualia exist over and structure the factive world and crossing receives elaboration in and in order to conceive our fictive worlds.⁴¹ In fact, our ability to think about anything depends on a network that Arachne would envy for its weaving and re-weaving of crosses and blends between illimitable cognitive structures. Therefore, it requires but little reflection to confirm that our inner and outer universes intricate a "cross-hatched immensity" (Derrida, *Dissemination* 35).

We conceive of the activity of crossing in two main ways. The first corresponds with the

three-dimensional space-world we occupy. Crossing deeply resonates for us as one path aslant a second path, each pathway an occupant of spatial depth. In image-schematic terms, CROSSING consists of two PATH schemas meeting at a place of JUNCTURE, CONTACT, or SUPERIMPOSITION. As stated before, image schema act in combination with one another and CROSSING exemplifies how one schema will syndicate with, be a variant of, or overlap (!) with one or more schema. This malleability of schema heightens their use value in cognition, including that such pliability supports and enhances cognitive practices and ensures further economizing within the mental substrata.

Perceptual, kinesthetic, proprioceptive, and other bodily and psychic engagements inherent in PATH transfer automatically to the cross version. But, there is one big difference between the concept of a single path and that of two intersecting paths. We store CROSSING (OF PATH PAIRS) under a significant phenomenological category aboriginal to and natural in our lifeworld: the crossroads. The crossroads perdures as humankind's archetype of experiential 3-D CROSSING. Much that matters to humans situates at this special location. First of all and at all times, "crossing marks a place" (Arnheim, *Dynamics* 89). Place is our core experience, making us knowable to ourselves, because able to locate (ground) and, thus, concert ourselves there.⁴² As wonderfully captured by Wallace Stevens with his jar placed down in, so as to spot and give definition to Tennessee, the ability to construe our being-in-the-world and other objects in that world insists on the orientation, stability, identification, and remarking conferred by an entity, a body in/having/taking place. A crossroads materializes or virtualizes and, therefore, matters as a place of meeting or confronting. An ascendant property of chi-thinking is, that over the systematizing span of each chiasm, a pair of accentuated items in an antecedent are perturbed to the point of displacement in its subsequent. Whether this displacing brings on accord or whether it brings on discord stands the ultimate matter.

If placeness weren't significant enough, crossroads endure as proto-sites in the human consciousness. They are a primal experience and image. Patterning the trans-phenomenal, these marked sites are where change posits. It is at the crossroads where alteration may transpire as the result of contact with the different. Here, the di-verse meet up and quite possibly undergo

transition, under the discovery that here they may mutually replace (nullify, cross out) or double place (compound) one another.⁴³ Crossroads pose and implicate, if only in theory, some consequential, emergent structure, including the surfacing of elimination. The site where two roads contact each other and are said to cross stands rife with meaning. Such a salient site, laden with meaning or even its potential, gives pause to the real or virtual traveler.⁴⁴ It is a place to think on in more ways than one.

The crossroads scores a significant spot, an X. Indeed, the familiar marker and locator of placeness is the upright planar version of the crossroads. The two evoke one another, but more valuable here is that they conceptually enter into one another. It is a commonplace to identify chiasmus as like an X. Notwithstanding the disappointments in an article enticingly titled “Chiasm, Line and Art,” its author offers that “The term chiasm appears to derive from the Greek letter chi and looks and acts somewhat like it, ‘x,’ for each side bends and crosses into the other (inclines) while equally holding to itself (reclines)” (Mallin 220, emphasis original). Although the definition surpasses most others (and we will return to ideas within it later in the discussion), it suffers by a critical weak link: the weasely somewhat. Although taking several of the author’s points, I contend chiasmus isn’t just somewhat like an X. Chiasmus is the manifest, in language, of chi. Chiasmus appears and functions *sub modo* X. This device operating under the sign and condition of X, therefore operates under its awesome forebear, the diagonal cross.

The diagonal, inclined, or slanted cross \times and its morphically inclined, lettered adherent X are engrams consolidating the pattern and image of crossing. They are potent ideographs with visual, physical, motoric (e.g., Mallin’s bending is out-and-out motional), and additional meanings that bear on CROSSING and its summary meanings. When LINE doubles and overlaps or intersects at acute angles we get the archetypal \times as well as X and, thus, symbolizations that are themselves summary instances of and executions by CROSSING.

We realize or effect CROSSING in two primary ways that relate to space: (1) in oblique lines of the cross shape and the cross letterform occurrent in planar or 2-D space, and (2) in the inter-involving, prototypically oblique paths of the *compitum* occurrent in depth or 3-D space. CROSSING supports chi-thinking and makes itself available to the form and instrumentation of

chiasmus, among an infinity of other things. This trio of chiasmus, chi-ception, and CROSSING, which I associate under the coinage ‘X-ness,’ is the focus of Chapter Two. Inclined to be thoroughgoing, chiasmus covers both our 2-D and 3-D worlds and our thinking in and through them. It covers, if you will, in the course of calling on the preeminent spatial compendiums (both topologic and geometric) of the profound and plaguing intricacies of crossing.

METAPHOR AND CHIASMUS, SPECULATORS AND ECONOMISTS

Humans must have economic strategies to confront the incalculable complexity of the world. To inspect this complexity, speculate about it, attempt to monitor it, and edge toward knowledge we require cognitive strategies with qualities inverse to the existential complexity. These countering strategies have to be simple, ever reliable, and inevitable patterns of abbreviated meaning. Bruner indicates a strategy works best when it is a “compact image or symbol,” a schematic, pared-down representation, or elementary pattern that operates economically, that is, reductively. Through such strategies, we decrease the information overload that would otherwise crush our ability to reason and know. The arcane can be cut up along ‘sensible’ divisions and categories that more or less correspond to the reductive strategies at our disposal.

Subscribing to a tradition that goes back to Aristotle, Bruner singles out metaphor as a strategy not just conducive to but unrivaled in its resourcefulness to human thinking and knowing. Metaphors, contends Bruner, provide the “economic combinings” the mind must have to rein in the surplus information we are up against (22). Better still, the “metaphor mode” rests in “making a new connection between different perspectives” (67). The applause and ingenuity granted metaphor derives from its novel, wonder-working performances as a unifier of the disparate.⁴⁵ Metaphor unification, a vital reduction methodology, goes a great distance to interpret, even if it doesn’t lessen or solve for, the multiplexity of existence.

In the fields of cognitive linguistics and cognitive rhetoric, metaphor has been the trope of choice to showcase the idea of the intelligible by the means of the sensible (embodied). Metaphor is the showpiece in the embodiment cabinet because of its criticality to cognition.

Over the last few decades, the pioneering work of Lakoff, Johnson, and Turner revised our understanding of metaphORIZATION. They first demonstrated, and others, along with them, have further consolidated that metaphor is not exclusive to certain areas of endeavor or expression. Quite the reverse. Metaphorizing is common coin in cognitive currency; it is fundamental, inherent, and obligatory to our ways of thinking. All of us constantly, and with barely, if at all, any consideration, derive sense and more from individual metaphors, and, with an inattention of the same caliber, we invoke metaphoric projections to conduct tiny and grand tours over the mindscape. Metaphors prove an egalitarian cognizing omni-potentiality greased by automatic gears.

Chiasmus claims a similar omni-potentiality and egalitarianism. Or, so I claim for it. Chiasmus and metaphor stimulate a host of comparisons. Like metaphor, chiasmus succeeds as a compact apparatus of knowledge production. Both devices reconfigure existing knowledge to release new perspectives or to revise fixed categories. The reconfiguration of categories, including their blurring, blending, and compounding, is a specialty of theirs. Like metaphor's powers, those of chiasmus reside in its simultaneous juggling of similarities and differences, the results of which sometimes appear to arrive out of the blue. But the fact is, the novelty behind it understood structure and severe constraints that remain, by and large, inconspicuous. In comparison with metaphor, chiasmus shows a greater propensity to toss together items contradictory by convention or that are outright antithetical. Chiasmus, too, insists on reductive combinations, a feat seldom directly attributed, but probably because chiasmus exists under the shadow cast by metaphor.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, chiasmus is invariably involved with highly constrained combination castings, even if only for the purpose of bringing together to heighten difference or reinforce an absolute polarity. This eccentricity, for lack of a better term, is not nailed to metaphor's door, but it is a propensity that makes chiasmus more provocative, if only in this regard. Undeveloped herein is that metaphor and the associative chiasm display homogenization; they each, in more than a manner of speaking, instigate and control for spatial collapse. The latter will conduct degrees of homogenization, but it never realizes the monism the earlier pulls off on a constant basis.

Particularly intriguing about metaphor relative to chiasmus is that the performances of the latter incline to be joint projects with the former. Although the meaning exertions of chiasmus consistently occur on metaphoric behalf, the *AB:BA* pattern is no mere cerebration add-on. In such alliances, chiasmus drives rhetorically home the metaphoric idea. In chiasm after chiasm, the *AB:BA* organization erects and entifies a metaphor or a small group of metaphors. For instance, metaphor has long been credited as the indispensable vehicle for giving expression to man's cerebral activities.⁴⁷ In mind-at-work and state-of-mind representations, metaphor regularly recruits chiasmus to formalize metaphoric meaning. I propose that the accordance between metaphor and chiasmus devolves, to some sizeable degree, from each one's respective dispensing of physico-spatial loans to the abstract. When they work together what results is a conceptual economy in league and in compression with another economy. Thus, this hand-in-glove collaboration, which regiments and consolidates meaning, makes good embodied sense.

In keeping with its dual personality, the chi-figure enjoys a dual relation with metaphor. Chiasmus, in its formal capacities, presides over metaphor meaning. But metaphoric readings of these capacities are required for chiasmus to attain its full meaning potential. Crossing, mirroring, and moving, to take three examples of formal procedures attributable to chiasmus, are metaphorically developed. Though developed by metaphor, they are, for that, no less effectively 'there' and certainly no less felt.

Lastly, chiasmus and metaphor share one major similarity that directs us to one major difference. Both conceptual devices are exceptional profilers, or, rather I should say, we are tremendously facile in our profiling practices on metaphor, chiasmus, or the unison. We intuit what to focalize and what not with unreflexive aplomb. Despite no previous acquaintance with a metaphor or chiasmus articulation, we nevertheless function with appositeness and sensitivity as to specific effect. We are target sure. In the case of metaphor, we move between conceptual domains and extract from them exquisitely. With chiasmus, selection is just as exquisite, but extracting happens among different suppliers: namely, the iconic possibilities that inhere within the chiastic spectrum of affordances. From the chiastic storehouse of form—meaning

potentialities, only some are ordered up by (appropriate to) a given chiasm.

Humans undertake to get hold of the world through sameness and difference nuanced such that they can gain back, but gain anew on sameness and difference. Metaphor and chiasmus are workhorses in this great endeavor. Chiasmus, however, departs from metaphor in that it epitomizes in itself, in its little, but solid architecture (form), the meaning that this architecture assembles and makes available to all. Even to the trope of tropes. With an aim toward future examination, the discussion gives a suggestive look at the partnering of these two cognitive speculators and economists.

TRUE, TRUE, AND RELATED

The primary hypothesis of this inquiry is that chiasmus minds, which is to claim that it guides and effects cognition. Chiastic conceptualization obtains guidance from a basic floor plan juxtaposing paired members, the key elements of which duplicate and reverse on the opposite sides of an axis of conjoining. The doubled members each with paired, but inverted elements underscore that chiasmus is an accouplement, the array of which conforms to bi-symmetric laterality. At bottom, chiasmus is a binate structure in which the halves relate to one another across the larger whole they divide, yet conform.

“Duality,” proclaimed Auden, “is one of the oldest concepts” (301).⁴⁸ Having things by two can steady, increase assurance, and, on occasion, provide or appear to provide completeness. Duals also incite and excite. Composing and opposing, at a minimum, are dualities. Every negation is the reverse (dual) of some positive. Feasibly, the hemispheric brain may relate to our inordinate reliance on and reverence of dualism. Ownership of this two-sided instrument sitting atop our vertical spine churns out and performs on dual inputs, one of the most critical being vision.

Since earliest times, symmetrically minded humanity has relished visual technologies that arrange for bi-laterals compositing a whole that gives every appearance of being self-framed. The *Iliad*'s elaborately decorated flat shield famously proceeds by dual images. The two-sided tablet housing inscriptions, pictures, or combinations of both; hinged diptychs and

pendant pairs; upper- and lower-divided ceiling mosaics in early basilicas; double doors and panels (e.g., altar panels) with matching decorations or with related or divided perspectives; juxtaposed niches housing related items; paired sculptures, typically turned toward and, therefore, ‘engaging’ one another; and hemispheric cartography (i.e., *antique cartography*) catalog some outmoded, but also some durable receptacles spacing verbal, pictorial, figural, diagrammatic, and other kinds of information.⁴⁹ Renaissance painters heavily patronized the divided, but inter-related scene dramatized on canvas, usually laterally (e.g., Piero della Francesca), but sometimes vertically (e.g., Raphael). Today we cast eyes on the split screen, the flat phosphorus displays of which ‘upgrade’ to moving content, and we alternate between the ever-proliferating pullers (verbal, pictorial, or a combination of both) and the typographic main text they accompany. Which brings us to the book.

Certainly the most far-reaching and profound of graphic mechanisms for conveying bi-lateral representation excogitated by humans has been the book, first scribal and then typographic. Interestingly this institutionalizing of side-by-side exhibition is companionable in the human hand, the congenial reflection of our own indispensable handedness. The recto and verso comprise, for the print-immersed modern mind, a ‘given’ rather than what is in fact an invented double-sidedness. The opposing pagination of the bound, open-faced book accentuates the general spatial properties of instruments conducting optical duality: bi-lateral division, a delineated axis (center binding from a *spine*), and a full, self-authored margin (complete exterior boundary).

These and other self-encasing, hemi-parted presentations although arrested in space, compel the human actor to move between their respective halves and make discovery. “All things are known by comparison,” as Alberti famously observed, and chiasmus is a perfect set up for comparing purposes. The chiastic device bi-sociates (to borrow Arthur Koestler’s helpful terminology) two like-, yet differently-minded ideas, propositions, or viewpoints. These are put into relation through chiasticity. Above all else, the chiastic appliance supervises relations. It parlays relationships between dual entities, states, or constructs. Through its cognitive formula, the chiastic *A* and the *B* wind up ‘socializing’ to either of two ends: association or dissociation.

The associative–dissociative dichotomy is a broad heading for ramifications such as equality–disparity, agreement–disagreement, concord–discord, reconciliation–no conciliation, unity–division, and dependence–independence. Furthermore, the lateral ‘split-screen’ program of chiasmus is built to lodge a host of argument’s favorite formulations: thesis–antithesis, statement–counterstatement, pro–con, affirmative–negative, theme–counter theme, part–counterpart, side and opposite side, etc. The *AB:BA* ‘screen’ fronts a divided panel available for all sorts of *versus* confrontations and encounters, not the least of which is mirroring, with its double-facing, quirky optics, mesmerizing spatial complexities, and fluctuant, reverse-wise speculations. And, the enclosure of two adjacent, mutually regarding parks with opposing arrangements invite us to our bark up those mighty trees of human fascination: Self and Other.

Chiasmus, the arguer on the X, prompts movement to judge between two points of view. The act of putting two things alongside one another, as the philologist Leo Spitzer mildly noted, is that the pair can shed light on one another and cause us to seek out what they have in common (9). Commonality would be an instance of association. On the other hand, the side-by-side comparison Spitzer plays up can also cause us to seek out what the two do not share. Their lack of commonality would be an instance of asymmetry and suggests a departure or dissociation point. Where alternate perspectives are judged as disparate, hierarchy is likely to gather encouragement. One slant having the better over the other can tag more than super- and sub-ordinations/categorizations; it can label rivalry and antagonism. Here, again, psychological considerations come in to view.

We register hierarchy as a state of verticality: for example, an upper hand *versus* lower hand. One and its other are atilt or at odds and with one in a superior (raised) position relative to the second. These brief remarks introduce that chiasmus, whether dissociative or associative, shares in the visual, dynamic, and other physical aspects of the balance beam. This apparatus serves as the world’s physical equivalent to chiasmatic decision-making between two sides.

The two-pan balance beam, quite importantly, mimics two human hands weighing and feeling a difference between them, from the right to the left hand and from the left to the right. The gesture of the pair of hands alternating between being upcast and down thrust enjoys wide

frequency, even in populations that have little actual knowledge of this equipment. The gesture records the individual mulling over and estimating degrees of equilibration or disequilibration. The balance is man's perennial symbol of justice, and as such it reinforces chiasmus as an intermediary instrument for suspending and weighing discourse alternatives. Judgment—which necessitates determinations of equality or inequality—is implicit in the double-pan balance and in the double-sided chi-apparatus. Relatedly, as Wallace Stevens appreciates, an imperious X forces upon the scriptorial world from A to Z its prosecutorial, proctoring, and mediatory self. That chiasmus is always, overtly or ostensibly, a judging between elicits the subject of betweenness. Division along sides is a necessary condition of chiasmus; thus, a chi-thinker is never far from the complications of the in-between. Chapter Four considers the subject under the title 'Betweenity.'

In *A la recherche du temps perdu*, Proust unforgettably observed:

Truth will not begin until the moment when the writer takes two different objects, sets down the relation between them that is the analogue in the world of art to the unique relation of the law of causation in the world of the sciences, and locks them together in the rings of a beautiful style, or even, when, like life itself, in bringing together two sensations with a common quality he extracts their essence by uniting them with one another to withdraw them from the contingencies of time and fixes them by the indescribable bonds of a marriage of words.⁵⁰

The novelist, who was much given to chiastic expression, proves provocative for the present topic. As a matter of fact, Proust's passage could serve as lyrical description of chiasmus. The writer's passage bears on human thinking in general and its everyday creations, despite that his reference focuses on the choice productions of the *belles-lettrist*. The introverted framework the passage describes—a presumably leisurely forum for duals 'set down,' made proximal to one another, fixed in place for observation, and withdrawn from time—formalizes, with the laciness of Proust, an activity that has been interpreted elsewhere as that which we know to be natural and not privileged.

Erving Goffman analyses how human behavior involves a natural activation of real as well as veritable receptacles that enclose experience. For Goffman, experience is "marked off

from the ongoing flow of surrounding events by a special set of boundary markers” (251). By virtue of their boundaries, the contents earn a privileged, if variously registered, circumscription. Experiences in-framed inform, the information arising from differentiation; differentiation is provisional of categorization; categorization, conventionalization and general agreement. Albeit crude, this summary gets to Goffman’s point that framing is inherent in human cognition. Self-enclosed receptacles or ‘strips,’ as he calls them, orient us by bestowing each type and instance of segregated experience with levels of organization and influence. Closure, the bracketing off of an activity in the world, inaugurates disclosure, that is, the possibility of understanding.

As dissimilar as Goffman and Proust are in temperament, they share an intense interest in man’s “fabrications,” imagination, and protocols. And, they are as one in what they impute to framing. The American sociologist investigates over a wide range of human activity what the French novelist venerates about the imaginative process: how the bracketing of experience functions as a “guiding capacity” instituting what Goffman calls “alongsidedness” and the Gestaltians, in their first principle, proximity. Alongsidedness is ripe for comparing doubles, which respond to and can even reconstitute one another when ‘locked together’ in close speculative quarters (Goffman 28, 212). Framing eliminates incidentals and its resultant concentration, which is more or less self-insisting, catches us up. Derivative of intensity and focality, contents tend to become “engaging and entrancing” (57). Goffman forges another link to Proust when he relates how, with “an inward-looking” or “innermost engrossable realm [...], time often seems to drop out or collapse” (46).

If these quotations don’t appear applicable to chiasmus, they should upon subsequent discussion. It suffices to say at this introductory stage that chiastic self-circumscription occurs by reason of housing and organizing experience, reality, or counter-reality. In the manner of X and X, the device keeps an aloof persona. It marks itself off. Chiasmus is that shrewd Proustian introvert: elite enough, but just, to pull off two slants in one.

THE HITHER AND THITHER TOGETHER, AND (BE)YON(D)

World and reason are [...] mysterious,
 but their mystery defines them [...].
 It is on the hither side of all solutions.
 —Maurice Merleau-Ponty,
Phenomenology of Perception

Becoming fully heedful of cognizing capacities requires difficult uncovering because the automatic, by its nature, necessarily resists scrutiny (Turner, *Reading Minds* 66). Ease of cognizing demands a vast substratum composed of unnoticed structuration and operation. Turner “asks us to consider the possibility that it is precisely the things we take for granted that are both more essential and more complicated than their dependents,” that is, the more obvious outcomes.

Chiasmus is so effortlessly consumed that the signature pattern designing its specimens in the first place rarely garners much notice in the work-a-day world. With regard to chiasmus and much else of a cognitive nature, the attitude, ostensibly, is ‘If it works, why bother?’ The present study entertains one thing we take for granted. Entertainment seeks justification in this premise: that the *AB:BA* pattern constitutes an essential way by which we mind.

The subtending by chiasmus of thought processes and products has gone under-appreciated. Despite that its personal form stimulates and controls thought, chiasmus doesn’t, in itself, appear thought provoking.⁵¹ This is not unique to chiasmus, but rather is consistent with how the mind’s elementary proceedings either stay below our conscious radar or stimulate only the barest observation. Indeed, our unawareness is par for the cognitive course, as attested by late twentieth-century and early twenty-first-century studies into cognition. Our customization to the elemental conceptual and representational capacities within our mental mindscape, by and large, keeps these undetected. Automaticity more than administers to our thinking: it is a criticality over all the enterprises of conceptualization.

By its own form, chiasmus bears a meaningful, thought-full pattern that models and, thus, per-forms a constellation of cognitive matters. Its bearing is constrained and principled: which is to say that it falls along lines of association and dissociation. In linguistic/rhetorical terms,

these are the two scripts that chiasmus enunciates/figures. But chiasmus qualifies as more than linguistic construct or rhetorical figure; more broadly, it is a means to form matter, of the cognitive sort. Chi-thinking, large amounts of which we gather in discourse, are struck from the unique spatial stamp of *AB:BA*. We must look to space to actualize what belongs together and what not. Together and not—these are primary constructs by which we organize and order the penumbra and summon up what's what. These constructs foster and, therefore, sponsor our assurances and realities. Instruments that guide these critical spatial relations are, therefore, indispensable. As an instrument sub-structuring and subtilizing space relations and then substantiating these relations through autofiguration, chiasmus rates as one of humankind's fundamental conductors and enterprisers of thought, reason, argument, and discovery.

It is my contention that, given investigation and analysis, chiasmus actually exceeds the esteem that may be accorded it at first, second, or even third glance. Esteem is earned, and chiasmus garners respect to the degree to which it is duly and fully regarded. Readers will have to take that assertion on faith, at least for the present. But, to give promise to that assertion, I apply to chiasmic operations the prediction of Mark Turner. By such application, which I believe is warrantable, chiasmus possesses an essentialism and complexity beyond what might be supposed. In many respects, chiasmus constitutes a diminutive, yet amazingly involved world onto itself, a world with almost an inner life of its own. This world's acute, yet delicate facets, complications, and effects are the adventure ahead. A main goal is to show that though a pronouncedly fixed and fixing pattern and though of a self-collected, almost austere nature, chiasmus is much inclined to lines that are protean, flexible, and ductile. In the collective and, at times, in the singular it is all kinds of contradiction, and, for that, of enduring fascination.

This study examines the chiasmus–cognition alliance and the cognizing priorities resident in a design seemingly of a simple, not-so-exceptional floor plan. Though conceded, at times, able to pull off neat trick or fillip, chiasmus is commonly presumed worth little account, because capable of little that counts or signifies. The study seeks to do justice by an utterly remarkable, inexhaustible thought conductor. Chiasmus obliges remarking and rethinking. The study aims to return the favor to that which grooves and, thereby, gives thought.

NOTES

¹ Chapter Two takes up the issue of how we conceive of the reversing of the *A* and *B* elements as performing a crosswise action. However, at this commencing moment, I feel compelled to forestall concerns about the application of crisscrossing to chiasmus, particularly as this issue was raised by the cognitive semiotics scholar Per Aage Brandt. For readers who share Professor Brandt's partial resistance to the applicability of the crisscross, I direct them to Chapter Two.

Unrelatedly, except for the appropriateness of early preamble placement, it may be helpful to provide a brief word glossary to the project. The word *chiasmus* connotes: (1) a quite general phenomenon or activity, which is of wide range; (2) a subtype, style, or technique of this general phenomenon; and (3) a specific example or datum of the phenomenon. In its three applications, *chiasmus* resembles, for instance, *metaphor*. The term *chiasm* (along with its plural *chiasma*; sometimes *chiasmi*) also refers to a particular example(s). Along with some others, I have adopted *chiastic*, *chiasmic*, and *chiasmatic* as descriptive variants of *chiasmus*.

² Tennyson got to the term before Dickinson. He uses it in a "Locksley Hall" line: "Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change."

³ Commentary by Rudolf Arnheim can contribute to how a groove can be, at once, both static and dynamic. In *Art and Visual Perception*, he cites the findings of Paul Weize. The famous twentieth-century biologist indicates that "what we perceive as static form is but the product, transitory or lasting, of formative processes." Arnheim includes the example of a snail's shell as the materialization of the organism's rhythmical movements. The spacio-physical movements of the snail are recorded in the architecture of its shell. Arnheim contends "nature is alive to our eyes partly because its shapes are fossils of the events that gave rise to them. The past history is not merely inferred intellectually from clues, but directly experienced as forces and tensions present and active in visible shape" (417). These perceptions of forces, tensions, and shapes—all of which have to do with conformation—become memories that we draw on, as for instance when words (in this case, *groove*) comes to mind. Of course, grooves have the advantage over shells of overt motility of action as well as an attribute of vitality through their harnessing of energy that 'speaks' to more than the eyes.

⁴ This and the immediately following quotation from Merleau-Ponty appear in *The Primacy of Perception* excerpt that appears in Harrison and Wood's *Art in Theory*, page 769. See Bibliography.

⁵ I have in mind Gestaltists such as Irvin Rock, Erich Goldmeier, Wolfgang Metzger, and, of course, the founder of the Gestalt movement, Max Wertheimer. In the world of art perception, Rudolf Arnheim is the supreme spokesperson for Gestalt doctrine. Of Arnheim, more will follow.

⁶ The phrase is Goldmeier's but it could have come directly out of Langer or Merleau-Ponty.

⁷ Turner finds that space is inseparable from humanity's mindscape as story-scape, that is, the realization that man's conceptualizing rests in story telling and that the fundamental stories, the ones we can't do without, are all about space (objects and events that transpire in space). These unwritten miniature stories, with their skeletal content, are requisite for reasoning and for elucidating reality (*Literary Mind* 13). Their "unproblematic" nature (14) procures cognitive economy; their 'smallness' of components, ensures breadth and adaptability of usage. Their essentialism and minimalism, associates of "self-effacement" (Bryson, *Word and Image* xv, 4), underwrite the adaptability of the stories to report more complex, attenuated accounts of objects and events.

⁸ They cannot be dimension-less or extension-less in as much as they come into existence in and through space.

⁹ This quotation, also from *The Primacy of Perception*, is attributed (in an *Art in Theory* endnote) to the translator, Carelton Dallery, in James M. Edie's edition of Merleau-Ponty's work. See Bibliography for Harrison and Wood's *Art in Theory*, page 771.

¹⁰ This holds for grammar and semantics; categorization and other identity processes; argument, demonstration, and representation; reading; formal logic; and metaphorization. And it holds for specialized, seemingly distinct epistemic realms—the human sciences, mathematics and the biological and physical sciences, philosophy, art and literature, religion, and the law. What had been assumed humankind's extraordinary, inordinately self-conscious conceptions actually depend on recruitment of preverbal, skeletal schemas of bodily, particularly spatial experience. These studies indicate that what is extraordinary rests in the very ordinary. We continuously and effortlessly master and deploy these basic schematic routines. Our discernment of them either is essentially absent or miniscule.

¹¹ For fine discrimination, I have in mind, for instance, concentrative activities such as picking out a single voice in a choir or the pathologist's locating of a cellular irregularity on a microscopic slide.

¹² For example, the schema of Talmy's "dynamism" and "staticism"—of RISING, FALLING, CLIMBING, RESISTING, SUBMITTING, and such like—depend on BALANCE.

¹³ Blind persons proceed to figure out a thing in their physical range by a progressive movement of tactile symmetry; that is, with hands first together after locating the top and its center, followed by fingertips, fingers, and palms running in unison along the left and right edges. The fingering and palming 'gathers' equal portions of both sides. In the case of the mask presented in the text, the blind person would easily take in, literally in their hands and touch, the left–right symmetrical arrangement. They would discover in the object the symmetry recorded through their avisual, manual investigation.

I have personal acquaintance with this bi-lateral symmetric procedure. But for those who do not, they can find a short explanation of it in William James's *Principles*, Vol 2. 176–177.

¹⁴ James doesn't use his in-the-head experiment to make the point here about our sensitivity to bi-lateral symmetry, but it proved irresistible to me to do so.

¹⁵ The body's sidedness patterns congruence (symmetry), but it also patterns distinction between similars (asymmetry, the difference between right *versus* left).

¹⁶ Alan Fletcher, who is a designer by profession, describes the *Acheulian* hand axe in his chapter "Tools." He reproduces on the page opposite his description a photograph of one axe. It is from modern-day Ethiopia and is estimated to be two and a half million years old. Fletcher reports that these tools showed they were crafted "with a painstaking refinement which far exceeds practical requirements" (20). See Fletcher in the Bibliography.

¹⁷ Keeping strictly and fully in mind all that facilitates more involved thinking activities would thoroughly stymie thought. Boggled down in the pedestrian mechanics of cognition, we would never get to, much less execute a 'higher' thinking task.

Consider the following hypothetical as an example of attending to the minutiae of what is automatically, subconsciously performed in sailing. Imagine consciously disaggregating and then aggregating, factoring and integrating all the contributing mental apparatus operative in keeping a sailboat afloat, moving, and garnering and keeping a needed or wanted speed; in taking the wind, correcting the sheets, and fine-tuning the sails; in minimizing the water's buffeting and in accounting and adjusting for cross- and under-currents, surges, wakes, tows, etc.; in navigating and maintaining one's course. This example points to how we would become functionally paralyzed if trying to fully register each and every constituent act of cognition. Not able to perform automatically, we would be disadvantaged sailors, surely, and bound to find ourselves in the drink.

¹⁸ This 1929 profession comes to us without elucidation or clarification of any sort, appearing in *The English Auden* (299). Placed amid a miscellany of casual journal entries, it stands an isolated comment, one literally segregated from adjacent entries by two series of asterisks, before and after its single line of type. In retrospect, it might well be deemed prescient of later-day scholarship. I make bold to claim that today Auden's intriguing, but unexplicated remark deservingly could stand as an aphorism encompassing an idea substructuring and subscriptional within multiple disciplines in the ending decades of the twentieth century and the early years of our current century.

¹⁹ That we are acquainted with spoken language as temporally sequenced and written language as spatially arrayed further reinforces the path schematization for a language "passage."

²⁰ The point of iconic signs is to tie down the world through semblance. Jonathan Culler in his study of semiotics states that we can "never construct a position outside tropology from which to view it" (209). In other words, we are always at the behest of figuration, using some form, figure, or sign to represent and, thus, explain. Auerbach appears to have taken much the same view as to mimesis, although we, in accord with Culler, would extend it beyond canonical literature or any kind of language event. Mimesis for Culler is just another way of saying that semiotic systems are tropologic and iconic—out of necessity.

²¹ Morris determines that iconicity involves "natural extensions of a process always at work in language" (emphasis added). The arrangement of sentences typically represents the order of events and the association between persons, things, and qualities the world presents. This grammaticalized, extremely pervasive and meaningful kind of iconism in language hardly registers notice outside of linguistic study. Linguistic iconicity, I would note, can be as attenuate as vowels formed in the front as opposed to the back of the mouth relative to the manner in which the distinction between lingual formations captures concepts of 'self' or 'proximity to self' *versus* concepts of 'other' or 'distance from self' (Pinker, *Words and Rules* 81–83).

Literary iconicity most obviously gestures to pictorial "chirography," which, though it goes back to the ancient Greeks, endures in the works of Robert Herrick, George Herbert, Stéphane Mallarmé, Dylan Thomas, and e. e. cummings. Lewis Carroll especially relished the duplicative nature and duplicitous slippages the picture verse can release.

The curiosity-seeking Lewis Carroll, who couldn't seem to pass up puns and double-entendre in general, relished the duplicative nature of picture verse. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* he gave us, with the long, lexically graduated (using decreasingly smaller font sizes), serpentine mouse tail that tells a little tale, what may stand as "the best known example in English of emblematic, or figured, verse: poems printed in such a way that they resemble something related in their subject matter" (Gardner, *Annotated Alice* 50). The 'tail' iconicity functions on several levels.

The swish of the tail replicates the back and forth in argument between the tale's two disputants, Mouse and Fury. A character named Fury is bound to bring on agitation and produce a swishing zigzagging motion in a creature with a flexuous tail.

The other iconic aspect to Carroll's picture poem occurs with its closure. The tale concludes with *death*, a word connoting termination. The poem is, thereby, doubly punctuated by a final word about a condition of finality.

²² The fastidious, almost elusive iconicity of tiny Rembrandtian brushstrokes applied to canvas that carry a very subtle, intangible aspect of a portrait subject's personality. The matching, for instance, of artistic form to message in Rembrandt's painting of Jan Six is a single, but hardly unique demonstration of extremely nuanced iconicity in the visual arts.

In the portrait, Rembrandt wished to deliver on his subject's gentlemanliness by the bourgeois standard of the day: namely, exceptional nonchalance. The Dutch artist, whose brushwork repertoire was exceptionally expressive and varied, went a long way in accomplishing this particular look through

“brushwork that is *itself* nonchalant [italics original]” (85). See Schama, Simon, and Martin Scorsese. “Roughing Up the Surface: Simon Schama and Martin Scorsese Talk about How They Make History.” Interview by Kent Jones. *Civilization*. February–March 1998: 82–89.

²³ Authors of children’s picture books know that even the youngest listeners following the story of a reader can appreciate and delight in iconic effects. A charming Caldecott Honor book for the three-to-six-year-old set has the words describing falling autumn leaves descend mimetically across and down the book page. A. Birnbaum’s *Green Eyes* (New York: Golden, 1953), which has been a favorite of young children and adults for almost half a century, displays words (placed amid red and brown leaves) cascading downward like their leaf counterparts. The word *ground* in the phrase “and fell slowly to the ground” iconically comes to rest on the pictured ground, at the base of the autumnal tree shedding lexical- and leaf-wise. The down-words are widely separated along an imaginary diagonal line running from left top of book page to bottom right.

In addition to the prose example above, a poetic example is offered. It comes from *A Child’s Book of Poems*. Rev. Ed. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1983. 57. The book does not provide the name of an editor or compiler, but the pictures are by the delightful and prolific illustrator of children’s books, Gyo Fujikawa. The first eight “lines” of the A. B. Ross poem “Two in Bed” assume an iconic display relative to the subject. Technically speaking, these are four lines obviously modified, for reasons of iconicity, to make eight of decreasing line width. They make a wedge or v form, as follows:

When my brother Tommy
Sleeps in bed with me,
He doubles up
And makes
himself
exactly
like
a
V

Directly beneath the letter V, Fujikawa renders an ink drawing of a little boy asleep in a v-shaped position. Following under the pictured sleeper are two closing lines. Obviously the picture punctuates and reinforces the iconicity of the beginning lines and that is why it comes immediately after the v-shaped layout of these lines. The poem is quite simple, but the adults who oversaw its presentation thought the book’s young readers sophisticated enough to enjoy the iconic fun put before their minds and eyes. We would suppose that for most readers and their listeners the iconic amusement is essentially all that is memorable about the Ross poem.

The iconic effect in the preceding example reminds of the letters in “Le pleut” that trickle down a page like falling tears, the very subject of the poem by Guillaume Apollinaire. The spatial dispersing in the children’s book induces the reader to considerably slow the pace of her reading and contemplate, in turn, each word. This produces another iconic effect: imitation of the unhurried, almost cradle-like rocking of nature’s falling leaves which, as they disperse themselves, look as though lingering in airy space. The pleasurable nature of visual iconic effects, whether in children’s books or in serious poems such as Apollinaire’s, finds commercial value with graphic artists who recognize the rhetorical powers of iconicity to please, gratify, interest, promote, and sell.

Seemingly, iconicity can sell just about everything, including pots and pans. Berndes uses iconic salesmanship to advertise its cookware that has a unique casting alloying thick and thin metal layers. To promote its SignoCast cookware, the designer of the manufacturer’s brochure designated this alloy as **THICK-THIN-THICK** and abbreviated the layer combination **T-T-T**. The manufacturer maintains the thick rim, thin sidewall, and thick base of each SignoCast pan maximizes cooking performance and minimizes weight. The thickness and thinness of the words and the letters imitate in the face type

(bold or regular) the physical qualities the advertiser wishes to feature, so as to attract the attention of potential buyers.

²⁴ The icon, which can run the spectrum from a single, tiny aspect of the precursor to a full-scale analogy, can be pedestrian and aid the practical. A diagram for assembling a bicycle and an architectural blueprint are practical icons in that they exemplify the primary or essential structural features and outline of their respective objects. An iconic sign can be as commonplace as gesticulation, where the motions of the hand physically identify, mimic, or further emphasize an event or thing spoken of. Iconic homology can be common and public or, on the other hand, may be quite subtle and nuanced. Making this point is the congruence in body posture between two interactants who “exhibit” shared social status or similarity of views (Ekman and Friesen 84).

The example I have in mind here is the dice game called ‘In,’ which is played with four die. To throw double is to be ‘in.’ To throw the die and have all four have the same number is to be ‘in and in.’ A player who so throws claims advantage over her opponent. The iconicity of ‘in and in’ seems not the least bit remarkable to us. That is because iconicity surrounds us. The representational air we breathe is iconic.

²⁵ This idea of coming before mostly references ontogeny. Piaget, naturally, is the authority to begin with in investigating topology within the child’s conceptualizing of space forms. Arnheim is valuable for assessing topology in perception; Norberg-Schulz is critical for topology in all realms except the one Piaget focuses on.

²⁶ Among others, Nicholas Ruwet determines this in French, Dover in Greek, Bolinger in English.

²⁷ Langacker stimulated my adoption of the hyphen for noting elements combining into a grammatical unit (59). To this, I added the visually longer hyphen to distinguish combinational levels. Though Langacker discusses differences in levels, he doesn’t provide (at least when he introduces the hyphen) for a notation that would capture them.

²⁸ “An iconic sign,” explains Charles Morris, “is any sign which is similar in some respect to what it denotes” (emphasis added).

²⁹ For instance, the process of ‘arriving’ at a scientific theory, the proof of a difficult mathematical theorem, and comparable problem-solving deliberations and innovations regularly find description as SOURCE-PATH-GOAL progressions: that is, “pursuit” along exploratory, trial-and-error “paths” in “search” of a “goal,” a workable, pleasing, or reproducible solution.

With an interest in organizational theory, system design, psychology, and science, Herbert Simon describes the process of solving problems as identical to the discovery of a theory or the proof of a theorem. “The process can be—and often has been—described as a search through a maze.” The search requires a series of modifications along “a sequence or path [...] that leads to the goal.” In the next paragraph, Simon continues: “The process ordinarily involves much trial and error. Various paths are tried; some are abandoned, others are pushed further. Before a solution is found, many paths of the maze may be explored. The more difficult and novel the problem, the greater is likely to be the amount of trial and error required [...]. At the same time, the trial and error is not completely random or blind; it is, in fact, rather highly selective. The new expressions that are obtained by transforming given ones are examined to see whether they represent progress toward the goal. Indications of progress spur further search in the same direction; lack of progress signals the abandonment of a line of search” (95–96).

Although the difficult course of progressing to discovery or solution can be viewed as a concatenated series of steps, the entirety of the course can be reduced to a single footstep. John Stuart Mill estimated Descartes analytical geometry “The greatest single step ever made in the progress of the exact sciences.”

³⁰ In describing the parameters of the PATH schema, Leonard Talmy assembles a detailed typology. However, in differentiating among prospect paths, alignment paths, demonstrative, targeting, advent, radiation, shadow, and other primary path types it becomes clear that the line (or linear look-alikes: beams and shafts) is fundamental to each of these schema variants. See *Towards a Cognitive Semantics*, Vol. 1, 106–152.

Talmy's explanation is nuanced and problematic. The accomplishments will, no doubt, be obvious; not necessarily so, the problems. I will name only three here. First, it makes little sense that Line of Sight should be in the same hierarchical level under the higher Orientation Path as Prospect Path and Targeting Path. Secondly, Line of Sight is separate from another category, "Sensory Paths," with which we would expect it to be integral. (Sensory Paths are at the same hierarchical level as the Orientation Path.) Thirdly, it isn't clear just why the concepts of the Experiencer and Experienced don't appear in the Orientation Path section. The reader is left to believe that neither an agent/observer acts (Talmy's Experiencer) nor an Experienced transpires in Line of Sight or the other Orientation types. For instance, of the Demonstrative Path (a sub-category of Orientation), Talmy indicates that a "fictively moving line functions to direct or guide someone's attention." Is this "someone" not an Experiencer of this fictive motion?

I have been a great admirer of Talmy's work, but the PATH commentary in *Towards a Cognitive Semantics* displays categorical, commonsensical, and logical snags.

³¹ Installed in a bare gallery of British high classicism (the Tate's Duveen galleries), angular slate fragments, strongly evocative of nature, slant while they at the same time regularize themselves into a straight-line path. The immense oblong along the smooth, highly polished gallery floor lengthens into depth, compelling the visitor's eyes forward and onward. Simultaneously, the restlessness (per the shapes of the slate and per arrangement) within a controlled, contained sequence motivates the visitor's body to virtually move and progress 'in line' with this preternatural natural pathway. Long's sculpted installation is psychologically 'slated' to 'draw' the visitor's physical body forward in the need, in the way of all paths, to realize a goal so as succumb to the quiet that rests at an end. The quelled angularity and halted urgency of Long's slated walkway demands that we cock our heads and twist our necks, despite the straightness.

Exemplifying embodied expression belonging to the PATH gestalt is Richard Long's "primitive causeway." This description is more than apposite; it simply could not possibly be improved upon. It issues from the incisive eye and cogent pen of Richard Cork. I am in debt to Cork (see Bibliography) for introducing me to Long's work as well as a great number of extraordinary contemporary artists.

Despite photographic remoteness, we readily discern how *Line*, by its beautiful structuration, places distinct demands on viewers' different embodied intelligences (i.e., optical, motoric). Long's longitudinal causeway purposes specific bodily responses that we understand to be 'slated,' because materially resident and instrumentally present, in the *Line*.

"Path, motive, guide, original and end," emanation and tendency—this was how Boethius nominated God. Of interest here is not the ecclesiastical message, doxology in the majority of religions, but rather that Boethius strictly seriated (and in imitation of a line) what we today identify as certain vital properties of the PATH schema, properties that are scenic, temporal, and agentive. The oblong line transfers to PATH properties—origination and emanation, guidance, motive, tendency, and end (and presumptively movement and contrast)—that Boethius enunciated fifteen centuries ago.

³² Rudolf Arnheim refers to "lawful symmetry" whereby any variation from perfect or near perfect symmetry is understood as a variation from the "potential, 'intended' shape," the shape the variant form was really meant to have (*Visual Thinking* 52).

³³ That the imaginary line is an invaluable, not to mention ineluctable spatial conductor under-lying background warrants wider hearing in cognitive science. In spite of thorough and recurring deliberations on embodied space and the positioning of embodied space as its core postulate, cognitive studies in

linguistics, rhetoric, and semiotics have overlooked the role in human conceptualization of the spatially gifted autochthonous line (the SEMILIFORM LENGTH or LINE) and neglected its brood of spatially-magniloquent progeny, lines.

³⁴ They are not synonymous, despite that they are both non-propositional and non-verbal; despite that they both ensconce space as a recordation of extension; despite that extension is, for each, experiential and embodied.

³⁵ William James gives study to sensations of vision, touch, hearing, motility, pain, and a host of bodily detections of a similar kind. James's interpretation of all space feeling as linear not only gives him an approach for extensivity, but also the intensity (of the noting or marking) of sensation.

When we come to think about it, line gives space and life to much of what we would strain to otherwise think on—vectors, gradients, radiants, forces, spectra, diagrammatic arrows, polarity, tensivity, velocity, and projection, including that which takes place, in the abstract, between mental spaces, from image schema, and in cognitive blending. Light beams, with their refraction and reflection, and, of course, lines of sight are incumbent on rectilinearity. Mathematics would be bereft without the line and its theoretical, hypothetical, and resolving graces (e.g., the number line, the slope, the dividing line). Logic, too, depends on it, in many respects.

Because line is indispensable in these and other abstractions, there is a pull towards viewing it as itself a pure intellectual commodity, something too abstract, even anemic to be somatic. But that would be mistaken, as the treatise attempts to show.

³⁶ Shapes emerge from lines and surfaces are bounded by them. Paths don't perform these functions. The baffling construct of infinity, whether in mathematics, physics, religion, or philosophy, demands imaginary visualizing of the 'without-end' (Ivins, 41–42). The fictive double arrow-tipped line; the straight line, which, in theory, extends to infinity in both directions (Ivins 84); and the contour line that perfects the perpetual circle have endured as mental inventions for this conundrum. Because a PATH contains an endpoint, it falls short of the never-ending. Time, with its horror of limit, arrogates the line; paths sufficing only on occasion.

Despite that PATH content is summary, it is laden with embodied experience and memory actually too rich (extraneous) and distractive for the sheer modeling conducted by vectors, forces, arrows, etc. This schema is unsuited for these and great sums of inferencing and representational duties, including descriptions of natural features (e.g., coastline, fault line, cracks in ice, surface of a lake), not only because of its content, but also due to what Arnheim would identify as "object dimension," the object's own spatial formation and makeup, rather than its space relativity.

³⁷ Gombrich, who is suspicious of this innateness, concedes that two independent studies led to the conclusion that the contour line is entirely rudimentary. He cites the investigations of J. M. Kennedy (in *A Psychology of Picture Perception*) as making it very difficult to deny that the mammalian animal visual system is at home with the profile line. That this surprises Gombrich is what surprises today's reader. This reader isn't told what formal and cultural training he thinks mammals undergo to learn that one entity in the visual field is distinct from another. But to his credit, he does include Kennedy's findings along with the confirmatory work of Julian Hochberg, seeming, for a long paragraph to be swayed. But, then, Gombrich pulls the rug out from the reader and, simultaneously, loses a great deal of creditability by his use of a single photograph with some missing contouring as 'proof' of his own position. He gives no allowance to the fact that the photo is intelligible because the viewer fills in what is missing from the many contours that are visible. The reader is left to suppose that he still resists Kennedy and Hochberg's conclusions to their respective data and research. Gombrich, who rarely falters, does so here with his biology, reasoning, and argument. See *The Image and the Eye*, pages 200–201 for the discussion and 250, for the photograph.

In 2006, French archeologists working in their homeland excavated an artist's 27,000 year-old 'face portrait.' Carbon-dated and from an ancient quarry, the work stylizes the human face with three short graphite strokes. The strokes were made on a face-shaped rock, which is almost the 'bare bone' of a skull. This "old master" takes for granted the contour line of the 'front' view of the human head. The artist presumes that the head 'exists' in the rock's outline; he has no need to draw it with his graphite-tipped stick nor do we, thousands of years later, have need of his having done so to make clear sense of his depiction. Jonathan Jones explains, "people have been imagining the face for as long as we have been people. We are all the same under the skin [...]." This sameness is most evident in the taken-for-granted contour afforded by the stony canvas.

Jones asks, "Has there ever been a more touching portrait made, in the history of the world, than this?" I certainly take the point Jones draws by his rhetorical question and surrounding commentary, but I also find a poetic metaphor in it, as well. See Bibliography for Jones's commentary and the quotations cited here.

³⁸ In *The Thinking Eye*, Klee describes that the line is "active" relatively and, thus, by qualification; that is, in relation to a passive plane (7). Of greater consequence, however, are these other qualifiers that he visually depicts. Of interest to us is that the depictions are diagrams with a decidedly image-schematic look. The so-called active lines Klee shows in the same two-dimensional plane with another space form (the circle). In his diagrams, each of these lines 'act' upon its planar mate: either dividing the mate into two or causing its equal halves to become displaced relative to one another along the line's surface. This last is important: that Klee gives breadth to the line, making it more than exclusively extension. What's more, Klee gives above each line a second, but shorter line outfitted with an arrow tip. It is obvious from the action of the longer, arrow-less line that it is 'moving' in the direction to which the shorter arrow points. Thus, the idea of "impetus."

Klee's active line is really a path, as he suggests in *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (1925). By having to designate all these qualifiers to the active line, it becomes apparent that this particularized line type is on its way to becoming a path, if it isn't already there! Paths and active lines are derivatives of the superlative line disallowing action along it.

Goal weighs significantly in that the pure linear inscription made over whatever solid surface, in a material idolization of its creator LINE, doesn't declare a goal within itself. This non-declaration goes directly to the fact that the linear form in its pure state records an extension of indistinguishable points. LINE is symmetric (Klee: without "graduated accentuation"), as are some its manifests. PATH image schema, in contrast, proposes a source and a goal and, therein, marks a difference. Talmy outlines that goal is a discriminated direction pursued by an experiencer, fictive or factive, that traverses its length; hence, the schema involves internal agency. Goal expresses a climactic character that, logically and schematically, differentiates it from source. In total, SOURCE-PATH-GOAL schema is asymmetric. Further contributive to this internal variance, PATH, as with all image schematic structures, boasts scenarios. With the internally consistent LINE, one would have to work at inducing one or more scenarios. Logically, any effort to insert/place events and scenes within/onto/along (?) the SEMILIFORM LENGTH defeats what it spatially provides for in the first place. Though willing to stretch a point (i.e., the austere Euclidean point with neither breadth nor length), LINE is too strictly into itself to permit difference or take on any other agency beyond its nonaligned self. It is fully singular and ruley: thus, magnificently symmetric. Point is incapable of symmetry, lacking any space whatsoever. Klee rightly calls the point "dead."

Finally, the effort described to "insert" agency and scene would demolish what the conceptual artist and art theorist Daniel Burren considers the value in a thematically-blank ("neutral") spatial form whose own spatial organization has "indicative" potency. The geometric line, something like Burren's strictly vertical bands, is perfect for subtending quantities of "other work" throughout "the realms of thought" (863). Said differently, because line is totally ruled by a single self of extension only, it is purely adoptable for all manner of spatial enterprises. See Bibliography.

³⁹ Think of the one-year-old clapping his hands in delight or earnestly crashing two toys together by hands moved along cross-associating trajectories; the two-year-old recognizing a steeple in his mother's raised and pointed hands, arranged aslant before the church's peak switches to the people; the three-year old who plays paddy-cake and reverse crosses his arms to meet the hands of the adult player of this childhood game.

⁴⁰ Nature materializes and conserves through crossings that are relatively simple, that are several, or that are vastly multiplex. Biochemistry maps the metabolic pathways responsible for intricate series of cross chemical reactions, coordinate and antagonistic. Neurology probes the thousands of integrations the brain constantly performs (Wilson 304).

⁴¹ Departing from the natural world into that of our hominid ancestry, archeological fragments reveal that Neolithic man invented (perhaps before the wheel) the intersectional, hands-on geometry of knots and plaiting. Thousands of years ahead of writing systems, primitive societies worked this same geometry to keep inventories and genealogies, log events, to cue prayers and other religious observances, to recount legends and track story lines, and as a mathematical place-making and calculation methodology. Ancient Persia devised the quadratic garden where four watercourses inter-mingle at the center's right angles to symbolize cosmic centrality and Allah's supremacy. The strict transversals within the garden's quadrangle created a visual, sonic, and kinesthetic intersection for orienting and fixing the body inwardly, and, therewith, the mind. Jump thousands of years and we moderns easily appreciate how (at a coarse level) cloth, graph paper, nets, fences, lattices, and cross-paned and leaded windows are blatantly crossed. Yet, submit to inspection objects less grossly crisscrossed and what happens? Inter-involving sub-orders and knottings come forward.

From nature's crossing habits, we project imaginary intercrosses, as for example, when the radial branching and reticulation of trees inspire a poet's vision of the "Crosswise cover" that lends "Not roof shelter, but leaf shelter." From Miles, Josephine. "Autumnal." *Hudson Review* 1 (1948). 66.

⁴² The "place/body linkage" and, critically, being/identity are integral notions, as Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Gaston Bachelard proclaim (Casey, *Fate of Place* 216). Absent place, we become physically lost and essentially unidentifiable. We cannot conceive ourselves placeless. Place goes to our emotional and conceptual bones.

⁴³ It is necessary to point out that nullifying is not a neutral. Nullifying, in fact, is a rather complicated business. The treatise touches on that complication here and again.

⁴⁴ Crossroads are traditionally the junctures that host assignation, as, for instance, in Auden's "Lady, Weeping at the Crossroads." Assignation spells possibility and adventure, as it suggests the clandestine and possibly the suspicious. Perennially, crossroads were forbidding places, associated with robbery, suicide, murder, and mortal punishment by civil authorities. As a place of emergent structure, the crossroads inculcates potency, particularity, and seminality. Not surprising then that humans give pause at a cross juncture. There is good cause to cast one's eyes this way and then that, in cross fashion, at the crossroads.

Not made much of in the literature on crossroads is how they are scenes, and therefore markers, of physical parting. (Of course, separation is tacit in robbery, suicide, and corporal punishment.) Perhaps this idea of separation is so deeply ingrained that we barely note it. But, separation would appear to be as great a factor in the experience and significance of crossroads as meeting and convergence.

⁴⁵ Bruner makes no mention of unification 'failures'—i.e., the inevitable disparities and non-connects between input sources—inherent in any metaphor or analogy.

⁴⁶ Metaphor has been the brightest orb in the constellation of rhetorical figures. From Aristotle on, it has also been the figure of focus and charting, in all probability more than all the others in total. Its

brilliance has kept our critical telescopes occupied for centuries and, doubtless, its sovereignty will continue. However, a downside exists to this favoritism. This super star has eclipsed fellow figures and tropes. When not outright neglected, these have been sadly undervalued as Jeanne Fahnestock has rightly enunciated. Among the underrated is chiasmus, one of a group of five figures Fahnestock helps magnify by application of her keen scholarship.

⁴⁷ We possess hundreds of metaphors that describe knowing, reasoning, and argument as possessing two spatial qualities: linearity and containment. Relatedly, there can be curvilinear aspects to reasoning, argument, and knowledge. For instance, reasoning proceeds along a line, ideally straight and advancing without any obstacles; a reasoner or rhetor may take a hard stance or prefer a hard-line and she may block the line taken by someone with different reasoning or with an opposing argument; a good argument ploy is to ‘come straight out with’ an idea; a knowledgeable person is presumed to run circles around someone less knowledgeable, but definitely not because they use circular logic; a contradiction can be flat, persons can argue flatly or make a flat-out decision, though, possibly, proved flat-out wrong; a separation between items seemingly alike can require the drawing/cutting of a line, perhaps a fine or sharp one, which may require an acute thinker; it is expected that a discussion or article comes to a point; reason should be balanced; and on and on.

⁴⁸ Dual conceptions pervade theologies, languages, metaphysics, social and legal systems, and moral codes. The politics of individuals and nations proceed largely in pairs. The biological realm has always been a dual program: the sexual duet, the chemical trade-offs between plants and animals, the predator/prey antagonisms, the cell and the extra-cellular, the twining genetic threads in their partnering and divisional dances. Increasingly, the physical sciences uncover a spooky cosmic dualism, including wave/particle duality, dichotomous pairs of plus and minus, and, startlingly, flip-flopping between the magnetic poles of celestial bodies. Binary coding instigates the pixelated world to which contemporary man has become addicted and is our odds-on guess as to a ‘language’ for communicating with extra-terrestrials.

⁴⁹ See Solte (89–90) for information on the divided mosaics; and Benevolo (174) for examples of divided perspective.

Scientists have long relied on adjacent double graphical representations for data and pictorial display and from these make comparisons. Architects have required, for even longer, the comparison and elucidating advantages of side-by-side and even back-to-back flip perspectives of their compositions, either for their own planning purposes or to sell a patron or client.

⁵⁰ Translation appears on page 194 of Culler’s *The Pursuit of Signs*. See Bibliography.

⁵¹ The one significant exception is the work of Jeanne Fahnestock. She puts antimetabole (which she distinguishes from chiasmus) along with four other figures, under her fine rhetorical microscope and determines that all have value to the sciences as lines of thought, reason, and argument. The Fahnestock program, though it keeps to scientific discourse, strongly suggests beyond these disciplines. We will have more to learn from her in upcoming pages.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

THE *AB:BA(C)*'S OF CHIASMUS: DESCRIPTION AND DEFINITION

Chiasmus refers to the repeating and reversing of a minimum of two elements held to a given structure. This is to say that the structure's first element of repetition–reversal substitutes for the second element of repetition–reversal, and the second element substitutes for the first. The foregoing sentence relaying the prominent substitutional aspect of chiasmus, beginning with the word *first* until the sentence period, is itself chiastic. If we assign to the initial repeating element of any chiasm the letter *A* and, in the same fashion, assign to the subsequent element the letter *B*, the reverse ordering formulates a paired transposition of *AB:BA*. As evidenced in the metachiastic sentence of this paragraph, the repeating and backward switching operations distinguishing all chiasma result here in an *AB:BA* specimen of *first second : second first*.

Most commonly classified as a rhetorical or a grammatical figure, chiasmus is presumed a phenomenon of language in which the recurring, reordered elements are lexical. The two lexical items, which are equated or balanced given that they double, coordinate with, and situate proximally to one another across a limited linear span, typically reorder themselves within relatively uniform, adjacent clauses or phrases that are themselves perceived as balanced. Equilibration is a feature of all varieties of chiasmus. Borrowing from linguistic and rhetorical terminology, we can stipulate that chiasmus invariably is a type of parataxis, that is, an organization by coordination; a type of parallelism, namely, reversed parallelism; and “a type of balance,” meaning that an equilibration of arrangement exists.¹

Two examples of chiasmus illustrate the repetition and reversal of word pairs within

syntactically similar constructions of coordinated, parallel, balanced expressions: the first, Alexander Pope’s “A wit with dunces, and a dunce with wits”; the second, Samuel Coleridge’s “Flowers are lovely, love is flowerlike.” In a brief examination of chiasmic samples he selects for comparative purposes, John Welch underlines that whereas balance and syntactical inversion are chiasmic requisites, antithesis is not (“Introduction” 9). As in the Coleridge case, the second half of a chiasm need not voice an antithetical or countering statement. Still, we must stress that antitheses are not necessarily yea-or-nay; our sense of the antithetical can be a matter of more or less. Furthermore, one of the larger claims to fame of chiasmus is its facility at juxtaposing contrary terms and contrary ideas.

Coordination (which implies similarity or equality) and balance are critical factors of parallelism, a word that means ‘placing side by side.’ Coordination, balance, parallelism: each is a primary property of chiasmus. Moreover, the three operate interrelatedly. If we consult standard handbooks for grammar, familiar guides to literary terms, and popular writing manuals it becomes apparent the general interinvolvement of these properties of language. The Holman-Harmon *Handbook to Literature* states of the “principle of parallelism” that it “dictates that coordinate ideas should have coordinate presentation,” that is, like or coordinate structure (358, emphasis added). According to Edward Proffitt’s rhetorical guide for writers, parallelism emerges from “coordinate structures—pairs and series of sentences and their parts” and it quite naturally “create[s] a sense of balance” (184, 137, emphasis added). The authoritative *Practical English Handbook* pronounces that a “balanced sentence has parallel parts that are similar in structure, length, and thoughts. Indeed, balance is simply a word for a kind of parallelism” (Watkins and Dillingham 115, emphasis original). The *Harbrace College Handbook* similarly advises of the close association of balance and parallelism. Germane to chiasmus, the *English Handbook* assumes and illustrates with diagrams how balance and parallelism necessarily involve symmetry, and the *Harbrace* requires readers to “notice that repetition can be used to emphasize the balanced structure” (Hodges and Whitten 269). The entry for *parallelism* in the Yelland-Jones-Easton *Handbook of Literary Terms* defines it as “[b]alancing one statement against another in clauses or phrases of similar length and grammatical structure.” Clausal or

phrasal coordination means the “ideas expressed in the statements are generally balanced” (137, emphasis added). In sum, serial or sequential parallelism, which depends upon coordination—that is, the ordered assembly of uniform, associative, or merely similar elements sequenced as interrelated members (counterparts) within parallels—makes for balance.

Important to acknowledge of discourse is that “there is balanced syntax, a special kind of parallelism that sets parallel elements in opposition” (Proffitt 137). This parallelism subtype, although assuring coordinate alignment, cultivates and “highlight[s] dissimilarity” (Proffitt 137). When this “special kind of parallelism” and reversed parallelism join rhetorical forces, as often happens in chiasmic locutions, opposition and antithesis pose far more complexity than the more common varieties of parallelism. As we might predict, the uniting of these rhetorical forces exponentiates the rhetorical effects of a chiasm.

The key elements that repeat in chiasmus are most commonly single words,² as in Pope’s line where *wit* and *dunces* co-occur. Chiasmus exists, however, on levels of discourse other than lexical. The repeating and crossing activities may take as key smaller linguistic components³ (e.g., letters of the alphabet, phonemes) or larger features of texts⁴ (e.g., stanzas, paragraphs, chapters) or of narratives (e.g., characters, themes, ideas). A palindrome, which has been described as “the compressed extreme of chiasmus” (Lanham 106), is a graphic (and because graphic, often, as well, an acoustic) species of the chiasmus genus. Born of letters, which are laid out according to a strict reverse-transcription of a first half, the palindrome (Greek for ‘recurring’) is of all chiasma variations the most literal, in the strictest sense of that word. A remote cousin of the palindrome is the ambigram, a word whose letterforms are ingeniously redesigned, even drastically contorted if need be, to make it “read the same, when reversed, turned or otherwise inverted” (Firmage 43), that is, to make it effect a chiasmic organization based upon letter shapes.

Coleridge’s heavy mimetic use of chiasmic patterns in “Frost at Midnight” includes a miniature scale chiasmus based on graphic and acoustic ingredients (Nänny, “Chiasmus in Literature” 57–58). With “ ’mid cloisters/dim,” the aphaeretic *’mid* and the *cloister*-bracketing *dim* replicate in letters and sounds the cramped, imprisoning sense of the poem.⁵ On the far side

of the spectrum, chiasmaticity on a large scale orchestrates the entirety of Tennyson's elegiac opus *In Memoriam*. Not only do the work's one-hundred and thirty-three poems each exhibit *abba* rhyming quatrains, but closely paired sections, themes, episodes, and scenes line up in a descending–ascending arrangement on opposite sides of a dominant center, the emotional nadir of the poet's elegiac experience (see Kilroy). Moliere's *Tartuff* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Tempest* have been deemed whole work chiasms (Quinn 95). Similarly, the two-part sectioning of Northrop Frye's *The Great Code* into an *ABCD:DCBA* chapter sequence exemplifies, as with *Memoriam*, large-order, extra-syntactic chiasmus.

Where chiasmus happens on the level of syntax, the key words may be absolute, approximate, or near opposites to one another. On the other hand, lexical *A*'s and *B*'s need have no association or affinity whatsoever, including a contrastive association, or they may possess only a partial, sometime, or passing relationship. By its powerful crossing and counterbalancing operations, syntactical chiasmus puts into close relation entities that are unassociated, are only partly allied or quasi-associated, or stand in any of a number of antonymic, contrasting, or contrary relationships. By these same interoperabilities, the clauses within which the key terms position and re-position also co-relate. Relations compound as terms and clauses swap places with one another.

For a simple, if rather general definition that has the benefit of conforming to modern critical practice (Nänny, "Chiastic Structures" 75), we can take chiasmus to be "a balancing pattern in verse or prose where the main elements are reversed" (Cuddon 113). Whether each key element is identically reproduced in the second half of a construction (which the formulation *AB:BA* captures, but with less precision than the representation of $A^1B^1: B^1A^1$) or instead a synonymous or related term appears in the latter half (better represented as $A^1B^1: B^2A^2$) brings us to the matter of an affiliated rhetorical figure.⁶ What has been described up until now as chiasmus—a bi-lateral symmetrical figure consisting of the repetition and inversion of two identical key words within two parallel, but oppositely ordered phrases or clauses—has also been labeled *antimetabole* (in ancient and medieval rhetorical treatises, *antimetavole* or *commutatio*).⁷

A word that entered the English vocabulary three centuries before *chiasmus*, *antimetabole* was translated as ‘counterchange’ by Richard Puttenham in his sixteenth-century book on rhetorical figures, *The Arte of English Poesie* (Nänny, “Chiastic Structures” 75). *Antimetabole* (Greek for ‘thrown over against’) denotes reverse change, an operation that entails repetition. Likeness as to reversal and repetition explains why the two rhetorical devices have been taken for figural twins.

Those who have trouble telling the twins apart make no distinction between the terms *antimetabole* and *chiasmus*. Occasionally commentators use the two names interchangeably. But far more commonly, commentators accede to one name to the exclusion of the other (the far older *antimetabole*⁸ unaccountably is the lesser known of the two) and then broadly apply whichever is their opted-for designation.⁹ This kind of terminological default or preference occurs in the explications of philosophers Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jacques Derrida and literary critics Rodolphe Gasché, Andrzej Warminski, and Phillippe Lacoue-Labarthe, all of whose work on structures of dual inversion find voice in chapters that follow.

Others, and in particular modern rhetoricians, contend the names describe associated yet nonetheless different rhetorical phenomena. They make a distinction over whether the second *A* and *B* are exact duplications of the first *A* and *B*. As a consequence of this discrimination about lexical exactness, they interpret one figure a variation, a sub-category, or an extension of the other.¹⁰ But even for those who do draw this fine line, the two figures, because each is undeniably a “close relative” of the other, are thought to be difficult to differentiate in actual practice (Fahnestock 126, 128). Richard Lanham, in the second edition of his authoritative *Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, concludes that *antimetabole* and *chiasmus* are “virtual synonyms” (14). By reason of this essential synonymy and because *chiasmus* is the term nominated by the majority of the critics and philosophers influential in this project, quotations and comments herein about *antimetabole* are assumed illustrative of and applicable to *chiasmus*. An even better reason for adopting *chiasmus* is that in traditional rhetoric’s drawing of a definitional distinction, *antimetabole* ($A^1B^1: B^1A^1$) refers to the narrower phenomenon of lexical replication. Since *antimetabolic* locutions amount to a sub-variety of a broader

phenomenon, privileging the term *chiasmus* is in keeping with, because it subsumes antimetabole, both its basic qualities and operations.¹¹

A final, but important clarification is necessary. It has to do with the election of *AB:BA*, the typographic shorthand for chiasmus employed throughout the treatise. Chiasmus also goes by the abbreviations *ABBA* and *abba*, along with some slight variations on these (mostly with superscripts, e.g., $A^1B^1B^2A^2$, $a^xb^yb^y\alpha^y$). Readers will encounter all three of the main shorthand formulas (italicized or not) in the chiasmus literature. None of the triad or their variants is incorrect. Nevertheless, I believe the one adopted here, *AB:BA*, is preferential.

ABBA and *abba* (capitalization aside) differ from *AB:BA* only in the colon. I retain the little punctuation mark for two large reasons. First, the colon's presence accentuates that chiasmus is an entity bi-lateral about an axis. Said otherwise, chiasmus presents as a uni-bivalent linear composition in that its propositional cola serve as the double platforms upon which chiasma are built. The *A* and *B* terms crucial within chiasmus appear twice over and diametrically ordered, usually within larger signifying dual platforms that are alike or related. By *platform* I have reference to phrases or clauses isogenous or nearly isogenous to one another in lexis and syntax. As indicated earlier but worth repeating, the special mirror-like quality of chiasmus comes out not only in the inversion of the crucial terms within an antimeric structure, but also in the associated inversion of two clausal or phrasal hemi-platforms, which because they are lexically and syntactically alike, assume the appearance of structures mutually reflecting. The mirror effect is particularly enhanced and capable of rhetorical luster when, as very often occurs with chiasmus, *A* and *B* situate respectively in each of two cola¹² in the first half of the figure and then crosswise situate in two like cola in the second half.¹³ The graphic colon explicitly recognizes the chiastic arrangement as a factor of cola. We might designate this the reverse di-isocolon chiasmus.¹⁴ However, whether we are speaking of this form of enhanced symmetrical match up or something far simpler and briefer, a colon overtly noted tangibly punctuates and thereby explicitly acknowledges the chiastic arrangement as analogously, though distinctly membered in its essential paraquaternacy (and, accordingly, cola-like).¹⁵

A second reason for the colon goes to the fact that it visually and, hence, expressly marks a center point. It, in fact, sits in plain centric sight. A quandary exists over whether the chiasma we usually meet, that is, those that are syntactical in nature, possess a center of some kind. Answers, when they rise to any detail, to questions about the centricity of chiasmus—Does the figure have a ‘true’ center or does it have a center in effect only? What, in fact, constitutes a ‘true’ center? Does the figure organize a center or does a center organize it?—fall short of consensus. The quandary’s existence points to aspects of chiasmus that classical and early modern rhetoricians in particular fail to gauge: namely, that it’s an exceedingly complex, difficult, and esoteric personality. But beyond providing evidence that chiasmus legitimately qualifies as a problem(atic) child, one that’s challenging, variable, argumentative (as we will see), contrary, and, like metaphor, another difficult figure with which it quite often hangs out,¹⁶ “fractious” (Redfern 166)—centricity is critical to this particular symmetrical grammar construction. I contend that a chiastic midpoint, even if virtual in nature, is vital to the two essential arguments the figure writes. I enlist support for this contention when the spatial and dynamic elements of chiasmus receive larger discussion.

I further contend that operations inherent to the figure rely upon a midpoint. An implicit center possesses axial value, which takes us back to the distinctive mirrory nature of chiasmus introduced already. A mirror works by an axis of reflection that actuates mirror symmetry and the consequences of such symmetry: doubling and counterverting or counter pointing (i.e., counter crossing). As the consequence of symmetry, mirrors also create closed-off worlds that hold the reflected and its original in a tightly circumscribed sphere, one that is self-holding or self-contained because exclusively self-reflecting. This circumscription matters greatly in chiasmus for technical reasons—rather obviously, it is a self-framing structure (the *A* elements bracketing the form’s interior elements, *BB*) and the term serves as a synonym for and as description of the envelope pattern—but even more significantly, for functional, semantic, and psychological reasons, relating to framing, insulating, stabilizing, iterating, echoing, along with a myriad of others. Feasibly more than any other aspect, mirror symmetry most distinguishes our rhetorical instrument from other schemes and tropes. Northrop Frye, whose final

publication was *The Double Vision* and who was ever the promoter of “counterpoints,” underlines the mirror effect in his chiastically ordered *The Great Code*. He emphasizes that the text arranges a structure of “double mirrors” reflecting and regarding each other rather than any “outside.”

The chiasmus-mirror association behooves us to take Jenijoy LaBelle’s point in *Herself Beheld* that “mirroring is, quite literally, a mode of figuration or figuring-forth” (42). Mirrors, figuration, introspection, chiasmus: these are complicit. This complicity furthers our appreciation that chiasmus is a self-reflective, self-reflexive artifact of inward regard (self-regarding, or to reproduce LaBelle’s preferred term: *self-beholding*) and a defining, in-pulling (interose) medium paradoxically “figuring forth” reciprocal interchanges within a restricted physical space. The contemporary poet John Hollander supports our appreciation with his pronouncement that “in [Robert] Frost’s lines in ‘Spring Pools’ about ‘These flowery waters and these watery flowers,’ the central trope of reflection, mirroring, the transformations of the seen into the unknown, and so forth, is here made to be the meaning of chiasmus itself” (xvii). Hollander entices us with his “the meaning of chiasmus” and his follow-up remark that “the crisscross pattern means even more than that.” Regrettably, this brief essay covering chiasmus *obiter dictum* teases its readers with an unmet suggestion of “even more.”

Fortunately, we have room and reason here to expand upon what Hollander hints the subject is owed. Chiasmatic mirroring and related matters—identity, fidelity and distortion, affinity and incongruence, sameness and difference, indistinction and distinction, assimilability and unassimiliability, subjectivity and objectivity, symmetry and asymmetry, conversion, exchange, alterity, consonance and contradiction, interiority and framing, representation, subversion, legibility, complexity—make up some of the significant and signifying “more” of chiasmus. To gain greater cognizance of these, the present chapter unfurls and holds aloft some of the long history and various applications of this exceedingly ancient, effecting, and complex figure.

THE LONG LINEAGE OF CROSSED WORDS WITHIN CROSSED LINES

Etymology serves as a generally rewarding line of attack for inquisitors of any new-fangled, challenging, or difficult concept. Before following this same approach for the foreign-sounding *chiasmus* and what it could intimate, a Walter Ong reflection is worth keeping in mind; namely, that “concepts have a way of carrying their etymologies with them forever. The elements out of which a term is originally built usually, and probably always, linger somehow in subsequent meanings, [...] often powerfully and even irreducibly” (12). The long-life of etymological significance, particularly when it reaches back to the far-off recesses of what Ong identifies as “primary orality,” is certainly the case with our word.

The Greek *chiasmus* (χιάσμος) traces to *chiasmos* or *khiasmos*, meaning “marked by the letter ‘chi’ ” (Gallop 281). Chi or khi was graphically represented as χ in ancient Greek.¹⁷ At a glance, anyone familiar with the Roman alphabet, which was a daughter alphabet of West Greek and the single writing system embraced by speakers of English, can appreciate that χ is a visual equivalent of an X or lowercase x. Notwithstanding that *chiasmus* takes its name from the crisscross display of a Grecian letterform, the propositional devisings that fall under a chiasmic heading date to a period well before the Greek alphabet, which was invented sometime around 800–750 BC. Although we say that chiasma, in effect, imitate a χ- or X-like shape and then, with respect to physical shape, we turn to our Greco-Roman chirographic inheritance, in truth, the discourse ‘imitator’ came earlier. We know *chiasmus* is at least as old as the ancient Semitic peoples, whose script had its own X-shaped symbol, and it is reasonable to suspect that our crisscrossing language operation is even older. Due to the tremendous age of *chiasmus*, it would be more accurate to claim that the letterforms take after, having followed on, all manner of crossing phenomena, whether performed by the hands or bodies of humans or noted by early peoples in the natural world. These phenomena would naturally include the decorative creations of craftsmen, potters, metal smiths, and weavers; but seemingly it would justly count as contemporaneous another type of pleasing handiwork: the linguistic crisscross of *chiasmus*.

I presume that behind the crossed letterform, whether written along the exact lines of χ or X, persists a potent visual form, one that like the circle has stretched back to the dawn of

human time. The easily distinguished, easily executed form, which was appropriated quite naturally for syllabaries and alphabets, is X, the oblique or non-perpendicular cross. Chi(!)rographically, chi is one version of X. But so is the even older chiasmus, which we can now specify as denominated, anachronistically, as the ‘chi-form’ (Welch, “Introduction” 10). Nominally, *chiasmus* references ‘a placing crosswise’ (*Princeton Encyclopedia* 183) or a double “diagonal or crosswise arrangement” (*Shorter OED*). The descriptive values just now noted capture the blatant visual shape of and particular formal features distinctive of X.¹⁸ As with the geometric circle, the oblique cross is an indispensable formulary and symbolic “illustration” (to use Wallace Steven’s valuable term) for certain potent or vital actions, objects, solutions, and meanings needing to be marked within what Ong touchingly styles the “human lifeworld” (42–44). Because in the strict sense, chi belongs to the literate world and because chiasmus passes down from the deep recesses of pre-literate cultures, it is important to keep before us the following: that although *chiasmus* names a crosswise lexical, syntactical, and propositional array that with some regularity is said to be arranged along the lines of a chi (or, relatedly, along any crosswise structural affiliate), chiasmus ultimately shares a physical and meaning semblance to the hoary, nonlinguistic, yet perpetually and profoundly signifying X.

As indicated, chiasmus is not a neoteric phenomenon. Though an X-er, of a kind, it is generations old—twenty-five hundred generations, at the very least (Fahnestock 122).¹⁹ This ancient is a rhetorical instrument in which key elements cross back by repeating in reverse in the formal and actional ways that are, in the collective, the unique persona of the oblique cross. The crossing or inverting of the key elements sets up a circuit of reciprocity and propels a mirror-like or reflexive interchange. The reciprocal mirroring compounds and thus takes on an especially reflective or, as Henry James might say, “burnished” quality when, as is more often the case than not, the chiastic elements divide themselves between two closely positioned phrases or clauses that are themselves inverse or mirror images of one another.

The X-ing action made possible by the reflective operations of repetition and reposition delivers an antimetric composition. Such a composition has a counterbalanced distribution of duplicated elements about a denoted or virtual midpoint. The antimetric structure in language,

what the rhetoric handbooks call *antimetathesis*, articulates a sequential array both bi-lateral and symmetric. When this array of ordered regularity contains two key elements, the repeating of the pair provides the constituent number minimally requisite for the “double order,” bi-lateral pattern of what constitutes the “simplest case” of symmetry, $AB:BA$ (Piaget and Inhelder, *Conception of Space* 7). When the arrangement keeps to strict bi-lateral symmetry, but the key elements augment beyond A and B , more elaborate antimeric sequences of $ABC:CBA$, $ABCD:DCBA$, and so forth, follow on.²⁰ Furthermore, permutations upon these precise symmetries are derivable. $ABBC:CBBA$, $ABCBD:DBCBA$, $ABB:BAA$, and $ABBB:BBBA$ report just four of a multitude of possible permutation sequences.²¹ Though requiring on the part of a sequencer, the basic, ostensibly simple $AB:BA$ blueprint can be highly, even astonishingly worked and permuted, as we will learn.

Chiastic formulations, many in expanded, elaborate series, pervade the Old and New Testaments (Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity*; see also Lund). The pervasiveness accorded with the reality that whatever the length, the “chiasm was *de rigueur* in Biblical times” (Radday 51). As the dominant stylistic tool and thematic organizer for the speakers and writers of those distant times, chiasmus took a rhetorical lead in discourse of all sorts. In ancient Hebrew poetry and prose, both sacred and profane, chiastic permutations and extensions, which frequently protracted to the mid- and even far letters of the alphabet, repeatedly produced complicated palindromic patterns controlling meter, spelling acrostics, and regimenting the presentation of ideas (Bliese 48; see also Watson). The Old Testament drew on chiasmus to structure everything from partial statements to pericopes to entire epistles and books.²² One of its most enduring chiasma shapes the idea of two beings conceived and cherished as one. It is the affecting, passionate pledge of perpetual devotion, belonging, and intercoupling, “I am my beloved, and my beloved is mine” (Song of Solomon 6:3). On a grander scale and more deliberated than the micro chiasma in the Old Testament (though equally copious), the macro versions display a “concentric geometric style” in which a matching series of clauses, phrases, or verse lines form “two lateral panels” organized “symmetrically around a dominate center” (Radday 47, 55, 67). Chiastic concentricity and, relatedly, circularity, attributes arising out of

strict linearity, become a motif in this project, as subsequent discussion will show.

The New Testament, cultivated by the fertility and the rich traditions of the Old Testament's Semitic style of discourse and of the Greek rhetorical forms (Lund 24; Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation* 8–11), similarly abounds with chiasmus. Both the shorter and the extended syntactic types flourish in the Christian scriptures, gospels, and letters. An example of the extended type exists in The Letter of James. The passage 2:14–26 stands as “the crux of the letter,” namely, that faith alone cannot save the follower of Christ unless she or he has also performed good works (Welch, “Chiasmus in the New Testament” 212). Within the commentary surrounding this profound passage, that is, the lines before and after, the epistle's author cross-composes an elaborate counter-pointed formula of twenty-five sections (either clauses or phrases) that make up the Letter's total of one hundred and eight verses. John Welch, modern day specialist on ancient Semitic chiasma, avers that “the balancing of elements in the first and second halves of the epistle” establishes an “equilibrium [...] delicately maintained. Every [individual] section bears close affinities to its counterpart” that seemingly reaches across the smaller central chiasm (212). The *idée matière* of James's preeminent chiasmus, namely that “faith without works is dead,” positions exactly (2:14–16) at the midpoint of the halves. If you will, it conducts as the crux of the crux, beginning and closing with another matching element: a probing as well as haunting question, “What does it profit?” Predictably with extended chiasma, a middlemost statement functions as the doctrinal, thematic, or climatic pivot on which the lateral sequences balance and turn inward. This overt centrality “concentrate[s] the reader's or listener's interest on the expression” that is physically and notionally centermost (Freedman 7). James makes it easy to visualize his entire message as two matching panels that formally rest, yet swing on a hinge of crucial import.

The accentuated centering of a pivotal idea generally distinguishes the macro from the micro chiasmus. However, there exist micro chiasma that register a distinct mid-linguistic element, ordinarily some *C* of an *ABCBA* structure. Justus George Lawler considers such chiasma a “modification of the [usual] chiastic motif” (56). Such modified chiasma constitute, for instance, a relatively common vowel pattern in *Paradise Lost*.²³

For the majority of listeners and readers of the New Testament, the smaller, condensed chiasma as compared with the elaborated are far more recognizable as they are immediately audible to the ear, in which they may resound beyond the concluding word, and are readily visible to the eye or the mind's eye, by the blatantly strict crisscrossing. The ear and the reading eye normally find it easier to detect bi-lateral symmetry across a smaller, tighter district than a larger, possibly looser span. For these reasons, the non-extended versions of chiasmus are especially useful as remembered lines that lodge in the head and act as guide-phrases to be taken to heart. Furthermore, the shorter syntactic chiasma that populate the New Testament's books and gospels underline "the contrast [...] between the law as understood in the past and as Jesus understands it" (Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation* 45). To win over believers to the covenant espoused by Jesus Christ and to advance and convince of his miraculous, abstruse articles of faith—the indivisibility of God and Jesus; the intersection of two opposing, disparate realms, the spiritual and the earthly; the suffusion of infinity in Christ's humanity; the mutual, undying love between Jesus and his believers; salvation and athanasia through faith in the atoning death of the Savior; the resurrection of Christ and his return to his disciples (e.g., "Jesus will come again," from John 16:16)—, the New Testament relied heavily on a stylistically pleasing, self-affirming device to which the masses, predominately illiterate, were accustomed and sensitized.

But this winsome device, prevailed upon by preachers of the time of Christ, as well as scribes and religious for recording or resurrecting the sermons preached by Him and in His name, possesses a further advantage: iconicity. Chiasmus on its own is a facsimile of interrelation, intersection, conversion, transversal, reciprocity, and return. The New Testament God assumed mortal coil in order to transform all of humankind, past, present, and future, into a supreme oneness—an act of utmost illogicality. The familiar chiasmus, of its own collineation and coil, actualizes the illogical by turning around accepted wisdom and up-righting the familiar. Much like metaphor, chiasmus is an essential means within our cognitive powers for ministering transformations and securing new images. Key among these ministrations and of particular welcome in religious discourse is the "transvaluation of values," which Burke

distinguishes as the theological cornerstone of the duality that is Christ Lord.

Another rhetorical plus, chiasmus is an ingenious middleman. So was Lord Christ, the embodiment answering the chiastic question that resounds down through the ages AC.: “hadn’t man been fashioned in the image of God, and hadn’t God taken on the image of man?” (Auden, *Dyer’s* 457). The X-ing discourse figure, like the divine, saving figure suspended on an upright cross, intermediates and reconciles. Both get extremes to meet, including those which logicians and most others deem mutually exclusive. The sensible and the supersensible reside poles apart; they are categorical mismatches. Yet, because chiasmus can match up, cross over, and thereby intercross (*transubstantiate* in Christian parlance) into one and the same entities logically, commonsensibly, or typically taken as widely variant or outright incompatible, sense and supersense infold upon one another by this rhetorical go-between.²⁴ With “I am in the Father and the Father in me” from John, the near exact lexical reversal within a duplex form persuades of the living form of God as man who “appears looking just like any other man” (Auden). The apostolic chiasm intermediates the relationship between two whose prospect of likeness would seem, on face, not merely remote, but so discrepant as to be “impossible to the imagination”: where the “profane appearance” of a Johnny (after the Baptist) come-lately evangelist whose mortified flesh and capital punishment delivered at the sullied hands of mankind stands in complete “contradiction” to the “sacred assertion” of immortal divinity, unalloyed goodness, and power without limit (Auden). Yet despite differences apparently incongruous and irreconcilable, chiastic collineation, parallelism, and reciprocity can transfigure and reconcile perfect and human being into co-existents, co-extensives, co-identities. The one-for-one concurrence of related co-terms and the collineation of chiastic mirror symmetry figures deity and man as coterminous; hence, formalizing them as indistinguishable and conjoint. The Almighty and flesh-and-blood man miraculously form, via a double, X-ing form, two ‘in’ one. ‘Supreme Mediator,’ ‘Image Re-Maker,’ and ‘Publicist for a New Order’—titles all that Christ and chiasmus, figures bound to and incarnating cross shapes, could be said to share.

With its overturning, outright overthrowing credentials, chiasmus powered the

controverting, radical rhetoric of the extraordinary, enigmatic “good news” the Nazarene preached and his disciples proselytized (Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation* 96); with its commutative credentials, it undergirded the “Christian plot [...] consisting of events that are both reversible and interchangeable” (Stanley Fish qtd. in Ermarth 11). As evidence of the persuasive power and applicability to drive home a Christian tenet, how best to convince of and parable transfiguration than by a *transfiguratio*: a trans—a cross—figure. Able to reform, invert, refute, bend, and contradict, chiasmus befits the deeply paradoxical, well-nigh inscrutable theology “of the New Testament, where the first is already last, where death is life, gain is loss, and the lost is found” (Welch, “Chiasmus in the New Testament” 211). This versatile, countersigning figure delivering the enigmatic, wondrous language²⁵ of transformation, alternation, consecration, reversal, return, and profound and eternal unity (and, thus, miraculously overcoming its own partitive nature) is in itself a wonder-worker formularizing the mystifying beliefs of Christian scripture.

ANCIENT SECULAR CHIASMUS

In his 1984 article on Mark’s gospel for the “Biblical Theology Bulletin,” Augustine Stock emphasizes that the “architectural techniques” of inversion, concentricity, and symmetry “are not unique to biblical literature but belong to a class of discourse phenomena attested in many different languages” and cultures of antiquity (30). Chiasmus reigns over that larger class. And this reign stretches to the far recesses of pre-literate times. We begin to explore chiasmus in those recesses by reaching back to Homer and well beyond.

The adventurous tales of Achilles and Odysseus recounted by Homer had been stories of earlier epochs. The Asiatic Greek who lived about eight hundred years before Christ worked within a venerable tradition of rhapsodes, each keeping alive for his generation and passing along to the next a memory store of familiar, time-honored stories. Only a fraction of these popular stories saw writing. Fortuitously, manuscripts were generated of the two lengthiest of the known Homeric poems (Lord 153). Written in the new Greek alphabet sometime around 700–650 BC. (Ong 23), twenty-seven hundred hexameter lines collocated in the *Iliad* and the

Odyssey guaranteed, now for all time, the reputation of Homer. Lauded as the Western world's literary exemplar and revered as the equivalent of the Greek's Confucius, his influence on the culture of Greece and later on philhellenistic Rome and its empire grew by bounds. Aristotle, who considered Homer the father of tragedy, made sure the young Alexander was brought up a solid diet of Homer. When Aristotle's student came of age and of conquering, Homeric reminiscences guided Alexander's super-warrior actions and even his notions of entitlement (Hornblower 91, 290, 310).

"Homer was not a man but a god" was one of the sentences children in Greek-speaking kingdoms and provinces first learned to copy in their handwriting lessons (Marrou 162). No matter though that he was believed to surpass mere mortals, mighty Homer's methods of composing conformed with the themes, techniques, and linguistic tools of the epic singers' trade. Among the linguistic tools plied by the trade, chiasmus stands out. The meticulous scholarship of Alfred Lord establishes that chiasmus is an indispensable organizational and expressive device in the traditional narrative poetry practiced by oral societies. Collecting from Lord and other students of oral narrative poetry, we connect how the chiastic pattern's adaptation to a range of structural levels accounts for its prolificity in this genre. The figure's plasticity is such that units within a verse line and, as often, the complete, usually end-stopped line find themselves under chiastic control (see, e.g., Lord 42). The pattern also controls for a few lines of poetry or single stanzas (or their oral equivalent) as well as for salient, particularly dramatic segments of a scene or entire episodes. At its most encompassing role, chiasmus outlines an entire epos, as is said to be the case of the *Iliad* and *Beowulf*. Structuring beyond the micro chiasmus levels receives consideration in Chapter Three. At present we want only to take note of the fact that chiasmus was a methodology for oral narration that solved some of the arduous constraints, especially of retaining events and their sequencing in story and presentation time, on rhapsodes and their audiences. Lord covers the chiastic pattern's mnemonic, compositional, rhetorical, narratorial, and aesthetic contributions. Supplementary to his work is that of the lesser-known Adeline Bartlett, whose small monograph records the importance to Anglo-Saxon poetry, with its very strong oral identities, of the chiasmatic or

envelope pattern. Bartlett suggests how this pattern, which, in the manner of Homer, operated on small, medium, and large poetic levels, tends to subsume other patterns essential to early epics: parallel, rhythmical, and incremental. Furthermore, chiasma incorporate within their neatly-delineated, framing structures, decorative insets and ekphrastic ‘pictures’ and scenes (82), as well as conventional devices that are pre-Homeric epic traditions. The frames, of themselves, supply pronouncement, echoes, and memory aids.

By starting with the indispensability of chiasmus to Homer and to epic composition in general, we gain a perspective on chirographic usages of chiasmus from the vantage of oral usages. The helpfulness of this approach is that the attributes that made chiasmus adventitious for the non-literate epic compositor of ancient story and his listeners are just as germane today. The joke Blackberried between friends can get its punch from a chiastic form, despite that the ‘compositor’ and ‘listener’ might find it mind-boggling that this form was ubiquitous before the invention of written language.

CHIASMUS AS A GRECO-ROMAN PHENOMENON

The chi-figure proliferated in the Greek and Roman literatures of antiquity, from before Homer all the way through to the Late Latin authors (Welch, “Chiasmus in Ancient Greek” 250). With a few exceptions,²⁶ classical authors did not favor, as Hebraic writers did, the “chiastic architectural pattern for larger units” (251, 262). Instead, the shorter chiasmus that holds to the verse line or keeps within a sentence period was preferred by the Greeks, said to have invented rhetoric, and by the Romans, said to have perfected rhetoric (Golden, Berquist, and Coleman 76). This preference is evident in Homer, Plato, Isocrates, Apuleius, Heraclitus, Seneca, and Horace, to name a few luminaries from a list that hasn’t been strictly formalized, but would sure to be long. Plato’s *Timaeus*, for instance, is replete with chiasmus. The figure’s equilibration, self-enclosure, and self-sufficiency mesh with, as they conduct the subject of cosmic perfection.

R. B. Steele, who explains chiasmus as anaphora’s counterpart (“Anaphora and Chiasmus” 154), ascertained in his early twentieth-century examination of ancient Rome’s

writers that the shorter chiasmus is prolific in Lucretius, Livy, and Virgil (*Chiasmus* 5). Steele designates chiasmus a recurrent stylistic element constant across all of Sallust, who was known for a concentrated and sharply paradoxical style. The chiasmic-prone Montaigne (*Essays* 198) greatly esteemed the style of Sallust, whose prose exhibited similarities to his own. As opposed to the Frenchman, however, the first artistic historian of Rome indulged in unusual and complicated chiasmic arrangements.²⁷ The same figure under the hand of Sallust's contemporary Tacitus was, by comparison, less showy and its frequency varied among his works. With his precise, epigrammatic style, which in the later writing became more poetic,²⁸ Tacitus liked chiasmus for its aphoristic potentials.

The learned Steele, painstaking in his collection and study of chiasmus and anaphora in Roman literature, declares that even though *chiasmus* was not, in actuality, a term in the vocabulary of Roman rhetoricians, they illustrated related figures, such as *contentio*, *commutatio*, and *contrapositum*, when citing sentences that were, in fact, chiasmatic (*Chiasmus* 4). Angelico-Salvatore Di Marco, in his helpful work on the rhetorical effects of biblical chiasmus, indicates that despite *chiasmus* originating from the Greek, the word itself was unavailable to those living in the ancient world until Pseudo-Hermogenes directly cited it in his treatise *On Invention*.²⁹ The 1993 Di Marco article confirms what George Kennedy had attested nine years previous. I transcribe liberally from what Kennedy asserts in his *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, a text that contributes to our understanding of the centuries-long delay between the eventual nomination of chiasmus in ancient rhetorical texts and its widespread, early-on practice in the writing and speeches of antiquity:

A few [rhetorical] devices commonly found in ancient texts and given labels by modern critics are not identified at all in handbooks of the classical period. *Chiasmus*, or 'crossing,' is an example. The term appears first in Pseudo-Hermogenes, *On Invention* (4.3, p 182 Rabe), a work perhaps of the fourth century of the Christian era, where it is applied to a reversed arrangement of clauses in a sentence. Yet as a figure it is not uncommon in classical Greek literature, and very common in Latin. The closest parallel term in Latin is probably *commutatio* (*Rhetoric to Herennius* 4.30), which, to judge from the examples given, could be applied to such Biblical instances as 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath' (Mark 2:27). But *commutatio* does not include everything known as chiasmus. In the Old Testament whole passages are often composed chiasmatically, with the parts arranged in a sequence

A, B, C, . . . C', B', A'. This elaborated chiasmus can also be found as a compositional technique in Greek as early as Homer and is again very common in Latin poetry of the Augustan period, but it is ignored by classical rhetoricians and literary critics alike. (28–29)

Longinus ‘authenticates’ Kennedy’s observations. In *On the Sublime*, the reader won’t encounter the word *chiasmus* or any of its adjectival forms. Yet in the Loeb Classical edition translating the Greek rhetorician’s treatise, the reader finds chiasmus a frequent mode of expression. *On the Sublime* quotes a chiasmus, though not so identified, from Isocrates, the most influential laureate of classical Greek rhetoric: “ ‘words have such power that they can make great things humble and endue small things with greatness’ ” (qtd. in Longinus 281). A subscriber to the Isocretean notion of the transformative power of language and himself an adept at reverse parallelism, Longinus is clearly a practitioner of chiasma. He complains, for example, that “Homer has done his best to make the men in the *Iliad* gods and the gods men” (189). His objecting locution performs a two-way disturbance and “turn[ing] upside down” of the normal order of gods as gods and men as men, that is, the normal categorization of *A as A* and *B as B*. This anomalous condition disturbs Longinus, who, for all his awe of the *Iliad*’s literary achievement, considers the *A as B* and *B as A* Homeric re-classification a serious “breach in the canons of propriety” (189). In a less exegetical and more theoretical mood, Longinus voices, “art is only perfect when it looks like nature and Nature succeeds only when she conceals latent art” (241). By his critic’s lights, art and nature share a relation such that “[t]heir cooperation may well result in perfection” (281). Here the rhetorically savvy Longinus configures “perfection”—that is, the rescinding and reconciling of antitheses (art and nature) into a sweeping, faultless culmination. The configuring is managed by what he names a “cooperative” figure, which I interpret to mean an inter-relational form in which elements become co-efficients of one another through grammatical coordination. *On the Sublime* offers readers several more chiasmatically-patterned observations.³⁰

It has been suggested that the educated citizens of the Greco-Roman world were predisposed to chiasmus based, at least in part, on the manner in which children learned their ABCs. In his history on ancient education, H. I. Marrou informs that “In Roman times it was not enough to know the alphabet from alpha to omega. It had to be learned backwards, from

omega to alpha and then both ways at once,” that is, in pairs or sets formed sequentially from each of the two ends of the alphabet (210–211). The Roman system of teaching children their letters was the instructional method inherited from the Greeks (Stock 25). When Greek and Roman citizens ‘knew their letters’ they literally knew them chiastically: forwards, backwards, and two ways to the middle. I. H. Thomson adds to the discussion by alleging that “there was an inherent ‘ambilateralism’ present in the ancient world, in which Greek-speaking Hebrews or Hebrew/Aramaic-speaking Greeks lived in a culture that moved both right to left and left to right” (Thomson qtd. in Porter and Reed 216). Although we can only speculate on the degree to which this ambilateral mindset predisposed a culture toward chiasticism, it can’t be denied that Greek inscriptions were, for a lengthy period of time, written in an alternating right-to-left–left-to-right continuation. Moreover, inscriptions, which dotted the public spaces of Greece, much like the modern world’s billboards, were prone to chiasmic messages, which we will examine more fully in Chapter Three. The practice of boustrophedonic writing also persisted during the early period of Roman civilization. Examples occur in early Latin inscriptions (Ong 104).

Right-to-left and left-to-right movement was a prominent feature of ancient choral drama. The Greek chorus, which “was able to harmonize their double functions” of “spectators in the drama” and “spectators of the drama,” performed verse stanzas in pairs called Strophe and Antistrophe (Moulton 9; emphasis original). The “metre and evolutions for the two stanzas of a pair were the same down to the minutest gesture” (9). An ode was the composite of each Strophic and Antistrophic pairing. Richard Moulton explains in *The Ancient Classical Drama* how the

Chorus started from the altar in the centre of the orchestra, and their evolutions took them to the right. This would constitute a Strophe whereupon (as the word ‘Strophe’ implies) they turned round and in the Antistrophe worked their way back to the altar again, the second stanza of the pair getting its name because in it the rhythm, gestures and metre of the first were exactly repeated though with different words. A second Strophe, very likely accompanied with a change of rhythm, would take the dancers toward the left of the orchestra, in the corresponding Antistrophe they would retrace their steps to the altar again. The process would be continued indefinitely; if there were an odd stanza it was performed round the altar, and called an Epode if at the end, or a Mesode if in the middle, of the performance. (9)

The chorus' precisely coordinated, ambilateralist steps and unisonous rhythmic singing bear a striking resemblance to chiasmus. For purposes of generic representation, we might designate the stage production an *ABC[...]:[...]/CBA* performance and the stationary center altar, the place of physical and visual focus and dramatic intensity, we could think of as punctuated by the mid-most fixture, the colon. And just as with chiasmus, the directional and reverse directional halves of the strophic–anti-strophic form arranged a self-contained, completed whole, an ode. It is worth noting that choric symmetry and balance, again like chiasmus, was of such importance that odd stanzas kept the dancers to the altar area as though not to upset the perfect bi-lateral symmetry and equivalence established by the mirroring Strophes and Antistrophes.

Moulton emphasizes that the very formularized, strictly equivalent turns and counterturns corresponded with and accented a change or shift relating to the events performed by the actors. The chorus would sweep “with the evolution of each Strophe to the right or left of the altar, and in each Antistrophe measur[e] back their way step for step and rhythm for rhythm. This [directional] change mark[ed] a change of thought” (30). The movement–countermovement worked iconically and content and form matched one for one.

Goffman explains the Greek chorus as having bracketed episodes within the larger event frame of a dramatic production. In this regard, he is not speaking of the danced and sung metrical “evolutions” across the stage that Moulton references. Instead, and fascinatingly relevant to chiasmus, is Goffman's construal of the peculiar role–relationship the chorus has to the characters on stage and, simultaneously, has to the audience. The chorus acts as a duple-utility “mediator—a specialized viewer who also participates as a staged character” that collectively earns the chorus categorical uniqueness and produces “extensive bracketing” (227). The chorus interposes as a third party, what Goffman identifies as “an extra role between characters and onlookers.” As this combinatorial third party, the chorus is an emergent structure that arises between two groups with very different parts in the staged events. This transcendent hybrid “is of the stage yet beyond it.”³¹ Although Goffman does not, I identify this as a case of *both/and*. Goffman mentions, albeit without elaboration, how the “mediating, editorializing

functions” of the choric instrument’s commix of actor mindful of spectatorism and spectator mindful of action assumes exceptional reflexivity. If we put a check beside each of these aspects of the Greek chorus—a self-bracketed (contained) happening, rhythmic, lateral crisscrossing, two-sided symmetry, centricity and evolution, the fluctuation or cycling of direction and redirection, transpositions in thought, double speculation or mindfulness, both/and (hybridity), co-occurrence, a third or emergent categorization of transcendence, betweenity and mediation, and reflexiveness—we total up many hallmarks of chiasmus. The Greek chorus nicely elicits how chiastic properties can be difficult to segregate because they tend to be conceptual companions. For instance, mediation, *both/and*, centricity, and hybrids are concepts that bear a close or continuum of resemblance. As the discussion progresses, these hallmarks and others not yet mentioned as well as the replication of major chiastic properties will be fleshed out.

Before closing this sub-section, it is compulsory I eliminate a false impression I would not leave you with. It may be tempting to see a special correspondence between the *AB:BA* figure and a bias on the part of the ancient Greeks and Latins for discursive, rhetorical, theatrical, architectural, and other kinds of arrangements that uphold the principles of axially, symmetry, and balance as the reason for the *AB:BA* apparatus in these cultures. But that temptation would be mistaken. We have already registered the salience of chiasmus in pre-Hellenic cultures. And the upcoming discussion establishes that the figure did not end with the Romans, but persisted past the fall of their Empire. Neither the Greco-Roman world nor civilizations subsequent has any exclusive claim on it. That is because chiasmus is a catholic, egalitarian figure.

CHIASMUS AFTER THE AGE OF ANTIQUITY

As said, classicists do not have a special ownership of chiasmus. You will find no lack of novelists, poets, essayists, dramatists, and philosophers from later eras who prize the figure. Amongst a large, quite diverse assemblage predisposed toward chiastic expression we may count, without any pretension to completeness, Heraclitus, Dante, Shakespeare,³² Milton,

Pascal, Samuel Johnson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Kierkegaard, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, Kafka, William and Henry James, Thomas Mann, Ernest Hemingway, Tom Stoppard, Jacques Derrida, Unamuno, and Octavio Paz.³³

Following this roll call of canonical names, we might expatiate on a few others. Sir Philip Sidney savors antimetabole. His fondness for the figure accords with, because it receives underwriting by polyptoton and isocolon,³⁴ the first of which he indulges in his poetry, the second, his prose (Williamson 94). Sidney's habit of alliteration and repetition, along with involuted, back-curving language units, is compatible with *AB:BA* patterns.³⁵ He displays an extreme "sensitivity to indirection," persuaded by "moving on the oblique," and straddles the ideological "middle ground between two extremes" (Sloane 171–175), qualities which put Sidney at the top of Thomas Sloane's list of those who write "on the contrary" (i.e., giving contraries their due) and who deploy schemes of duality. Given these writerly qualities, the Janus-faced figure working slants and turnabouts proved an apt rhetorical appliance in Sidney's canon. The appliance was apposite, too, and would seem a conscious election when we consider that Sidney was a thoroughly "artful" composer for whom literary craftsmanship was a "larger subject [in] itself" and who exemplified "the rhetorical mind in operation" (Sloane 171, 181).

Artful, sophisticated, and possessing his own virile tone, Michel de Montaigne was a chiasmus enthusiast contemporary with Sidney. In a project that in several senses is a lifework, the classically-schooled Montaigne declares a predilection for concise, pithy prose; "sharp and forcible expression"; and, above all else in argument, overt, easily grasped order (70, 290). The *Essays* pronounces a temperament given to expect at least two opposing slants (perspectives) to every issue. Equipollence of vision is necessary because each object and event is, *au fond*, mixed. To make report of private equipolarity, which is the only fitting response to the world's, Montaigne draws on those rhetorical tools that control for ideational juxtaposing, parallelism, antithesis, and inversion. Reasoning naturally following temperament, the essayist keeps things on an even ideological keel by perpetually giving to the other half its due, its share of a whole. Those who latch onto only one side of an issue and refuse the possibility of an obverse are sure

to err. “Aristippus championed only the body, as though we had no soul. Zeno championed only the soul, as though we had no body. Both were flawed.”³⁶ Joseph Epstein selects this particular passage from the *Essays* to exemplify Montaigne’s admonition against belief systems intending to eliminate one side of a totality over a second, of equal likelihood. Such narrow, separatist thinking Montaigne rejects as “an error of the first magnitude” (Epstein 31). By its dual-sidedness, chiasmus models the dual-mindedness Montaigne counsels.

The epistemologic aloofness of Montaigne—he claims to be unfamiliar with any staunch conviction: “all opinions are alike to me” (*Essays* 289)—, conjoined with his dispassionate, distant style all but outright states that sides, albeit considered, mustn’t be taken (Hewlett 80). The philosopher–moralist submits that the “world is a perpetual seesaw,” human experience is always a “blend, a mixture,” and, with all of life’s polar opposites, each of a pair “is no less necessary to us than the other” (*Essays* 235, 374). Montaigne’s overall method was to write “pretty oblique[ly]” (Hewlett 78), that is, inclining to one direction and then its reverse, but declining to adhere to either in the final analysis. This dualistic, crosswise (i.e., conversely directional) habit of writing springs from Montaigne’s contention that a situation comes down to which side you are on, as the oft-cited chiasmus about his cat not only memorably drives home, but formally exemplifies by its double-sided structure.³⁷ A favorite term was *twist*, no surprise in a writer who perpetually controverted common prejudices and pieties presumed incontrovertible. The man who created and set the high bar for the personal discursive essay heavily brushes the brilliant canvas of his self-portrait with chiasma original to him. He works into the portrait, as well, a goodly sum of chiastic touches authored by others.³⁸

From French prose I advert to English poetry of the following century: specifically, the work of Dryden and Pope. Their closed heroic couplets, with lines partitioned into equal or nearly equal halves, admirably house the double-membered chiasmus, a cultivated figure, polished, refined, and given to repartee, as were the two neoclassical poets. Chiasmus abets their intellectual language: the pointed, counter-weighted, cleverly turned phrasing of their incisive styles; the quick thrust and parry of concise argument or pungent, aphoristic expression held to a line or two; and the artfully measured, structurally neat language ensuring, as Samuel

Johnson said, that “every word [...] falls into its proper place.”³⁹ Rhetorical habits “attendant” to this language, “such as parallelism, balance, antithesis, repetition, and other similar patterns”⁴⁰ found ready outlet in and fashioning shape through the formal properties of chiasmus. Ironically, the inveterately opinionated Wordsworth, who condemned the “days of Dryden and Pope” as a period unfortunate in its enthrallment with a deadly language and figuration of “counter-spirit,” himself found good cause for the countering tactics of chiasmus (Wordsworth qtd. in Budick 972, 973).⁴¹ To bring us to a later period in English literature, it might surprise the reader, as it at first did me, that the daringly original language and style of Gerard Manley Hopkins revels in thematic and linguistic chiasmaticity.⁴²

Samuel Butler’s chiastic excesses have accurately nominated him a chiastic “obsessive” (Norrman, *Samuel Butler*). The repetition at the level of lexis and diction that is a signature of Ernest Hemingway’s prose often patterns chiastically (Nänny, “Hemingway”). T. S. Eliot’s heavy, almost fatiguing surfeit of the figure in his poetic *chef d’oeuvre* *The Four Quartets* and its being a mainstay of his thinking throughout the non-fiction surely qualifies chiasmus as one of the modernist’s most revered linguistic and thought appliances. In essays collected for *The English Auden* and *The Dyer’s Hand*, W. H. Auden lightly drops perfunctory chiasma here and there, but he also advances several of his more important ideas through complex, well worked out versions of the figure.⁴³

Canonical writers have enlisted chiasmus for their epitaphs. “I never cared for life; life cared for me” serves Thomas Hardy as permanent inscription.⁴⁴ Coleridge’s plaintive eulogium entreats those who stand at the grave of poor “S.T.C.” to pray “That he, who [...] / Found death in life, may here find life in death.” With its summing up, rounding-off talent and its asset of lingering in the reader’s mind beyond the reading’s conclusion, chiasmus makes an effective and appropriate tagline commemorating and memmoring one’s life. It also releases, by its reversal, a fillip with a poignant cast. The figure’s architectural nature shapes a fitting, enduring literary monument. Both the poet-novelist and the poet-essayist ensured his last word was, inevitably, a lasting word. By virtue of its exceptional resonance as well as its ability to capture in brief two ways of interpreting a consequential, puzzling life event, chiasmus has also graced

the opening of the memoir of the Pulitzer Prize winner Art Buchwald.⁴⁵ A similar puzzlement effected chiasmatically opens Dylan Thomas's *A Child's Christmas in Wales*.⁴⁶

Not surprisingly, chiasmus locates within numerous practices in poetry, a genre subserved by repetition, accentuation, and echoic sound and whose "every level of language⁴⁷ [...] consists in recurrent returns" (Jakobson, "Grammatical Parallelism" 399). Choriambus, a metrical foot composed of two unaccented syllables flanked by two accented syllables, and *antipast* (Greek for 'drawn in the contrary direction'), a metrical foot composed of two stressed syllables flanked by two unstressed syllables, assume two chiastic patterns, each the other's converse. With prosodic *rime embrassées* we find the alternation of masculine and feminine rhyme according to an *abba* scheme. Henry James provides an example of the phenomenon of cross-alliteration, a device generally associated with verse but one that prose writers at times find rhetorically advantageous. James's counter-weighted phrase "the *shadow* of a *change* and the *chill* of a *shock*" from "The Beast in the Jungle" organizes according to a somatic chiasmus-like scheme.⁴⁸ According to Holm and Harmon, such "[i]nterlacing alliteration" has a generic outcome: it "produces a quadratically ornate effect" (130). That said, James's cross-alliteration produces more. It imparts a portentous effect to his most haunting story and, by its mirroring quality and intuned, circular structure, reflects on a miniscule scale the protagonist's life-killing, shadow-ridden narcissism, an egocentrism that entombs him in chilly solitude. Finally, poets have at their disposal a chiasmic rhyme scheme. Also known as arch-rhyme, chiasmic rhyme results when the final word of each of the lines of a quatrain evince an *abba* arrangement, an example of which would be 'cat/dog/frog/bat.'⁴⁹

Politicians with a rhetorical, even literary talent have long been drawn to the figure. Benjamin Franklin, Winston Churchill, and John F. Kennedy demonstrated a penchant for *AB:BA* constructions. Likely the most recognized chiasm in modern times is Kennedy's call to Americans to " 'ask not what your country can do for you -- ask rather what you can do for your country.' " ⁵⁰ This clarion spur to action has in the decades since the 1961 Presidential Inauguration invited countless substitutions for the original *A* and *B* terms from this, the second and better recollected of the two commanding chiasma the speech boasted.⁵¹ One radio spot,

for instance, urged regular car maintenance with this down turn: “Ask not what your car can do for you; ask rather what you can do for your car.” Reverse variations have been used to sell owners on the idea of a replacement vehicle that will “do” (perform) for them, as well as variations used to vend other types of consumer products.

Chiasmus might be called the banana peel of figures by reason that in making entities turn upside down it rouses laughter. The laughs can originate from the irreverence occasioned by overturning and place switching. Oscar Wilde is a wonderful case in point. Jacques Barzun maintains that Wilde, though dismissed as a flamboyant “trifler” by many contemporaries (who nonetheless flocked to Wilde’s latest play and eagerly awaited the newest of his instantly quotable quips), was in truth dedicated to the belief that “[v]irtues and vices must be revalued in opposite directions” (*Stroll with William James* 190). Immovable to any idea other than that art exists to challenge, overthrow, and transform preconceived, set attitudes (*Stroll* 190), the “ingeniously perverse” stylist who relished the flourish of a “twist” (Burke, *Rhetoric of Religion* 227) took up chiasmus to formulate audacious, albeit serious ideas meant to shift minds to alternate ways of understanding. The uptake was an adroit rhetorical move because the memorable, but sometimes very glib-seeming chiasmus expertly reverse-directs propositions and shifts terms and their syntactical, and therefore their semantic, values about. The irreverent Oscarisms and incisive witticisms, many of which are chiastic,⁵² ensure the revaluation that Barzun emphasizes in order to challenge complacencies.

Outspoken Dorothy Parker, who had a hey-day with games of lexical shifts and slips, and cheeky Mae West, who liked to slip a fast one, had a gift for the one-liner.⁵³ They were celebrities who, like Oscar Wilde, attained notoriety for the outrageous barb or irreverent appraisal. And, as was the case with shockers by Wilde, those by the blond bombshell and the acerbic Parker frequently benefited from a chiastic pattern. It’s a natural at delivering the 180-degree realignments and categorical capsizings that are the humorist and wit’s stock in trade. Things and persons are subject in Parker’s chiasma, as in Wilde’s, with the same chiastic knife-edge and skewering.

Flaunting themselves by chiastic flouting, these broad-minded wits would have gotten a

kick out of the irreverence in the recent title reversal of the perennial American favorite *Gone with the Wind*. *The Wind Done Gone* ludicrously puts down or sends up Margaret Mitchell's revered original. The revisionist title takes hold of listeners by upsetting the accustomed order of terms, turning them, as we would say, either 'wrong' side round or down. The humor has a real bite to it: the reversal suits a parody that shakes and turns upside down Mitchell's fiction (and romanticized invention) of plantation life in the mid-nineteenth century South by switching the point of view from white to black, from slave owner to slave.⁵⁴ "Parodies and burlesques use the memory of the original words [...] for comic contrast or irony" (Doughtie 41). In that they depend upon our recognizing both likeness and difference between an original and a follower-on, parody and burlesque are chiasmic-like.⁵⁵

Throughout *Our Mutual Friend*, Charles Dickens found chiasmus to be invaluable, using it to greatest effect for purposes of social satire. The figure executes the tongue-in-cheek, belittling humor applied to the Veneerings and their pretentious, dotty social set, as well as the acerbic, severely incriminating humor applied to the viciously aggressive Lamelles. The outrageous party by Mr. and Mrs. Veneering, the "bran-new people in a bran-new house in a bran-new quarter of London," at which each haughty or loony guest is affronted by being wrongly mistaken for some other unrecognized invitee leads up to Twemlow's nonplus over "the fusion of Boots in Brewer and Brewer in Boots" (Dickens 48, 51). When Person *A* is wrongly taken for Person *B* and *vice versa*, distinctions, for this timid guest, are disconcertingly "lost" (51). Moreover, the consequent indistinguishability renders one version of Dickensian desentimentalization.⁵⁶ Everything becomes changeable and con-fused. The whole starts to blend together so as to confer on *social mix* a literalness bound to give the phrase a disagreeable, if not bad name. Though Dickens's didn't intend his readers should, nonetheless, they might commiserate with the socially "feeble" (i.e., insecure), perpetually stupefied, tremulous, twembly Twemlow who feels his turned-around, mixed-up brain begin to soften and give way due to the commutable state of fellow party-goers.

However, no amount of commiseration is imaginable with the Lamelles, the novel's despicable pair who con one another into marriage by their respective pretenses of wealth.

Immediately after their wedding the sinister twosome trade “Question for question” and “admission for admission.” The entire conversation between these double-crossers is “double-edged” and a nasty exchange of thrust and counter-thrust in parallel phrases and sentences. The two-sided deceit soon comes to light with Mr. L and the new Mrs. L mutually outraged — “equally disappointed” and “equally injured” (172). Neither spouse regrets having instigated a cheat; their only regret, having been the victim. But since each becomes an object of deception as well as a subject, the like-minded schemers end up mutually conned. Dickens’s near incessant drumbeat of parallel phrasing and his many chiasmic sentences in the Lamelle sections of *Our Mutual Friend* underscore the unrelenting congruence of situation and of feelings. Chiasmus presents husband and wife as equally seething over their confederated plight and it depicts their shared disgust over their bi-lateral foolishness (172). The figure formulates the miserable impasse of the “happy pair” when the groom decries with the bluntness of a very spare parison: “ ‘I cannot get rid of you; you cannot get rid of me’ ” (172). The conjointly “entrapped imposters,” likewise thrust and made a horrified mate to twice the poverty than was separately and previously his/hers, snipe at one another chiasmically: as for instance, “ ‘Don’t be tempted into twitting me with the past knowledge that you have of me, because it is identical with the past knowledge that I have of you’ ” (173).

The two equally fearful of being found out by their well-to-do betters of their parallel mortification (i.e., that she was duped by him, and he, by her) and of the disclosure of their disgraceful social predicament (i.e., being in a tight spot, namely, doubly poor or twice-over impoverished rather than greatly enriched), they each, being thinkers along identical lines, almost at once and as one hit on a solving accord: to perpetrate another twofold scheme. The mutually despising, co-deceiving husband and wife now plight themselves to a “mutual understanding”: namely, a reciprocal face-saving that will be in their “joint interest.” It is “a new marriage contract” in which, by a perverse twist of the Golden Rule, they vow to cheat and defeat “All England” by collaboratively covering up the failure of the two-way self-defeating scheme that has left them legally, financially, and miserably yoked together. They resolve, ‘from this day forward,’ that their every action will doubly reflect and doubly fake a lovesome

state. The mirroring, circumscribing, artful cross figure of chiasmus fittingly recurs throughout the descriptions and dialogues presenting the superficial, double-faced Lamelles.

Chiastic proliferation in *Our Mutual Friend* is not unexpected inasmuch as the Victorian writer's last completed novel nearly chokes on its constant stutter of parallel phrasing; as "identity problems are central to the plot" and the "double plot [...] poses the central problem of the novel"; as turnings and "dual structures" are predominate formal features; and since mutuality and convergence *versus* "fracture and disconnection" are thematic preoccupations (Page 140). Furthermore, as Norman Page explains through highlights from *Our Mutual Friend*, the exceptionally self-conscious, rhetorically adept, and grammatically sophisticated style of Charles Dickens's late work is very much a matter of his habitually composing according to a "cumulative and repetitive coordination of similarly-patterned units" and of a heavy reliance on "anaphoric structure" (140, 141). Adding *reversio* to these omnipresent grammatical techniques resulted in chiasmus, a figure that oversees much of the satiric humor of *Our Mutual Friend*. For setting out characters absurdly quirky or oddball,⁵⁷ cross, counterfeit or pretentious, tricky, and invariably at cross or contrary purposes, and for epitomizing the reciprocal parries of back-stabbing by and treachery between these persons, the back-words going, double-dealing, delusive crossing figure proved indispensable to Dickens.

CHIASMUS BEYOND THE LITERARY ARTS

The chi-figure has an existence outside of what Roland Barthes considered "Signs of Literature." Any assumption that chiasmus endures principally for dignifying and, thus, "signifying literature" (Genette, *Figures* 58–59) grossly underestimates its extension to and influence in fields outside the highbrow world of literature, an extension and influence that is, in fact, immeasurable. Chiasmus ranges far afield of *belles lettres*. Not only does it have a 'life' outside of being a literary figure, it flourishes as an indefatigable organizing formula wherever human endeavor and creation, thought and communication occur. Its propagation relates to the universality and inexhaustibility of its rhetorical operations—parallelism, reflection, retroversion, an alteration in the relations of parts that may be reciprocal (two-sided) or not

reciprocal (one-sided), to tick off just a few. To this point, the various rhetorical affordances of chiasmus have been modeled using literature, but the very same properties apply as chiasmus persuasively ‘does its thing’ in non-literary praxis.

By its very nature, chiasmus treats comparatives, entities that have or, due to the even, though inverted arrangement of the $AB:BA$ pattern, are caused to have both likeness, yet difference. It also supervises substitution between comparatives, their correlation or equivalency, and their inversion. With respect to comparatives of an everyday sort, we might take a lesson from George Dillion’s book on semantics. Dillion discusses “the basic notion of relativity” that underlies the semantics of comparatives in English. For purposes of illustration, the present discussion, in its extraction from Dillion, focuses on commonplace dimensional terms (positives such as *tall*, *big*) with respect to their inflected comparatives (*taller*, *bigger*) and positive opposites (*short*, *small*).

Dillion opens his topic by announcing that children must acquire “the [...] notion of relativity” that presides over comparatives if they are to become facile with dimensionals, including some of their “quirkier aspects” (63). Young children without the adult’s greater linguistic grasp of the nuances of dimensional terms have to learn what is involved when, faced with constructions like ‘John is taller than Bill’ and ‘John is shorter than Pete,’ they are then asked “Who is the tallest?” (62). Dillion explains that answering the question, or answering others that require comparative understanding, correctly requires respondents to bring “into alignment as inverses the terms *shorter* and *taller*” (62; emphasis original). This alignment of inverses (also termed *converses*) amounts to a “formulation of equivalence: X shorter than $Y = Y$ taller than X ” (62). Dillion’s $XY= YX$ equation for inverses instances the inverting component of the chiastic pattern.

The equation for lexical inversion in general exhibits the $AB:BA$ pattern: “Two terms are said to be inverse when $aTb \square bT'a$ ” (126). Dillion particularizes this generic equation with two relational pairs, one having to do with relative size or dimension and the second pair having to do with another kind of relative, one that is more personal or familial.

$$a \text{ PARENT } b \square b \text{ CHILD } a$$

a LARGER than $b \square b$ SMALLER than a (126)

Chiastic properties with which we are by now familiar appear in a further comment on Dillion's general equation for inverses at the word level. "A single term is said to be symmetrical or reciprocal when $aTb \square bT'a$ " (126). Even if they weren't specified in adjectival form, reciprocity and symmetry are apparent in the formula. But, a third property is symbolized (although it is, of course, implied by the adjectives). The \square sign (which means 'is identical to') signifies semantic equivalency, a topic about which we will soon have more to add when speaking of a different kind of comparative.

Because prepositions are relational—"a preposition expresses a relation between two entities" (Quirk and Greenbaum 143)—and because this relation has to do with either the position or direction of one entity to the other, prepositions have the potential to express reciprocal relations. This potential, appropriately enough, arises with prepositions of relative position, *by*, *over*, *under*, *behind*, etc. In their authoritative work on English grammar, Randolph Quirk and Sidney Greenbaum exemplify the reciprocal association of relative position prepositions that are antonyms, *above* as opposed to *below* and *in front of* as opposed to *behind*.

The picture is *above* the mantelpiece = The mantelpiece is
below the picture

The bus is *in front of* the car = The car is *behind* the bus

Although not designated as such by Greenbaum and Quirk, each sentence pair constitutes an *AB:BA* arrangement. The juxtaposed sentences, with prepositional antonyms classified as "converse opposites" by these authors (149), express the chiasmic formula of inverses issued by Dillion:

a ABOVE $b \square b$ BELOW a
 a IN FRONT OF $b \square b$ BEHIND a

Due to the symmetrical relationship of inverses, antonymic prepositions, those in which an *A* is the *versus* of a *B* and *B* the *versus* of the *A*, offer up two different ways of putting across what is essentially the same idea.⁵⁸ Two ways for conducting one idea bespeaks of flexibility, in

the spheres of form and semantics.

Just as important to remark, chiasmus is a device eminently equipped for describing variables that pose as co-factors or co-determiners of one another. William James formulated such a situation of the physical world when he wrote that “acceleration varies with distance, but distance also varies with acceleration” (*Pragmatism* 225). Whether we know anything about the laws of physics or that James’s is a simplification of Newton’s Second Law of Motion, we can infer from the American’s chiasmatic explanation that (1) acceleration and distance stand in a symmetrical relation in that each affects the other, each is the other’s factor or agent of variability, and (2) that this two-way variability implies a kind of back-and-forth relation of constant modulation. Another way of explaining the relation is to say that distance (*D*) and acceleration (*A*) work in parallel in the sense that *A* alternates or adjusts by the factor of *D* and the favor is returned, for *D* alternates or adjusts by the factor of *A*. Dillion would describe the reciprocating relation between the two terms as one of “transitivity” (62), which we would further qualify as an arrangement extremely constrained in that it is held to just two interdependent terms or constituents. A pair of co-factors operating within a confined, reverse transitivity—a condition identifiable as “mutual dependence” or “mutual constitution” by Jeanne Fahnestock (141)—ably communicates the chiasmic performance.

In her latest book, the analyst of scientific rhetoric chronicles how formal figures and their “compressed” (a synonym of *constrained* and *confined*), but “durable, completely general lines” of reasoning and argument have been conducive and, on many occasions, instrumental to the discourse, the experimentation and modeling, and, in actual fact, the very hypothesizing and thinking of natural and physical scientists (25, 24). She indicates, for instance, that in his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, Newton exemplifies, logicalizes, and puts into writing for the peer-reviewing of seventeenth-century England his Third Law of Motion by *AB:BA* constructs, relationships, and sentences.⁵⁹ *AB:BA* syntactically re-presents—that is, gives secondarily by its own form—the reciprocal causality of the mechanics of Sir Isaac’s Third Law. The Law states that the actions of two bodies upon each other are always equal and directly opposable. The downward force of a book on a desk equals the upward (therefore

opposing) force of the desk on the book. Fahnestock invites her readers to contemplate that Newton's chosen figure may do more than "express key insights in his physics; it may also come closest to epitomizing his overall philosophy of science as well" (143).

Accepting her invitation, let us turn to a set of discoveries in the area of optics expressed chiasmatically by the theorist regarded as one of the most original and brilliant in all of science. Fahnestock's *Rhetorical Figures in Science* does not examine this other series of findings disclosed in "A Letter of Mr. Isaac Newton [...] Containing His New Theory about Light and Color [...] Communicated to the Royal Society." The 1672 epistolary report to the prestigious Society, predates by fifteen years the publishing in the *Principia* of the triumvirate laws on motion.⁶⁰ From what Newton called his "*experimentum crucis*," in which he tested different prismatic refractions of light with apparati physically positioned according to a bi-laterally symmetrical arrangement,⁶¹ he arrived at his "doctrine" of thirteen propositions. The first of these propositions states that "As the rays of light differ in degrees of refrangibility [refraction], so they also differ in their disposition to exhibit this or that particular color. Colors are [...] properties which in divers rays are divers" (1759). In other words, degrees of difference in the refracting of light rays induce color difference, a "this or that" outcome, as Newton phrases it. He elaborates on Proposition One's founding remarks in Proposition Two, which is reproduced in full:

To the same degree of refrangibility ever belongs the same color, and to the same color ever belongs the same degree of refrangibility. The least refrangible rays are all disposed to exhibit a red color, and contrarily those rays which are disposed to exhibit a red color are all the least refrangible. So the most refrangible rays are all disposed to exhibit a deep violet color, and contrarily those which are apt to exhibit such a violet color are all the most refrangible. And so to all the intermediate colors in a continuing series belong intermediate degrees of refrangibility. And this analogy 'twixt colors and refrangibility is very precise and strict; the rays always either exactly agreeing in both or proportionally disagreeing in both. (1760)

Three of the five sentences of Proposition Two, and those critically positioned at the outset, are explicitly, assertively chiasmic. The placement, prominence, and grouping of the chi-figure should not be considered misintention. The founder of classical physics was, in the

estimation of Albert Einstein, as much an “artist in exposition” as he was a genius in theory, mechanics, and experiment.⁶² A gifted writer “notably lucid and trenchant,” Newton enjoyed full control of his rhetoric.⁶³

The theorist’s emblempary rhetorical control reveals itself in the choice of the *AB:BA* pattern, seeing as the pattern perfectly and eloquently accords with Newton’s concept that color origination and refraction are interrelated. Each of his sentences, so symmetrically and homographically worked out with respect to lexis and syntax, deftly underlines the exacting nature “ ’twixt,” as he writes, color and refraction. In choosing to register his conception by this verbal scheme in triplicate, and consequently minus the imposition of some other verbal arrangement that would distract from or intrude upon an insistent lineup of chiasma three in a row, Newton persuades of an interrelation rigorous, persistent, corroborated, and unerring. The rhetorical appliance attests, in itself, to the formal relations about which it informs. The interrelation intimates that the color-refraction association is ever the same, fixed, fail-safe, definite—qualities that, in turn, imply a constant in the universe. This last is just what the Professor of Cambridge would like to order and, in fact, did order by his election of a rhetorical device whose canon is based on definite regulation and perfect order. Furthermore, the back-to-back lineup of three chiasma, each of which wills an insistent, inordinate symmetry of almost perfect mirror writing (perfect because it is self-agreeing, that is, permitting only the slightest of differences between the original half of a sentence and its reflected half), induces the psycho-psychological sense of stasis associated with symmetrical forms. The “spatial prosody” of a strict symmetrical structure, especially along the horizontal axis, “invites no movement in any one direction more than another” (Scott qtd. in Levi 218). Newton’s three chiasma show by example Alberti’s *finitio*, where the individual constituents of a composition possess such a conformity of proportion and goodness of fit that lifting or relocating even a single one strikes recipients as unimaginable: the composition “*consensus et conspiratio respondeant*” quite simply forbids the least disturbance or alteration; it is finished off, consolidated, unalterable (Alberti qtd. in Wölflin, *Renaissance* 67). The eloquent stasis that comes about by the accentuated symmetry of Newton’s conscripted figure suggests that the key terms *color* and

refrangibility/refrangible are entirely sufficient and meaningful within and onto themselves, in the way that mirrors look to be because the reflecting surface and the reflected original map or superimpose one onto the other to create a closed-off, self-securing, self-formalizing loop. Confirmation and con-formation, completion, and non-movement bespeak a language of immutability. When configured of the mechanical world, immutability rewards the physicist and mathematician with a proof that is cogent and elegant, and that gives every indication of being that desideratum sought in mechanics, a constant in the universe.

Fahnestock outlines how Michael Faraday⁶⁴ as well as Joseph Henry revealed the mystery of mutual association between electric and magnetic fields, which then led to the uncovering of the fundamental singleness of electricity and magnetism. Today antimetabole and chiasmus work on behalf of an even greater conundrum puzzling scientists working in many fields: the subject of consciousness. In his aptly titled *The Mystery of Consciousness*, John Searle sets out *AB:BA* locutions to outline the more prominent theories of human consciousness. For instance, Searle paraphrases the work of David Chalmers and avers that Chalmers's findings publish that "the structure of consciousness is mirrored by the structure of [the brain's] functional organization and functional organization is mirrored by the structure of consciousness" (Searle 149). "Using this perfect correlation," Chalmers interprets "conscious states in terms of functional states" and *vice versa* (Searle 149). The two appearances of *mirrored* in a locution formally mirroring underscores and overdetermines a reciprocal causality fearsomely interrelated and logically inescapable. In his own words, Chalmers proffers that his "double-aspect principle" is needed "to bridge the gap" between two popular principles of consciousness (qtd. in Searle).

Given that biological systems seek "to erase imbalances," act "in accordance with regularities," and find "average norms of adjustment" between alternate states (Foucault 357), organisms and phenomena within this science regularly acquit themselves according to chiasmic patterns. Two such phenomena are mutualism and osmosis. Mutualism describes a relationship between two different organisms in which each benefits by its concerted association (its transitivity, remembering Dillion) with respect to the other. A classic example is that of the

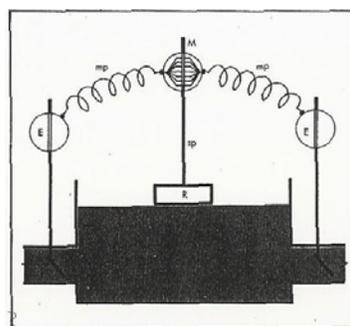
anemone fish and the tropical reef anemone. The two organisms provide one another with protection from their separate predators. Reciprocal food provision occurs between ants and aphids. By their two-way nutritional purveying, “the ant cannot do without its aphids and the aphid cannot do without its ant” (Weisz 192). The transitivity alliances between ant and aphid and between anemone fish and anemone achieve a state of equilibrium in which each member of a pair contributes equally and profits equally.

Osmosis is a process of liquid equilibration. The particle concentration on two sides of a semi-permeable membrane (as, e.g., a living cell) moves across the membrane so as to reach equilibrium. If we designate the sides *A* and *B*, at “the isotonic end state, where concentrations in *A* and *B* are equal, [...] as much water moves from *A* into *B* as from *B* into *A*.” In other words, “the number of water molecules transmitted from *A* to *B* equals the number transmitted from *B* to *A*” (Weisz 83). This cross-diffusion plays a vital role in biological systems in that it maintains balanced concentrations of particles based on a responsive back-and-forth dynamic (Weisz 84). Osmotic processes obey the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which maintains “that, if left to itself, any system tends toward a state of greatest stability.” Critically, “the phrase ‘if left to itself’ here implies that the system is closed, or completely insulated from the environment” (Weisz 96; emphasis original). A chemical reaction within a container “can usually be taken as a closed system,” explains biologist and distinguished educator Paul Weisz. The Second Law, like the First Law of Thermodynamics, not only employs a chiasmic vocabulary of direction, reversability, transformation, mutual interconvertibility, stability, and equilibration (Weisz 96–99), its wording accounts for and gives due emphasis to what is also a consequential factor in chiasmus: the matter of a system closed-off or self-contained. The matter of self-sufficiency will receive more attention down the road.

Descriptions of biological systems demonstrate an affinity for chiasmus, as these systems have traits in common with the chiasmic pattern. For instance, most metabolic reactions are inherently reversible regarding inhibition and excitation. As a consequence of “alternative pathway switching,” which involves two opposing sequences or directions, if “the *A* sequence is operative it will inhibit the *B* sequence; and if the *B* sequence is operative, it will inhibit the *A*

sequence” (Weisz 546). By means of interoperability and reversibility, “metabolic pathways may exert significant control over one another” (546). Metabolic reverse switching is one instance of steady-state controls whereby different biological factors or reactants at molecular as well as at other levels “hold one another in mutual check” (546). What amounts to “a restrained compromise” exists between reactant pairs (546). The factors or reactants achieve a “dynamic balance” (538) through reciprocal oscillations. The shifting or oscillating of inverse directionality and outcome may be likened to a teeter-totter. This constant self-regulation or self-modulation ensures a “steady state, a dynamic equilibrium” (547), wherein neither side of a connectivity reaction will for very long ‘outweigh’ or outbalance the other without this other counter-adjusting to the condition and reestablishing equality between the two ‘sides’ of the reaction. By means of steady states “living units [...] adjust and coordinate their internal operations,” operations without which the organism would cease to function. Plainly, life is a balancing act.

Chiasmus will arise in discussions of auto-correcting steady-state systems because the figure has the means to ‘make good,’ that is make cognizable, the nature of such systems. At the same time it has the advantage of epitomizing the systems it describes. Laurel Brinton indicates that repetitive figures “iconically express situations that are iterative, intensive, parallel, or contrastive” (185). Steady-states are just such situations, iterative, intensive, equilibrated, and alternating. While Fahnestock would no doubt find much to approve in Brinton’s study on the autoiconic donations of several rhetorical figures, the former effectively takes the latter into new territory. Fahnestock determines that chiasmus, like certain other traditional figures of rhetoric, acts as a visual equivalent for one or more facets of that which the chiasmic locution linguistically imparts. With this visual potentiality just touched on, but with more detail to come in Chapter Two, we want to consider from Weisz’s discussion of biological steady-states diagrammatic representations that are themselves chiasmic (539, 546). His general model (Fig. 4) illustrating a steady state system is what Fahnestock calls a visual chiasmus. The diagram effects a chiasmic line up of *ABCBA*.



21 · 4 Model of a device maintaining a steady state. R, receptor; M, modulator; E, effector; sp, sensory pathway; mp, motor pathway. If the system is adjusted as described in the text, then any change of inflow or outflow will bring about signals through $R \rightarrow sp \rightarrow M \rightarrow mp \rightarrow E$. Valve positions will then be adjusted so that the valves will counteract the change of inflow or outflow and reestablish an original water level in the tank.

Figure 4. Weisz, Model of a device maintaining a steady state.

Even more notable in the Weisz discussion is a second diagram (Fig. 5) that represents the pathway switching operation. Not only does this illustration, like the first, exhibit mirror symmetry, but it uses the cross diagonals of an X-figure to visually represent the “control” or regulating factors and inverse directionality inherent to steady-state–maintaining metabolic reactions.

21 · 12 Alternative pathway switching. Assume that A_1, A_2, A_3 and B_1, B_2, B_3 are two reaction pathways requiring the enzymes a', a'' and b', b'' respectively. Assume also that A_2 has the property of inhibiting b' , and B_2 of inhibiting a' . If then the A sequence is operative, it will inhibit the B sequence; and if the B sequence is operative, it will inhibit the A sequence. Also, if presence of A induces the enzymes a' and a'' through an operon mechanism, then the B sequence will be automatically inhibited through the effect of A_2 on b' . By such means, two or more separate metabolic pathways may exert significant control over one another and thus over the kinds and amounts of materials synthesized in a cell.

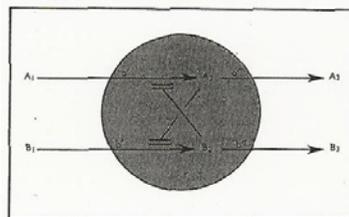


Figure 5. Weisz, Model of alternative pathway switching.

Chiasmus at the level of the single organism, to stay with the biological sciences, bears consideration as well. The highly influential but, in the modern era, discredited theory of ‘embryology-conforming to/repeating-evolutionary stages–evolution-conforming to/repeating-embryology stages’ collated two inter-related principles: “ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny” and “phylogeny causes ontogeny.” The German biologist and philosopher Ernst Heinrich Haeckel hypothesized that “the succession of embryonic stages would mirror a succession of past evolutionary stages” and *vice versa* (Weisz 797; emphasis added). Over an extended period of time, Haeckel’s “Law of Recapitulation” was assailed. It faltered, but not so his election of chiasmus. It was the logical appliance, the one perfectly fitted in description and form, to persuade of the phenomenon under discussion. The matching relational patterns, proportional stages, and reciprocal divergences and successions crosswise duplicated over the two developmental spheres of evolution and embryology almost demanded a bi-symmetrical presentation. In addition, the Law’s terse phrasing, in which four of the six words are repeats, had the rhetorical clout that brevity and clarity provision. As the language scholar William Cobbett observes, “to say much in few words [...] always gives strength to language” and achieves, especially when combined with clearness, a “most valuable quality” in winning over others (83). The extreme brevity, clarity, and generalization of Haeckel’s encapsulation produced the vigor and other suasions that herald the epigram.

We infer more about the epigrammatic nature of the Law of Recapitulation when Weisz informs that the two ontogeny–phylogeny principles “were so neat and they seemed to explain so much so simply that the fundamental difficulties were ignored by many” (798). The overlooking of “fundamental difficulties” occurred despite the existence of experimental evidence able to invalidate the principles, evidence available even at the time of Haeckel’s ‘discovery’ of them. However, the mistaken Law, mainly by the sheer force of its prodigious rhetorical strengths, including perhaps its iconic puissance, that it was itself a recapitulation) won out believers for decade after decade. Even today you will hear or read well-educated

persons who cite the ontogeny–phylogeny chiasm as gospel. Like many a short, snappy chiasm, it sticks in the head, individual and collective. And once stuck, it isn't easy to toss over.

The airborne inward spiral of peregrine falcons on a descent calculated to swoop up small animals on the ground far beneath them relates to the fact that their sharpest distance vision is nearly 45 degrees off center. To compensate for this significant tilt peregrines, would have, in theory, two strategic alternatives, each of which is the very contrary of the other with respect to factors of straightness (undeviating, direct) and curving or turning (circuitous, indirect). An article entitled “Fancy Flights” describes the pair of alternatives available to the bird to correct its directed descents and compensate it for visual limitations. After this, the article's author lays out the actual in-air path chosen by these raptors to pursue quarry: “To keep their prey in clear sight, it is more efficient (faster) for them to fly on a curved path with their heads straight than in a straight swoop with their heads turned.” The author highlights the tradeoffs between straight and turned flight paths in a sentence form that itself iconizes back-and-forth alternatives and that displays qualities of linearity and curving. Taking advantage of its summing up and memorable assets, an *AB:BA* scheme also neatly concludes the article: the falcon's “fancy flights” may “inspire flights of fancy” in those humans who observe them.⁶⁵

A relatively recent chiastic contribution to botanical science is an intriguing theory of what could be called evolutionary mutualism. Michael Pollan supplies evidence that plants and humans long have had a reciprocal association in which each has influenced the other. The relationship between mankind and plant kind has not been strictly one-sided as we are accustomed to think: that is, that man, by having held dominion over a seemingly passive botanical world, has been evolutionarily unchanged by that world. Pollan overturns the entrenched notion “that we're the subjects acting on the passive objects” of that world. He replaces this hegemonic view with the contention that we, in turn, are the recipients of the activities of plant life. He finds for a symmetrical, balanced interconnectedness and interaction, for a relationship of co-agency in which both parties modify and adapt to one another. Pollan describes a “co-evolution, a give and take” in which the vegetative-human equation operates according to a commutative principle.⁶⁶ A “sometimes rapid, sometimes glacially protracted

[...] process of recursive molding and remodeling” is what “is meant by the term ‘co-evolution’” (Wilson 169; emphasis added).

In his book and in its after-publication promotion, Pollan made constant recourse to chiasmus. His choice of a rhetorical figure that forms reciprocal relationships entirely befits his co-agentic thesis.⁶⁷ Book reviewers and reporters as well as interviewers of the author at the time the title came to public attention intuited the fittingness of chiasmus to convey Pollan’s ideas; consequently, the figure had a field day in the discourse of the reviews, reports, and interviews. One radio reporter explained Pollan’s work as arising out of a double perspective in which a speculative gardener (Pollan) is imagined as posing to himself this provocative question: “‘Did I choose these plants, or did these plants choose me?’” A television interviewer sums up *The Botany of Desire* as a book that advances that “the plants are as much in the business of remaking us as we are in remaking the plant world.” The transitivity, co-evolutionary story of plants and humans is “Not them and us,” but also us and them.⁶⁸ This last chiasmic idea underlines how the figure can abolish causal favoritism because, by its parallelism, it puts agents on an equal footing and, by its semantic re-ordering, it balances out agential primacy. By its transformative and overturning nature, chiasmus is suited to transfigure agency, a prodigious and potent feat that is not only food for thought, but that comes to mind only through thought.

TURNAROUNDS AND OTHER *AB:BA* GYMNASTICS

It has been said that repetition is “the simplest of rhetorical devices” and is “a childlike form of emphasis” (Mazzeo 9). Chiasmus, a figure of repetition, can be as pedestrian and utilitarian as giving spoken directions to a small child hesitant about going to a friend’s house alone for the first time: “You leave here” or “You leave home and go past the yellow house, next walk by the house with the big porch, and then you are at Jason’s house. And when you return, you leave Jason’s house, go past the house with the big porch, next walk by the yellow house, and then you are back home” or “back here.” These directions are an *ABCD:DCBA* chiasm. The phrasing naturally enough uses the word *return* since chiasmus involves a

returning or reversal, that is, a two-way sequence of forward and then back. The starting point and ending point of the child's walk, being essentially one and the same, makes a full circuit. Likewise, the directions, which begin and end with the same or synonymous terms (*home* or *here*), figure a closed and, what we presume to be, ideally, a circular shape.

Playing backwards and returning to a starting point or 'home' place is a favorite activity of young children. For example, having mastered their beginning numbers, they will count, often to earn the praise of a parent, older sibling, or teacher, from one 'all the way up' to number ten and then show off their newly-acquired skill by directly reciting the identical number series in reverse. This forward-backwards numeration, often accompanied with ten small fingers going up (extended from a curled hand) first one-by-one and then down (retracted back into the closed hand) one-by-one, is child's play, but no less chiasmic for that.

James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is profuse in chiasmus. A short distance into the portraiture, Steven Dedalus engages in a chiasmic game on paper that many children enjoy aloud or in their minds. It is a pastime I remember running in my head as a child, as have others. But Joyce's bookish, artsy Stephen 'plays' the game on paper. In the flyleaf of his geography book, the boy had written his name and after it the several places intervening between his small person and "The Universe."⁶⁹ Joyce has Stephen read to himself his own previously handwritten list:

Stephen Dedalus
Class of Elements
Clongowes Wood College
Sallins
County Kildare
Ireland
Europe
The World
The Universe

The child protagonist reads first down the page, then up (from "The Universe" to his name), and then a third time, back down to the literally and figuratively ultimate item and the one absolutely most strenuous for the little schoolboy to think about.

The forwards-backwards-forwards readings (down the page-up the page-down the

page) assume a ‘geography’ of *ABA* ‘elements.’ The first two readings comprise an extended chiasmus of *ABCDEFGHI:IHGFEDCBA*, a construction where the two ‘sides’ or ‘halves’ face in toward one another. Furthermore, by transposing their constituent elements, the second reading ‘winds’ or ‘cycles back’ to form a kind of circle. Many, likely most children would be content to end the reading or reciting game at this satisfying point of matching-up halves and achieving, by a ‘reconnection’ to the beginning item in a series, a round. However, Stephen isn’t “Everychild.” A precisionistic and precocious youngster (a pint-sized stand-in for James Joyce) obsessed with formal rites and poetic ones, he writes/re-rites the second half, the ‘backwards’ or bottom-to-top reading, by artfully giving it a twist (or rather by Joyce’s forcing a twist). Stephen’s contemplative aim is not a fulfilling ‘return’ to self (to his named self) and the creation of a whole complete onto itself (himself), but rather a re-return to the list’s last and truly ultimate item. That requires a duplication or redo of the first reading, where he stops on “The Universe,” the immense idea of which provokes extreme perplexity and mental strain from pondering “everything and everywhere” and from thinking about the only being who is up to conceiving and delving into such colossal thoughts, an Illimitable, Catholic and catholic God Almighty (27). The third-time sequence of *ABCDEFGHI* offsets the counterbalance of a whole formed by *ABCDEFGHI:IHGFEDCBA*. The disruption to the balance, throws Stephen off. He is left unsteady by his own cleverness. With *ABCDEFGHI* appended to a self-enclosed, self-completed structure of mutual in-formativeness,⁷⁰ Joyce describes his prodigy tracking away from inwardness; instead he thinks his geography ‘out,’ but to no satisfying, conclusive end. Stephen turns away from his self to cogitate the “big,” namely, plenary space into which Joyce’s wee thinker is subsumed and all but disappears.

As with everything in Stephen’s world, “There were two sides in it” (Joyce 27), but these contrary sides not only reverse but can perplexingly re-reverse. Re-reversal makes for the aberrance and strain of the reflection of reflections and its shiftiness renders one—despite geography book in hand and the orderly sequence of a cosmic hierarchy in which one has first place—frighteningly dislocated, spatially-defeated in the Pascalian sense, and philosophically very much outed. To borrow from a vocabulary of “psychological estrangement” applied to the

world of Dickens, a vocabulary leading us back around to terms of irregularity and incongruity, Stephen's troping of chiasmus bespeaks of his "erratic soul" unable to arrive at a "consistent self" (Ermarth 181). This is chiefly due to a psyche yearning for symmetry and congruity (the consistent, the conforming), but split by a universe perilously antinomic (the erratic, the wildly variable). Sanford Budick's notice of the association between "symmetries of fractional selves" and the anxiety-related, "discomposing effect" of certain chiastic usages could have found in Stephen's antireflectional 'poem' and his chiasticized geographical chiasmus premier instances of the association (962).

By comparison with Stephen's fatiguing, hyper-sophisticated, symbolically-laden 'play,' nursery rhymes, with their repeating words and phrasing and chiastic proclivity, are simpler, pleasing pastimes. "Mary had a little lamb" is a chiastic favorite.⁷¹ "Old King Cole" probably qualifies as the most chiastic of all the rhymes. Of the monarch, we recall he "Was a merry old soul/And a merry old soul was he." This chiasmus appears in all six stanzas along with chiasmatic variations of reverse construction that are very similar: e.g., "Now every fiddler, he had a fiddle/And a very fine fiddle had he." Kenneth Burke insists that "Mother Goose is little more than an exerciser" of formal devices "of comparing, contrasting, and arranging" (*Counter-Statement* 143). Not surprising then, that chiasmus, which trades in likeness, difference, and arrangement, is a persistent device in nursery rhymes.⁷²

For an example that is far more overtly and robustly chiasmatic and deeply vested in visuality, consider the inverted containers of a pair of woman and man's colognes, each called "Touch," introduced, in the year 2000, in the highly competitive fragrance market. The paired fragrances by the Burberry fashion house appear to have spawned the continuing fad for complementary or, as the industry calls them, "partner" scents for him and her.⁷³ The masculine "flask-like bottle" and the companion feminine "bottle, inspired by a spool of thread," are reverse images of one another. Burberry claims in its print ads that "Together the two bottles create a perfect harmony between man and woman." This verbal claim obtains visual warrant in the photography featuring the physical containers. The advertising photos reveal that the angle to which one bottle slants outward and downward along its sides corresponds exactly and

inversely to the angle of the other bottle's inward and upward slant. The precise physical agreement, complementation, and reciprocity imply a twosomeness in which each bottle partner gracefully 'acknowledges,' 'responds' or 'answers' to, and 'conforms' with its opposite. This physical vice-versality showcases a pair of obliquely-angled containers acutely 'sensitive' to each other's form. Hence, when placed side by side as they are in Burberry's ads, the pair align closely, evenly, beautifully. They 'touch'—we might almost say 'caress'—perfectly, and, by their extraordinary accord and tight connectivity, imply a faultless, intimate, and fated couple (composite). Such a chiastic arrangement sells the idea of an ideal: a perfectly consummate, an absolutely responsive and sensitive male–female relationship. The chiastic image visually pitches that the couple purchasing “Touch for Men” and “Touch for Women” are bound to be a 'perfect' fit, a romantic match in which he, only, is inclined toward (meant for) her and she, only, inclined toward him. Another way to view the bottles is that every tiny fraction of his incline matches her decline and, well, you can fill in the rest.

Before leaving Burberry's inclining–declining bottle pair we might take note of the strong sense of factors of autocorrection already referenced with regard to steady-states. Notably, too, is that the pair's inter-motivated association, in effect, entails a type of internally-directed, closed system, of the steady-state and chiastic types. Finally, one 'alphabet' for American Sign Language (ASL) was developed to capture movement and interaction types that, because they are universal and recurrent, need have expressive outlet. In this deaf alphabet, the crossing mark \times symbolizes “contactual action, touch” (Daniels and Bright 863). Touch, connectivity, proximity, and lines that are equal and whose “action” is strictly relative to one another by their synclinal mirroring, these are factors of chiasmus that the next chapter will enlarge upon.

In the earlier 1960s, an Italian fashion house commissioned a signature logo that amounts to a visual chiasm, *haute couture* style. The Fendi logo (designated “the Zucca”) features a simple, but commercially clever mirroring of the upper case letter for the name of the house.⁷⁴ One F making up half the famous trademark assumes the customary orthographic stance and positioning: an upright orientation and a 'facing' to the right. In very close spatial conjunction

to this letterform, another F, one in every respect the physical counterpart of the first letterform, is rotated exactly 180 degrees. We shall designate this turned-around, reversed F after the Roman emperor Claudius, who, as an alphabetical reformist, proposed it as a desirable new letter for the Latin alphabet (Firmage 233). On account of its fully downside-up state, the Claudian F stations backwards, that is, opposite the customary right-facing capital. With the Claudian, the flat and straight-back stem (resembling a kind of human spine) transposes to a right-sided position and its reverse, open-side part (its 'face' side) transposes to the left. The inverted F positions precisely oppositely to and 'looks at' and 'behaves' squarely with the first F. The two halves of the duo, which 'turn toward' and 'face' one another, outline, by their in-turned, complementary, congruent relation, a nearly unbroken perimeter. With their proximity, inwardness, and 'intimacy,' and with their 'backs' to the 'outside,' the trademark's chiasmus-behaving letter pair virtually shapes an enclosing frame. Only two tiny gaps make the exception to a frame otherwise entirely encompassing. These insignificant openings, the eye mostly ignores. By Gestalt psychology's principle of simplicity, viewers of the logo see an almost continuous, encasing contour.

The Zucca's visual shaping has correspondences with the virtual shaping that we feel with chiasmus. The regular F and the upside down-and-turned F register as a tight, nearly self-confined scheme. Again, qualities the chiastic device coerces. With 'backs' turned, their collaboration seems more than self-sufficiency and completeness; it has the appearance of disdainful, perhaps snobby detachment. Their being a world whole unto themselves relays (at a subliminal level) what is a merchandiser's dream of a message: namely, that Fendi, alone, is it, 'the works.' Indeed, the logo's message of exclusiveness, even aloofness, from letterforms utterly 'locked' on themselves and 'deflecting' whatever occupies the surround, arises from a composite visual that is essentially entire unto itself. Viewers 'read' of the logo that it alone encompasses what needs be looked for to be in vogue. Fashion's right look depends on the absolute, the all-its-own look. Not I think coincidental is that the logo's graphic equivalent functions as the punctuation mark, the *futaekagi*, in Japanese for double quotations and for

indicating textual items necessitating that they be physically set apart and visually highlighted (Daniels and Bright 214). The typographical purpose of the *futaekagi*, to draw visual attention, lends support to the attribution here of the meaning implications of the Fendi trademark. What better in the fashion and boutique industry then to catch the eye. Few would dispute that the heavily-promoted trademark's reverse heraldic symmetry, with its distinctive, but restrainedly elegant composition, caters, exceptionally, to the eye and works as an eye-pleasing signet to blazon or 'herald' Fendi's posh merchandise.

An especially appealing example of visual chiasmus, which has several salient features in common with the Fendi logo and the *futaekagi*, appears in E. H. Gombrich's chapter "The Visual Image: Its Place in Communication" from *The Image and the Eye* (154). It is reproduced here (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. Savignac, Poster of two men painting one another into being.

Gombrich doesn't identify the whimsical, witty poster by Raymond Savignac as a visual chiasmus nor does the celebrated psychologist of visual phenomena make mention in his

chapter of any of the poster's many prominent chiasmic features. The most obvious feature is inversion, which here we 'read' as true upside-downness, *true* because we have a body, actually two, ours and the illustrated one, to orient the viewer as to what is up and what is down. Other salient features include reflected and rotational symmetry, counterbalance, doubles that exhibit strict likeness (i.e., outline, rhythm) and strict opposition (i.e., light and dark coloration), direction, implied back-and-forth movement, mutual interaction and alternating agency, and circularity.

Though not mentioned, it is by dint of these conspicuous features that the playful poster is able to strongly "arrest the attention," "surprise" and "set the mind a puzzle" (Gombrich 155). Those who intend chiasmus, whether of the verbal or visual type, have recourse to it because they know its powers to arouse, impress, startle, and generally put one to thinking. They have an appreciation for its catching and holding eye and mind. The "surprise effects" of the Savignac image force viewers to "linger" over, "puzzle" out (Gombrich 155), and be amused by what seems a super smart fun-house experience: a topsy-turvy, round-and-round, weirdly captivating mirroring representation. The surprise Gombrich notes is of course right even if he neglects to designate the poster's involving, thought-provoking visual "effects" as deriving from a chiasmic configuration. The literal, quirky re-marking that occurs with one painter painting a second painter (and he, then again, painting the first), each of whom is strangely a twin and yet not a twin of the other, is remarkable and intriguing. Though not in a verbal, but certainly in a visual sense, chiasmus is 'writ' large in the clever poster.

CATCHY, OFTEN CRAFTY, BUT NOT NECESSARILY HIGH ARTY-CRAFTY

Chiasmus is ubiquitous and exceedingly ordinary. Because it is exceedingly ordinary, it is ubiquitous. If attuned to, yet not in fact on the look out for the *AB:BA* figuration, it crops up regularly, even daily. As proof of this last statement, within a span of four days I heard, read, or had reported to me this chiasmic quartet. A Washington, D.C. radio station which had solicited audience comments about the station and how it rated, self-servingly aired one loyal listener's praise: "You're a perfect station. We listen to you and you listen to us."⁷⁵ A neighbor frustrated

by a recent mole invasion in his yard complained about the destruction to his lawn and threatened that “The moles better put a stop to it or I’ll put a stop to them.” A physician advising a close family member about a potent pharmacological treatment cautioned his patient, “You may agree to take the drug, but the drug may not agree with or take to you.” Lastly, an annual fund drive for our community’s fire department solicited citizens’ donations with a one-page mailer. The department leaned heavily on chiasmus (quite prominently displayed in oversized, color-contrastive letters at the very top of the mailer) to drive home their solicitation argument and motivate local households to send in contributions: “We volunteer for you every day. Today, will you volunteer for us?” The concept of partnership that public service organizations stress during money-raising campaigns regularly finds form and persuasiveness with chiasmus.⁷⁶ The mailer’s *AB:BA* request formulates the partnership idea and prevails on readers by means of it. The chiasmus bespeaks of a relation that goes two ways and involves two different kinds of volunteer activities: one having to do with work and time; the other with money. The second half needed to match the first half of the chiasmus hints at the necessity of monetary donations to match the firefighting and rescue work and the time voluntarily given to this work. Both halves and not just the one (the fire-fighting volunteer half) are essential to maintain a service indispensable to the community.

Advertisers and others hawking products are themselves ‘sold’ on chiasmus. The figure carries a great deal of rhetorical capital for those in, what have been dubbed, the “persuasion industries”: advertising, marketing, and public relations.⁷⁷ Give mind to some commercial chiasma encountered over the course of just a few days. A radio spot announced “The E-class [Mercedes] you used to wait for now waits for you.”⁷⁸ This chiasmus succinctly related a consumer-favoring turnabout in the buying–selling dynamic of one class of vehicles. A dealer’s then-current overstock of the E-class had replaced the situation several months earlier when this car group was a hot product and difficult for consumers to get their hands on. A print advertisement acquainted prospective truck buyers about the affection those who already own Dodges have for their vehicles. The ad purported that “they [i.e., Dodge owners] take good care of their trucks because their trucks take good care of them.” The mutual guardianship makes for

a happy affiliation that a prospective buyer presumably would relish. A car rental agency aiming to distinguish itself from its competitors offered customers two means for getting behind the wheel: “You come to us or we’ll come to you. Either way, it’s a good deal.” “Either way” underscores the dual options announced in the locution and essentially submits the existence of a ‘one way or another’ kind of flexibility. When flexibility translates into customer convenience, it can put a rental agency ahead of its competition. A heavily-aired car campaign marshalling chiasmus to make its main point revealed ad-writers savvy about and responsive to three concurrent factors that in the autumn of 2001 were immense changes in the United States: a groundswell of patriotism, an economic recession leading to a growing number of job layoffs, and a predicted downturn in consumer spending. In light of these factors, the exciting news for the public-spirited citizen with a new car purchase possibly on his or her mind was an almost unheard of zero-percent financing rate. Ford Motor Company hoped to push the patriotic consumer toward purchase with “Ford drives America. And right now it’s easier for America to drive Ford.” Here chiasmus depends on two denotations of the word *drive*. The two different meanings make Ford come out looking doubly good (not unlike the rental company)—committed to boosting America economically by two distinct activities: its manufacture of cars, which of course employs thousands of Americans, and its provision of zero percent financing, which offers American consumers a much-needed financial break and, at the same time, counters the nation’s slumping economy.

Chiasmus is a seller. It persuades, coaxes, wheedles, influences, wins over, and convinces people to open up their wallets or get out their credit cards or check books, or else it would not be pervasive in the rhetoric of sales. A cellular phone service boasts the convenience and desirability of conference calls that allow the individual to “have a family meeting without meeting the family.” A different take on so-called face-time with family members comes out in a Milton Bradley television commercial marketing young children’s board games. The commercial has an over voice that is a composite of the voices of several small children cheerily telling their ‘parents’ “It’s you with me. Me with you.” The children’s summing-up chiasmus amounts to a telescoped message about parents and children coming and being

together, which in fact the commercial dramatizes with several short scenarios depicting adults and their small charges happily engaged with one another as a consequence of the board games they sit over.

In contrast to the lovey, two-sided nurturing–nurtured relationship extolled in the Milton Bradley rendition of shared time between parents and children, another commercial makes use of chiasmus to stress the one-sidedness of an association that is strictly business. An Internet ad by Citi Platinum promoting their Select Credit Card reminds consumers “You use credit cards not the other way around.” This shorthand, pithy chiasm takes clever advantage of the tiny commercial space allotted to pop-up ads and responds to the short tolerance of Internet users for this sort of literally in-your-face, unsolicited, and interruptive plugging of services and products. It also insists who is in charge in the credit card–credit cardholder relationship. It is the holder, at least the holder of a Citi Platinum card, who is, so to speak, in the driver’s seat. There’s no co-equality or chummy two-sidedness here. Togetherness or one side calling the shots: our chiasmic form can pull off either. Small wonder it’s a favorite stratagem with those with some product or service to vend.

Before leaving advertising as a popular medium that heavily draws on chiasmus, I would like to single out another commercial that aired in the fall of 2001. It is particularly noteworthy for the way in which its two actor-characters physically mime aspects of discourse chiasmus, including the one the acting pair verbalizes collaboratively. The televised commercial depicts a husband and wife, each awakening in the night and, unbeknownst to the other, taking a different route to the medicine cabinet. From this cabinet, both retrieve a product that will relieve whatever respective discomfort has disturbed his sleep and hers. On return walks to the bedroom, their separate paths cross. At this unexpected intersection, they physically bump into one another. At the crossing and collision point, one surprised spouse blurts out the good news that “There is Vicks [Vaporub] in my Breathe-Rites.” Directly, the other surprised spouse responds in inverse kind “My Breathe-Rites have Vicks.” The physical collision of the couple by means of intercrossing paths is a tiny dramatic moment that gives focus to the chiasmus emerging from the two-sentence dialogue uttered by the actors (the rest of the commercial’s

verbalizing being the pronouncements of an over voice).

But even more importantly, the dramatized action iterates chiasmatic ‘action.’ The physical coming together models the cross directionality and intersectional aspect of chiasmus. Furthermore, the collision enacts the amazing (surprising) conjunction, the reformulation and combination of two previously separate products. The product pair has been converted into a composite product that does double duty, that is, it does the job of Vicks Vaporub and the job of Breathe-Rites nose strips. Although the commercial is noteworthy because of its dramatic, physical mimicking of chiasmus, it shouldn’t be overlooked that its subject is about something as humdrum and as removed from the realm of literary art as nasal congestion.

THE WISE AND THE WOULD-BE’S

Proverbs, maxims, and aphorisms, which are “very old form[s] of writing and speaking” and which fall under the category of “wisdom literature” (E. Cook 19, 20), regularly look to chiasmus for “delivering intelligence, intelligently delivered.”⁷⁹ Lao-tzu, who lived around 500 BC, habitually entrusted chiasmus to convey the sage, enigmatic instructions in his manual on the art of enlightened living, the *Tao Te Ching*. The transposing powers of the figure and its dealings in antilogy and the antipodal formulated the Chinese teacher’s paradoxical, abstruse, reflexive philosophy based on the precept of ‘doing not-doing.’⁸⁰ Lao-tzu taught “[r]eturn is the movement of the Tao”; the other is the self and *vice versa*; symmetrically opposed states preside over the universe (the Tao is “dark” yet “radiant,” it *both* is *and* is not); every force comes face to face with its counter force; and all pairs of opposites exist in an inextricable, mutual state, a state exceedingly contradictory and “unfathomable” given that it is what we may designate ‘*both/and*,’ that is, it expresses, simultaneously, both difference and reconciliation (Lao-tzu, Chapters 40, 21). Inasmuch as these teachings share properties and propositions in common with chiasmus, the latter fittingly persuades of the former.⁸¹ Beyond conveying the recondite truths, and even the exquisite placidity and concision,⁸² of the *Tao Te Ching*, the *AB:BA* scheme aptly encapsulates what this moral guidebook reveals as the “great secret” of life. In a pair of juxtaposed questions that prevail on chiasmus for reciprocity and connection

between contraries and that adumbrate the sense of deliberation, dignity, solemnity, importance (or profundity), authority, calmness, and correctness bi-lateral symmetry typically provisions,⁸³ Lao-tzu's readers find it near impossible to resist or to conceive any comeback to the double erotesis of "What is a good man but a bad man's teacher?/What is a bad man but a good man's job?" (Chapter 27).

Given that maxims, aphorisms, and proverbs "communicate entire thoughts in an encapsulated, ready-made format" (Mertvago 4) and that they "usually give a sense of stability and decorum" (E. Cook 20), the highly formal chiasmic scheme that keeps to its circumscribed frame makes an ideal rhetorical choice for enshrining a moral. Other qualities intrinsic to chiasmus work in subtle, yet vital ways on behalf of aphoristic sayings. The figure will bear repeated hearings and readings, as it points a moral or truth, by virtue of its pleasant chiming of repeated, accentuated words and phrasing as well as its satisfying symmetry. In addition, the circling-back construction has an echoing effect that encourages the mind to remember beyond the close of the last word.⁸⁴ Goethe's collocation of common nouns in his title *Maxims and Reflections* captures the reflective purpose of these sayings. As Coleridge observes, the mere artifice attributable to the measured "recurrence of words and quantities [...] facilitate[s] the recollection of any given fact or observation." With the "particular pleasure [that] is found in anticipating the recurrence," a composition displays "charm-superadded" (453–454). Chiasmus contributes its fair share of rhetorical charmers that "order language in such a way that the hearer, recognizing the form, [...] more easily assimilate[s] the content" (Doughtie 37). What finds easy assimilation via recognition and anticipation, fosters reception and retention.

The recognition, however, has explanations other than just formal. When hearing or reading an analect new to us, it feels as if it awakens what had been a "dim forgotten or hidden truth" within ourselves known at some deeper level. We have the "obscure feeling" of recognition, identification, and recollection because the message "is related, as Coleridge says, 'to something within us that already [...] exists' " (K. Clark 11, 12). Wise sayings very often seem true, familiar companions we gladly receive and are at ease with, whether or not we share prior acquaintance. In the case of chiasmic epigrams, dictums, proverbs, mottos, and maxims this

feeling of recognition and welcome may be strengthened because the verbal and rhythmic patterning dictates that words fall into formal line, meaning that they line up according to what strikes us as their pre-scribed, rightful, exact, and exactly meant places. In this sense of being rightly- or well-versed, the *AB:BA* article garners a feeling of familiarity. Correctness that gives us the ‘straight of it’ and nothing else than straight results from ruly elements that formally ‘add up’ and ‘prove true’ to the chiasmic pattern, a pattern suggestive of a kind of faithfulness resident in its own reflective nature. This correctness promotes the saying as a recognizable, if not also a necessary and (self) sufficient ‘truth.’

Another advantage, chiasmus allows for the decisive distinctions that adages actively trade in and are noted for. Between competing claims or competing possibilities, chiasmus often favors one side decisively over another or indicates one alternative is the unequivocal superior to another. In rhetoric, discriminating or correcting of one phrase (or word) at the expense of another is known as *diorismus* (Greek for ‘distinction, direction’) or *correctio* (Greek for ‘making straight, getting right’) (Lanham 56, 42). Examples illustrate how one proposition in one half of a chiasmic saying serves as a point of departure to show up the adjacent proposition as misplaced, as misguided, or as outright faulty reasoning: “If you have nothing to say, then say nothing.”⁸⁵ “A man need never change his mind if he has no mind to change.” “He that respects not is not respected.” “You can take the boy out of the country, but you can’t take the country out of the boy.” “More people know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows.” “You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.”⁸⁶ “There’s small revenge in words, but words may be greatly revenged.”

The advice “ ‘Be good and you will be happy’ is a dangerous orthodoxy, thinks W. H. Auden. He inclines to its reverse: ‘Be happy and you will be good’ is the truth” (*English Auden* 300). He prefers one side to a true–false (inverted) causal relation between goodness and happiness. His “though not all fools are knaves, all knaves are fools” (*Dyer’s Hand* 127) draws a decisive distinction between two derogatory nouns, of *fool* with respect to *knave* and of *knave* with respect to *fool*. It demonstrates how chiasmus often categorizes one entity relative to another and, as a result, differentiates between them. Interestingly, the tidy, uncluttered saw

about orderliness, “A place for everything, and everything in its place,”⁸⁷ achieves its formulistic suasion by means of a figure in which placement and displacement arrange all sorts of difference and in which syntactical order holds sway over the semantic distinction (the difference just mentioned) between each half of the chiasmic locution.

The most celebrated of all crosswise counsels is “[You] Do onto others as you would have them do onto you.” Before the world had the religious injunction of the most revered of golden sayings enjoining impartiality between self and others an ancient Greek philosopher proposed a similar idea. Aristotle’s sage advice about social civility urged this: “We should behave to our friends as we would wish our friends to behave to us” (qtd. in Grothe 11). Aristotelian civility and Golden Rule’s altruism acquire a harsh twist by the insertion of a negative (the adverb *never*) and by the hardened, stick-it-to-you quality of the brusque imperative case of *do* when the biblical-sounding and Bible-warranting *onto* drops out in “[You] Do others and never let them do you” (Merriman 103). This selfish, self-protective philosophy was imagined as John D. Rockefeller’s “personally amended” rendition of the Golden Rule (Merriman 103). Meant as a sarcastic, pointed jab at the American tycoon famous for his take-no-prisoners capitalism, the chiasm originated from a contemporary humorist with a tongue deeply lodged in cheek. Another chiasmically-phrased business rule-of-thumb was conceived by an aggressive, affluent capitalist. Joseph P. Kennedy’s “When the going gets tough, the tough get going” not only has become trite, it has spawned many an unimpressive variant.⁸⁸

Self-help books, motivational speakers, inspirational gurus, and advice columnists frequently recite familiar chiasma.⁸⁹ These authors and advisors unwittingly favor or purposefully opt for chiasmus because it is easily remembered, appears well-considered, presents discursive lines that in themselves display formal guidance and stricture, carries a certain authority, and can seem the last word on a subject. ‘The secret of life/success/happiness is not to do what you like, but to like what you do’ and ‘It is better to have what you cannot love than love what you cannot have’ paraphrase two of the more recurrent, popular advisory chiasma. One self-help book from the 1990s reassures that an advantage to adults who conduct

themselves as grown-ups should, rather than as dependent children is that “Others are less likely to tell you what you ought to do and more likely to ask you what they ought to do” (Pittman 41; emphasis original). “There is so much bad/in the best of us/And so much good/in the worst of us,/That it doesn’t behoove any of us/To talk about the rest of us” and “When we seek to discover the best in others, we [through these others] somehow bring out the best in ourselves”⁹⁰ crisscross along the formal and semantic lines of the superseding Golden Rule. Once you have hold of the formula, you can spool these out endlessly.⁹¹

Well before self-help manuals and motivational speakers and the plague of psychobabble that fills our airwaves, life’s verities were regularly delivered from one human to another via *AB:BA* formulations. The old adage “Experience without learning is better than learning without experience” exemplifies the arrangement whereby one half of the formulation exists to be righted by the other. One verity that seems to know no season encompasses and conjoins two contrary views on love, the wistful and the cynical: “Love makes time pass, time makes love pass.” Pathos haunts this chiasmic message formulating the idea that though time and love are intimately associated, as are lovers, nonetheless either will drive away the other. By the bilateral symmetry of the arrangement, we read into the saying that time and love are equally capable of making us forget the other one. Never one to let human folly escape him, Samuel Johnson observed chiasmically on matters of the heart that “Love is the wisdom of the fool and the folly of the wise.” The good doctor’s remark reminds us that with love, wisdom and foolishness are as one. The concept of inseparability is a persistent affordance of the associative chiasmus. Also measuring love with waggery of the sort the droll Johnson would have relished is the later anecdote that “It is better to get something in your eye and then wink, then to wink and then get something in your eye.” This jest, with its own semantic wink, underscores the critical order and causality of two events, which chiasmus is particularly adept at conducting.

A COMMON PROPERTY

Chiasmus is a perennial, universal property. No age, person, or media has any proprietary claim on it. By virtue that it is a for-all-time, collective property, we suppose that, if asked,

Henry James would include it among all that is subsumed in “the common dust of life” (“*Our Speech*” 11), a phrase resonant of death and, by that very resonance, of death in life. As concluding evidence, we shall reference how chiasmus was literally writ in life *and* achingly in death’s “common dust.”

The evidence requires us to return to a lethal arena, one that silenced untold numbers of on-the-scene, traumatized victims, rescue workers, and onlookers, and along with them a national audience of spell-bound television viewers equally shuddering and at an utter loss for words. The chiasmus to which I refer came in the wake of the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center’s twin towers. It was a short declaration poignantly scrawled in the dust, powder, and ashes heavily shrouding the depopulated, ghostly Red Zone in lower Manhattan. CNN radio on 30 September 2001, took note, but without any additional detail or commentary, of this message in the ghostly, crematory-like region: “One destroyed many. Now many will destroy one.”⁹²

This chiasmus acting out the proverb about writing one’s injuries in dust was not the product of a modern-day Petrarch safely ensconced in his study and leisurely buffing a highly figured *bon mot*.⁹³ Nor was it the over-edited, punctilious labor of those who “cough in ink,” Yeats appellation for scholars. It was not composed for reasons of aesthetics or to gratify the writer’s literary mind or *confreres* of the same mind. It was not meant for publication, broadcast, or wide consumption; not meant to exploit and hype⁹⁴; not even meant for posterity. It was not intended to achieve monetary recompense, career advancement, or the gratification of one’s fifteen minutes of fame. Given that the name of Osama bin Laden is a conspicuous omission, though it could easily and understandably have been substituted for the indefinite *one*, the message would seem to preclude even the America-hating fanatic as the message’s sole intended reader.

The chiastic comment likely originated from a spontaneous, exceptionally personal act. The pulverized remains from the death dive of monolithic skyscrapers with thousands of doomed people inside may have invited the writer to see the comminution as a slate awaiting human outcry. Possibly our anonym in the epitaphic mood of Richard II (let us “Make dust our

paper” because “nothing can we call our own but death”) was moved to speak for hundreds of thousand of distraught citizens and the dust was ready to hand, as it happens a fitting⁹⁵ necrographic (“ashes to ashes, dust to dust”) tablet that was not just everywhere he looked, but irresistible by its very blankness and symbolic nullity. Or perhaps the inrush and struggle of emotions or uncontrollable indignation from a world literally “declined to dust” (Byron qtd. in Lawler 210) seemingly gave him no choice but to find what partial release can sometimes be attained when anguish or outrage attains words.

Whatever the actual motivation, this chiasmus was the anonymous record of the man literally in the street. A finger scribed a message presumably only a very few passers-by permitted in the cordoned-off sector would catch sight of amid one hundred and twenty-five million tons of rubble. The writer knew the eight words would be ephemera, soon scattered on the wind or atomized by round-the-clock excavation and heavy machine removal.

“After great pain, a formal feeling comes.” Formal feeling might well arise when built and human form are obliterated on such a scale, when monster-sized buildings of steel and concrete become amorphous and their helpless occupants silica. Our anonymous writer who came to a formal means of expression arising out of a national event of unthinkable anguish and loss gives proof of Emily Dickinson’s insight into human pain (Number 341). The *AB:BA* pattern of return and reversal suited the composer’s prophesizing of *quid pro quo*, of destruction in return for destruction. The plain, spare, matter-of-fact chiasm formulated that the perpetrator of the attack will get back in kind exactly and unequivocally what he had wrought. It is the Biblical “eye for an eye.” Though scrawled in the swiftness of the impromptu, an act *ex mero motu*, the writer nevertheless seized the form perfectly befitting a declaration of retaliation. His form-of-choice, doubtless made without a smattering of forethought, was the precise die in which to cast the idea of reciprocation. What is more about the reflex, it ended in a casting with an impression as certain as though carved in stone. Chiasmus well passes for finished and done with due to its commanding, self-assured, and finished off personality. Our writer’s chiasm, although cross-scored in dust, conveys inevitability. Generating and evincing the rhetorically advantageous impressions of certitude, settlement, and completion often fall to

the structure-function of chiasmus.

Chiasmus procures grammatical turnabouts, such that if an *A* subjects a *B*, that *B*, when it gets the successive turn the reversing form insures, subjects *A*. That turnaround, inescapable with the chiastic shift of subsequent with antecedent, converts the potent *A* (subject or actor) determining and perpetrating action into the action's recipient. The turnaround, one-for-one exchange, and equal or matched arrangement of *AB:BA* figures a situation of turning the tables, getting even, and attaining redress through a match-up. All of these provide for the victimized party to get his just turn at the perpetrator. Vicissitude, including the tit-for-tat of global terrorism, is indeed a chiastic forte. In the stringent, "obligatorily reciprocated" arrangement of the doubling (matching) back chiasmus (Derrida, *Given Time* 41), payback time gets figured—strictly so. Further, what goes round (*A* to *A*), comes (back) round and (permitting still another cliché) bites you. To give (back) as good (the same) as one gets (receives), to ensure retaliation in kind, involves a second action following on and fully equal to the first. This makes for a perfect ending or resolution and, as Kenneth Burke discerns, a "perfect ending should promise something" (*Symbolic Action* 21). The Red Zone chiasmus promises to deliver on the same.

Furthermore, the form implies another factor we naturally associate with physical retaliation; namely, that adversaries eventually face off. They invariably come face to face in a match-off with one another. Chiasmus not only builds from two syntactically matched, but opposing or countering members, but with one subtype of chiasmus, of which our present example is an instance, the members rather significantly exhibit converse, though commensurate trajectories toward a shared middle or meeting point. This point, which marks a dividing line, seemingly finds the two halves drawn, for good or for bad, closer together. At this critical juncture, the pair on either side of a syntactic middle achieves a kind of face-to-face positioning; thereby replicating the formation adversaries prototypically assume to order and settle up their differences.

As said, chiasmus can install states or relations of reciprocity. The 9/11 chiasm provides a circuit of reciprocity: a grisly circle where retaliation begets retaliation begets retaliation. Reprisals can continue round and round, back and forth, forth and back, with the initiating

event no longer remembered with time's passage or purposely blanked out by subsequent participants. Getting even then produces a particularly vicious vicious circle: passed to and then bred in generation after generation. Those sensitive to the eternal return of revenge may find such return already adumbrated in the 9/11 chiasm. The circular nature of our rhetorical figure and the vicious circle as one fascinating demonstration of chiasmatic circularity, whereby concepts of the eternal and the interminable find capture within *AB:BA* constructs, will receive fuller treatment.

In summary, whether the means are vocal cords outfitting phonemes or fingers displacing dust, daubing ink, or pressing keyboards, chiasmus provisions distinct, expressive grooves. And, by virtue of their unfailingness, these grooves release arrangements that occur widely and commonly. Notwithstanding that it informs the mundane and the monumental and everything between, chiasmus maintains a fine-line discriminator. In that respect, it imitates the well-defined tracks of its own elegant, profound pre-inscriptor. With this resemblance in mind, the elusive, allusive X obligates the attention the next chapter proffers.

¹ Chiasmus is "A type of BALANCE in which the second part is balanced against the first but with the parts reversed." This definition is from Holman and Harmon's *A Handbook to Literature*.

² In *Never Let a Fool Kiss You or a Kiss Fool You*, Grothe indicates that numbers, as opposed to words, can operate as the principal elements in the figure. He gives this example: "A lawyer starts life giving \$500 worth of law for \$5 and ends giving \$5 worth for \$500."

Grothe's is really a small point given that numbers are also words, and, most likely, if we were to hear this quip first rather than see it on a printed page, we probably would not distinguish 5 and 500 as other than words. Grothe's example is nice to have, but it brings out merely a graphic *versus* non-graphic distinction that doesn't really tell us anything more about chiasmus.

³ *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* gives the first line of Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" as an example of phonological chiasmus (183). In his "Foreword" to *Celestial Pantomime* by Justus George Lawler, John Hollander references the same line: "a chiasmus or crisscross can be found in the vowel patterns of 'In Xanadu did Kubla Khan' (ah-oo-oo-ah)" (xvii). That said, Hollander claims "we feel" this chiasmus "to be decorative or schematic." Unfortunately he does not specify what is meant by *schematic*, but clearly this contemporary poet's attitude toward the paired vowel reversal in Coleridge's euphonious line determines it an unessential or an insignificant extra. For Hollander, it amounts to one of those "momentary, ad hoc figurations" that don't count for much; that is, they don't contribute meaningfully to the matter at hand by being themselves demonstrative of the subject under discussion. In other words, they are not iconic, but are instead superficial or ornamental.

The *New Princeton Encyclopedia* makes a point overlooked by many: namely, that chiasmus typically manifests on more than one level at a time. That is, if chiasmus occurs at the lexical level with the repeating of words then it follows that chiasmus presents at the phonological level as

well. Grothe (xii) provides examples of letter and phonemic reversals: “A magician pulls rabbits out of hats. An experimental psychologist pulls habits out of rats” and “I find Peale appalling and Paul appealing” (the latter original to Adlai Stevenson).

In his article “Chiasmus in Literature,” Nänny describes literary examples of chiasmus that function at several levels simultaneously. One example is from T. S. Eliot in which the first stanza of a poem displays chiasmus on the levels of syntax, line, and word (55). Another is a stanza from Coleridge in which one construction is, at once, thematically, syntactically, and phonologically chiasmic (57–58).

⁴ Ralf Norrman in *Samuel Butler and the Meaning of Chiasmus* explains that the repeating elements of this rhetorical device can be “Sounds or letters, syllables, words, phrases, sentences—and even larger units of texts, such as paragraphs or chapters” (1). Norrman’s book devotes to thematic chiasmus in Butler’s novels.

Even though the present discussion concentrates on the sentential chiasmus, chiasmus does, in fact, occur on all linguistic and many narrative levels. According to Nänny, who specializes in the literary chiasmus, “chiasmic patterning [...] occur(s) on all levels of both poetic and prose texts [...]: on the level of sounds (including rhyme) and graphemes (inclusive of punctuation), words, sentences, lines, stanzas, chapters, books, on the level of narrative (plot, character, diegesis, mimesis) and dramatic elements (scene, act, setting, time) as well as on the level of theme or concept” (“Chiasmus in Literature” 51; emphasis original). Nänny even gives an instance of chiasmus on the level of letters. In Coleridge’s line “ ’mid cloisters dim,” the first and third words reverse letters according to an *ABC:CBA* chiasmic pattern (58). Nänny contends this very “small-scale” chiasmus functions mimetically and meaningfully within a larger phonological and lexical chiasmic context. The lettered chiasmus contributes to the meaning also advanced by the Romantic poet at the level of sound and word.

⁵ The two key terms are *spare*, just three letters long. Literally, there isn’t much to *dim* and *’mid*. These trigrams are monosyllabic. They have a clipped sound to them and allow for little ‘breathing room.’ Coleridge has actually cut off a letter with the contraction *’mid*. In sum, the words on the page and as uttered are compressed, restricted to very little visual, oral, and aural space.

⁶ For an example of a Jamesian chiasmus by synonymous terms we can turn to *The Ambassadors*. The reference is to Strether and “the oddity of a double consciousness.” Illustrative of this twofold consciousness is that “there was detachment in his zeal and curiosity in his indifference.”

That illustration given, most of the chiasmic examples I comment on from James are of the $A^1B^1:B^1A^1$ rather than the $A^1B^1:B^2A^2$ type.

⁷ The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (4.28.39) comments on *commutatio*. The *Rhetorica*, though written in Latin, is “a very full treatise on Greek rhetorical theory” (Crowley and Hawhee 27).

⁸ I offer proof of this via dictionaries and handbooks as well as from websites devoted to rhetorical figures. *The Longman Dictionary of the English Language* (1984) has an entry for *chiasmus*, but none for its cognate *antimetabole*. The same is the case for *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (1990) edited by Chris Baldick. Similarly, the unabridged edition of the *Random House Dictionary of the English Language* (1973) has an entry for *chiasmus* yet *antimetabole* is not listed. The absence of this latter and much older term in an unabridged dictionary seems especially telling.

A Handbook of Literary Terms and *A Reader’s Guide to Literary Terms* includes *chiasmus* but not *antimetabole* among their respective listings. See Yelland, Jones, and Easton, and Beckson and Ganz in the Bibliography.

One website (<http://www.uky.edu/ArtsSciences/Classics/rhetoric.html>) with a “Glossary of [forty-five] Rhetorical Terms with Examples,” consulted in January 2001 and May 2007, uncovered a separate entry for *chiasmus*, but none for *antimetabole*. The *chiasmus* entry made no mention whatsoever of a similar or related figure. The two examples of *chiasmus* conform to an $A^1B^1:B^2A^2$ rather than an $A^1B^1:A^1B^1$ pattern. The first example is by General Douglas MacArthur: “Those gallant men will remain often in my thoughts and in my prayers always.” Here the key terms are *remain*

thoughts : prayers always. The second example is from Cicero. “Renown’d for conquest and in council skill’d.” In both locutions, the so-called likeness or match between each pair requires more effort on the part of the reader to notice. Certainly many readers or listeners will fail to catch the likeness.

⁹ In *Tradition and Desire*, renowned art scholar and theorist Norman Bryson uses the term *chiasmus* to characterize a curious inversion of visuality present in painted images of people in meditation. Bryson sees the distracted mediator as implying the viewer through a chiasmic reversal. For Bryson, *chiasmus* describes any instance of reverse reciprocity, an extremely broad interpretation of the term. Bryson does not, however, take *chiasmus* out of the realm of rhetoric. A provocative writer with fresh approaches to art theory, he regularly reflects on paintings and the act of painting with respect to rhetoric. He employs a wide rhetorical vocabulary to his studies of art and bases many ideas in rhetoric.

¹⁰ Fahnestock considers that even though a chiasmic construction has the same $AB:BA$ inverting pattern of *antimetabole*, the crucial terms of the first half of the chiasmic sentence are, in the second half, only related and not exact duplicates (227). For Fahnestock, *antimetabole* demands strict duplication of key terms; whereas, *chiasmus* does not, in fact, exhibit one-to-one duplication. This means the differentiating factor between the two figures is the degree of lexical matching in the key terms. She acknowledges, however, that for Biblical scholars, *chiasmus* is what she identifies as *antimetabole*, a figure in which the key terms can very well be exact copies, and not mere cognates, of one another. Her position is that even if a Biblical *chiasmus* may be *antimetabolic*, a rhetorical *chiasmus* may not.

The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics recommends that “the term ‘*chiasmus*’ [be reserved] for the genus of reversal figures, whether or sound, syntax, or meaning, without necessarily involving specific word repetition” and the word *antimetabole* should be restricted to “the narrower meaning of a single reversed word pair” and therefore “a species of *chiasmus*” (79). This accords with Fahnestock’s position wherein she classifies *antimetabole* as one pattern among a variety of possible chiasmic patterns (127). The web site “*Silva Rhetoricae*” (<http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/silva.htm>) takes a stronger stand than does the *Encyclopedia* by pronouncing that *chiasmus* is “not to be mistaken with *antimetabole*, in which identical words are repeated and inverted.” For Gideon O. Burton, copyright author of the site, *chiasmus* repeats in inverted order either ideas or grammatical structures, not identical lexical items. This last is the province only of *antimetabole*. The view that *antimetabole* is “A type of *chiasmus*” finds additional confirmation in *Merriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of Literature* (1995). The *Encyclopedia* views *antimetabole* as “the repetition of two or more words in reverse order in successive clauses” and provides the oft-cited *live eat : eat live* example that appears in Quintilian.

In their college textbook on rhetoric, Sharon Crowley and Debra Hawhee provide three examples of *antimetabole* (248). These would seem to support Fahnestock’s position that the term refers to an $A^1B^1:B^1A^1$ rather than an $A^1B^1:B^2A^2$ form. But complicating the issue is what these authors have to say about *antimetabole* in their Glossary, which doesn’t give a separate listing for *chiasmus*. The Crowley–Hawhee Glossary omits mention of identical word pairs in describing *antimetabole*. Instead it states “a figure that expresses contrasting ideas in juxtaposed structures; also called *chiasmus*” (367). Both the definition, which some rhetoricians would take as a description of *chiasmus* more than of *antimetabole*, and the secondary comment “also called *chiasmus*” complicate their assessment of

the two terms. Presumably, Crowley and Hawhee see little difference between the terms.

Richard Lanham, in apparent contrast to Fahnestock and the *Encyclopedia*, designates chiasmus as the *AB:BA* structure that contains duplicate terms in two mirroring halves and designates antimetabole an *AB:BA* structure with a balance and reversal that is “looser” (33, 14). Norrman, in his book-length treatment of figurations of *AB:BA* in the writing of Samuel Butler, takes as chiasmic what Fahnestock and the *Princeton Encyclopedia* would classify as antimetabolic. Likewise, *The Chambers*

Dictionary of English provides an example in defining chiasmus that Fahnestock singles out as a figure of antimetabole: some individuals “do not live to eat, but eat to live.” In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Baldick defines *chiasmus* as a “figure of speech by which the order of the terms in the first of two parallel clauses is reversed in the second. This may involve a repetition of the same words (‘Pleasure’s a sin, and sometimes sin’s a pleasure’—Byron), or just a reversed parallel between two corresponding pairs of ideas” (34). To exemplify chiasmus as generating ideational, but not lexical reversal, Baldick cites “Despised, if ugly; if she’s fair, betrayed” from Mary Leapor.

Nänny interprets chiasmus as “largely an extension” of antimetabole (“Chiasmus in Literature” 51). His more restricted sense of antimetabole refers to the same words or ideas repeated and inverted. By Nänny’s reading, chiasmus is the more general term. But to complicate matters, he makes a distinction between syntactic chiasmus and lexical chiasmus (52), the latter being what Fahnestock probably would likely call antimetabole and the former, that which she would likely nominate chiasmus. What Brian Vickers in *Classical Rhetoric in English Poetry* identifies as antimetabole in *Paradise Lost* (Vickers qtd. in Nänny, “Chiasmus in Literature” 52), Nänny calls “chiasmic syntax” (52). In a different article, “Chiasmic Structures in Literature,” Nänny cites Laurence Sterne’s “Ask my pen, —it governs me, —I govern not it.” He speaks of the novelist’s famous sentence as a “reversal chiasmically” performed and then identifies the sentence as “the rhetorical figure of antimetabole” (81). Because Nänny does not elaborate, it would appear that here he views chiasmus as the “dynamic” device that inverts entities and antimetabole as a special instance of chiasmatic inversion (81). On this view, antimetabole is the performance; chiasmus, the performance methodology.

Surprisingly, *The New Rhetoric*, which George A. Kennedy views as “perhaps the most influential modern treatise on rhetoric” and unmatched in setting out the argumentative merits of many important rhetorical figures, is not helpful in sorting out the differences, if any, between the two figures in question. The word *chiasmus* does not appear in *The New Rhetoric*’s five hundred-plus page text or its very detailed subject index. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca do define the figure of antimetabole (or antimetathesis) as the “repetition of the *same* words in transposed order in successive phrases” (444; emphasis added); in other words, an $A^1B^1:B^1A^1$ arrangement. Following their definition, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca immediately warn that antimetabole “is sometimes confused with commutation” (444). According to the authors of *The New Rhetoric*, commutation (also called reversion) is one type of antithesis, a type wherein repeating key terms are meant to be taken in two different senses (428–429). Notwithstanding the business about the two different senses, none of the three commutation examples offered by the authors would be excluded from the antimetabolic category as defined by Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman. In fact, one of these commutation examples, Cicero’s “one should eat to live, not live to eat,” is regularly cited as a recognizable instance of chiasmus (see, e.g., Grothe xi). However, it should not be forgotten that others, Fahnestock, Quintilian, and others cite the maxim as a prime example of antimetabole.

With the *OED*’s entry for *commutation* as “A figure of speech involving a reversal of word order,” it would appear that chiasmus and antimetabole, whatever or if ever their distinctions, become subcategories of a more general figural activity, that of commutation, a word derived from the Latin *commutare*, meaning exchange. Without question, antimetabole and chiasmus formulate exchange. Interesting to ponder, but complicating matters is George Kennedy’s idea that the “closest parallel term in Latin” to *chiasmus* “is probably *commutatio*” (*New Testament* 28). Elaborating on this idea, Kennedy reproduces a chiasmus from the Bible that he believes, judging from examples given in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, would make the *commutatio* grade: from Mark, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.” Kennedy, himself an eminent modern scholar of rhetoric, provides

further indication that many assume an $A^1B^1:B^1A^1$ arrangement deserves the designation chiasmus.

As if the waters weren't muddy enough, the entry for *commutatio* in *The Handbook of Rhetorical Terms* provides no definition beyond the Latin etymology and merely refers readers to two entries, antimetabole and chiasmus. This cross-referencing implies that the three terms are related. This is worth noting relative to Kennedy in that the latter's book omits any mention of antimetabole. The antimetabole entry in Lanham's book, which is both fuzzy and less insightful and therefore less

edifying than that for chiasmus, links chiasmus and *commutatio* and suggests these make for a "more precise balance and reversal" than occurs with antimetabole (14). Lanham's reader is left to wonder just what is meant here. Does the precision refer to identity of terms, or phrasing, or both? How precise is precise? And since we appear to be talking degrees of precision, how are degrees measured or determined? Probably the vagueness the reader feels with Lanham's handling of the differences between the two terms is to be expected since, in the end, he considers them to be essentially analogous phenomena ("virtual synonyms") and really not distinct, despite his speaking in comparatives: specifically, "looser" and "more precise."

In *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M. H. Abrams gathers "some common 'figures of speech'" that "achieve special effects" chiefly "by the arrangement of their words" (160). The famous literary critic and scholar lists these figures under an entry called "Rhetorical Figures." Chiasmus receives mention in the entry; antimetabole, none. He defines chiasmus as "a sequence of two phrases or clauses which are parallel in syntax, but reverse[d]" in "the order of the corresponding words" (162–163). With Abrams' first two examples, the reversal does not involve identity at the level of lexis. However, when illustrating that the reversing operation of chiasmus sometimes "consists in a reversal of the position of an entire phrase," his chosen example manifests exactness as to lexis. The same holds with his fourth and final example, one from Shelley's *Defense of Poetry* making the point that the figure is no more a stranger to prose than it is to poetry. The upshot of Abrams' commentary is that the figure's "corresponding words" cast in a reverse order in the successive phrase or clause to the antecedent may be the same or they may not. For Abrams, at least in his Glossary, lexical identity is not a make-or-break property of chiasmus.

Although Fahnestock does distinguish the two terms, she nonetheless finds them to be "close figures" (128). Therefore, what she specifies about antimetabole seems equally apt with respect to chiasmus. For this reason I am comfortable in electing the latter as the preferred term in the present study.

I realize this decision may not be accepted by some, but consensus in this area appears unlikely. *Roget's International Thesaurus* has several grammatical terms for *inversion* (the grammatical analogues are a sub-entry). The word *chiasmus* shows up along with several others like *metastasis* and *palindrome*. But *antimetabole* is nowhere to be found. Moreover, if *antimetabole* is elsewhere in *Roget's* I have yet to find it. Relatedly, *The Shorter OED* has an entry for *chiasmus* but not for *antimetabole*. The chiasmus definition in the dictionary reads as follows: "*Rhet.* The inversion in a second phrase or clause of the order of words in the first."

¹¹ The reader, if she hasn't already reviewed the previous dnote, may wish to do so for an explanation about antimetabole as a narrower version of an $AB[...]:[...]/BA$ phenomenon. The *Holman-Harmon A Handbook to Literature* allows "In general, any [discourse] elements" exhibiting a "mirror-image design" wherein "the second part is balanced against the first" can be considered chiasmic. The *Handbook* (6th ed.) suggests that *chiasmic* is, in fact, a synonym for *mirror-like*. This synonymy has become more fashionable since the *Handbook's* 1992 printing.

As for the issue at hand, the *Handbook* claims that antimetabole and chiasmus resemble one another, except that the latter reverses grammatical order but not the same words. However, the entry for chiasmus includes examples that aren't all grammatical: "Firestone snow-tire" and "moonstruck mushroom" are instances of phonemic chiasma. Interestingly, *The Shorter OED* makes a similar point under the *chiasmic* entry's example: "'Rhymney Beer—the Best Round Here,'" having (according to B. Cottle) "the added trick of chiasmic alliteration on R, B, B, R." Whether the duplication and reversal is of sounds, words, numbers, phrases, clauses, sentences, or other meaning

units, *chiasmus* seems the preferred term, because it has (perhaps because of its root meaning) a greater inclusivity than *antimetabole*.

¹² The author of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* explains that colon “is the name given to a sentence member, brief and complete, which does not express the entire thought, but is in turn supplemented by

another colon: ‘On the one hand you were helping your enemy.’ That is one so-called colon; it ought then to be supplemented by a second: ‘And on the other you were hurting your friend’ ” (295). Two or more cola can line up consecutively. Adjacent cola each with the same or almost the same number of syllables comprise the figure of isocolon (about which, see the endnote that follows).

Arthur Quinn defines isocolon as “the repetition of the same grammatical forms in different words” (77). Quinn’s definition resembles Richard Lanham’s: “Phrases of approximately equal length and corresponding structure” (93). Lanham considers the *Ad Herennium*’s succession of the same or almost the same number of syllables to be a narrower interpretation of isocolon. However, whether the similarity is of syllables, grammatical forms, or of both, the end result is of balanced phrases of the kind demonstrated in a pair of examples, one modern and one ancient, cited by Quinn: “The bigger they are, the harder they fall” and Herodotus’ “In peace, sons bury their fathers; in war, fathers bury their sons.”

¹³ One might call this a doubled di-isocolon or, more descriptively, a doubled-back or reversed di-isocolon. “We call Isocolon the figure comprised of cola,” explains the author of the *Ad Herennium*, “which consist of a virtually equal number of syllables” (299). One need not have an exact equivalence of syllables for isocolon for in “this figure it may often happen that the number of syllables seems equal without being precisely so” (299).

Discussions with Margaret J. Cartwright about the operations of chiasmus were critical in thinking about this issue. The expressions ‘doubled di-isocolon’ and ‘reversed di-isocolon’ are but two of the valuable contributions she made to my understanding of that complicated and shrewd character, chiasmus.

¹⁴ Coleridge, Emerson, and W. H. Auden in their prose and Henry James in both his fiction and non-fiction reveal a partiality for the di-isocolon chiasmus. Presumably, for all four writers, the greater symmetry had aesthetic appeal. The twice two platforms also had practical argumentative value: allowance for more involved ideas and intricate associations. For the American novelist, the potential for elaboration and special effects and the opportunity to pack in more or greater qualification and nuance were additional rhetorical enticements.

¹⁵ I am using *cola* here almost as a synonym for a binate structure. This explanation is for the reader who may be troubled that I have misunderstood the definition of the colon in classical prosody, rhetoric, and in prescriptive grammar.

¹⁶ One could write a chapter on this subject, but only a few comparisons need be listed here. The most obvious likeness is that chiasmus, like metaphor, is a primary cognitive methodology. Both figures trade in analogy and re-categorization. The associative chiasm may insinuate a blending of the original terms. Ted Cohen indicates that effective metaphors “deliver their twist compactly and [...] without exegesis” (9) The same can be said of chiasmus. Both the correlative and the refutative types of chiasmus often bring a “twist of insight” or surprise, just as with metaphor. Cohen also speaks of the metaphor receiver as a “complicitor” in “getting it,” that is, understanding what is not literally the case, but quite possibly more meaningful in its figurative sense (10). The chiasmus receiver also is complicit in her anticipation of the way in which the figure will pan out, with a *BA* as the reverse match subsequent to the already heard or read *AB*.

¹⁷ Readers will notice that neither emphasis nor underscoring have been employed to indicate a letter referred to as a letter. This purposeful omission occurs from the beginning to the end of the text. Particularly in Chapter Two, where I refer to letters, especially X, with great frequency, I found the accenting extremely distracting and bothersome. Also, a problem arose with foreign letters, such as chi and rho. I did not favor practices such as both italicizing and underscoring to mark that a character is a letter as well as a foreign import. Just italicizing these foreign letters and not then underlining our

English alphabet letters seemed a reasonable alternative to pages filled with the visual clamor of underlined X's.

Throughout the text, I adhere to the standard practice of accenting words when they are being commented upon as words. For that purpose, I elected italicization.

¹⁸ At the same time, it gestures toward the graphic display of alphabetic X.

¹⁹ Robert F. Smith in his article "Chiasm in Sumero-Akkadian" and John Welch in his "Chiasmus in Ugaritic," which both appear in the latter's edited volume *Chiasmus in Antiquity* (see Bibliography), confirm the hoariness of the figure. In their respective discussions, Smith and Welch discuss the appearance and usage of chiasmus in pre-Hebraic Eastern Mediterranean cultures.

²⁰ Hermann Weyl uses *automorphic* in his widely known and referenced *Symmetry*. The term refers to symmetrical arrangements, whether bi-lateral or of other types, in which there is an exact one-to-one mapping. Chapter Three further references Weyl's treatise and, in due course, elaborates on automorphism.

An *ABC:CBA* example: "Art is compatible with polytheism and with Christianity, but not with philosophical materialism; science is compatible with philosophical materialism and with Christianity, but not with polytheism" (Auden, *Dyer's Hand* 456). By his chiasmus, the American poet drives home the point that art and science share certain attitudes and beliefs and do not share others. Without saying so directly, Auden implies that the two systems are partially compatible with one another and partially not.

An *ABCD:DCBA* example: "We should not judge rules and duties by moral and customs, but we should judge customs and moral by duties and rules" (qtd. in Perlman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 428).

²¹ This third example comes from the first eight lines of Keats's "The Day is Gone." Lawler picks out and names the chiastic structure (224). The critic discovers what he calls a "cymatic" and "corpuscular" alternation in the lines of the sonnet's octave. *A* designates the cymatic lines; *B*, the corpuscular ones.

²² Not only are individual books chiastically structured, but this figuration exists between books. Intra-book chiasm occurs within the Pentateuch (literally the "five scrolls") and, thus, the "five books of Moses." The arrangement is *ABCBA* with the books of Genesis and Deuteronomy paired, the books of Exodus and Numbers paired, and these two pairings each positioned relative to Leviticus, which occupies "the central position in the Torah" (Radday 84–86). Genesis and Deuteronomy are, respectively, the first and fifth books (scrolls) of the Pentateuch; Exodus and Numbers, respectively, the second and fourth books; Leviticus the third book positioned midway between the two preceding and two following books.

²³ Lawler furnishes several *Paradise Lost* examples, only one of which I duplicate for readers here. From the epic's Book II, lines 410–12: "What strength, what art can then/Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe/Through the strict Senteries and Stations thick." The *ABCBA* phonetic pattern (what Lawler names a "sonic pattern") occurs in line 412: Through the strict Senteries and Stations thick.

²⁴ By *supersensible* I have two meanings in mind. These are distinctions made by John Hollander in an article not on religion but on fiction. With respect to the term *supersense*, Hollander differentiates between the “anagoge” and “that which depends not on sense for its recognition” (“Literary Consciousness” 118). While the former doesn’t apply to Hollander’s discussion, it, as well as the latter, are applicable to mine.

²⁵ George Kennedy begins his study of the New Testament by underlining that “there is a distinctive rhetoric of religion” that includes “deliberate rejection of worldly reason” in preference for the para-doxical and obscure. Kennedy claims this distinct rhetoric creates a “sacred language” (*New Testament* 6).

²⁶ The speech of Proteus in *Georgics IV* “comes close to the more intricate chiasmic creations one encounters in the earlier ancient literatures” (Welch, “Chiasmus in Ancient Greek” 262). Welch finds little evidence of texts by the Greeks or Romans with the lengthy or macro chiasma that proliferate in the Near Eastern cultures. These cultures, on the other hand, were just as likely to employ the shorter or micro as they were the longer chiasmic form.

²⁷ With Sallust, “Not only are clauses arranged to form chiasmus, but there is also chiasmus within clauses which are chiasmic” (Steele, *Chiasmus in Sallust* 24).

²⁸ The descriptive remarks about the styles of Tacitus and Sallust are from *Benét’s Reader’s Encyclopedia*. 3rd ed. New York: Harper and Row, 1987.

²⁹ This information comes from a footnote in Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed, 215.

³⁰ See pages 237, 247, 267, 285, and 305 for other instances.

³¹ These words do not belong to Goffman, but originate with A. C. Scott. See Goffman, page 227.

³² A monograph devoted to the predominance of chiasmus in a single Shakespearean play (*Macbeth*) scratches the surface of the Bard’s career-long affection for the figure. See Paul Anthony. *The Torture of the Mind: Macbeth, Tragedy, and Chiasmus*. Amsterdam: Thesis, 1992.

³³ From Shaw’s “Pygmalion,” Liza states, “ ‘He treats a flower girl as if she was a duchess.’ ” To which Higgins replies, “ ‘And I treat a duchess as if she was a flower girl.’ ” The two comments upon treating everyone equally badly describe an unfavorable type of egalitarianism. The chiasmic conjunction of the two utterances marks Higgins’ social indifference, which in turn, comments on his general indifference to and disregard of persons.

³⁴ Fahnestock reminds us that Quintilian “describes the antimetabole in a way that connects it with polyptoton” (128). See, as well, page 131.

³⁵ In his text, Williamson quotes Frances A. Yates on Sidney’s style in the *Arcadia*, which “employs alliteration, repetition and many other devices of euphuistic sound pattern.” However, the clauses and sentences differ from the euphuistic in that they “lose themselves in curves and involutions.” The quotations appear in footnote 4, page 94 of Williamson.

³⁶ Epstein’s excerpt from the essays appears on page 31 of *Life Sentences*, a work that can’t be praised enough. The original appears in Book Three, Chapter 13: “On Experience” (“*Aristippus ne defendoit que le corps, comme si nous n’avions pas d’ame : Zenon n’embrassoit que l’ame, comme si nous n’avions pas de corps.*”)

³⁷ The saying is “When I play with my cat, who knows whether she is amusing herself with me, or I with her?” [Book 2, Chapter 12: “Quand je me jouë à ma chatte, qui sçait, si elle passe son temps de moy plus que je ne fay d'elle ?”] (this chapter does not appear in the abridged *Essays* version listed in the Bibliography). Another example of relativity is this: “In Guienne I pay the printers; elsewhere they pay me” [Book 2, Chapter 2: *J'achette les Imprimeurs en Guienne, ailleurs ils.*] (*Essays* 240). Here Montaigne speaks of how fame is measured by where you are residing. Also illustrative of

relativity: “to the Ghibellines I was a Guelph, to the Guelphs a Ghibelline” [Book. 3, Chapter 12: *Au Gibelin j'estois Guelphe, au Guelphe Gibelin*] (*Essays* 320). Here a person’s identity is not a fixed item, but seesaws between two possibilities. The chiasm capsulizes that personal identity depends on who is viewing you at a particular time and what their assessment is.

³⁸ Examples of chiasma original to Montaigne include the following: “If you see him, you listen to him; if you listen to him, you see him” [Book 1, Chapter 25: “Si vous le voyez, vous l'oyez : si vous l'oyez, vous le voyez.”] (*Essays* 75); “I prefer to twist a good saying in order to weave it into my argument, rather than twist my argument to receive it” [Book 1, Chapter 25: “Je tors bien plus volontiers une belle sentence, pour la coudre sur moy, que je ne destors mon fil, pour l'aller querir.”] (79); “There have been nations in which it was the custom for children to kill their fathers, and others in which the fathers killed their children” [Book 1, Chapter 27: “Il s'est trouvé des nations, où par usage les enfans tuoyent leurs peres : et d'autres, où les peres tuoyent leurs enfans, ...”] (93); “Not being able to control events, I control myself, and adapt myself to them if they do not adapt themselves to me” [Book 2, Chapter 17: “Ne pouvant regler les evenemens, je me regle moy-mesme : et m'applique à eux, s'ils ne s'appliquent à moy.”] (204). For other chiasma, see pages 51, 96, 97, 172, 236, 240, 241, 248, 320, 329, 377, 381.

Chiastic statements by other writers that Montaigne quotes or paraphrases, or that he turns into a chiasm by turning an aphorism or other phrase around are aplenty in the *Essays*. Consider: “wise men have more to learn from fools than fools from wise men” by Cato [Book 3, Chapter 6: “*A cette sorte de discipline regardoit le vieux Caton, quand il dict, que les sages ont plus à apprendre des fols, que les fols des sages*”] (286). On the topic of friendship, which elicits a series of chiastic remarks original to Montaigne, he also cites a seemingly “abhorrent” yet “sound” precept by Chilo: “Love him as if one day you may come to hate him; hate him as if you may one day come to love him” [Book 1, Chapter 27: *Ayez le (disoit Chilon) comme ayant quelque jour à le haïr : hâissez le, comme ayant à l'aymer.*] (99). The French essayist also quotes a brief chiastic remark from Horace (78). Montaigne makes a chiasm of a piece of wisdom from Epicurus by turning things around: “Epicurus says that a wise man can never pass over to a contrary state [foolishness]. The opinion I hold is quite the reverse, that a man who has once been a fool will never afterwards be wise” [Book 3, Chapter 6: “*Epicurus dit, que le sage ne peut jamais passer à un estat contraire. J'ay quelque opinion de l'envers de cette sentence ; que qui aura esté une fois bien fol, ne sera nulle autre fois bien sage.*”] (266).

³⁹ Samuel Johnson quoted in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 5th ed. Vol. 1. Ed. M. H. Abrams, New York: Norton, 1986. 1789. Johnson’s remark was said of John Dryden, but it applies equally to Alexander Pope.

⁴⁰ See page 723 of Baugh. As with the preceding quotation, this refers specifically to the Augustan poet. However, Dryden “was of all others Pope’s master” (Baugh 732) and the two shared the stylistic tendencies mentioned in the text as well as others. Baugh indicates of Dryden that “an ideal of correctness [...] resulted in verse notable for deft artifice and for mechanical perfection. [...] Aphoristic lines were much favored, especially such as involved epigrammatic surprise” (732). These assessments apply equally to Pope, who, as we know, made a study of and was greatly influenced by Dryden.

⁴¹ Budick's article from *ELH* offers that while Wordsworth may have railed against the malignancy of antitheses and countering language in general within Dryden and Pope, "He is the counter-spirit incarnate" (973). Budick's "formal objective" in his "essay is to describe that chiasmus [...] occurs as much between writers of different periods as within the writings of any individual author" (962). Budick struggles mightily to show that "historical chiastic relations [exist] between chiasma of different writers." The problem is that Wordsworth in a retrogressive (historical) chiastic

relation with Dryden and Pope depends on a very narrow number of excerpts from the writings of these three prolific writers.

Although I don't find Budick's "formal objective" met or even his narrower argument about Wordsworth as against the romantic poet's neoclassical predecessors all that compelling, he does touch on issues about chiasmus important herein. In this respect, the present project benefited from his article.

⁴² Justus George Lawler. *Hopkins Re-Constructed: Life, Poetry, and the Tradition*. New York: Continuum, 2000.

⁴³ Grothe's website (in the subsection on "Types of Chiasmus") lists this chiastic excerpt from Auden, but without attribution: "In poetry you have a form looking for a subject and a subject looking for a form. When they come together successfully you have a poem."

⁴⁴ The full epitaph reads "I never cared for life, life cared for me./And hence I owe it some fidelity [...]." The inscription appears in W. H. Auden, *The Dyer's Hand*, 353.

⁴⁵ The memoirist is Art Buchwald, widely-read syndicated columnist, Pulitzer Prize recipient, and member of the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Letters. The popular humorist begins *Leaving Home* with an incident of monumental leave-taking and removal: "Shortly after I was born, my mother was taken away from me or I was taken away from my mother" (11). In his brief introductory remarks to the main text, Buchwald owns up that he is new to memoir writing. Nonetheless, the unforgettable chiasmus prefaces a compelling, fitting way with words, which the novelist William Styron generously acknowledges in his comments on *Leaving Home*.

The absence the chiasmus relates haunted Buchwald, who died in early 2007. His "whole lifetime of maternal deprivation" was the source of unresolved psychic pain and depression. The deprivation was absolute in that Buchwald had no memory of ever having seen or spoken with his mother, who spent more than thirty years in facilities for the mentally ill. Buchwald's life began not with belonging, but with egression. Chiasmus, a figure of syntactic crossing, captures the poignancy of the lives of a young mother and her newborn crossing, but missing one another.

Buchwald's opening sentence is not simply memorable. Its form captures the intransigence in the life of the newborn and his mother, which came about from their individual movements from home and hospitals. These movements kept them perpetually apart. Because he was so small, the separation that became permanent always remained unaccountable and mysterious, even to the grown man. It was either that he was removed from his mother, or she from him, but it was really impossible to say which of the two was the case. Like chiasmus, parent and infant son shifted here and there. Notably, a form of juxtaposition underlines the poignancy of a bond and closeness that should have been and was always longed for, but was not to be. That mother and son kept missing one another, physically, psychologically, and emotionally, molded the child's life and his decision at six or seven to become a humorist, just as the "whole lifetime" of missing was the reason for his own mental problems and institutionalization. At his memoir's opening, where he begins at his life's beginning, Buchwald appropriately retains the rhetorical figure that lends its shape as befitting mold for his formative inceptive experience.

With no mother, but only his slightly older sister Doris with whom he was forever being moved from institution to foster home to institution, Buchwald's childhood was one in which "she [Doris] had become my responsibility, just as I had become hers" (27). This second chiasmus reflects the mutual reliance that developed between the two small siblings who were left to forge an alliance of two. By holding fast this union they managed to endure a constantly uprooted existence and, perhaps worse yet, the almost wholesale adult indifference to their physical and emotional displacement. The shuttling back and forth from private home to public "home" (various institutions, including an orphan asylum) left them with permanent psychological scars (49).

Some pages later in *Leaving Home*, the author speaks of his relationship with his father: "He [the elder Buchwald] wanted no favors from me, and [...] I could not accept any from him" (40). Here chiasmus is used to describe a different kind of reciprocation between persons: two people implicitly agreeing not to do for one another. Once again, chiasmus figures the condition of parent-child detachment. But in this second chiasm, emotional indifference of a different sort is formulated. The columnist and his father tacitly agree not to get close, involve themselves with, or ever disclose much to one another (44). It is a silent two-way understanding, the symmetry of which Buchwald's chiasm iconizes. Chiasmus, as we shall discover, is adept at figuring indifference of many different sorts.

For more examples of chiasmus in a contemporary memoir read Art Buchwald. *Leaving Home: A Memoir*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1993. See, for instance, page 47.

⁴⁶ The *AB:BA* remark from this perennial Christmas favorite reads as follows: "I can never remember whether it snowed for six days and six nights when I was twelve or whether it snowed for twelve days and twelve nights when I was six." Mardy Grothe's commentary from his website (the subsection on "Types of Chiasmus," where it is enrolled as an example of what he calls "numeric chiasmus") is itself worth quoting directly: "Thomas's opening line beautifully captures the confusion adults often experience when they try to recall things from the past."

Interestingly, both Thomas and Buchwald (see the previous note) draw on the figure of chiasmus to convey the idea of mental confusion or simple befuddlement, which, as we will have occasion to explore in more detail later on, is a recurring faculty of *AB:BA* constructions. Buchwald's chiasmus, however it might at first share a lighthearted, quipping quality along the lines of Thomas's, shortly is viewed by the reader as a grievous defining condition of the humorist's life.

⁴⁷ The various linguistic "levels" Jakobson specifies are phonemic elements and "lexical, syntactical, and phraseological units" ("Grammatical Parallelism" 399).

⁴⁸ Credit for this example goes to Holman and Harmon's *A Handbook to Literature*.

⁴⁹ This last example and the identification of the three chiasmic types from poetry mentioned in this paragraph come from *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*.

⁵⁰ One will see the punctuation between the two halves of this very famous chiasmus presented several ways. The two hyphens and the spacing given here reproduces how the excerpt appears in the official press "RELEASE OF 12 NOON, FRIDAY, JANUARY 22, 1961 TO ALL NEWSPAPERS, RADIO AND TV STATIONS" from the Office of the White House Press Secretary.

⁵¹ About midway in his oration following the swearing in as U.S. President, John F. Kennedy urged Americans, "Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate."

⁵² "Nowadays all married men live like bachelors, all bachelors live like married men" (Wilde qtd. in Linfield and Krevisky 25).

⁵³ Examples of word-shifting games from Parker: “Sorrow is tranquility remembered in emotion,” “Brevity is the soul of lingerie,” and “Putting all my eggs in one bastard.”

Dorothy Parker’s profane, but immortal chiasm (an implied type that uses *vice versa*), the one which gets the most attention, is the retort she gave a friend when asked why she had not attended a Broadway play featuring a character copied after her: “I’ve been too fucking busy, and vice versa.” The profane word, Parker uses in two different ways, making an *AB:BA* equation of double shock. We assume with the chiastic wisecrack, that Parker’s question-asker got far more than was bargained for.

Mae West’s signature line “A hard man is good to find” is in the same wisecracking, ribald manner as Parker’s. Both are meant to scandalize, to take the hearer aback, something that each

construction literally does by its backward trick. The blonde bombshell’s remark exemplifies the phenomenon of implied chiasmus in that it is the *BA* match to the familiar saying “A good man is hard to find.” Her quip depends upon the reader knowing and recognizing the unspoken original from which her quip springs.

⁵⁴ Alice Randall, a black songwriter, is the author of *The Wind Done Gone* (2001). Randall’s book makes use of reversal on levels other than thematic.

⁵⁵ *A Handbook to Literature* defines burlesque and parody using chiasmus. Burlesque is “a form of comedy” where “a serious subject may be treated frivolously or a frivolous subject seriously.” Style is an essential indicator of burlesque, “that is, a *STYLE* ordinarily dignified may be used for nonsensical matter, or a *STYLE* very nonsensical may be used to ridicule a weighty subject” (Holman and Harmon 67, small capitals original). Burlesque is “characterized by ridiculous exaggeration,” specifically, seeing a difference that nonetheless depends upon recognizing a strong semblance in the first place. The same holds for parody, which is often of a more serious nature.

Burlesque and parody stand in a chiastic relation to one another. Their strategies are “opposite” (Holman and Harmon 360). Generally, “*PARODY* works by keeping a targeted style constant while lowering the subject,” whereas burlesque or “*TRAVESTY* by keeping a targeted subject constant while lowering the style” (67, small capitals original).

⁵⁶ An unforgettable case is the opening to *Bleak House* where the reader feels herself disoriented as to time, unable to determine if the state of affairs presented is in the past or present. Much of this effect is due to how Dickens handles his verbs. In many sentences, the verb is simply missing. With one exception, there are no finite verbs until the reader arrives at *has* in the second and last sentence of the third paragraph. The exception barely counts for we read “since the day broke (if this day ever broke).” The lack of distinction as to time receives emphasis with descriptions such as “Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better.” While the dogs and horses are slipping in an accumulation of mud, the reader slip-slides her way in a fantastic temporal muddle.

⁵⁷ In Henry James’s essay on Dickens, he speaks of the Victorian novelist’s “habit of specializing people by vivid oddities.” This specializing “was the gulf over which Dickens danced the tight-rope with such agility” (*Literary Criticism*, Vol. 2, 969).

⁵⁸ Differences vary in the meaning of sentences, which otherwise are alike, but which have converse prepositions. We might consider the directional or motional prepositions *to* and *from* by taking up two paired sentences: *Bill lent the book to me* and *I borrowed the book from Bill*. These are presented in parallel in Quirk and Greenbaum’s text (i.e., in the same line) with a two directional arrow sign between them. They do not comment on this sign, but we can interpret from the omission

of = that the authors do not view these sentences as equivalents, despite the fact that they identify *from* as the converse of *to*.

The difference here, we gather, has to do with the verbs. With the sentence pairs reproduced in these endnotes, action verbs are in evidence and lending is a different action than the more passive activity of borrowing. One verb makes a person an agent; the other, a recipient of an action (that of lending). However, with the sentence pair reproduced in the main text, also from Quirk and Greenbaum, we are dealing with a linking verb and, at that, the type that is most empty of meaning (*be*), indicating not any sort of action, but instead a state of being. Being or existential verbs are very static, ironically, lifeless, at least on the page and certainly when compared with action verbs.

⁵⁹ Newton's Third Law of Motion states that "the mutual actions of two bodies upon each other are always equal." Although the Law itself is not presented by antimetabole or chiasmus, examples in Newton's *Principia* utilize their reverse formulations. Newton explains, "if you press a stone with your finger, the finger is also pressed by the stone" (qtd. in Fahnestock 142). By extrapolating from the reciprocal action the figure epitomizes about mechanics on earth, the scientist deduced that "if the sun attracts Earth, then Earth must also attract the sun" (Fahnestock 143).

⁶⁰ The imprimatur or permission to print that appears on the title page of the *Principia* was 1686. But it did not actually see print until the following year.

⁶¹ Newton recounts his equipment and its special layout in his letter to the Royal Society. In this recounting, one might not on a first reading necessarily catch the bi-lateral symmetry of the experiment. However, a diagram of the experiment (Hatch 291) made the symmetry quite evident to me. We might formularize the symmetry as *ABCD CBA* from a description that moves from left to right. This left-to-right description gives both the layout of the apparatuses and the light that was the subject of the experiment: a wall emitting a light beam—a prism—a hole in a board (for the light to pass through)—the light beam—a hole in a second board—a second prism—light beam onto a wall.

⁶² Einstein said of the luminary who preceded him in physics that "In one person he combined the experimenter, the theorist, the mechanic and, not least, the artist in exposition." (467). Einstein claimed that in all four endeavors, Newton displayed rare skill. See "Newton, Sir Isaac," *Collier's Encyclopedia*. 1997 ed. The second quotation appears in "Sir Isaac Newton 1642–1727," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 5th ed, Vol. 1., General ed. M. H. Abrams. New York: Norton, 1986. See page 1757.

⁶³ Fahnestock stresses, "Newton had a conventional, and therefore very thorough, seventeenth-century education in rhetoric, both at Cambridge and before. He would have been familiar with all the verbal formulas represented in the figures" (143). Readers are advised to consult her discussion for its explanation of Newton's expressiveness and his facility with schemes.

⁶⁴ Faraday repeatedly drew on the "figural logic" of antimetabole for his discoveries in electrodynamics. Fahnestock uncovers how the scientist's detailed laboratory notes and drawings record experiments and observations about electric currents and magnetic fields, and how through his investigations, Faraday worked through several explanations regarding movement and directionality, "linear displacements," "circular movement," polarity, "mirror image reversal," opposing direction, "mutuality" and "reversal of effects."

⁶⁵ The article "Fancy Flights" is anonymous. It appeared in *Wild Bird News* 16, no. 5. Oct./Nov. 2002. Wild Bird Centers.

⁶⁶ This quotation and the one that follows shortly thereafter are excerpts from a discussion about Pollan's *The Botany of Desire* on National Public Radio's "Morning Edition" show. It aired on 4 June 2001. The first remark is Pollan's; the second, Ketzet Levine's.

For excerpts from reviews of the book, many of which have chiasmic sentences, see the Editorial Reviews provided by the Amazon.com web site.

⁶⁷ Here are two chiasmic statements by Pollan during the June 2001 PBS television interview (see endnote next for bibliographic particulars): "It makes just as much sense to look at the adventure of agriculture as something that the grasses did to us as we to them" and "they [botanical organisms] domesticated us as much as we domesticated them."

⁶⁸ Quoted remarks in this and the previous sentence originate with Gwen Ifill on the Publ. Broadcasting Services, "Lehrer News Hour." 29 June 2001.

⁶⁹ To complicate and comment on matters, on the opposite page, a friend had written a four-line verse. Joyce has Stephen read his own list, followed by the verse. The reading down the book page and up the book page of alternating list and verse itself amounts to an *AB:BA* pattern.

⁷⁰ I have used "mutual informativeness" from Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth on her discussion of identity in Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*. See, in particular, page 181. Despite working on the subject of self-identity in the novel, her discussion does not relate to chiasmus, although I found her phrase to do so. I have added a hyphen to emphasize the inward and informing properties of chiasmus. Because I am using the phrase in an altogether different sense from Ermarth and because I have changed its emphasis with the hyphen addition, I elected not to put the phrase in quotation marks. I thought the reader might find these distracting. However, Ermarth receives in-text attribution at the paragraph's end.

⁷¹ The resolution of the lamb's devotion to Mary comes in the final stanza of the familiar nursery rhyme: "What makes the lamb love Mary so?/The eager children cry,/Why, Mary loves the lamb you know!/The teacher did reply." Chiasmus is often a construction that considers love. Witness the Mother Goose rhyme "Johnny Shall Have a New Bonnet" that repeats the following chiasmus at the beginning of two stanzas: "And why may not I love Johnny?/And why may not Johnny love me?"

In the nursery rhyme about the Duke of York we find a notable chiasmus. The eight line poem relates how the "grand" duke marched his ten thousand men: "He marched them up a great high hill,/And he marched them down again!/When they were up, they were up,/And when they were down, they were down,/And when they were neither down nor up,/They were neither up nor down." What is noticeable is how this chiasmus emphasizes an in-between state, a state halfway between up and down. This middle ground is a condition chiasmus is adept at provisioning.

Chiasmus is associated with confusion and paradox, as this four-line nursery rhyme brings home: "The rule of the road is a paradox quite,/Though custom has prov'd it so long;/If you go to the left, you go right,/If you go to the right, you go wrong." The last line puns on the word 'wrong' as meaning 'not right' and alludes probably to the general notion that that which is on the left is questionable, uncertain, adverse, contrary, possibly sinister.

We might even see as chiasmatic the cries of those who encounter the fox in the nursery rhyme "A Fox Started Out in a Hungry Plight." The form of their cries is *ABABA*, with the *A* in each case the exclamation "O!" Interestingly the *B*'s, which change depending on the stanza, have their own iterative pattern across the entire nursery poem: "downs," "bones," "down," "den," "den," "down," and "bones." This form is almost symmetrical in arrangement.

For the rhymes discussed in this footnote and the entirety of "Old King Cole" see *Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes* 9, 46, 118, 134, and 137–142.

⁷² Burke continues: “though the jingles may, in some instances, have originated as political lampoons, etc., the ideas as adapted in the nursery serve purely as gymnastics in the fundamental processes of form” (*Counter-Statement* 143).

⁷³ Since Burberry’s ad campaign, numerous other partner fragrances have invaded the cosmetic and fragrance counters. DKNY, Jil Sander, Jaipur, Lolita Lempicka, Dolce & Gabbana, Issey Miyake, Angel, Jean Paul Gaultier, Bulgari, and Boucheron now feature his-and-her fragrances. The examples cited appeared in a May 2001 department store (Lord & Taylor) “About Beauty” customer mailout. Shortly thereafter, Giorgio Armani began to market its partner fragrances. In July 2001, Liz Claiborne jumped on the his–her bandwagon with its Curve for Women and Curve for Men fragrance line. The very next month, Michael Kors introduced its Michael for Men. The

manufacturer had already sold at women’s fragrance counters a feminine Michael. The new ads for August 2001 proclaim “Michael For Her and Now for Him.” The second product is hyped as the “masculine complement to Michael’s award-winning women’s fragrance.” Another summer 2001 introduction of a masculine complement to an existing female scent was “Created by visionary Perfumer Phillip Llewelyn Prime.” This “visionary” asks the consumer to “imagine the possibilities” now that Stardust for Men is available to match the Stardust already marketed to women. (The quotations above are taken directly from magazine and catalogue insert advertisements.) Even newer on the scene are Cassini for Men to ‘match’ the older Cassini sold to women and Allure for Men, which came out not too many months after Channel’s introduction of its hit woman’s fragrance Allure.

In the Ralph Lauren take on partner fragrances, the company’s ad writers make sure to duplicate critical terms like *sensual* and *seductive* when describing the two scents. When romance comes in a bottle, readers are twice told how to give themselves up to an “irresistible” love experience: “Open to experience/Ralph Lauren Romance Men” and “Open to experience/Ralph Lauren Romance” for women. The boxes, bottles, and squeeze tubes are near matches in shape. The physical matching, along with the two-tone photography of tightly entangled lovers, drives home the idea of perfect partnering, Ralph Lauren style.

In case one suspects too much has been read into fragrance bottles and their designs, consider the excerpt below from the Burberry website. Site visitors can read the “concept” behind the company’s fragrances and learn some basics about bottle and packaging values and ideas. The quotation explains Burberry’s newest addition to its fragrance line, Baby Touch: “The bottle recalls the spool of thread inspiration found in the original Touch fragrances. A rounded bottom creates a rocking effect like a toddler’s toy or chair. The white cap is shaped like a daisy flower with a check ribbon loop on top. Wrapped in soft terry cloth, the bottle sits inside a package with shap fastening, reminiscent of a baby’s, layette. Printed in check shades of ivory, lilac, baby blue and place green, the outer packaging resembles the look of a warm cashmere blanket.” Under the site’s “Advertising” heading, visitors are told “The advertising communication captures the playful preciousness and soft touch a a baby wrapped in warm Burberry cashmere blanket.” The word *preciousness* does double duty, signalling both babies and expensive taste.

<http://www.burberry.com/Fragrances/BurberryTouch/BabyTouch.aspx>. 1 Aug. 2007.

⁷⁴ “Commonly referred to as the ‘Zucca’ print in its original form and ‘Zucchino’ in its smaller style, Fendi’s iconic ‘double F’ logo pattern was first designed by Karl Lagerfeld in the 60’s. It has been used on a variety of Fendi products, including handbags, wallets, luggage, shoes, and apparel.” This information was attained 15 Aug. 2007 at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fendi>. Fendi advertisements and the official corporate website lavishly splash the double F symbol.

⁷⁵ This advertisement for an FM Latin music radio station was heard 28 Apr. 2001 at 9:45 p.m. in Washington, D.C.

⁷⁶ In a brief period of forty minutes, I heard three chiasma broadcast during a pledge week on a local National Public Radio station in Washington, D.C. On the morning of 29 Oct. 2001, two different live voices informed listeners “This is a partnership. We support you. You support us” and “You’ve counted on WAMU for over forty years. Now can we count on you?” A recorded voice explained that the “money you send us today” immediately goes to work. “It comes right back to you in the form of news, music, and talk shows.” On the station’s last day of fund raising, an announcer made explicit the reciprocation latent in the earlier chiasma when he stated “Our reciprocal relationship with you [the supporting listeners] is a special one.”

A few months later (18 Jan. 2002), another National Public Radio station in Washington employed chiasmus to bring out the positive duality between the station and its faithful, financially supportive listeners: “You wouldn’t be the same without WETA and WETA wouldn’t be the same

without you.” This locution implies that both sides of the chiasmic equation depend upon and are made better by one another. A subsequent NPR fund raiser (10 Dec. 2002) stated “We will be there for our members, if our members are there for us.” This example, like the others, evidences that mutual relationship finds figurement via chiasmus.

⁷⁷ A Frontline television documentary entitled “The Persuaders” examined what it called the “persuasion industries.”

⁷⁸ This was heard on a Washington, D.C. radio station, 91.5 FM, on 11 May 2001 at 1:15 p.m.

⁷⁹ This four-word phrase I caught at the end of an advertisement heard on Natl. Public Radio on 2 Jan. 2007. I missed the product name and did not hear the commercial a second time.

⁸⁰ Exemplifying these qualities is the idea that “darkness within darkness” illuminates, that is, brings understanding or insight to the believer (Chapter 1).

⁸¹ Not to leave the reader hungry for examples, here are a few to savor. “Those who know don’t talk,/Those who talk, don’t know” makes for an incisive lesson written in the laconic manner of Lao. Two more are “Because she competes with no one,/ no one competes with her” and “True words aren’t eloquent,/ eloquent words aren’t true” (Chapters 56, 66, 81).

⁸² See the endnote that follows for an accounting of the placidness that chiasmus may convey.

⁸³ Four of the named qualities derive, directly or indirectly, from Mark Turner’s discussion of symmetry in *Reading Minds*. Refer to page 75 for “power and importance.” With *importance*, I have taken some license, allowing myself extension to *profundity*. The ideas about dignity as well as the deliberative quality so in tune with the meditative tone of the *Tao Te Ching* come from Turner quoting John Wilson (77). Calmness is a quality of symmetry specifically mentioned in Hargittai and Hargittai (194), however calmness (or its many synonyms, stillness, stasis, restfulness, placidity, repose, and so on) is a natural concomitant to the equipoise, equilibration, or balance assumed of entities bi-laterally symmorphic. Such entities possess what we think of as “just proportions” or “perfect” or “near-perfect” arrangements. As a consequence, they seem endowed with correctness or rightness and, therefore, appear to have a special authority. This authority reinforces the power or command of the figure and the rhetorical sway it may exert.

⁸⁴ With the juxtaposing of two repeated, like phrasings of a composition, “one hears the echo, so to speak, of the first [part] while hearing the second” (Doughtie 40).

⁸⁵ I had long supposed this was a very old chestnut and the ‘tree’ from which it had fallen was untraceable. However, attribution exits and it isn’t all that old. It dates to the early nineteenth century

and its author is Charles Caleb Colton. The saying was written down in his *Lacon* (1820–1822). These facts were gleaned from a calendar of daily sayings.

⁸⁶ Author is Ami Carmichael (Linfield and Krevisky 238).

⁸⁷ This proverbial saying is not as old as we might think. It came on the scene in 1875, in a now forgotten work by Samuel Smiles. See *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

⁸⁸ To promote a campaign “to tackle hunger” in Washington, D.C. involving the teamwork between the Washington Redskins football team and the hard-working D.C. Central Kitchen, a charity that annually feeds thousands of meals to the homeless, an announcement to raise money

featured this chiasmic headline: “When the Giving Get Tough,/the Tough Get Giving.” The reader is invited to “join” in this worthwhile collaboration of the Tough (professional athletes) and the Giving (the charitable volunteers who regularly give of their time and energy). The chiasmus intimates that the athletes and volunteers have a lot in common: each capable of qualities generally thought disparate, toughness (i.e., an unwavering commitment) and compassion (giving to others). *Washington City Paper* 16 Nov. 2001. 57.

⁸⁹ Since in the text I leave out examples of chiasma from the third category, I provide a specimen here. It was for an advice column reader with friends who compared their unruly pets to unmannered children. To “Doggone Tired” is this reply: “People try to compare young children to animals that need to be ‘trained.’ I reject that idea, although the opposite *is* true. Animals are like young children [...] that deserve to be taught [emphasis original].” “Ask Amy.” *Washington Post* 25 Jan. 2007. C4.

⁹⁰ The first quotation is from *Hello Sunshine!* Proverbs selected by Barbara Kunz Loots. Kansas City: Hallmark, 1972. np. The second, authored by William Arthur Ward. I happened across it in a 2001 daily calendar.

⁹¹ The perennial optimist Oprah Winfrey spun from the formula the following: “The more you praise and celebrate your life, the more there is in life to celebrate.”

⁹² CNN reported this during one of its many radio reports on 30 Sept. 2001.

⁹³ The saying counsels “Write injuries in dust, kindness in marble.” It is listed on page 59 in the *Dictionary of 1000 French Proverbs with English Equivalents*.

Italo Calvino on the Italian sonneteer: “Through more than three hundred sonnets Petrarch pretends to believe he is walking in the open countryside, overwhelmed by suffering and anguish, whereas he is actually seated comfortably in his study, his cat on his lap, as he contentedly polishes his verses” (n.p.).

⁹⁴ Andrei Codrescu, an occasional contributor to National Public Radio over the last few years, wrote a poem entitled “9/11 (with Allen Ginsberg in Mind).” The work is a dirge in which each of the thirteen stanzas begins with a direct address to a personified 9/11. Stanza ten reads as follows: “9/11, you were a godsend to poetasters who were out of the gate lamenting and whining before your towers even gave out!” The entire death song bemoans the selfish hype, mistreatment, and defilement of the event by so many groups in America. Codrescu’s sarcasm is as biting as it is hitting.

⁹⁵ The connection of writing with funerary tablets and monuments would place the act, though the association is unknown to the writer, in what Mary McCarthy identifies as the “classic temper” (*Stones of Florence* 42-43).



CHAPTER TWO

X-NESS

X [...] is written completely otherwise.
Jacques Derrida, "How to Avoid Speaking: Denials"

The vital, arrogant, fatal, dominant X
Wallace Stevens, "The Motive for Metaphor"

A giant on the horizon, given arms,
[...] and legs, stretched out,
A definition with an illustration

A large among the smalls
Of it, a close parental magnitude.
Wallace Stevens, "A Primitive Like an Orb"

THE OBLIQUE CROSS AS SYMBOL (X) AND LETTER (X): A GRAND SIGNATORY

Through its discussion and examples, Chapter One claims the universality, durability, and diversity of chiastic formulations. The present chapter focuses on that which stands behind this rhetorical figure but is at all times the impress de-signing and outlining each occurrence: namely, the slanted cross.

The X-shaped sign goes by the term '*crux decussata*.' The *decussata* is squarely similar to and yet, squarely distinct from, the + or '*crux quadrata*.' The two are dominant shape structures of rotation and reflection that importantly share a contour. The derivation of *contour*—"turning with" or "turning in unison"—we seldom contemplate. But that contemplation is advisable with respect to the *quadrata* and *decussata*. For all its likeness to the upright *quadrata*, the X is a turn or twist on the + shape structure. The + and X are one and

the same, except for orientation. The orientational departure furnishes a first clue to the oblique ‘metaphysics’ of this sideways cruciform: its being both identical to, yet at the same time being decidedly different from what is otherwise its shape twin. The disposition of \times rests in its structural embodiment of likeness, difference, and transverseness. That \times demonstrates in itself both sameness and difference in structural make up and that it is insistently (doubly) aslant are chief concerns of this discussion. The interest in these grows from a central claim herein: that the diagonal cross, which is the intaglio upon which all chiasma come by their distinctive impress, their crosswise appearance, is at the heart of their reverse-crossing performances. Thus, the better we understand the ways in which \times formally ‘does its thing,’ the more likely we are to understand the same of chiasmus.

The $+$ and \times signs are geometrically fashioned. To be more explicit, they are made objects, precise by rule, straight by line, and drawn precisely to the consummate four-sided figure, the square. To say they are *made*, doesn’t mean they must be down on paper or are confined to similar surfaces; instead, $+$ and \times can be, because in fact they are, ideals in our minds. Through the rigorousness of geometry, whether that geometry is of a material or mental conduction, these related cruciforms inherit their specific outline and their related, as well as, individual dispositions. But with that said, it is vital to point out that the precision, straightness, and absolute internal agreement of the cruciform pair’s respective instantiations can be a matter of more or less without losing the applicability of what is reported here of the two. In other words, despite deviations from this ideal or archetypal status, hand-drawn versions as well as other variants of the ruler and straight-edge ‘originals’ very much remain on the applicability stage when the discussion’s limelight focuses on crisscross structures and their signifying contributions.

Consequently, from here forward such deviations are deemed minor and variants are rated cognates. But, while this is the case, the human prejudice toward prototypes must not be forgotten. By that prejudice, versions and variants are held to be facsimiles of reduced perfection and, thus, temporally (subsequent in time), formally, aesthetically, philosophically, and functionally and influentially ‘lesser’ beings. By this presumption of eminent potency, \times

functions as the paragonal space shape to act as ambassador for representing all that its crisscrossing articulates. Since \times is the formal instigator of chiasmus, we shall need to pay exceptional heed to this special shape.

As explored below, the preeminent cross shapes of $+$ and \times illustrate in their formal structures a conglomerate of basic, but critical concepts without which human thinking would be severely blighted. A fair portion of these will be discussed in relation to the diagonal cross and chiasmus. It is enough for now to specify that the equiangular, equilateral $+$ and \times assume primacy among shape structures in the same way as do circles, squares, equilateral triangles, and other shape elites.¹

Extensive trials into spatial conception development in very young children established that \times and $+$ are prepotent, prepossessing structures. These trials were conducted by Jean Piaget and his research associate Barbel Inhelder. Their evidence suggests that the visuo-spatial might of \times and $+$ is also panhuman. Owing entirely to the physical silhouettes of this cruciform pair, they catch the eyes and deposit in the minds of infants. At under a year of age, the visual and mental systems of humans effortlessly ‘grab onto’ and record these two cross shapes. Upright cross or diagonal cross, each finds very early favor with humans.

Piaget and Inhelder discovered that their studies’ tiny subjects visually responded to the cruciform shapes just as they responded to a group of other very basic topological forms. From inquiries into spatial knowledge and learning, the research uncovered that (1) the babies (some as young as six months) discriminated the cross pair and (2) they knew (recognized and discriminated) both cruciforms to an equal degree, a finding that caused the researchers to dub $+$ and \times “geometrical cognates.” According to the notion, both commonly held, but also validated by neurophysiological investigations, that seeing is already a category of knowing, we might well conclude that infants know—lock onto, distinguish, and archive—a good shape or *pragnatz* when they see it.

These cognates possess alternate names that are of historical or descriptive derivation. The *crux-decussata*, popularly referred to as the St. Andrew’s cross,² is also called the oblique, diagonal, sideways, or slanted cross; the *crux-quadrata*, often nominated the Greek cross, is

described as a vertical-horizontal, perpendicular, or upright cross. The *quadrata* models, in small, the most orienting of orientations in the great human scheme: the horizontal-vertical. This special cross derives from an absolutely vertical line bisecting an absolutely horizontal line of identical length. The plumb *crux quadrata* proclaims its inherent quaternity. The *decussata* exhibits an identical quaternity to the upright *quadrata*, but the former differs from the later in one outstanding way: namely, it cuts the angularity of the *crux quadrata* exactly, squarely, by two. In other words, the *crux decussata* divides each of the +’s four right or 90-degree angles identically (i.e., in two equal parts) to arrive at a 45-degree angular offset four times round. I will have more to say on the topics of off-set, cutting in two and proceeding by halves, four-squares, and circularity, but for now it is enough to remark that what comes ‘about’ by this tilt of 45-degree compromise from the + is an analogous form, but one that, by having rotated ‘at odds’ all the (four) way(s) round, intriguingly ends up ‘off’ (the +) by half. Factors of four and two, factors of half-wayness and intermedial marking/cutting/dividing, and factors of sameness and difference are critical to the slanted cross—especially as its exacting diagonal lines ‘run’ to and from corner to corner of a regular square (technically, one that is not at a tilt)—, yet, nonetheless, the *decussata* stands off kilter and, thus, at variance in relation to the predisposing, canonically-orienting x/y axes of the *quadrata*. Importantly, it is a variance, a being at odds, that splits the spatial difference and so makes a same difference. The same-difference aspect of the sideways cross is a supreme aspect of chiasmus, a side-to-side figure blatantly same-to-same, but divided and reversed. Pertinent to chiasmus, as well, are additional *decussata* factors, including the extremely complex and contradictory phenomena that are the formal, natural, and logical fall out of intersection.

I advance that these and associated physio-visual factors, all told, directly bear on chiasmus in that the rhetorical figure inherits them from the *crux-decussata*, what we more commonly call a crisscross. Resembling an engraved plate that exists ‘before’ and operates ‘behind’ its engraving, the prepotent, inherently expressive and logic-wrought crisscross patterns and informs each chiasm. Unaccountably, the impressive X, despite being an indispensable universal structure and construct profuse in meaning, has rarely received other

than perfunctory notice with respect to chiasmus and has obtained no codification regarding its qualifying as the instrumental-cognitive core of chiastic expression. What struck me as a rather baffling neglect became an impetus for investigation. The present work offers itself as a first stab at remedying what has been, with a very few exceptions, token attention to the chi of chiasmus. The remedial task requires that we parse a familiar, the crisscross, and see where it leads us.

THE SYMBOLIC AND LETTERED AMBASSADORS

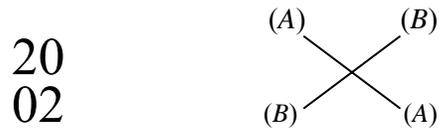
Richard Lanham introduces his readers to chiasmus as follows: “The term is derived from the Greek letter x (chi) whose shape [...] it resembles” (33). John Hollander goes considerably further than Lanham. The poet determines *crisscross* to be a synonym for *chiasmus*.³ A chiasmus enthusiast whose address is to a popular rather than scholarly audience tutors persons curious about his pet subject. He, too, references a crosswise form, defining chiasmus as a reversed word order that can be “marked with an X.” For Marty Groethe, X functions as after-the-fact test for the place switching between identical or close to identical terms or phrases. The test employs X in a diagrammatic sense: as a diagonalized array laid over linguistic locutions. With a diagrammatic match up, a linguistic candidate obtains chiasmus status. Individually, Lanham, Hollander, and Groethe recognize the chi in chiasmus, but together they constitute a spectrum as to the importance of the crisscross.

In my judgment X is what distinguishes chiasmus and serves as the figure’s essential visuo-spatial infrastructure.⁴ We can begin to approach the part played by the crisscross by viewing the X as a structural template that is generative host to especial visual implications. Let us start with a couple of chiastic locutions.

A business analyst, speaking about the dark clouds that hang over the financial landscape in the ninth month of the calendar year, notifies radio listeners: “Everyone hates September, and—it hates them back.”⁵ The analyst enlists the nouns *September* and *Everyone* and their respective pronouns (*it* and *them*) as key terms that trade grammatical slots (subject and direct object) over the shared verb *hates*. My research shows that the holding of a verb in common

transpire as we process a chiasmic arrangement.

For instance, the chiasmic cross framework of the palindromic year 2002 achieved a neat accentuation when a graphic artist rearranged the number quartet along new lines:⁸



In the artist's graphic re-do, a diagonal 'materializes' to 'connect' one pair of identical numbers and a second, opposing diagonal 'materializes' to 'connect' the second number pair. These materializations are in effect. We stress that it is the factual data of structural identity coupled with our inherent, perceptual-psychological penchant for simplicity and coherence of shape and organization that prompts us to cross-link 2 with 2 and 0 with 0. The diagonalization is implicit; there are, of course, no diagonal lines—such as those shown to the right of the 2002 display—materially tying the two number pairs. The viewer, confronted by the broken-up number design, 'causes' the upper, left 2 to cross-associate with its visual-meaning double, the lower, right 2, and 'causes' the upper, right 0 to cross associate with its visual-meaning double, the lower, left 0. An array where each look-and-mean alike aligns with its look-and-mean alike. What could be simpler, more fitting, or better insure coherence than one-to-one correspondence? What could be more pleasing to eye and mind? Like 'crosses over' to like on the motivation of the human brain with its preference for and determination of the simplicity, efficiency, and orderliness of unanimity (coherence). We find here the good housekeeping (order keeping) of Gestalt psychology. This prompting toward cross linkage and coherence applies to the linear array of sub-units that duplicate and reverse themselves crosswise within any larger entity that we identify as chiasmus.

The artist's arrangement detains the eye. Beyond rewarding a vacation from the convention of numbers lined up along a horizontal, the numeric badge possesses an aesthetic appeal. It strains credibility to ascribe the 2002 crisscross as originating from a designer steeped

in a seldom-discussed phenomenon with the exotic name *chiasmus*. Presumably, the design choice was irrespective of chiasmus and irrespective of the fact that *palindrome*, a word better known than *chiasmus*, is a sub-category of chiasmus. Thus, it would be a great deal more likely that the choice was a design natural; that is, the double diagonal motif was seen by the artist as a design apparent, ‘resident’ and simply ‘waiting,’ within the crossing-mirroring linear layout (which is a palindrome). The choice suggests our visual and aesthetic favoring of this motif and it shows how the artist, in his design product, counts on his viewer–readers to easily recognize the crisscross natural to and apparent in an *AB:BA* lineup.

The topic of aesthetics and crosses garners greater comment later. At present, I wish to emphasize only that the slanting lines of a sideways cross are implicit and all but ‘there’ for the viewer–reader of the numeric chiasmus 2002. Using an oblique cross, no doubt for eye- and mind-catching effects, the graphic artist rightly hit upon the diagonalized, crossing-over pattern innate to a bi-laterally symmetrical composition of the chiasmatic variety. And likewise, the same crossing over pattern is innate in the September and the deer examples.

The same diagonal pattern presided at the core of Roman Jakobson’s conceptualizing a crisscross synthesis between his linguistic theory and that of Ferdinand de Saussure’s. Before a small assembly in 1973, the Russian formalist chalked a large oblique cross accompanied by a four-square of crucial terms on a lecture room blackboard at the Collège de France (Fónagy 25). Jakobson was attracted to syntactical dislocation and deformation in language (Eagleton 98) and was sensitive to the semantics of “grammatical appliances” in general, but in particular to what he identified as grammar’s “diagonal” and “parallelistic systems,” not coincidentally discussed in an article titled: “The Grammar of Poetry and the Poetry of Grammar” (600–607). As a philologist and literary critic, he recognized and frequently drew upon for his own critical explications and arguments the formal rhetorical values of “chiasmic constructions” (“Grammar” 602). That Jakobson was a man always with an eye for the meaningful “geometry” of the crisscross (605–607), that is, the relational and inter-involving configurations attained by chiasmus, finds backing in a second Jakobsonian cross, the famous upright one forged by the intersection of an axis of selection and an axis of combination. Though itself a crux, a cross, as

Jacobson demonstrates, also has the power to solve one.

Given that the structure and significations of the diagonal cross are intrinsic to the chiasmic construction, the cross warrants more than a passing statement to that effect. Moreover, those who assert that chiasmus is iconic in that it expresses a crisscrossing or crossover action need say more than just that. Yet rhetoricians and others who would have us interpret chiasmus iconically, as well as expositors on the subject of chiasmus who remain indifferent to the figure's iconic ramifications, have neglected to stress that which is the figure's very template, the slantwise cross.

This neglect isn't due to shirking a recognized problem or skirting a matter acknowledged difficult. To the contrary. The consistently presiding assumption holds that the X shape is not problematic nor is it hard to understand. \times or X: each is widely dismissed as a fully self-evident form and, hence, a form whose nature necessitates the barest explanation, if any at all. Each is supposed a "transparent symbol," which, in *Language and Thinking*, Hubert Alexander defines as a symbol whose "meaning is [presumed] so clear that scarcely any attention is wasted on" it (62).

By contrast, I allege that if we set ourselves to ascertain the rhetorical workings of chiasmus, then the device's essential mechanism warrants all the attention we can devote. By a comprehensive and more considered account, \times reaps more than an escape from the prejudice dismissing it as a passing familiarity. Its just due obligates an appreciation of it as an exceptionally complex, sly, and profoundly mixed character, one with an assertively dual and split personality. A fuller accounting is imperative in that, as I contend, the involved, idiosyncratic, and, in especial, enigmatic, ambivert qualities of this fascinating form are presignatories of chiasmus. This last statement is but another way of stating that the essential qualities of the crisscross design carry over to, play out, and signify within its equally fascinating verbal and figural complement. Chi does more than bestow *chiasmus* with a prefix. It is the engraver that chisels the discursive crux figure. The slantwise cross, which has always stood a fascinating decoration and symbol in the human lifeworld, presides over all chaisma as their 'sunken' or intagliated de-sign-er duplicating itself endlessly. This cross as a pre- and

extra-linguistic symbol or sign (×) and the symbol's homographic facsimile (X) take center stage within this chapter.

One final, but requisite tenet must be in place before we draw open the stage's curtains. Ernst Cassirer and Susanne Langer pledge to a tenet premising all that follows in this chapter and beyond. These philosophers espouse that forms and symbols supply us with “a particular way of seeing” and of conceptualizing reality (Cassirer 11). The production and positing of ideational forms (concepts) reckons on comparable and “influencive” symbolic forms.⁹ The Cassirer–Langer premise tallies with etymology in that the word *form* descends from Latin's *forma*, a term equivalent to *idea* in the language of the ancient Greeks (Abrams 69).

In a “Translator's Preface” to a book authored by Cassirer, Langer stands shoulder to shoulder with her author by insisting that symbols, “verbal, religious, artistic, mathematical, or whatever modes of expression they be,” arrange for thought in a “fixed and held” format (Langer in Cassirer ix). In its consolidated and abbreviated intercession in human mentality, the symbol or form, “each with its own perfectly determinate spatial limits that give it its specific individuality” (Cassirer 13), has significance or reference, but not because of a dependency on traditional applications or customary practices. As Langer pronounces in her own text, the symbolic form “does not rest on convention, but motivates and dictates convention” (*Feeling and Form* 22, emphasis added). Whatever “representational function” the symbol performs “accrues to it” (70). Accrual devolves from the spatial characteristics specific to and salient within that form. These characteristics Rudolf Arnheim designates “pure, elementary qualities” of shape or pattern (*Visual Thinking* 30). What a visible symbol or form means rests, *au fond*, with its material self; that is, meaning ultimately traces to the specificity of its unique physico-spatial constitution. That constitution is defining, by which I intend, in conformity with Langer and Cassirer, that it is meaningful. Along with adherents of Gestalt psychology, Langer asseverates that any fundamental non-discursive symbolic form, as for instance a circle, triangle, spiral, or zigzag line, expresses the meaning that inheres in its line and shape and “expresses it at all times” (Langer 64, 211)—that is, whenever the form or its like appears (212). The visual “symbol and whatever it is to mean” (i.e., the idea or “the object

symbolized”) cooperate “on the basis of formal analogy,” that is, by having a “common logical form” that is intelligible and entire in itself (27). Only by the agreement of “formal analogy” will a visual symbol work in the company of and “serve” on behalf of “actualities,” interpretations, or representations that gesture beyond its self (Langer qtd. in Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* 161).

Kenneth Burke corroborates what I have nominated, for the sake of convenience, the Cassirer–Langer premise. Burke decrees that a symbol’s implications amount to “its ‘future possibilities’ in a purely formal sense” (*Language* 69, emphasis original). This contention could be characterized as an *idée fixe*, not just in *Language as Symbolic Action* but throughout Burke. This leading twentieth-century philosopher of language and rhetoric stipulates that any potential applications (i.e., “future possibilities”) of a symbol (whether the symbol falls under a pre-verbal or verbal category), we quite naturally “size up” as “obviously” right, that is, true and proper to, because fundamentally derived from the symbol’s particular form (69). The formal attributes belonging to a given symbol pre-scribe whatever implications (Langer’s “feelings”) may come ‘out’ of it. These attributes are substantiative: they give substance to meaning. And critically Burkean, a symbol is not simply preemptive, it is strategic and communal; it is universally intuited to possess specific and in-forming “implications” (Crusius 71).

As we progress through the first half of this chapter, which catalogs many of the symbolic implications of the slanted cross, we will want the company of Cassirer, Langer, and Burke. Their interpretation of symbols will secure a primary goal: explicating the formal attributes of this particular form. Their perspective will benefit us most especially when taking up the Christological “implications” resident within \times and X, since the common temptation runs exactly opposite: interpreting the historical and religious figure as dictating to the *crux decussata*; that is, laying hands on, baptizing, and christening (imposing) meanings the oblique cross would otherwise have nothing to do with. When we come to this part of the discussion, experts on the symbolism of the cross, who importantly for us study the cruciform on the basis of its spatio-physical features, will also be called upon to guide the religious interpretations the

X-structure motivates, as Burke so rightly puts it, in the “purely formal sense.”

AN AMBIVERT PERSONALITY

Look up our overlooked X, under its alphabetical cognate in *The Oxford English Dictionary* and the inquirer will find the entry to be the longest of any letter, bar none. This, despite that in English lexicography “initial x- is extremely rare” (*Encyclopedia Americana*), as writers and typesetters well know,¹⁰ and despite that among English words this particular letter is next to last in frequency (Firmage 251). The exceptional length of the X entry defining our curious, “unnecessary” letter exists across dictionaries (Firmage). Thus, English lexicons, each and all, deem this letter/character/shape as requiring more than the usual amount of defining.¹¹ What’s more, the index to *Roget’s International Thesaurus* dignifies only four letters (G, I, L, and X) with separate explanatory entries. Of this quartet, only quirky X warrants a two-entry thesaural accommodation.¹² Evidently, X has a lot of explaining to do.

The exceptionally signifying nature of X, that is, signification over and above that of other alphabetical characters,¹³ contributes to the extensive outlets in which this epigraph finds hire. One entry in *Roget’s* enumerates the association between X and the unknown or the uncertain; the second entry specifies the letterform’s crossed shape and, relationally, its crossing and cruciform connotations. Epigraphists technically refer to this alphabetical character as the “cross sign.”¹⁴

Before we get any further along in investigating the cross sign I am obliged to justify a typographical-ideographical decision affecting the remainder of the text, but most especially this chapter. The computer font for this text is Times-Roman, and I have used its X to this point in the discussion. However, from here forward in the text and notes, I use X for the purpose of accentuating shape in those circumstances where shape has as much or more to do with the letterform. When I want to refer to the crisscross shape generally I have taken the license to use a combination: X/X, which I hope won’t cause too much confusion. A spare, sans serif, single weight typeface for the cross letterform of our language makes it simpler to concentrate on visual structure and it urges us to better attend to the alphabetic skeleton that is kin to the

diagonal cross.

The word *skeleton* makes its appearance here in the technical sense outlined in a classic on the graphic nature of letterforms. The term *graphic* references a strictly visual or physical, drawn and designed presentation. In their *Elements of Lettering* (1940, 1950), John Benson and Arthur Carey insist that whether we study the visual images of our alphabet for intellectual, aesthetic, or practical pursuits, “We must start with letters reduced to their very simplest terms” (25). These most simplified or reductive of letterforms Benson and Carey designate “linear figures” (25–27). These “are not true letters, but are expressions of the linear aspect of letters” (20). The third to last of the linear figures in the English alphabetic series is X. It is physically formed from two lines drawn to a straightedge laid down from opposite corners of a foursquare. The square’s corners are the utmost points of the composite lines of X, its beginning and ending points to guide the straightedge’s rule. The resultant cross diagonal form (absent the square outline) reproduces, for it is the very same as, the age old, pre-linguistic oblique or slanted cross.

All subsequent letters derive from the prime linear figures, which as a group are created in either of two ways: (1) from a template composed of the basic, strict, and pure Euclidean forms of a single circle, square, and equilateral triangle prototype superimposed on one another, or (2) by a second template founded on the first, but with additional straight lines for ruling linear shapes. From this inceptive linear alphabet, which as a group has an overly mechanized look and lacks human sensibility and visual refinement, a first generation of true letters emerges. Carey and Benson refer to these emergent letters as “skeletons” or, more precisely, “corrected skeletons,” because they are improvements on the linear forms (33). Where we have X, in the linear alphabet, we gain X in the corrected.

In ancient Rome, these post-linear forms were aesthetically re-worked. They were based on the perfecting lines of triangle, square, and circle, with a philosophico-aesthetic eye toward proportions guaranteeing that the resulting letterforms would be “admirably arranged” and “thoroughly made” and measured according to this tenet: that each would be a clear, full realization of self (17, 16). These ‘corrected’ forms, improvements over the linear originals,

were also refined so the individual letters would fit with one another to attain a harmonized, aesthetically pleasing set of proportioned members. Finally, the re-designing of the precursory figures was meant to humanize them: that is, so that they would be “corrected visually for the benefit of the reading eye, statically to satisfy the desire for stability, and kinaesthetically for the convenience of the writing hand” (33). The “essential” first letters (the so-called skeletons improving upon the linear figures) then had as their ‘progeny’ the consummate letterforms in the West, the famed Roman capitals. The Romans stand in the occidental world as its quintessential letters. These elites have endured for over two thousand years, influencing “most of the other forms [of letters] descended from these for nearly as long” (25). The X took on greater formality and subtleness, perhaps even civility, when it became the Roman capital X.

X (as well as X) is interpreted as arising from X. What matters more than the generational lineage is that X and X are close visual kin. Our eyes readily espouse that crisscross shape and cross letter sign are affiliates. However, because the literate contemporary mind, saturated with physical signs and alphabetic letters, ‘reads’ more complication into its letterforms, I have tried to establish how these cruciforms, X and X, are relatives and much that applies to one generally can be said to apply to the other.¹⁵ This section closes by stressing their status as analogs, which is critical because when chiasmus is introduced with some mention about a chi or crossing involvement, we learn either that the figure is diagonal- or cross-like (i.e., resembling an oblique cross) or that it is X-like. Both are appropriate ways of describing the figure, but because they are it is incumbent the discussion account for the two forms. There will be times when I will speak just about the letterform (X) and other times when I will stay only to the cross shape (X). Even so, what follows hereon essentially applies to both. I think of them as X/X, as cognates that make for a kind of grand sign in our thinking. We can now begin to discuss X, X, and, more comprehensively, the signatory X/X.

PALEOFORMS

Two inter-crossed lines, radix of the Greek chi, were a popular shape on antique Greek vases. But because X is found on petroglyphs, the sideways cross boasts a lineage far older

than the early Greeks. Wallace Stevens accedes to the shape's immemorial status with his poetic line about "the big X of the returning primitive" (339). William Blake's *Ancient of Days*, which harkens to "the dark backward and abysm of time," effectively pictorializes Stevens' characterization of our diagonalized shape-structure. The relief etching by Blake features a hoary figure leaning far over and across the yawning abyss of the primal world. The figure takes the gauge of this unformed originary world with an antique tool, a X protractor. Alexander and Nicholas Humez in one of their alphabetical treatises (*Alpha to Omega* 167) emphasize that chi is for 'chasm' (the abyss) and for 'chaos' (the unformed). The oblique cross traces to the deep primitive.

X is, indeed, an abiding, aboriginal form. According to Carl G. Liungman's *Dictionary of Symbols*, before being used as an early Chinese ideograph and ancient Egyptian hieroglyph, the "diagonal cross with arms of equal length" was "engraved on the walls of pre-historic caves in Europe" (139). This crisscross inscription has shown itself to be perennial and indelible, the sign having retained a continuous and unique hold on humans irrespective of whether an individual or her society at large was lettered or even exposed to letters. We could say that X, so "congenial" to vision" (Langer 62) and so pleasing and easy to the visual apparatus and attaching and intriguing to the mental, has been 'inscribed,' from time immemorial, on the back wall of the human mind.

Even if ancient cave drawings offer tangible evidence of a deeply recessed existence, absent that datable evidence we would nonetheless conjecture that X is as old and as primal as two crossed sticks or two intercrossing paths. As "an analogical notion taken from the natural sphere" and from the common experiences of humankind, X emerges as an abiding, or what Rudolf Otto describes as an "untiring" ideogram (26, 64). In the course of identifying primogenitor space forms such as circle and path, famed architectural theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz reminds that "crossing" constitutes "one of the oldest spatial structures known to us" (*Architecture: Meaning and Place* 33). He esteems this shape as a prototype structure: stable and enduring, universal and elementary. The diagonal cross, as the "analogical" notation for crossing *in verum natura*, was known to preliterate societies as the visual archetype of the

conjunction of dualities.¹⁶ Presumably it is this archetypal status that Ben Jonson intuits with his remark that “X is rather an abbreviation [...] then a Letter.”¹⁷ Well warranted is Jonson’s view that, beyond its obvious orthographic role, the English alphabet’s crisscross letterform looks and behaves as an abbreviation or abstraction. This is to say that X, in the same way as its shape antecedent ×, is a vital form that holds and transmits what Langer identifies as “vital feeling.” This “vital feeling” is for her a conductor of the expressive, logical, and intelligible. Her phrase is the equivalent of *meaning* or equivalent of Burke’s *implication*.

Through the centuries and within diverse systems of human expression and endeavor, perennial X̄X has invited and had deposited onto its shapeliness layer, upon layer, upon layer of significance and symbolism. Its aptitude for passing as or ‘speaking for’ so many entities and concepts—that is, its protean and especially potent abbreviation, image, and symbol talents—mainly springs from its singular, bold, human-impressing shape. Further down the chapter’s discursive road we undertake a prolonged stopover to investigate the matter of X’s physical structure. But preliminary remarks on the structure in pages immediately upcoming inquire into the uppermost regions of X̄X’s very deep symbolic and signifying strata.

The slanted cross has “strong existential implications” in that its diagonal configuration poses two diametrically opposing directions or choices (Norberg-Schulz, *Existence, Space and Architecture* 26). The place of crossing invariably stands as one of the most primary of human experiences, explains Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant in their encyclopedic study of signs and symbols (261). At a crossroads, we come up against the unknown and confront alterity; we face “a basic problem of life, [...] a choice between which direction to take” and which not (*Existence, Space and Architecture* 26; see also Chevalier and Gheerbrant 261). The choice can be crucial and excruciating, a pair of terms that derive from crux, Latin for ‘cross.’ If one agonizes over which of two lines (directions) of movement to try, think, or pursue it is because confrontation, conflict, and confusion inhere at the crossing point. Here, at the intersection, a person naturally has reason to pause. She faces, in a real or virtual sense, adversatives—opposing alternatives or antithetical propositions—and must weigh and brazen them out. The nexus may present as a strange, problematical, thwarting, rare, unexpected inter-involvement

where the adversely posed ‘come upon,’ ‘hit upon,’ ‘take hold’ of, or ‘take on’ one another: that is, they con-front (come up against), con-fuse (merge), or con-flict (collide). Thwarting and collision are real possibilities when you arrive at the nexus, a spot which is very like to catch one up and unprepared. At the salient conjunction, we think of *convergence*, a word etymologically associated not just with bending and inclining, but also twisting and wrenching. Understandable then are the feelings of unease and reasons why various warning signs traditionally were erected at places of physical crossing.¹⁸

By these and other associations, the crosswise mark raises more than mild uncertainty; it throws us into outright quandary. It deeply perplexes because it is self-contradictory in the extreme. On the one hand, its diagonal lines may be conceived as meeting up at a point of conjunction where a “union of opposites” takes place (“Focus”). Rightly or wrongly, we may allow ourselves to suppose that with this union, arising from an intersection or exact point of crossover, separation and distinction no longer apply. By absolute co-incidence of place, opposition finds itself, just there and just then, just possibly and by a certain logic, suspended, neutralized (the notion of *punctum indifferens*), or eradicated. Eradicating or neutralizing, however, may rise to a unique level of nullification. The intersection as *punctum indifferens*, is, at best, a mere jot or dot, a whit negligible or inconsequential. At worst, it is estimated null and void, brought to naught, a frustrating, unfulfilling interval of no-thing. Mutual canceling, effacing, or blotting out suggests physical or metaphoric conflict, confrontation, destruction, tension, struggle, even anguish. Here is the notion of a crux as a distinct place, often inescapable, that is acutely problematic, exceptionally intricate, or severely pressured. With the more neutral interpretation, this interstitial, transformative space produces the indeterminate or unknowable, which may be taken for either a good or bad, positive or negative condition. An intersection’s dissolution of difference can result in the favorable or unfavorable.

If favorable, we may presume of the intersection of two complementary, yet entirely opposing lines a coalescence that rises to an *ultimum punctum*. This elimination of opposition, in fact, also accords with *convergence* in its association with centering and concentration. With these two notions, a host of kindred concepts insist on their relevance to the discussion.

Some of the more germane are: contraction, stricture; coming together, congress, consolidation, union; intensification, heightening, deepening, tightening, reinforcement, redoubling; engrossment, profundity, meditation, thoughtfulness. As we shall see, these have a direct bearing on X and, by formal association and endowment, on chiasmus.

Yet, we mustn't overlook that the same pre-opposing, but eventually crossing lines of the slanted cross involve two other major aspects. The cross's constituent lines 'take off' from the concurrence of the midpoint to "then proceed in their own direction" ("Focus"). The pair of lines of equal length that compose the oblique cross gradually and evenly incline toward one another and meet up at a point absolutely inter-medial. Then from that intermediate place, a loci of adjoining or impinging, the lines 're-commit' ('re-turn') to their 'movement' or 'action,' but with a decided difference. The resumption demonstrates decline and separation: the lines gradually and evenly decline away from one another in a precise, reverse mirroring of their inward motion. Accordingly, the X shape, contingent upon a beautiful visual-physical rapport and an elegant equivalence of strictly graduated lines, displays coterminity and obliqueness, manifests opposedness and concurrence, insists on a thorough divergence and a thorough convergence. Besides these stark dualities, the display has a burly look and a committed, determined feel. The look and the feel are part of the physico-spatial features that Langer and Burke speak about with regard to forms as a class.

Even though the crisscross's two lines impinge and concentrate at a single, absolute midpoint, once 'released' from there and going their increasingly separate (dividing) ways, in theory, they go on forever. By this prospect of endless protraction, the constitutive lines of X extend, in theory, without end and, thus, well beyond the range of our apprehending. The letter and the number X have been associated, by alphanumeric license and by mythological symbolism, with the concept of infinity.¹⁹ X, O, and N are the letters we identify with meaning "to any extent, to the utmost" (Firmage 167, 170) and thus to the limitless. Even a format as ordinary as a contemporary television commercial connects an oblique cross arrangement—of a long lipstick tube and its case of corresponding linear shape—with infinity.²⁰ The association between X and infinity would appear to have a basis in that the ∞ sign (which can also mean an

indefinite number) actually arises out of a crisscrossing, doubling, symmetrical figuration that captures in its shape the idea of interminability. The number 8 on its side, which is the Western graph for the infinity sign,²¹ is the equivalent of a curvaceous X-form positioned horizontally (i.e., rotated 90 degrees) and then closed by its 'end' points curving about so as to meet up with one another. The resulting shape insinuates the conjoining, enclosing, bending back, and rounding-off features denoting and the conspicuous personality belonging to the chiasmic construct. The infinite and kindred metaphysical notions—endlessness and ceaselessness, the eternal and the indeterminate, circularity and closure—as fundamental aspects of chiasmus will receive examination in Chapters Three and Four.

Also fascinating are the certain *versus* uncertain, clear *versus* obscure dualities of the sideways cross. To begin to uncover inherent contradictions of this type we might begin with one algebraic use of the cross covered in advanced algebra courses. One can solve for two unknowns in two linear equations or solve for three unknowns in three linear equations by a boxy (either square or rectangular) matrix. Whether speaking of the pair of opposing diagonals within a 2-by-2-element matrix or the diagonalization within a 3-by-3-element matrix, the respective cross connections are fundamental to solving, respectively, for a pair or a triplet of unknowns. The solving diagonals form a non-perpendicular cross. Each cross line is known as a diagonal of a determinant. Release from indeterminacy can result from crosswise diagonals.

In algebra \times stands for an unknown or powers of an unknown. The same mathematical system with the solving cross diagonals commissions as minuscule cross letterform to represent an unknown quantity whose value wants solution. Algebraists rate \times as preeminent among unknowns.²² Not only in mathematics but everywhere else, the diagonal cross stands for that which is variable, indeterminate, or uncertain.²³ It should be stressed that the designation of an unknown quantity or entity by a letter or symbol of \times or X is a practice that predates the modern world.²⁴ The X mystique knows no beginning.

Over the centuries in the West, X was the customary proxy for illiterates unable to write their names. Those who did not know their letters knew enough that X could signify for them, declaring, for all practical purposes, “ ‘This is me’ ”²⁵ (Kendrick 20). This practice lent warrant

to and then put a consigned into circulation. The wildly variable letter was exceedingly potent. As a surrogate signature it legitimated. It was a mark and a statement of attestation, confirmation, identification, and personalization. Even in today's world of high literacy, when conducting financial, contractual, business, and other official transactions that require us to notarize ourselves,²⁶ we are told, aloud, on paper, or in effect, to sign by or alongside the X, which on paper may appear as X or X.

The tremendous utility of having some widely-honored, all-around proxy, a protean symbol of substitution, was recognized early on. For all intents and purposes, X was a natural choice to characterize a predicament of insecurity or uncertainty and to suggest an oblique condition. We might witness, once more, the crossroads, where one falters because of the risk of becoming lost or worse still. The cross diagonal's colleague, the inscrutable X, just as effortlessly and notoriously fills the same bill. When it comes to consigning, these two are omnipotent and omniscient. We especially prevail on X to stand in, replace, or make shift for the not-yet– or never-to-be–nominated as well as the generic or unfamiliar person or thing, just as it hires out for no object or person in particular, including imaginary, pseudo, or counterfactual objects and persons.²⁷ It is the most permutable and unexacting of marks, for it juggles whatsoever is needed. It is quick to hatch and finesse all manner of things or should we say all manner of comers, that is, items that may or may not come to be. The downside of X's illimitable mutability is its lack of objecthood, its absence of subjectivity. By pointing to something beyond itself (even in its marking-the-spot function), nothingness and nullity lurk about X. In swapping for and deputizing whatever, its something of a feint—though not just any old ploy. No, its that contradiction and rarity: a flagrant feint.

In semantic terms, this labile substitute is not self-affirming; it poses or posits for something withheld or other. X as a substitutive, rather than as a primary symbol always anticipates (Alexander 61), but because it so often subrogates for the generic or innominate, waiting for the specific and unambiguous may well prove, as with Godot, for naught. And in fact, it happily subs for *not* or *no* and other negative types.²⁸ Thus, X often can't be solved, in which case it remains wanting, determinate-wise. But when solved for, the feigner takes off,

simultaneously vanishing at the moment of determination, going absolutely faint. In a one-to-one exchange, it gives way (i.e., it gives up its holding place) to that which is meaningful, that which has come forward and fully, aptly, or correctly 'into' its own. Though, in theory, on the verge of some other, this inclining form declines to stay when arriving on the scene to take its real place is the rightful thing. When the rightful other self proclaims, the visually-assertive, physically flinty stand-in goes immediately absent. Determination sends X and \times packing.

I don't believe it has received notice that X, in an ironic turn of the tables, gets the canceling boot when the symbolized comes to the fore (i.e., when it is solved for). Something like Kafka's baffled K, X, when serving as the figure of the unknown, problematic, and baffling, fails of self-significance. W. H. Auden is close on when observing that "x with no will of its own" is a poor excuse of/for a thing: an impotent (a wanting), "faceless cypher" (*Dyer's Hand* 62) because, like a later American poet has opined, "X [is] no one's" and no-thing "in particular."²⁹ Jacques Barzun comes down harder still. X, he says, is simply "vacuous" (*Stroll* 21).

But X's vacuity, like much else about it, isn't straightforward. Much that is incapable of specification or has yet to be specified, as well as much that cannot be or that resists denomination, goes on in the name of, or rather, under the letter X and the sign of \times . For purposes of argument, Bertrand Russell elected X to consider a "certain object called the 'round and square.'" I can't resist pointing out that Russell's cryptic object, which amounts to a physical equivalence (a cross and overlap) of two constitutionally disparate shapes, would find in an *AB:BA* construct a discursive representation more inclusively descriptive. Something like "a rounded square that is, at the same time," a squared round formalizes and mimics an imagined instance of a transversing and overlapping of hegemonic shapes almost nothing like one another.

Though a temporary put up job, X is willful and assertive, presiding and pre-scribing. A master at labeling, still it's no snob. It hangs out with out-and-out unknowns, great numbers of which are a problem waiting to be solved, and it does its all to accommodate, by pre-/per-forming in the name of these no names. That is, X pointedly alludes to them, obtains for them

place and notice ahead they would not enjoy elsewhere, and implies, by its beguiling, thought-provoking presence, that they possess some warrant, content, or value. Thereby, X advances them a consideration they would otherwise fail of. Being paradoxically both null and explicit, it holds them a place that is considered, posited (a word associate of *place*). In sum, it marks unknowns a spot, a place, in our thinking.

We may posit what is averse or unable to declare itself by the fact X fills in for that which lacks outward presence and ontologic explicitness. In this role as ultraist filler-in or placeholder, X ingeniously arranges an extraordinarily significant disguise. As potent proxy, it wields the almighty power of converting the uncategorizable³⁰ into the categorizable, the innominate into the nominate, the bygone into the no longer gone. The provisional, the hypothetical, even the illogical and nonexistent can be thought about or through when the sign for the unknown steps in/up for them with a referring loan. Auden notwithstanding, X possesses an extraordinary gift for reference. Quite literally, it is a power to reckon by—and, thusly, with.

To convey its unknowable and veiled aspect and perhaps even its exchanging capacity, the manual alphabet of American Sign Language signals the X epigraph by entirely concealing the fully opposable thumb, our crucially accommodating, antepositional finger.³¹ Notably and aptly, it is the only letter of the signing alphabet in which a finger is completely obscured. Indeed, X excels at cloaking, as in giving anonymity to others: characters in novels, persons to remain unnamed in newspapers, any lesser Brand X. It's a favorite operator in clandestine affairs, in part because of a long reputation as the recluse among alphabetic letters (Sacks 339–40).

X fascinates because of a reputation for being obscure and perplexing, covert and suspicious, not easy and obvious as ABC.³² Such qualities intrigue. And since intrigue is the lifeblood of any sales industry, X offers commercial cachet and cash value. Television and movie producers; event planners and publicists; writers of headlines, product advertisements, and bumper stickers; marketing researchers, corporate and other identity managers, and public relations types of all stripes take for granted and for profit that prospective audiences or targeted ones estimate this orthographic sign as chic or edgy. These last two qualities relate to X

as enticingly *cryptic*, the word tracing to *kyrptein*, meaning ‘to hide.’³³ X’s undisclosed or secret associations suggest danger and potency capturing the attention and, in train, the fascination of audiences.

The self-proclaimed hustler who renamed himself Malcolm X shrewdly exploited these associations and the interest they fetch.³⁴ The black revolutionary’s reinvention of himself involved a charismatic cryptonym that could project danger and power and could publicize militancy and a radical message. These self-promotions could attract, motivate, and empower followers and, in addition, give notice to the white establishment that here was a force to be reckoned with. Today, X literally pays off for hustlers of a different stripe: posers and sellers of ultimately tamer, hyperbolic brands of cultural revolt, such as that produced by punk musicians and their agents, as well as that promulgated by advance men, promoters, and advertisers of popular entertainment.³⁵

As a letter-glyph, X possesses a sure as well as enduring marketing and sales advantage given that its impenetrability excites mystery and allure.³⁶ The commercial value of X as dangerous provocateur obviously was not lost on John Singer Sargent. At the 1884 Paris Salon, the voluptuous figure in the American painter’s *Madame X* edged even closer to tantalizing and scandalizing supposedly shock proof Parisians. The risqué letter lent partial ‘cover’ by bestowing a ‘bare identity’ to the bare-shouldered, but undisclosed portrait subject, Madame Gautreau. Henry James, an early Sargent enthusiast, proclaimed “the portrait of Madame G” a “remarkable canvas” and pooh-poohed the uproar it excited as “unreasoned” (*Picture and Text* 110, 109).³⁷ However nearly everyone else of the time pronounced the woman outrageous: too forward, too imperious, and much too powerful. X and X as shorthand for the excessive, risqué, and inscrutable, and as a way to signal the obscene with a wily wink hasn’t faded. Modern cartoons, for instance, continue to use X and X for these abbreviation purposes.³⁸

Madame X, the designation James didn’t use,³⁹ nonetheless by its titular X captures in a single letter what art critics continue to commentate in the picture, even if James chose not: “potency,” an “enigmatic” and “arresting” proclivity, a fatal arousal, and a visual magnetism of such puissance there’s no escaping it.⁴⁰ Like the bold undercover (and therefore oxymoronic)

letter by means of which she's sexed up and then passes before public view, Singer's statuesque, canvas-filling figure in her full length, figure-hugging black dress is unabashedly commanding, elegant, and striking to the human eye. The letterform and Sargent's X-y figure conduct fatality, seductive intrigue, and sexual mystery—concomitants to what surprisingly has gone without notice: a direct depictional citation to Venus.⁴¹ Sargent, indeed, had it letter perfect, given that letter and figure are, in multiple senses, lookalikes; given that an inescapable visual lure and forwardness, not to mention being always an eyeful, are specialties of X just as are potency and seductiveness.⁴²

The irresistibility of the cross letterform—which hasn't been ignored in the least by imaginative writers, film directors, and other entertainers capitalizing on X in the titles of their productions—, in relation to the conceit of the femme fatale, eroticism, and sex, traces as far back as the Greek goddess whose mythology has her springing full-bodied from the sea.⁴³ Aphrodite, whose two-sided, mutable nature, libidinousness, and “intricate charms,” confounds, captivates, and captures mortals and gods, is associated with oblique crosses,⁴⁴ and she, like Sargent's *Madame X*, dangles herself before the onlooker, who risks hypnotism and entrapment and is subject to her fatality. Moving downwards in time, from a mystifying, but eye-catching temptress armed in tantalizing, sexy X straps to conquer any man or god she lusts after,⁴⁵ we eventually arrive at the late practice of the X-graph (*grapho* in *pornography* means ‘to write’) for denoting pornography, graphic content better kept concealed, better left under cover(s). The cross letter denotes graphicness, of a sexual or illicit sort. This denotation builds from the synonymy between pornography and the forbidden (Cawelti and Flannery 113). X enjoys a double game:

To many, X-rated means obscene, immoral and pornographic, synonymous with ‘smut.’ To others, such a rating could hint at Art [...]. To most of either opinion it piques curiosity about the work in question to find out why it received such a brand. (Firmage 255)

This two-sidedness and the fact that “the forbidden can [like chiasmus] work backwards, so to speak,” means that “Works from the past which clearly exploited the forbidden can easily be redefined as works of art once they achieve a patina of antiquity” (Cawelti and Flannery

115). Whether as art or smut, movie audiences, producers, and directors assume that an X-identified creation or a production that flaunts “a certain friskiness [...], a special factor X” is likely to bring on a “vibrant,” tantalizing uncertainty.⁴⁶ And uncertainty, when its quotient is especially contradictory, intrigues and involves. X as a “dominant symbol in popular culture”⁴⁷ for the provocative or sexy means that a billboard can baldly announce the “X appeal” of some commodity and viewers don’t even notice or need the missing the S and E.⁴⁸ These letters have become superfluous because X, with its aphaeresis smarts, says it all.⁴⁹ To “Put the ‘X’ in Sex” requires but a single letter, widely reputed libidinous.⁵⁰

In the view of a designer for a cutting-edge marketing firm, X sells prolifically because “It’s being labeled in an unlabeled way” (McCarthy). The remark shrewdly picks up on the letter’s trickiness and perversity. It also gestures to the letterform’s ingenuity at countersigning but not really or entirely giving away, as in the Sargent title and in modern X-named materials. The letter’s a super hot commercial property because its come-on, peek-a-boo attributes—releasing, enticingly, by half—adds to a form seductive to the eye and fuels an image deemed sexy and riddling. If X is itself wanting, as Auden asserted, it nevertheless has the wherewithal to leave us desiring more. Rudolf Otto, who insists on an essential commonality between the erotic and the divine or holy,⁵¹ detects that an entity which is “half revealed, half concealed” strikes us as partially impenetrable and, hence, filled “with the power of suggestion” (65). Labeled and unlabeled, allusive and alluding, capable of intimating whatever, X is inordinately, perpetually suggestive and, as a plus, able to put a gloss on or thought to most anything. What better for a symbol, commercial, religious, or other, than to be unceasingly suggestive and nonexclusive as to what all it may allude to or might be so bold as to suggest!

The letter’s captivating nature, that it offers something Xtra, unXpected, Xtraordinary, or Xtreme, explains the “X factor” in “today’s marketing world” and why this superstar of letters is “seen everywhere from pop culture to new products.” (McCarthy). The trendsetter for the “sexy crisscross”⁵² in female attire, the alluring Aphrodite would approve that today X has become the sign of smartness in haute couture. More and more, the wares as well as the labels, tags, emblems, ads, and names of fashion houses feature it. Tiffany’s “cross-stitch” and oblique

“cruciform” jewelry items, Paloma Picasso’s X-design jewelry,⁵³ Armani’s logo “A/X” (McCarthy), and the designers Maxximum, NEXX, New York MAXX, and X=M=X supply but a few examples. X shouts in vogue and exclusive and, hence, translates into expensive. In craze everywhere (McCarthy), X is banked on to boast the sales or price points of everything from automobiles,⁵⁴ video games, athletic equipment, computer software, television shows, music, magazines, financial advice, personal care products, fast food, and medical prescriptions.⁵⁵ Insurance, mutual funds, and military contracts have turned to X’s appealing looks to liven up their staid, glamourless selves (e.g., No Load Fund-X, the Csar-X Airforce contract). The thinking goes, good form makes good.

In 1972, several American oil companies affiliated. To commemorate the occasion, the conglomerate sought a novel name and a bold, upmarket look. In order to grab hold of America’s eyes, interest, and investment shares, the brand name instigated a double-take: the visual tie of two crisscross letters. Today, Exxon’s website boasts that its emblem stands “uncontested.” As we shall return to over and over, X has an exceptionally strong visual grasp and retentiveness. Like other gestalts, it stands incontestably itself. With no loss whatsoever to pronunciation, one X in Exxon would have done consonantal duty. But two replicated letterforms, in conspicuous inter-involvement, perform more than one commercial trick. Not only does the XX seize optical attention, but the display hints of extra-ness twice over. Furthermore, the particular layout of the paired letterforms owned an innovative, daring, and modern feel, especially in the early years after the formation of Exxon. Finally, the XX, which usually runs larger in size than the other three letters, subliminally suggests that although able to take things somewhat beyond the usual limits, the brand nevertheless keeps to a close-fitting, cooperative (congruent), safe-guarding (tight) relationship. Steady, yet enterprising: Exxon attained a pair of superlatives by a design team’s savvy with a pair of X’s. The team’s members knew, as designers always have, that a form can show smarts: it can plead ideas.

The modern sculptor Andre Fournelle, who repeatedly draws on the diagonal cross as a motif for his projects, stated in a 1998 interview that “ ‘the idea of the “X.” For me it’s the forbidden’ ” (qtd. in Kozinska). X can indicate acts impermissible, counter-cultural,⁵⁶ or

outright banned, as in overhead road signs that warn motorists that driving in a given lane is verboten. Forbidden in conjunction with hidden, these attributes explain the naming of the “X Documents.” These covert reports and advisories originated in the 1930s from the intelligence agent, who, with code names “Mr. X” and “X,” headed up the resistance movement in Germany. The agent’s point-on papers were secreted along to the British Foreign Office.⁵⁷ X’s messages divulging the menacing circumstances building in pre-World War II Germany were conveyed, as the phrase goes, “on the cross” (i.e., surreptitiously). We should keep in view Gracián’s wise discernment that “Secrecy has the feel of divinity” (91) when, in a few pages hence, we survey Christianity’s application of the slanted cross and its alphabetic compeer.

X as done on the sly and, therefore, with its countering (clandestine) connections, conjoins with X as top secret, dangerous, powerful, edgy (figuratively and literally), sexy, death-defying and death-dealing in the 2002 blockbuster *XXX*, which was shortened, at the time, by movie-goers to ‘Triple X’ or ‘X.’⁵⁸ The film’s action hero is Xander Cage, a professional X-treme athlete. Xander becomes an operative who, after being put to extreme, forbidding tests, is singled out for “the assignment of a deathtime.”⁵⁹ He is put to a supreme test, not unlike the good guy–super hero Jesus Xhrist with whom comparisons are replete. Xander is called upon to perform a mighty act, nothing less than global salvation. Fortunately for the movie audience who might not get the message, their hero is tattooed and, thus, pre-marked and foreordained for his role as vanquisher. Like Christendom’s paragonal X, Hollywood’s was a kind of chosen one, a pre-elected savior with mass appeal. Predictably, the code name for the film’s protagonist who rises to uber-undercover spook is ‘XXX.’ The side benefit of this particular clandestine euonym is the boost a triple X confers on the hero’s sex ‘rating.’ The names Xander⁶⁰ and XXX, plus miraculous X-ploits play off the visual muscle and the massive mystique and come-on of X. The film’s producers and promoters knew the “sign [that] brings the customers” (Jean de la Fontaine).⁶¹ They calculated on the high-powered and captivating letter to pique and pull in hoards of customers, not just cineasts of the action genre. The upshot: X worked its magic by a magnitude of three. X-intrigue helped generate “a swift \$100 million” in ticket sales and helped hustle a “profitable ‘XXX’ franchise” that could

be cashed in after the movie's initial hype.⁶² The seduction–X-hiliration factor inspired the Washington, D.C. avant-garde night club JAXX to cleverly title its website www.JAXXROXX.com. Likewise, the factor was the motivation behind an off-the-wall rock band calling itself “Symphony X” and another fledgling rock group doubling its provocative bets with the name ‘Ex-Cross.’⁶³

X is “a highly sensitive unknown” and we shouldn't forget that “it's been that way for centuries,” not just in the past hundred years (Bishop). Among the alphabet's elite club, this member is the most enigmatic or sphinx-like. The word *sphinx* means ‘drawing together,’ which is exactly what happens at the enigmatic, visually-involving midpoint of X and X. Ending with x, *sphinx* is like-spirited: a dual, august creature; physical enticer and death pledge; encrypter of the unidentified; worker by return and player at the inexplicable.⁶⁴ Moreover, “X ‘is’ not and does not say what ‘is.’ It is written completely otherwise,” as Jacques Derrida observes (“Denials” 6).

In his observation, postmodernism's cunning champion of equivocation, paradox, and deferral alludes to X's baffling, inscrutable personality. This peculiarly apophatic character poses, ontologically, for the indecipherable: the other than self.⁶⁵ One reason X is shrouded in mystery and secrecy is the sheer evasiveness as well as feint and deferral derived from its posing as some other, its rigging (dis)guises for any yet-to-be or never-to-be-revealed other. The disguising makes X disputable. Given it is the ultimate, universal wild card, X quite naturally incurs for itself a name for being loose. This reputation for being wildly, endlessly variable calls up two discreditable contrariwise behaviors: “It is a bad thing to be good for nothing, but worse to be good for everything” (Gracián 48). The fact is that in science, mathematics, and all fields of inquiry or interest, X can fill in for any thing or no thing whatsoever. In this place-holding role, it tells us to ‘go figure.’ But if we can't figure as told or required (the equivalent of defeat by the riddle or unknown posed by the maddening sphinx), we have left on our hands that which remains indeterminable. Then we find ourselves stuck with a symbol that adamantly reminds us of how we have gotten nowhere certain.

Our arcane and orphic letter that can refuse to give (way to) meaning not only is obscure,

it can obscure.⁶⁶ To ‘X out’ is to blot or wipe out; to make illegible, either in a literal or an extended sense; to cancel or invalidate. The idea of crossing as canceling has a long history. John Donne, connoisseur of erotic and divine crossings, attests to X as eradicator.⁶⁷ One visual evocation of X’s eradication ploys occurs in work by a Renaissance artist. Caravaggio uses the double oblique to render the corporeal indeterminate. In one of his red chalk studies of Christ, he obscures the legs of the seated, front-facing figure. By a “remarkably bold ‘X’ of drapery,” the drawing obscures, yet brings out the limbs that will be cross-forced in the course of a cross scaffold’s drama (Bambach, Chapman, Clayton, and Goldner 41). The boldness, the sheer physical prominence of the cross shape works as the ideal vehicle for disguising what actually exists prior (beneath). The shape’s forwardness throws what came before or what would otherwise be outright into an obscured background. As is often the case with the blotting out by X, Caravaggio’s screening is an out and out tease, a playing with and playing between presence and absence. With X (in Caravaggio’s study it is really more a X in outline), we must parse, tease out, and reconstruct that which stands behind the cross covering. Picasso, in a different mood, would regularly toss a X in his paintings just for the feint of it. These painters, who lived almost five hundred years apart and in dissimilar cultures, understood that X is double taking. Its visual allure derives, rather significantly, from its traffic in the determinate and the indeterminate.

Those who grew up in the typewriter-age well recall having to manually move the machine’s carriage backward to align it to an earlier place on a page. The re-aligning was performed to rid oneself of a mis-typed or mis-thought section. Over that section on the page, the typist would then hit the X key. The action enabled the typist to ‘strike out’ a letter or other character, an entire word, or a series of words. The typewritten X-ing indicated that what had appeared earlier on the page was, in retrospect, mistaken and, therefore no longer wanted.

The custom of using crisscrosses to ‘remove’ simulated practices that predate the typewriter. The removal, something like a killing off that leads the victim behind, may connect to the crossroads’ connections to various disappearances, money and property being the most common and persons and lives the most harrowing. Ostensibly, striking-through or striking-out

with this letter by machine or, alternatively, with a hand drawn ✕, disposed of the objectionable item(s). In a later period of the typewriter, crossing out on paper was updated. It was performed with ‘miraculous’ disappearing products with promising names like ‘White-Out’ and ‘Liquid Erase.’ However, the advent of these over-painting products did not replace the notion of ✕ as the character to specify obliteration and associated ideas (e.g., negation; discontinuation; disallowance; bringing to a standstill, end, or a close). The persistence of the crossing-out custom continues despite that the products’ utility has almost dried up as we have moved into the even more miracle-performing computer era. Rather, the age-old tradition of the effortlessly executed diagonal cross—historically associated with death and promise, absence and presence—persists because this double-stroke form brilliantly executes (out-cuts) and, obliquely (partially) rids us of the undesirable. The ridding is consequential to its own intelligible, forthright presence standing, triumphantly, on top of and dominating ‘over’ the misconceived.

A fascinating, but unstudied aspect of the enduring practice of crossing through with a single or with a series of ✕ or X characters (or, for larger elimination tasks, a single page-sized or even bigger ✕ or X sign) is that an incomplete obscuring results. The crossing-out only partially eliminates; it doesn’t outright abolish or attempt to fully veil the offending original. Contrarily and oddly enough, cross scoring distinguishes, makes more prominent, the item or items fated for deletion. If viewed by someone else (or later even by the originator), the semi-crossed-out product (the underlayment) invariably garners curiosity. Anything crossed out (partially cloaked) excites interest. Marking out invariably intrigues; it instigates suspicion, question, or wonder. The practice of X-ing, thus, proves equivocal. Still, in our delete-key–typewriter-obsolescent age, what gets X-ed out with a computer can become cancelled or eliminated entirely. On many telephone answering machines a ‘fat’ version of ✕ is a control for deleting taped messages (Liungman 140). In many on-screen computer displays ✕ or X designates the icon for the delete function.⁶⁸ Many machines (e.g., photocopiers and faxers) use ✕ on keys for ‘cancel’ or ‘stop’ functions. By any stretch, though, these are not the end of the excisions and negations under the control of ✕/X.

When × or X stretches its ‘reaching limbs’ across another sign, it can take on a far-reaching connotation: it can represent the equivalent of “do not” (Bruce-Mitford 117). In this equivalency, × or X puts on a forbidding or warning wrap. Additionally, the crossing through of other signs commonly represents that what these signs stood for no longer appertains: their essential denotation having become outlawed through the appearance of × or X. The arrival of × or X spells disappearance, but only of a kind. By means of the overmastering of the cross sign or cross letter, some other becomes dissociated from its original, intended, or accustomed designation. This dissociation is an instance of displacement, a dislocation of identity or warrant. With these points, it would be apt to recall the dissociative function attributable to chiasmus, the discourse version of the optico-physical crisscross.

Sometimes the everyday identity of a thing can even be ostensibly changed if it is branded over with a crisscross. This X- or ×-branding can take away,⁶⁹ neutralize, or quash an entity’s real, outward, or standard significance, while, at the same time, it invents a radically different one.⁷⁰ The extremity of these antithetical, thwarting shenanigans amazes. Among alphabetic letters, the crisscrossing one wins the prizes for “Most Deviate” and “Most Deviant.” Although oblique, X shows off an almost audacious directness. Direct and oblique: these structural aspects and formal qualities of the chi-figure are recurrent. They await further attention.

This extraordinarily explicit form/character shows no qualms about countermanding other marks, characters, symbols, signs, images, logos, etc. Our bold signatory ×/X, like chiasmus, can be refutative. It can nix identity or negate signification. In “everyday use × often indicates that something that is on or near × no longer counts or is wrong” (Liungman 140, emphasis original). By crossed arms that conjure a state of barring, × or X signifies blockage, discontinuation (a standstill), and prohibition, in general. Whatever the media, ×-ing or X-ing out blocks or averts the expressible, knowable, or certain.⁷¹ These ‘executions’ insure that an alternative is left in place of what is done away with. This replacing and alternation are giants of chiasmus. With the new condition brought on by crossing or negating out, we are left with something missing, the quandary taking us back to the algebraic × that stands for some missing

value.⁷² Douglas Hofstadter, whose original and wide-ranging work on topics in common with, but not in actual fact on either the cross letterform or chiasmus—topics such as design, inversion, recursion, “contracrostipuctus,” figure/ground relations, form, and decidability *versus* undecidability—declares that “pages covered with X’s [...] would be as good as blanks” (403). X’s arrange for blankness; they symbolize and stand it up.⁷³ But beyond this amazement, they are arcane, perhaps even untoward, in bringing absence to mind, that is, to presence. X may have little to do with any-thing or, conversely, have a lot to do with no-thing. An aura of odd absence, not to mention ambiguity, hangs over the cipher. Yes, it’s a bit of a blank.

Keats shuttered over “death [as] the great divorcer forever.” Death, the supreme, most mysterious and impenetrable absence, is the omega of X-ing, the utmost grave, enigmatic, yet incontestable editing-out. Apposite then to the cruelist cut, a single X, a single X, or a trio of either in a row alerts as to dangerous or deadly materials (e.g., poisons, radioactive substances) and forewarns of hazardous circumstances or possibilities. In commentary later in this chapter we will be wise to remember the visual salience of the crisscross motif, that it is difficult to optically ignore and difficult to mistake, that gives it special value in labeling toxic contents or portending adversity, injury, or lethality.

Victor Hugo interpreted as symbolically apropos the philosophers’ use of X. It was the right symbolic fit, thought the writer, because the letter was presumed esoteric and shrouded in the fated and immutable (Firmage 256). The ancient Egyptians associated the oblique cross with death. As the last letter of the Semitic languages, of Greek for a considerable period, and of Latin until about 50 AD (Firmage 250), the letter stood for finality and connoted death. For a variety of reasons, crossroads became associated with death (*Brewer’s Dictionary*).⁷⁴ Many a victim and many a victimizer found ill or mortal fate at the intersection. As late as A. E. Housman, gallows clanked “Fast by the four cross ways” in Britian. This death notation traces back to the *Odyssey*’s mythopeic crossroads, the very spot where the enigmatic Sphinx took up her lethal residence. A pair of human bones at cross diagonals (often with a skull ‘overhead’) is an enduring emblem of mortality and death threats, which even elementary school pupils are assumed to know. Two crossed swords, one of which is death dealing, are what Victor Hugo

thought of when X came to his abecedarian mind. The diagonal cross as death logo persists. Rescuers and volunteers in hurricane-flooded New Orleans used and the citizens in war-torn Iraq continue to use an oversized X or X spray-painted on houses and other buildings to signify locations of the dead. The cross markings enable others, who will follow, to conduct their removal tasks. X and X are steeped in disappearance and are recordations of life's debits. They are eerily absent-ridden.

By convention, X is the mark of death for animated cartoons, comic strips, and similar venues. These popular formats use a drawn X in place of a character's eyes or eyelids to relay a message of existential blanking.⁷⁵ Merchants publicize with X and X to proclaim their products' "killer looks."⁷⁶ The thinking goes that X̄y/X-y looks can close (seal) a deal. Our present day "X-ultation" largely has to do with "death marketing" (Schorow).⁷⁷ The gaming world, which is heavily invested in inflicting and escaping death, killer roles (e.g., bounty hunters, pirates, mercenaries), and even entrepreneurial power plays, is strewn with pumped-up X's and X's in game titles, visual tags, and other promotions.⁷⁸ The power stances and overt straddle of X and X and their overt conveyance, in strictly visuo-physical terms, of fastening down or fixing and, therefore, finalizing quite likely contribute to the 'killer' and 'death' thinking. On the biblical belief "the letter killeth," X would be the chief suspect in a line-up of alphabetic signs suspected of conspiring with Death.

The supreme liaison between death and a cruciform is the latter as the most sacred symbol within Christianity. It is the symbol at the core of the Christian faith. The mysterious passion of the sentenced messiah was a tragedy staged on a plumperpendicular cross; although, startlingly as it may seem, Christ's Roman crucifixion may have actually been conducted on X-shaped beams. After the fact, the devoted may have elected a perpendicular cross for reasons of fastidiousness and to distinguish their crucified savior from the common lot who hung from the Empire's sideways cross (Pedoe 24–25). One lamentable modern example of execution on a sideways cross: as late as the 1870s, East Asian warlords with "supernatural powers" (read 'political powers') ordered "men crucified" to death, "nailed side by side to rows of timber X's" (Mason 109). But assuming tradition's perpendicular cross, the thwarting beams on which

the blameless condemned was ruthlessly laid out—arms cross-fixed to a transverse (lateral crosspiece) and legs crossed and bolted to a vertical beam—and tortured (excruciated) to death were no mere prop in Christendom’s original mystery play. In this sacred drama, which has had a fabulously long run, the diagonal cross has figured prominently alongside the upright cross.

Prophetically, for believers of Christ’s New Testament, the oblique cross in the Old Testament connects with issues of civil power, religious judgment, punishment, death, and the possibility of salvation. The followers of Christianity came to interpret the slanted cross as foretelling of the upright cross on which their savior died. For instance, one oracle of Ezekiel (9:1–11) tells the chilling narrative of those spared the swords of executioners by a × siglum. A nameless, enigmatic scribe carrying a writing case branded those citizens in Jerusalem who honored God’s laws. These righteous were marked out for salvation with the terminal letter of the Hebraic alphabet, *tau* (Firmage 214). At the time of the prophesizing of Ezekiel, *tau* was written ⚡.⁷⁹ The same life-preserving signum was inscribed in blood on doorposts and lintels prior to the frenzied slaughter of the Passover. The near wholesale destruction passed over and left untouched households displaying ⚡ “Early Christian interpreters saw in this saving slanted cross an anticipation of the perpendicular cross of Christ.”⁸⁰

“In the 3rd century Saint Clement of Alexandria called the [slanted] cross the sign of Christ, and Tertullian at about the same time referred to Christians as *crucis religiosi*.”⁸¹ Over time, the upright cross acquired a sacrosanct status: the emblem of eternal salvation through Christ’s holy sacrifice.⁸² × and + in themselves, but then with religious imagery as further supplement, incarnate the conjunction of opposites. These crosses, with crucifixion attaching to both its profound, but still in all extra truth, essentialize man’s most basic reality: antagonism. In *A Dictionary of Symbols*, J. E. Cicerot judges agon as man’s ontologic and epistemologic denominator. He determines that antagonism is “the root of existence, expressing as it does life’s agonizing pain, its crossroads of possibilities and impossibilities, of construction and destruction” (68).

In his monograph on Samuel Butler’s near fanaticism with chiasmaticity, Ralf Norrman is enlightening. He tells how “Chiasmus was known as the *figura crucis* and associated with

Christ” (33). This nomination and association have two explanations. The similarity in shape to the wooden cross of execution is the first. The second is that in Christian theology the Redeemer and the blissful Heaven or Paradise over which he reigns traditionally is imagined as graced with the same kind of symmetrical perfection and ideal harmony as the rhetorical figure. As the designing relique of chiasmus, the letter chi presents these qualities. The Humez brothers conclude that Christianity “imbue[d] the letter X—chi—with a wealth of meaning” (*Alpha to Omega* 166). These alphabet specialists elucidate that “X stands for the crucifix or cross, both Christ’s and, in medieval times, that of Saint Andrew” (167). Other crossed forms, besides the Latin (i.e., Passion) cross and the crucifix, came to symbolize Jesus and his miracle-working death,⁸³ but among these the sideways was preponderate.

In devotional paintings, frescos, and other art and decorative works dating from Europe’s late Middle Ages and for centuries after, the folding arrangement of arms diagonally was familiar. The crossing over the chest indexed the sainted or religious and it semaphored the celestial being, for example, the swooping angels in Ghiberti’s prized Baptistery doors. The act signaled piety generally. In the human figure, it also signaled penitence and the conviction that, through the miraculous cross sign, one’s sins might be absolved (blanked out). Relatedly, Christ as the embodiment of eternal, everlasting Truth along with the pledge of salvation through the sacrificial cross, with Christ as the Word of Honor, stand behind the age-old superstition of promising to ‘cross my heart and hope to die’ unless speaking in all honesty, that is, unless swearing ‘the God’s truth.’ A physical gesture of crisscrossing made by the hand simultaneously accompanies the truth-telling promise ‘erasing’ the threat of death. “Since Christ embrac’d the Crosse it selfe, dare I/[...], th’mage of his Cross deny?”⁸⁴ John Donne’s rhetorical question contributes to our understanding of how a crisscrossing motion ‘embraces’ Truth. By simulating a diagonal cross, the sign of “the instrument of God” on which the Son was given as a hallowed pledge of forgiveness and eternal reward for those who keep steadfast to the Word, one vows to do right or face the consequences. Forfeiture is written in the diagonal cross.

Conversely, if a person varnishes, minces, or falsifies the truth while crossing his fingers

behind his back or out of sight, then the superstition holds that by the hidden gesture of one finger athwart another and each going two opposing ways the forswearer fully protects himself. His protection, brought off by a back hand and got hold of on the furtive (i.e., crisscross), ensues once more by a type of symbolic erasure or putative blotting out that absolves or merely spares the punishment prevarication would otherwise hurl down upon him. When it comes to the truth, crisscrossing cuts two discordant ways: benediction as against malediction; that is, leaving you protected or leaving you dead. Either way, it's final.

X or chi also stands for Christ in that it is the first letter of his name (in Greek, *hristos*). The Irish Celts shunned X in their writing solely on its appellative tie to Christ (Humez 167). 'Xn' for *Christian*, 'Xnty' for *Christianity*, and 'Xmas' for *Christmas* derive from the X as auspice for Christ. An X alone, especially in liturgical literature, serves as a siglum designating Christ (Liungman 139). As the signature replacement for illiterates, X vouched-safe because the mark, as the sign of Christ, was 'as good as His Word.' X is a sure carrier and trustworthy conductor. And, of course, goodness of form is hard to prove otherwise.

Besides X, several variants evolved as shorthand ways to emblemize the Son of God and his death by crucifixion (Kendrick 53). These include the first two letters of Christ's name in Greek in the chrisoms XP and xp; IX (more often than not displayed either with the letter I or with a straight up-and-down line bisecting the X); and XC.⁸⁵ The chi-rho chrisom often appeared with the the letter rho (P, the equivalent of our capital 'P') interjoined either with the crisscross or with the epicural letter. The interjoining took one of two primary designs and varied according to how the rho, which was elongated in both cases, interlocked with the cross. The P could split the cross vertically down the middle and by its greater height stand atop the cross. Or, in the second configuration, the P would continue along the other's diagonal line and so extend to the right of the cross. This continuation made the line appear as though it were both a pole (or beam) and a human spine, with that spine holding a head (the globe part of the P) bowed down by earth's gravity (bending toward the horizon). The famous chi-rho monogram, in both of these basic configurations, ruled in the print media of its day (the first centuries after the death of Christ and through the medieval ages) as the physical-literal uni-son

initializing the supreme Son. This dramatic, iconographic sign, “often called the cross of Christ” (Liungman 46), was a vivid, self-promotional marker (i.e., a mark of a human person) that could impress perspective converts in the nascent years of Christianity and that would continue, over the ages, as a deeply symbolic illustration of their savior’s sacrifice for the illiterate religious, while being both illustration and lettered confirmation for the faithful who were literate.

The chi-rho monogram, which for many centuries stood as Christianity’s primary emblem, is Christographic by a visual, extra-alphabetic reading. That is to say, the venerated letter pair (derived from Christ’s name) ‘pictures’ a crucifixion through the likeness of a human figure erected upon or hung from a cruciform. This monographic letter–picture is, for example, the core of a fourth-century pattern poem meant to be “read in different directions,” with the longer messages laid out “along [the] diagonal reading trajectories” of the cross letter (Kendrick 51–53). The oversized slanted cross, on which is suspended in the upright position a smaller stylized human-like and, liturgically, Christ-like rho, physically conforms within the outline of another form representing the balance of opposites, the square (Bruce-Mitford 104). The same ‘personalized’ Christograph and its ‘dramatic’ exhibition appears periodically in modern times. Illustrative: a large-scale chi-rho reliquary graces the floor of the nave of a contemporary cathedral in San Francisco.

In its physical ‘person,’ X/X has other sacred applications. It formally demonstrates a doctrine at the heart of Christianity: the miraculous, paradoxical indistinguishability and inherent convertibility of Father to Son and Son to Father. Better than the *crux immissa* or Latin cross (†), where the upright dominates lengthwise over the horizontal beam (symbolic of the merciless contending with the miraculous),⁸⁶ X/X embodies formal equality and uniformity. With their consimilarly inclining-declining arms of equal measure that intersect at identical points along their identical, but separate lengths, X and X epitomize the chiasmic simultaneity and consubstantiality of Deus-Christ. Moreover, if mystical union is *in commendam* an “act of unknowing” (Derrida, “Denials” 10) and if divinity entails the “the principle of the negative”⁸⁷ (Burke, *Rhetoric of Religion* 18, 21–22; Derrida, “Denials” 6), then the conventional sign for

the unknown as well as for negation or denial, to bring in Derrida's recurring term, offers itself as ideal digest for the numinous contemporaries of Deus-Christ as well as Christ-Man.

During the Middle Ages, when cathedrals and churches were erected at geographical and civic intersections and the busy crossroads of population and commerce,⁸⁸ the slanted cross was elected to confer sacralty upon newly-erected residences of worship. Upon completion of a cathedral or church's construction, the building's consecration rite consisted of corner-to-corner diagonal lines carefully colorated over its pristine floor (Metz in Firmage 278). As literal substitute for Christ's primary initial and as sanctifying figure to 'undifferentiated' ground (i.e., ground not yet transformed into the profound difference of divine figure), the ash and cinder X was the authoritative, earthly pre-form incomparably suited to conduct a miraculous conversion in the name of the Holy Imperceptible. The *axsan* letter was *ingrossare*, Medieval Latin for 'large writing' and indicating a great, fair, certifiable copy and an object "in its final or definitive form."⁸⁹ It was the perfect choice for the transformation or crossing of the corporeal to the sacral and, doubtless, engrossing to all in attendance. X would tangibly and quite visually draw together the building's four corners, its outer perimeter and interior spaces, and its throng of celebrants. All would be tied into an inspirational unity of tremendous symbolism. X, the ulterior sign to chiasmus, could be depended on to figure association, harmony, and completion.

Verily, the sign and "the letter of mystery" (Firmage 258), X and X signify the Son of God as Mystery. The consecrating slanted cross, looking not unlike two colossal rulers, achieves St Bernard's proclamation that "He sits in equity," meaning that Christ perpetuates as evenhanded Ruler across and as absolute (corner to opposing corner) measurement of his creation. An *incineratus* composition of 'limbs' outstretched to the size of a massive public structure, the slanted cross incarnates Christ's miraculous reach across and supremacy over Mighty Death, a triumph arising from His divine self-abnegation. This abnegation or obliteration performs as segue to Immaculate Presence. The imposing shape of X to sanctify the most impressive structure they would ever see, know, or enter on this side of death impresses upon worshippers the unifying crisscross of the earthly and the divine in Christ Almighty, while

the middlemost point punctuated divine Unity and Harmony. The crisscrossing from the church's outermost points that draws together the four distant corners (recalling the earlier-mentioned sacred poem by John Donne, specifically "the round earth's imagined corners") visually reinforces how God pierces through, touches all points of, and cross-ties his varied creation in order to amalgamate a uni-verse, a single, altogether (w)holy version. *Vice-versal* in shape figures the uni-versal in idea. From the diverse to singularity: this is a counted-on 'miracle' also conducted chiasmatically, because performed under the auspices of X and X.

The single X and single X found their way in customs that, at first glance, might be dismissed as unrelated to Christ.⁹⁰ For two millennia, X and X have been abbreviations for a kiss. Thus, they have operated as standard bearers or faithful badges of affection and love (*OED*). This usage may well have its roots in the belief in Jesus Christ as the supreme model of love and the "God who is *Love*" (Otto 201).⁹¹ In addition, the familiar practice of crossing out by a series of X's or X's may derive from the Almighty's absolution, his blotting out the sins of man. Since sins are faulty or mistaken acts, so-called black marks against divine decree that, in turn, stain one's soul (stigmata that remain unless erased by absolution). By this reading, sins may be *obliterated* (Greek for 'against the letter'), blotted or blanked out, effaced, or 'erased'—'white-outed' in modern-day parlance. This wondrous erasure can only happen by that which Derrida characterizes as the uneffaceable and "unerasable," namely, "a full presence, an immobile and incorruptible substance, a Son of God" (qtd. in Kendrick 14). The ineffaceable, the thing of paramount presence, is best suited to the job of absolution. With no irreverence intended, this idea of erasing has a far more mundane equivalent in today's digital age. The command-X on computers functions to cut or subtract from a document that which had graphic 'life' on a monitor's screen and in the internet cosmos. This trouble-free, instantaneous resecting from a body of text (or release from the internet plenum) and the equally painless enablement of a 'resurrection' and 'redemption' (i.e., pasting or reinserting) elsewhere, proved at first rather miraculous transactions to those who grew up with the maddening limitations of the typewriter. These amazing 'executions' and 'cataclysm' helped turn typewriters into computer believers.

The slanted cross as symbol and letter is self-contradictory. Theoretically illimitable and yet limited; unitive and yet dissociative; inclusive and yet exclusive; infinite and yet proscribed and terminal; holy or reverent and yet forbidden or irreverent, it is an emblem of extreme slippage. It is a radical shifter between antinomic properties, associations, or ideas. That the sign is constitutionally two-sided devolves from and hence comports with its spatio-physical character. The form holds two diametrically opposed slants; conformably, so does the sign. As already detailed, the sign traffics in indecisiveness and contravariancy. Yet, double-edged as it is, it is also exceptionally distinct and incontrovertible. This second set of qualities similarly devolves from the form's habitude, its physical and spatial manner of being. The next section considers this wily, double-natured form and examines how it pulls off a habitus that manages to be 'both/and': both definite and indefinite. This will require our sizing up the form's spatial-physical and visual struts and their engrossing geometric and logical inter-relations.

HAVING AN EYE FOR ×/X

The cross saltire synonymous with our sideways cross literally means 'tumbling cross,' a cross that flips (presumably by turns of four), tips over, or somersaults (Walker). We might predict, on the basis of etymology alone, that a diagonal cross augurs risky business. Teachers used to mark up school compositions with X's, the most ineffectual of all correction marks ever devised because they stood for unspecified carelessness.⁹² These detested marks, themselves neglectful of focus, invariably left students unsure, not to mention frustrated and irritated as to how they should proceed in their next learning forays. As it happens, cross patterns in our material environment cause viewers to falter because they prove dangerously confusing. An X phalanx on a floor trips us up and results in a tumble (Tufte, *Visual Explanations* 70).

× ×-ed (times itself)= hazard: myself turned turtle or landing sideways or some awkward combination of both. A reverse, perhaps, to expectation, but rather revealingly, the phalanx confronter will physically stumble, mistake, or miscalculate her step because multiple ×'s are visually "strident" (Tufte 70). × multiplied overwhelms the retina, which fixates on and doesn't quickly detach from the visually assertive individual ×. This visual knockout

prefers a separate existence. When it is multiplied, it tries the limits of visual acuity or rather each × vies for our attention. Rather bizarrely, the superlatively balanced ×, when physically reproduced, throws us for a loop.

With this appreciation, we arrive at a paramount attribute of the × and X shapes, namely, that they vaunt extreme clarity. How could a diagonal cross be anything but absolutely clear? After all, ‘it marks the spot,’ leads us directly and unmistakably, but egoistically to itself: its person-place. In our vision and in our making sense, × is a prescinding, deliberative affair.

The intersection or intercrossing of two lines establishes a specific and exact point. To ‘wrest or extract from’ is one meaning of *exact*, and × does just that: wrest from a physical data display a notable, definite, singled-out locus. Its cross marking, a kind of visually explicit deictic projection, ‘motions’ us, actually or effectively, to dig beneath or look further to possess something, simultaneously and potentially, worthwhile and within range. On maps, charts, and in too many other contexts to list, × as intersect pinpoints a precise, dead-on spot or achieves a ‘dead right’ accuracy. Importantly, the idioms’ shared and reinforcing adjectival *dead* recalls and further underlines X’s associations with death. We can also describe the precision as “cutting it fine.” More will be said about ×’s incisive nature. × or X on ballots, polls, and standardized tests, questionnaires, or other types of printed material where one faces multiple choices picks out (i.e., makes seeable-knowable) one from an assortment greater than one. On the Internet, the oblique cross has become a standard emblem (often enclosed in a circle, or a box, or a circle inside a larger box) as a target for clicking to bring ‘out’ or ‘forward’ an image.⁹³ In this selection role it propels or bids us go elsewhere, to a place other than the one from where we began. It spells alternation, frequently of a reversing (*vice versal*) type. In these various applications, × specifies, demystifies, clarifies, reveals, imparts, determines, resolves—attributes, each and all, in contradistinction to properties of × brought forward or suggested previously.

The inordinate legibility of × derives from its intensely visual nature, a visualness rudimental but nonetheless clear-cut and penetrative. The inherent incisiveness of the form, that it presents, as an architect might explain, aris-ways, I suspect could well have been a factor in

the X letter form drawn as open scissor blades in a fanciful, representational alphabet created by the eminent ‘architect’ of Renaissance lettering Geofroy Tory (Firmage 192). X’s extreme visual dominance and deep (penetrating or etched) symbolism explain one another: X cuts a neat, an explicit and certain figure. It leaves a clean-cut mark, evoking what Henry James would nominate “a particular sharp impression” (AN 70). By its distinctive outline, which we envision as deeply scored, we humans know and fixate on this hatch mark,⁹⁴ for our knowing springs from seeing that comes at once and with surety.

Norman Bryson, who contends that we need to approach paintings as visual signs, enhances our understanding of the X sign’s special legibility by a brief discussion of the Chi-Rho page of *The Book of Kells* (*Vision and Painting* xii, 28-29). The clear, exacting, stylized shapes of the Latin letters venerated for centuries for their “superior abstraction” were nonetheless deliberately and flagrantly metamorphosed “almost beyond recognition” in *The Book of Kells*, with the ornamental Chi-Rho the exemplar of material complexity and visual extravagance surpassing all the *Book*’s illustrations (Kendrick 7). Yet amid the illuminated page’s retinal anarchy arising from a whorl of restive intricacies, the arabesque of unsolvable rivulations and tangles, and a bevy of abstruse, slow-to-emerge representational images, chi visually extricates itself. It’s a visual stand out. By virtue of its dominant and striking form, chi detaches or departs from the paginal turmoil, what Arnheim would designate visual adversity (*Visual Thinking* 70). The X or chi, “recognizable at once” despite being out-sized and entirely contained by and appropriated within the magnificent rho majuscule, captures, relieves, and settles the eye by its “obvious” and “unequivocal” signage (Bryson 30). By reason of its “fundamental,” “privileged,” and “overriding shape,” X provides a visual clarity both immediate and “meticulous” (Bryson). Not to be obscured by a surround deliriously intricately and involuted, X’s powerfully oblique lines vest it as extrinsic. Among its many traits, the complicated personality of X is emphatically outgoing. X is “not modest or shy” writes Tufte, whose discussion shows that, letter weight aside, X is always a bold character within the eyeshot of humans. It makes a strong visual mark or impression wherever it goes, whatever the crowd of objects striking the retina and vying for ocular attention.

Tufte and Bryson's findings matter here because of our contention that X/X serves as the pre-form and *arrière-pensée* of chiasmus. These commentators' assertions about the visual extrovert find corroboration in an article on chiasmus in the journal *Visual Language*. The "Greek letter chi" conducts as the "most visible, most superficial, and most extrinsic of signs," Jane Gallop opines (273). With her terms *superficial* and *extrinsic*, which, for the most part, are synonyms for physical stridency, Gallop finds X beholdable or visualizable to the nth (or at least the third) degree. X or X, it boasts an extraordinary visibility quotient. It has a salience, instant and inescapable. It seizes, detains, and impresses the human eye, as Piaget and Inhelder proved. All else being equal, X and X are incontestable, blatant images in the visual field.

Doubtless, the exceptional visual allure has as to do with aesthetics. In a study of the Greek and Roman alphabets, David Goldman calls X "a visually beautiful letter" (90). We feel this beauty and respond to it. Goldman's tiny encomium to our alphabet's twenty-fourth letter surely gets it right and obtains unanimous assent. But what is it exactly about the design of this grapheme that accounts for its beautiful, gratifying appearance as well as its visually explicit personality?

"We can never convey completely the felt quality of a design," acknowledges Rueben Brower, "but we can outline the [...] items" that make up a given design and which rouse a "community of response" to it (11, 4). Brower's "items" refer to the formal elements of an object. And his "community of response" accords with a thesis that has the backing of the Gestaltians, Merleau-Ponty, Cassirer, Langer, and Burke. We need to bear in mind the spatial "items" of this cruciform if we are to better grasp its special design and its meaning as a space-shape to which the human-community responds, irrespective of culture, time period, and other influences.

FIGURING THE ANGLES

In *Visual Thinking*, Rudolf Arnheim relates, "Numerals and letters [...] have evolved historically as the result of the search for sets of shapes simple enough to be easily produced, perceived, and remembered" (33). Humans devised letters, numbers, and other signs that, by

virtue of the simplicity and intelligibility (coherence) of their shape, could be grasped immediately and picked out with certainty by the human eye. This pair of comments introduces, in brief, Arnheim's stand on the criticality of simplicity and coherence to object recognition. Upcoming I discuss the perceptual simplicity and integrity of the X-shape and its lettered compliment X, which does double signifying duty as character and integer within the Roman alphabetical and numeric systems. Our interest is not in X's semiotic functions as letter or number,⁹⁵ but rather as a visual presentation, what Bryson would consider its "being-as-image" status (*Word and Image* 6). Most of what we shall concentrate on is the diagonal cross, for it is the cruciform shape or crisscross that imposes its mark upon, for it functions as the crucial stamp or mold—the crux, in real fact—pre-forming chiasmus. X and X are the easiest and commonest ways to convey ideas of crosses, crossing, intersection, etc.; however, X is the fastest way for us to speak or write of these. It is faster to say 'chiasmus is X-like' than to explain it is 'cross-diagonal in form like the *crux-decussata* or *sidways cross*.' However, X, as the obvious shape structure to X, goes before in the Gestalt sense. The reason being: it is even simpler and, therefore, has greater structural economy. Whenever we speak of X, we shall want to understand its relation to the pre-eminent X.

An exponent of Gestalt theory, as already indicated, Arnheim finds that what we concentrate on most especially in our visual field is not the individual parts, elements, or details of an object, but, if you will, the big picture: a well-defined, easily graspable (i.e., comprehensible), unified shape. The overall "shape of an object" emerges from "the spatial features that are considered essential" (*Visual Perception* 48). Spatial or structural features constitute the primary perceptual data upon which we attend when those features make up a recognizable, that is, an intelligible whole (48). In looking out on the world, the objects we discriminate and identify most easily are those that register as distinct, legible shapes.⁹⁶ "The perception of shape is the grasping of structural features found in, or imposed upon, the stimulus material" (*Visual Thinking* 27). Experiments prove that "Perception consists in fitting the stimulus material with templates of relatively simple shape" (*Visual Perception* 64–66; *Visual Thinking* 27). These simpler shapes are, of course, gestalts.

Circles, squares, and other elementary geometrical shapes are the most intelligible shapes to the visualizer because they cater to her eye's seizure of an "overall pattern" eminently simple, orderly, and generalized (*Visual Perception* 53). For this reason these privileged shapes serve as "templates" or prototypes for objects that may be second, third, or even more distantly-related or attenuated shape cousins. Perception not only notices, but it pursues "the simplest, most regular, most symmetrical pattern" in order to organize and understand "the perceptual forces" "interact[ing] in the visual field" (68). Gestalt theory takes as a founding article that "the tendency to make perceptual structure as clear-cut as possible" is how we sort out all that lands and passes in the data field (67).

A second, but no less significant Gestaltian article is that certain spatial parameters hold singular or special value (Rock 10; Goldmeier 93). Of these unique parameters, horizontality and verticality, centrality, and symmetry are the most assertive and instrumental. Beyond what our intuition tells us, the valuable gestalt experiments of Erich Goldmeier confirm: that in perceiving forms, "Two directions in space are [habitually] singled out, the vertical and the horizontal" (93). A form's tally with or orientation relative to these preeminent axes influences eye-legibility. In the main, the greater the degree of tallying or orientation relative to the horizontal-vertical the more eye-legible the form (93). Vision also valorizes the centerpoint, which will be perceptually implicit even when it is not explicitly marked (Arnheim, *Power of the Center* 14). The saliency of the center, whether physically denoted or formally presumed, is such that "we cannot even grasp the structure of [...] a shape without seeing it as organized around its center" (15).

Lastly, symmetry is that spatial condition which not only closely relates to the other two parameters,⁹⁷ but gives, exquisitely, a whole. Symmetry has something of the almighty about it: "We use it to cast order upon the world," expounds Mark Turner, a remark that momentarily transports us back to Blake's Antique figure with the prehistoric slanted cross as a kind of surveying instrument. Turner's emphasis is that from "moment to moment, in every aspect of our existence," we depend both on our knowledge of symmetry and our automatic, effortless recognition of it "to make sense of our world and to interact with it" (*Reading Minds* 70).

In *Symmetry, Causality, Mind*, Michael Leyton builds a large case for the profundity of symmetry based on its role as the precursor that stands behind (i.e., in the history of) and dominates over all down-line asymmetrical states or entities. Once more, Blake's Antique has applicability. Symmetry ranks, furthermore, as exceptionally instrumental by reason that most elementary geometrical shapes are decidedly symmetrical (circle, square, isosceles triangle, rectangle). Vision automatically and naturally looks to the symmetrical layout, to that which keeps to the Cartesian grid, to an unambiguous, measurable center point, to directional properties that run or placate to the upright and horizontal axes. These just named are the most fully distinguished spatial values and, bottom line, the ones against which the world's viewable objects need be perceived. Application of these two Gestalt articles will assist us in explaining why our eyes patronize, fix on, and instantly and indubitably differentiate \times when it comes before us.

From 'corner to corner,' inordinate symmetry defines the prototypical slantwise *crux*. \times is composed of four 90-degree angles, as compared with X, a diagonal cross with two equal angles somewhat less than 90 degrees and two equal angles somewhat greater than 90. The angular complementarity of \times and X occurs crosswise each cross array, up to down and side to side. But there is one outstanding difference between \times and X. In the case of the former, all four quadrants and all four angles are absolutely identical. Equality reigns throughout \times . Another way to explain this is that \times exhibits four-fold rotational symmetry; whereas X exhibits two-fold. What is meant by *rotational symmetry* is that if \times is turned clockwise or it is turned counterclockwise in precise quarter revolutions from its original position, the rotations bequeath, over and over, the very same figure as at the start. Ninety-degree gyrations, which also equate with the figure's four angles, return the identical object with which we began. The flipping or folding motion has not in the least perturbed shape or structural integrity; instead, the action yields the self-same entity, with each and every turn. Despite the rotation, sameness quite adamantly and incontrovertibly (!) persists all round. In \times we have an emblem of immovable turning, immovable identity. This peculiarity of difference making no difference and a form, despite being turned completely around, holding to itself and demonstrative of a

powerful intactness and structural sufficiency (invariance) are more than fascinating traits or intriguing tricks. They are critical aspects of X, along with many others, that bear directly on chiasmus, as subsequent discussion will explore.

A four-way right-angled X displays symmetry by reflection or mirroring as well as by rotation. These two symmetry types are distinct and do not entail one another. For instance, an object (a child's pinwheel, e.g.) may possess four-fold (or, for that matter, two-fold) symmetry but not mirror symmetry (Hargittai 38–39) or an object (a building, e.g.) may exhibit mirror symmetry but lack symmetry by rotation. Not only does X have symmetry derived by the two operations of rotation and reflection, the latter type of symmetry is two-dimensional: assuming again X a 90-degree angled diagonal cross (as opposed to an X), the figure owns two reflection planes, horizontal and vertical. Thus, if a mirror plane is placed at the horizontal midline facing either the top or bottom half of X, the whole is reproduced and if a mirror plane is placed at the vertical midline facing either the right or left half of X, the whole is also reproduced. Similarly, whether you cut a X in half either vertically or horizontally, the abscission leaves you with identical parts, two V shapes. Whichever (of four) way(s) you cut it, however (of four spins) you turn it from its origin, X recreates or per-forms the samelike. It beholds to and doesn't vary from itself. Once again, this is a X characteristic that chiasmus inherits by being in the nature (the form) of X.

The confluence of the operations for geometric symmetry, reflection, repetition, and rotation (Hargittai xii) performs these amazing, yet taken for granted 'tricks.' The particular symmetry of X congers up descriptors for the 'felt' symmetry consequent of X: *inexorable*, *emphatic*, *resolute* and *resolving*, *fearsome*, *menancing*; these are a conservative few. As I intend to show, the *decussata* bequeaths these qualities to chiasmus. But to stay to the topic at hand, the diagonal cross's extreme uniformity—up, down, right, left, and four ways round—offers viewers what Henry James, famous for his lusting eyes, would designate a “most assured show” (qtd. in Krupnick 535). X installs and turns (out to be) a sure, firm, and holding space shape. Its carriage is self assured.

In an examination of spatial perception, William James discloses the profound, singular

nature of the 90-degree angle.

We have more to do with right angles than with any others: right angles, in fact, have an altogether unique sort of interest for the human mind. Nature almost never begets them, but we think space by means of them and put them everywhere. Consequently obtuse and acute ones, liable always to be the images of right ones foreshortened, particularly easily revive right ones in memory. (265)

This observation from James's *Principles of Psychology* contributes to the current discussion in two related ways. True to his congenital "critique of reductionism," James recognizes the supremacy of one simple, but prominent geometric shape in human perceiving. The right angle exemplifies how certain shapes (he mentions also circles and squares) are "congruous" and "a good deal more distinct" than those shapes whose "measurement" puts vision to more recognition effort (151). Le Corbusier insists on the same, which Chapter Three explores. Suffice for now that the high priest of twentieth century's architecture avers that all who ply his profession have "by instinct recourse to right angles, axes, the square, the circle" because these unfailingly "give results that our eye can measure and recognize" (72). Of related value, these elementary geometric shapes oblige the eye's operational yen for exceptional regularity and orderliness (71). The contemporary typographer Doyald Young's notification that "Right angles are pristine" (8) sums the views of James and Le Corbusier. Young, with his sensitive understanding of the drawn line, declares for the impeccable legibility and pure visual assertiveness of the right angle in the eyes of the world.

The right angle receives special attention from Heinrich Wölflin in his magisterial volume on architecture. In *Renaissance and Baroque* (1888), Wölflin relates the controlling force for complete structural accordance by diagonals placed at 90 degrees. These diagonals at right angles to each other abide by an inverted ratio, which he writes as $b : h = H : B$ (66–67). The ratio indexes, as it produces precisely equivalent proportioning, where each half within a composition or within a critical section of a composition echoes the other half 'across' from it. We can't help but be struck by the fact that Wölflin's ratio is chiasmic. What is perhaps even more provocative about this finding is the degree to which the text surrounding the ratio's presentation bears indirectly on chiasmus, the structure of which generates from a figure

dominated by right angularity. Wölflin describes the effect in architecture of right-angular rule in terms that we know to be heavily thumbed in the chiasmus lexicon: structural uniformity through a regimentation of a minimal number of duplicated elements; co-existence of those elements across a central axis; emotion cooled or checked, if not neutralized; harmonious proportion and solution; “perfection and fulfillment” and “severe” style. Without any distortion of Wölflin’s intentions about what he means by architectural severity, we can translate his last remark to discourse to connote a composition of incontestable form and unarguable argument. In other words, a classical composition complete in itself.

Angularity, one of the dominant properties of the diagonal cross, is as good as the other two, centerpoint and ‘missing’ contour, to launch an inquiry into this exceptional structure. Other gestalts have angles (triangles) and in the case of some (rectangles and squares) are snug in ancons as well as angles. Latin’s *diagonalis* (from the Greek for ‘from angle to angle’) references that which is inclined obliquely from a reference line, commonly the vertical. Synonyms for *diagonal* are *cater-cornered*, *corner to corner*, *on the cross*, *oblique*, *kitty-cornered*, *crosswise*, and *off-set*. The last synonym captures the severance of the diagonal, its being physically ‘off,’ from the governing upright axis. Any such departure delivers a diagonal and, the diagonal, an angle. We should note, before going further, that angular severance and Wölflin’s classical severity, incumbent on the blunt right angle, are inseparable ideas.

Lines that come together to form an angle have many choices; they need not conform to the exactness of the right angle or the right angle right down the center. The high and mighty diagonal cross, however, wouldn’t think of any other two angles for itself. Only the right and the right precisely bi-sected will do for it. This restriction to the 90-degree and 45-degree angles, which triggers the syndication of symmetry’s regularity, uniformity, and balance, is a major factor in why the diagonal cross is not just noticed, but unmistakable, locked on, and immediately taken to and in by eyes and brain. The angular exclusivity, combined with visual incontestability, is also why the diagonal cross gets to be exemplary—a primal, venerable token of meaning and representation because of its distinguished, legible appearance and distinguished, motivated and generational self-logic.

Spatially speaking, \times is a total, even-Steven compromise. Its lines ‘split’ from the hegemonic vertical-horizontal axes in a departure four times precisely equivalent to the axes. It is a conformance of the four-ways kitty corner. The derivation of inter-related quadrangles through the action of a pair of reverse symmetric lines can remind us of how chiasmus is a foursome within a twosome ground plan; that, at a minimum, it has four elements housed within a strict binate structure. The lines of \times are offsets from the preeminent axes that organize our perceptual and conceptual grid style a quadrangular array and, hence, formulate a structure that witnesses in itself supreme physical, mathematical, and geometric agreement. We view in each of the structure’s slanted lines a ‘history’ where a 90-degree angle has been sectorized in precise halves. If licensing a departure from—that is, permitting a variance and an alternative angle to—the most sovereign of angles, nothing could be more clear-cut, unequivocal, and sensible (in both uses of that term) than the 45-degree angle. \times is born from the perfection of the orthogonal and, equally and serenely, from its nearest, dearest, and most agreeable and reasonable (comprehensible) relation, the orthogonal divided to precisely corresponding or mirror halves. This is why it can be described as a perfect compromise.

The lines of the diagonal cross cut exactly in two split the difference between our most important axes, the vertical and horizontal. In a passing remark, Arnheim says that the 45-degree angle is “simple” (*Visual Thinking* 146). Presumably, he means by this that because it slices right down the middle of the right angle, the 45-degree qualifies as the simplest, straight out solution to re-conforming and giving a new angle or slant to the 90-degree arc of the straight line. The 45-degree angle gives no more nor no less quarter to either of the resulting sides adjacent, but opposing. As a result, neither has a spatial edge when it comes to its respective angle: each is separate, yet identical, a mirror image. The line pair of \times halfway hewing to, but also halfway departing from the prime orientations of plumb and level pulls off, at the same notch, spatially separate, but still duplicate sectors and angles. By this curious, yet aesthetically gratifying ambiversion, \times sets the stage for the visual persuasions of chiasmus as well as the device’s conceptual applications, including intermediation, instances of *both/and*, and contradiction.

Let us call back Mallin's description of chiasmus, a figure that behaves "somewhat like" the cross letterform in that "each side bends and crosses into the other (inclines)" (220, emphasis original). The lines of X and × most definitely incline, but they also decline (segregate), doing so equally from, yet in measured regard relative to each other. They are mutually inclined and declined. We feel how these in-turned lengths lean or bear, touch and liaise together. In tilting cooperatively, but conversely to one another, they accord either an association of parity and rest or they instate a dissociation of disparity and resistance, or they amalgamate a third, in-between state. Mostly we sense how in ×/X all three exist simultaneously. The two strokes comprising ×/X can settle a score equably, or their leaning by contrariwise orientations can lead to something far less favorable and, hence, antipathetic or contra (including absolute contradiction). Agreement and stasis, as well as divergence and departure (change) are innate to ×. Sameness and difference adjoined and of corresponding quantity and quality can liaise extraordinary possibilities, most especially agreement, contest, or a destination squarely, but indistinctly divided between agreement and disagreement. Need we say chiasmus inherits these facets of ×/X.

Drastically departing from the circle, square, rectangle, and triangle and other basic shape-space executors (gestalts), the cross diagonal cannot be created by a single continuous line. It is greedy in its two lines. This linear duality and formal replication and mirroring are no trifling matter, but rather are inseparable from the form, meaning, and symbolic value of ×. In all respects, two defines ×. By design, it won't be talked out of being and doing by two. It is by twos that × can run to extremes, complexity, and contradiction, but also discharge, as it constrains correlation, repose, conciliation, unity, and intermediation. Through duality and an off-set, yet complementary physicality, × and chiasmus, each within itself, juxtaposes one aspect and a second aspect in the alongsideness that Goffman advises that humans must have to evaluate any one entity.

× also distinguishes itself from fellow gestalts in that it is not, in fact, an enclosed shape. But in this unusual absence (shared with +) it is no less an individuated, proprietary shape and no less expressive and calculable. It is as much an "insurmountable presence" as any

Merleau-Ponty would point out as an overt form of autfiguration (Lefort on Merleau-Ponty iv). X provides a formal portrait in full—symmetric, orderly, and consistent onto itself, with nothing superfluous to take away from its exhorting shape. By Claude Lefort’s reading of Merleau-Ponty, X, presumably like the “chiasm” about which the phenomenologist was intrigued in his final, but unfinished *Visible and Invisible* manuscript, declares “a self-positing posture” and operates as “the true in itself” (Lefort iv). Here is Mallin’s idea that each side of the chi bends and inclines, “while equally holding to itself (reclines).”

X SQUARES THE CIRCLE

For a gestalt, X is rather peculiar in its openness. But I have yet to discover anyone to comment on this extraordinary property. All but contour-less, X nevertheless holds firmly and solidly together. Of course, one reason for this sure grip is the cross-tied nature of the form and the correspondences we have of these in the corporeal world. We naturally defer to a pair of ligatures, bands, and bandages athwart one another to ensure that sides that have been cut or otherwise separated are able to knit together. Such physical conjugations put to a slant encourage unity and healing. The joinery of crossbars is enough to girder real structures and secure them upraised, despite gravity and the vicissitudes of time, weather, and circumstance. Cross-ties lash and conserve two or more entities together. Crisscross ties appear, for instance, in pictorial or sculptural representations of Christ’s crucifying cross, for that was how the heavy horizontal bar would have been suspended and maintained to the longer, even heavier upright joist. The sole ‘ornament’ on crucifixes is often a plainly styled X at the union of the horizontal and vertical bars. Even when performing strictly a decorative function, the X is seen as unifying, tying, and maintaining firm in place.⁹⁸

But another factor is at work that permits the problematic openness. We construe the diagonal cross as having a contour ostensibly ‘there,’ an outline that touches and conforms to the four ‘corners’ of X. This ostensible contour may bring to mind the conjectural one that self-surrounds in chiasmic locutions. Any structure that is clearly defined in itself and that possesses the distinct feel of bi-lateral symmetry automatically confers a certain sense of closure, if only

in theory (Portoghesi 164). With the concept of corners, we induct a square for the kitty-cornered \times . In our mind's eye, each of the four sectors enjoin in an inside corner with two adjacent sectors.

Think how we make either a \times or an X, the action that calligraphers designate the stroke-making sequence (see Harvey). Whether writing an X or drawing a \times , the procedure entails two separate lines, which are alike but different by being evenly aslant of one another. These like-counter lines materialize from two distinct hand strokes, which are alike but again evenly aslant of one another. In halving the original solidus, the obverse overlaying solidus scores itself in half. With the second stroke dividing the first down the middle, an exactly reciprocal outcome cuts it in two: a kind of geometrical doing to oneself what's done to the another. The double transversal, double-halving physical movements across space and the matched diagonal linear tracings over a planar surface necessary to mark a \times pre-view the two-way slanting (double perspectives), precise bifurcation, like *versus* unlike qualities, and clear-cut (incisive) inversion characterizing chiasmus. Intriguingly but not at all randomly, descriptions verbalizing how we create a \times or X assume chiastic form.⁹⁹

Now let us think on the value to us of a supposed contour. We begin in the upper right hand of an ostensible square and draw the first line of \times or X across the imaginary square to its bottom left corner. The line 'runs,' 'moves,' or 'travels' straight and continuously at a slant, a 45-degree angle to the vertical axis, which is also a 45-degree angle to the horizontal axis. Next, we lift our pen or other writing instrument from the paper and position it horizontally across from the right-hand corner where we started the first diagonal. This aligned, but opposing location, which will also be above and equidistant from the end point of the initial linear member, as it is equidistant from the start point of this initial line, will serve as the commencement of the second line, which 'runs,' 'moves,' or 'travels' to the bottom right hand corner of the supposed square. The consecutive stroke duplicates the antecedent line as to honoring a 45-degree angle to the upright and the horizontal axes. In other words, each stroke is a perfect compromise between the coordinates we most privilege. This ostensible, outlining quadrangle squares the outer boundary of the cross diagonal and lends, so to speak, a perimeter.

The artist Cy Twombly contends that “Every line is [...] the actual experience of its innate history.” It “is the sensation of its own realization” (qtd. in *The Power of Painting* 100). The X and O letterforms/symbols particularly intrigued Twombly, who delighted in the exphrastic potential of calligraphy and letterforms. A student of classical and primitive symmetry, this modernist was captivated by these two timeless, universal forms and with each one’s creation, neither of which he ever painted, drew, or etched the same way twice. His fine studies concerned with the motoric registration of shape are worth our attention, as they were Roland Barthes’s. Twombly requires the viewer of his calligraphic studies to weigh the ideomotoric principle, that is, how the idea of a tangible form is a reiteration of its original making. The physical repetition of a letterform(s) forces a regard of the motor movements that make realizable the graphic form(s) in the first place. Twombly ‘materializes’ and, thus, gives reminder and credit to the thoughtful, mobile hand behind and enactive of the materialization. He makes us ‘look to’ the anterior idea that the hand takes up and expertly choreo-graphs. As Norberg-Schulz rightly discerns in *Existence, Space and Architecture*, “mobility presupposes a structured [spatial] image” with its “generalized as well as particular orientations” (35, emphasis original).

Leyton contributes once again to the discussion with an indirect view to ideomotoricism. He observes that “Shape equals the history that created it” (73), by which he means a given shape recapitulates its formative past. From a “shape-structure,” we infer a history (549), most especially the thought that goes into that structure’s creation. As Gehry famously deduced, drawing is “thinking aloud.” To create an oblique cross on paper or other surface, we must have that cross ahead, in our mind’s eye.

The crisscross, with a square for non-materialized, but sensed bearings, is a figure with a deep history within the human brain, in the aggregate and in the singular. Each time, we make a diagonal cross, the concept of crossing is inherent. In addition, the human hand puts the crisscross to memory. An individual without sight would not find it difficult to put a perfectly good crisscross to paper.¹⁰⁰ Even when vision is lacking, execution happens at two confident strokes. The imaginative eye minds \times . It is an offset that stays true—secure and stanch.

× has a revois reliance on the square, that is, the latter subjects the × to itself and, so, presses the crisscross to an enhanced shape coherence (Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* 48). The square drafts for the cross, whether of the perpendicular or sideways variety, an “underlying invariant form” (49). Like the artist’s squaring grid for transfer and incising, the four square provides a kind of underdrawing, which traditionally assumes a spare visual presence (Bambach 22–23). We might conceive of × as the flip (visual) side of the square, with the square possessing, in Foucault’s designation, a dotted line status. A square is effectually there, reflected back in the × and, oddly or appropriately enough, × is there, reflected back in the square. It is not just doodlers and designers who feel there is a corresponding and inverse, shall we say mirror or chiasmic, bond between these two paramount shape-structures.

The square, in setting the bounding conditions, places curbs on the extensional lines of oblique and upright crosses, which have a potential to continue on indefinitely. This potential perhaps explains × as a sign for multiplication, an operation that “is a stretch—literally” (Seife 20). Although they are held to the strictures of their ostensible physical limits (the perfect quadrangle’s four corner points, in the case of ×; the half-way measurement between corners in the case of +), the lines of × physically extend, in our imaginations and theoretically, on and on into space. Spatial infinitude and spatial confinement, this is one amid a surfeit of contradictions inherent in the oblique cross. Infinitude, for instance, carries over to ×, a symbol that shows no sign of stopping and substitutes without end, and to chiasmus, which configures the immeasurable and illimitable, as we shall discover in upcoming chapters.

The × fitting to the square’s perimeter square is bound to prompt another geometric ‘residence’ in which × attains a comfortable, but even more perfect formal abode. The most celebrated of circle residences has to be the Vitruvian man immortalized by Leonardo de Vinci. Far less familiar is another *Homo Vitruvianus*. It appeared in Cesare Cesariano’s 1521 edition of the works of Vitruvius (Crispino 80). Cesariano’s single figure commits to geometry far beyond Leonardo’s double figure. The muscular, geometric ‘man’ of Cesariano stretches his four limbs in a true ×-like position (which isn’t the case with Leonardo’s *Homo*) to meet the corners of a square and the perimeter of the circle encasing the square. The circle with

contained square positions ‘squarely’ within a larger containing four-square, which is made up of square grids, 30 by 30 to each side. In Cesariano’s model, where man and geometry perfectly mirror one another’s ideal proportions and design, the smaller square runs to 20 by 20 small grids; a mathematical and formal compromise, which is also a visual and aesthetic assurance that the formula for mankind and the formula for the universe are divinely one and the same. The Cesariano composition of X-like man within a square within a circle within a square receives even greater geometric definition by a large left corner-to-right corner and right corner-to-left corner pair of lines. This formally inclusive oblique cross, whose center is anatomically centered, is missing in Leonardo’s *Homo Vituvianus*, whose center is ‘off’ from its square.

Leonardo, but even more Cesariano’s idealized models capture the Vitruvian principle of *homo bene figuratus*, which conveys that architectural properties must derive from the structural perfection of the human figure, most especially its symmetry and agreeable proportions. These models also warrant the connection of human body to the geometric body of the cross diagonal (the basis behind the Christ-figure within the chi-rho monogram, in either version: upright or diagonal rho). The models portray man as “symmetrical, upright, frontal,” the three attributes that comprise the “norm image of the human figure” (Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* 94). Children’s drawings and other “early stages of pictorial conception” automatically cede to this default arrangement we have of ourselves (Arnheim). We judge the human and the human-like from the norm: “Whether or not a particular figure, encountered in daily life or in a picture, is recognized and accepted as human depends on whether the beholder can see it as a derivate of [the] norm figure.” A X figure, which is supremely symmetric, ‘upright,’ and frontal and is animated by its stretching limbs, is fated to be judged like us.

Take a X or an X and before you know it you have a human or a being very much resembling and conducting as though a human. The National Women’s Health Resource Center has an X-structured Vitruvian woman as its icon. The Cingular Wireless Man began as a straight up X but soon acquired a ‘head’ (a dot at its top), and then, not long after, it became an animated figure in the company’s advertising campaigns and remains so, several years on. The

□□□X□□□, with its accentuated, centered X, has undergone the same personification and animation. Ernst Roch's submission for the 1967 Canadian World's Fair was an X shape in white on a circle's black background. In between the upright beam's raised 'arms' a small white circle conveys the figure's 'head' (for Roch's depiction, see Arnheim, *Visual Thinking* 147). The same formula of a personalized X appears as the logo for the National Arts Education Initiative. The capital X in the food supplement ChromaX also celebrates its product's cause and its user by conversion into a lively limb-extended human figure.

X and X as visual analogues for humans are highly suggestible. This impersonation offers one reason why we are so enamoured by these emblems and why they have such exceptional presence in our visual worlds. Its incised outline, besides having its own eye-appealing mirror symmetry, is a reflective plane in which we behold ourselves. Beyond that the outline of X and X is human-like, it claims both assertiveness and persistence in the visual field of humans. In a poem by Billy Collins, a female figure with "arms folded" (crossed) and with "bare legs set apart" is a mighty force to reckon with. Once in this stance, the narrator opines, women never fail to turn formidable (78). X and X convey the resolute as well as the impassable. In *Paradise Lost*, the "first grand Thief" trying to steal "into God's fold" is "cross-barr'd and bolted" from entrance (IV.190–1). A built X becomes a "substantial" protector. X can burke intrusion, invasion, wrongful entry, and taking away. The form and the symbol vouchsafe. They retain a staunch, solid presence and they incline to make physically and visually certain. The "dominant X" and X, which can override and forbid others as easily as it can devise them presence, have cause to be "arrogant." Afterall, the two strike us as unimpeachable totalities. They rouse and keep hold of even our infant eyes by their decisive, authoritarian design. In our thinking, they are *faits accomplis*.

THE METAPHYSICS OF X/X

X is a fixture in our visual fields. It impinges on our eyes by its abstract (*nonfigurative*, as artists would say), yet anthropomorphic form. In great part, these contrastive features account for the exceptional heed that is automatically lent it. With Arnheim's help we can

appreciate how this is: “so highly abstract an image will always have the chill of remoteness” and, yet, as a symbol, it will necessarily “convey a sense of lifelike presence” (*Visual Thinking* 146, 140). Without question, the ultra visualness and conspicuity of X is inseparable from its particular physical shape. There’s no getting ’round that it has spectacular looks. But beyond sheer physicality, we also need to consider additional meanings inherent in the X shape.

According to Bryson, the “privileged” shape of X (and, relatedly then, the “privileged” form of X) derives from its eminence as an indexical sign or “indicial mark” (53). Citing Charles Peirce, Bryson states that when a sign has a “natural or intrinsic relation” to the “ulterior phenomenal world” then it indexes that relation (52). Peirce dubs a label or sign of this sort an index. These special signs are motivated because their “natural resemblance” is “powered” or backed by “the anterior reality they are said to reproduce” (52, 53). In Peirce’s words, the index is differentiated from other sign types in that “it is in dynamical (including spatial) connection, both with the individual object on the one hand and the senses or memory of the person for whom it acts on as a sign” (qtd. in Broadbent 136). The index, of itself, is a physical manifest of a human experience and the spatial components of that experience. To return to Bryson, physicalness, he implies, determines visualness. The index is thus the physical, visual, and fully legible manifestation of an in-the-world experience, whether sensed at the moment or later remembered. By keeping before us the association of the X and the X sign to corporeal experience in the world, we understand that X stands out beyond that it is a scriptorial mark. Older still and even more eminent than its scriptorial role is an extra-chirographic, archetypal notation of physical crossing.

Peirce’s definition of the index interestingly enough corresponds closely with Jahani Pallasmaa’s definition of the most elementary of visual forms or archetypes. In his absorbing article “The Geometry of Feeling: A Look at the Phenomenology of Architecture,” Pallasmaa describes “the simplest, most archetypal forms” as “identified with our existence,” “our embodied memories and our world” (449, 450). In archetypes considered as simple spatial structures pointing to and re-marking “the reality that lies beyond” them in the physical world, we find a match to Bryson’s interpretation of Peirce’s indexing. A Pallasmaa archetype, like a

Peirce index, is a sign that veri-semblamatically registers “primary” experiences that we know through “feelings” or “memories” (450). The “direct” registration is indexical-like and the verisemblance (“looking” aspect) of the archetype to “the ulterior phenomenal world” corresponds to the index’s “natural resemblance” (450).

Contributory as Bryson’s remarks are to the present examination of the cross shape, the illustrious art scholar has partially misinterpreted the American philosopher–linguist he cites. According to the Peircean trichotomy of signs (i.e., icon, index, and symbol), the resembling sign is not the index, but the icon. Icons, according to Peirce, have “likenesses” to the objects they signify, whereas the index has “dynamical (including spatial) connections both with the individual object, on the one hand, and with the sense or memory of the person for whom it serves as a sign, on the other hand” (qtd. in *Essential Peirce* 5 and in *Philosophy of Peirce* 107). If Bryson conflated the icon (and its resemblance or likeness function) with the index (and its pointing and yet, on the same hand, participatorial function) this is perhaps not surprising for several reasons,¹⁰¹ the most critical here being that X/X is both an index and a sign. X/X is iconic in that it exhibits and excites “analogous sensations in the mind for [that] which it is a likeness,” the activity of crossing (Peirce qtd. in *Essential Peirce* 9). Yet, at the same time, X is indexical in that its tangible form points to and has associations with both the “anterior reality” of and the permanent recollection of spatial crossing.

Physical, visual, legible veri-emblem imitative and participative of transversion and intersection, X is a super sign. It has an outcropping or standing-out shape in our experiential and perceptual (optical and motor) memory. The modern sculpture Alexander Archipenko would say of this space form that it is “a reality in our optical memory” (qtd. in Wight 18). It is a phenomenalist form sharply characterized in our embodied minds. As an inordinately recognizable token, *incisive* in the many senses of that important term, it comes to shape (autofigure) those mental constructs with which it shares formal features.

LINES THAT STRUT

It follows that the same attributes of the cross-sign shape should succeed to chiasmus

given that this shape rules and rules a-cross the little realm of *AB:BA*. The visual vitality and symbolic “dominance” of X that Wallace Stevens underlines in a surprising number of his poems is not lost on chiasmus. The letter most often isolated in the symbolic alphabet code of the poet’s work (Furia and Roth 69), X is foremost for Stevens an icon and a character of exceptional force and influence. Stevens’ X designs both “sharply” and “immaculately” (Stevens qtd. in Furia and Roth 69); ergo, its incisive, cutting, or mordant (clean-cut) display and power.

By dint of its shape structure, the magisterial X “mediates between the limited and fixed contraries of A and B” declares Philip Furia and Martin Roth in their exegesis into how the “shapes, sounds, and meanings” of prime alphabetical letters inform Stevens’ poetry (69, 68, 66). They show that the poet works from the basic premise “that the alphabet has always been a code” (66), by which they appear to mean the letterforms’ shape structures function as mock-ups for prominent features of nature and man. In Stevens’ poetry, alphabetical characters have distinct identities and permanent roles respective of that code.

X in Stevens’ alphabetical reading has a special identity. He (and it is most definitely a ‘he’) oversees or “proctors,” measures, and masters the positions (extrapolating now from Derrida) of the oppositewise. What this means is that X intervenes in the “opposed and incompatible attitudes” of the characters A and B (Furia and Roth 69, 68). Stevens’ interpreters, with an excerpt from the poet, view X’s intervention between A’s side and B’s side of things as the world “hold[ing] a central place for X himself: he ‘promenades the dewy stones’ ” (69). Presumably, X’s promenading back and forth—his/its regnant crossing from one side to another—is how the sign brazens as and “is, literally, the [...] co-median.” As the world’s grand mediator, X subsumes one side and its obverse, poetically rendered as the soft–fleeting–insubstantial (i.e., man’s airy imagination) and the hard–fixed–solid (i.e., man’s hard reality) (68). Apparently, in consequence of negotiating between adverse or crossed characters or elements (again, Steven’s repeatedly named A and B), the character that literally exteriorizes and embodies a crossed state superintends the province of the variable and undetermined. In his renowned “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird,” the bird’s crossing “to and fro” makes

for “An indecipherable” mood. Presumably X can solve for the irreconcilable or unknown. Chiasmus follows suit.

Stevens’ imaginative ‘portrait’ of the emblemizing X offers suggestions for the physical-symbolic enterprises in which X engages. Through these suggestions is built up the essentially chiasmic nature of X. The sign ‘promenades’ chiasmically between A and B, that is, the contention *between* them—by going forward and then always “coming back” (Stevens qtd. in Furia and Roth, 69), by re-turning exactly from the B to the beginning point A, and by “assert[ing] a third” position that nonetheless paradoxically reconciles or “redeems” the opposites (Furia and Roth, 69, 68). Stevens’ X is the imperial go-between, the bridge that provides the way between every A and B. That which transpires between any such pair falls to X, with its stance and stretch and drawing between.

A FIGURE SHAPELY IN THE X TREME

Wallace Stevens, who singles out X more than any other letter of the alphabet (Furia and Roth 69), proclaims of it that it is “Too exactly [it]self” (Stevens 250). This proclamation by the poetic alphabetarian we interpret as endorsing, in effect, the explicit, superficial,¹⁰² extrinsic attributes of X that Gallop accents. Roth and Furia hint at X’s being perfectly emblematic—that is, its external shape fully coincides with its ‘inner’ meaning—in their notice of “X’s primitive integrity” (69).

In his provocative treatise on rhetorical figures, Ivan Fónagy underlines “the transparency and simplicity” of “the chi gesture,” which is his direct notation to chiasmus (4). Its simplicity notwithstanding, Fónagy also concludes of the X-ing rhetorical device, in accordance with Stevens’ conclusion about the imposing character X, that it exerts exceptional figural force. In Fónagy’s view, forcefulness derives from the visual inversional status of chiasmus (6). We would contribute that the X that reigns over the small realm of *AB:BA* proves highly compelling. This potent cross-sign compels or constrains, or to adopt Fónagy’s chosen term, ‘organizes’ distinct verbal formulations (12).

Even though Fónagy states that figures of thought like chiasmus are “principal organizers

of verbal sequences on all levels of language,” he nonetheless avows that they “are language independent” (10). What he has reference to in this last quotation is the visible nature of rhetorical figures. Figures, as the name itself suggests, are intrinsically visual. They are the “verbal analogues” of visual prototypes (12). These prototypes are elementary. Although “preverbal” and “preconscious” (35), they are significant, recurring shapes or patterns, what others would identify as Gestalten. The shape original to *reditio*, the figure in which repetition returns one to a critical beginning element, is one of the most primary of shapes, the circle. Different from but related to the shape of *reditio*, a pattern of *ABCDA*, is the shape of *gradatio* or gradation. With its *ABBCCDD* [...] pattern, *gradatio*, which is a figure involving order (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 504) like chiasmus, arranges a series of circles spun out along a continuous looping, but regularized line. This spiral shape is the visual prototype at the base of the inter-linkages, circularity, and evolution that this rhetorical figure verbally captures. *Gradatio*, explains Fónagy, “traces a spiral in” “virtual [...] space” (14).

Chiasmus, a personality (figure) different yet from *gradatio* or *reditio*, possesses a different tracing: an X trace. As said, the tracing on a page is a visual recording of the idea. As will be taken up later, two lines and movements of two opposing types are critical to our chi-figure. At present it is enough to say that an uncanny resemblance exists between the visual appearance of X and the verbal form it manifests. The uncanniness, if you will, is strictly a factor of strictness. That is, the resemblance is a nearness approaching con-form-ity.

This conformity of visual to verbal shape holds between the cross-sign and the crossing of chiasmus. Fónagy interprets figures as “secondary” forms generated from their “original semiotic structures” (1). That figures are the verbal incarnations of their visual signs begins to find outlet in Fónagy’s assertion that “In a sense, chiasmus interprets itself” (16), a statement that accords closely to Wallace Stevens’ comment about X as being exactly itself. Ostensibly, Fónagy moves closer to a recognition that a chiasm, in a way of speaking, writes its *au fond* self, the X at its core. The *AB:BA* rhetorical apparatus verbalizes (figures) its congenital graphic shape: namely, double opposing lines. The lines resemble one another except for their reversal (opposite or inverted status), a reversal ultimately true to or homologous with the opposing

slants or strokes that distinguish the cross-sign. Chiasmus, bearing the stamp of the indelible X/X, persuades by it. All the better that the stamp is of a deep, immaculate cut. In sum, the verbal inscription of chiasmus is the figure giving out (figuring forth or impressing) its visual inscriptor of double opposing lines. Wallace Stephens refers to the X as “mighty” and designing, “the per-noble master.”¹⁰³ The aim of the next chapter is to establish that this mastering form, when it takes on language and propositional meaning, conquers mightily.

¹ These are how Jean Piaget and Barbel Inhelder refer to the two shapes in *The Child's Conception of Space*. It is important to record early in this chapter that these investigators found it necessary to include both cross structures among their small set of twenty-one shape models for testing the ability of young children to distinguish spatial structures.

² So named because it is believed that the holy man was crucified on a X-shaped cross. The legend of Saint Andrew is that he was hung upside down and not on a perpendicular cross, as he found himself unworthy of emulating the crucifixion of his Lord on a perpendicular cross. This alternative cross was, nonetheless, a way of ‘christening’ himself, that is, professing himself a believer of the Savior in whose name he was willing to sacrifice himself.

³ Hollander’s *crux-decussata*—chiasmus synonymy—verbatim, “a chiasmus or crisscross”—appears in his “Foreword” to Lawler’s *Celestial Pantomime*. See Hollander in the Bibliography.

⁴ On his internet site devoted to his favorite topic, Marty Grothe begins each of the “Types of Chiasmus” sub-sections with this reminder: “All examples of chiasmus share the same distinctive structure—a reversal in word order that can be ‘marked with an X.’ ”

⁵ Analyst David Johnson was heard on 29 Sept. 2006, Washington D.C., 88.5 F.M. The program was American Public Media’s “Market Place.” Johnson, speaking on a slip in the previous day’s Dow Jones closing, attributed the financial downturn as partly due to the time of year when investors typically see a glum market (e.g., employment figures depress because college students return to school).

⁶ A second example of chiastic X-ing can be found in a letter dispatched by a young Henry James, Jr. to his friend Thomas Perry. In the missive, Henry admits “I’m abandoning my French [...]: or rather it is my French which abandons me” (qtd. in *HJLL* 14). The sentence makes the point about the diagonal cross as fundamentally structuring chiasmus. The sentence’s *French* and the first person pronouns, which stand in for a single referent (Perry’s correspondent), enlist as key terms. These terms exchange places over the verb *abandons* and the gerund *abandoning*, the latter combining with the stative verb *am*. The counterchanging nature of James’s jocular locution conforms to, because it is stamped by the X-shape.

⁷ Susanne Langer writes this sentence in *Feeling and Form* (70). It appears in the book’s discussion entitled “The Making of the Symbol,” where, per usual, her interest is with form and its symbolizing to us. Langer concentrates on the alternating pattern around the folk-art bowl, but she lends no descriptive attention to the emphatic pattern modeling the decorative one.

⁸ This special layout was featured on the front of the University of Maryland College Park’s Spring 2002 Schedule of Classes (2nd ed.), a publication produced under the direction of the Office of the

Registrar. The actual numbers in the Schedule's cross layout were considerably blockier in shape than could be reproduced here. The letters were in black and were given something of a third dimensional effect with gray shadowing. The shadowing was also used to show the 'backside,' if you will, to the front by having a small 'turned back corner' or 'dog-eared' fold back in the upper right of the cover. The 2002 background in red showed a typical page listing classes. Not much of the red showed through, however, because of the blockiness of the letters and also because the letters ran together (i.e., there was no horizontal line or vertical spacing between them), a physical display which unfortunately could not be duplicated for readers in the present text.

⁹ The term *influence* is from Coleridge and is apt to this discussion.

¹⁰ The former United States poet laureate Robert Pinsky has attested to this rarity. A self-admitted abecedarian, Pinsky knew ahead that at "X it's going to get very tricky" to come up with words for a poem based on the order of the alphabet: each word, in turn, for the poem he was composing followed exactly alphabetic sequence. See the interview in Moyers's book listed in the Bibliography.

Porter G. Perrin explains that X is phonically unnecessary (893). Many other letter combinations could stand in for it. His list makes a case for X's phonic complexity. Whatmough describes X as "curious" due to its pronunciation variances.

¹¹ Despite the inordinate length of the individual entry in the *Shorter OED*, X, oddly enough, is the beginning letter of the smallest number of words in English. Likewise in the *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary* (1987), a reference work of a little over 1,700 pages that has less than half a page accommodating the words starting with the twenty-fourth letter of the alphabet. Obviously X's sway is of the lettered kind. This gives evidence that X, in and of itself, is an entity about which much needs defining.

¹² *Roget's* lists G, L, and I in its Index. However, the last of these has reference to the first person pronoun; G and L are abbreviations. For example, G can stand for gravity and for money; L can stand for a railway or an angle.

¹³ The "names of the letters of the Greek alphabet can be traced back to Semitic meaning (*alpha* 'ox,' *beta* 'house,' *delta* 'wing of a door,' *jota* 'hand')." This information comes from the *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics* (273).

¹⁴ "X." *Encyclopedia Americana*. Danbury, CT: Grolier, 2000.

¹⁵ Discrepancies regarding how we see, read, and interpret these cross characters are complex. To what I have written in the main text on these characters, I would add that contemporary artists have taken considerable interest in this complexity. Over the last few years, several local exhibitions have covered art that considers the theme of the written (alphabetic) text and how viewers react to artful 'texts.' An outcome of these pictorial investigations has been the appreciation that viewers switch between reading and seeing characters with an alphabetic provenance. A further conclusion, at least one reached by the artist Denise Wolff, is that a viewer cannot read alphabetic letterforms and simultaneously see them as strict visual artifacts. According to Wolff, we either read or see at any one time. We cannot do both. For more, see O'Sullivan, Michael. "'Text': Reading Between the Lines." *Washington Post*. "Weekend." 7 Apr. 2006. 33.

¹⁶ "X." *Academic American Encyclopedia*. Danbury, CT: Grolier, 1997. The *Encyclopedia* also corroborates other statements in this paragraph. It states, "The cross is among the oldest and most universal symbols."

¹⁷ This quotation appears in *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary*, 1987.

¹⁸ At the merger of crossed roads, “the traveler must be prepared” to approach “with care, watchfulness, and sensitivity,” the reason being that persons are often tested or put at risk at these critical junctures. “We need to read the warning signs which tell us to be careful (“Dangerous Intersection Ahead”), to pay attention (“Stop, Look, Listen”), to be open-minded and flexible (“Yield Right of Way”). The success of our continuing journey may well depend on how well we heed these signs and on how thoroughly we develop the called-for capacities” (“Focus”). For those readers too young to remember, a sign that literally advised people to “Stop! Look! Listen!” once regularly appeared at American railroad crossings (Alexander, *Language and Thinking* 54).

¹⁹ In their book on the Roman alphabet, the brothers Humez call our attention to the following: “Priscian, the great Latin grammarian of fifth-century (A.D.) Constantinople, held that □ was really a modification of the (Ionic) Greek letter chi (χ)” (*A B C Et Cetera* 243). Goldman, however, shows how the X, which the Greeks finally settled on (having earlier had three chi forms) and passed along to the Romans and Etruscans, traces to the Sumerians (90). The Egyptians had several cognates including one that was identical to the closed diagonal cross forms we find in the Sumerian letter system (Goldman 90). The actual sign for infinity was proposed in 1665 by the English mathematician Wallis (Humez and Humez, *A B C Et Cetera* 243).

The mythological symbol is the amphisbaena, a fabled serpent with a head at each of two ends. The amphisbaena is depicted in several ways. One of these is strikingly similar to the infinity sign, where X is turned on its ‘side’ (turned 90 degrees) and the ends are rounded and closed off. In other words, a near equal to Wallis’s symbol for infinity. The amphisbaena is also depicted as a continuous circle and as a long snake body, resting horizontally, with two faces on either side with a knot, like the infinity sign, in the middle, a knot formed out of the snake’s coiled body. This later depiction is called a ‘nowed’ and heraldry drew frequently on this type of amphisbaena.

From the Greek, *amphisbaena* means ‘go both ways’ (Gardener, Notes to *Annotated Alice*, 58). The snake was thought especially treacherous and unpredictable because not only was it two-faced, but it could slither in either of two directions. The amphisbaena was the amphibian par excellence. If an amphibian in the larger, figurative sense is a being possessive of a double existence or ambiguous position, then the two-headed fabled variety is the ultimate version.

In his study of Samuel Butler and chiasmus, Ralf Norrman compares the ambidirectional nature of the rhetorical figure—its ability to go one way and then reverse course—to the amphisbaena. This shared category of the mythical and rhetorical figures brings forward the remarkably dislocating, perverse, and ambiguous or equivocating talents they share. If we consider that chiasmus, like its serpent equivalent, can advance two opposing, antagonizing ways, then “[t]here would be an insoluble conflict” within the figure (*Samuel Butler* 215). That which is insoluble, which has no resolution, goes on forever. In this sense chiasmus and the amphisbaena relate to a condition of infinitude.

Norrman stresses the abhorrent and frightening nature of the aberrant, divagating creature (215), but it appeared in a quite amusing context in *The New Yorker* 3 Apr. 2000. On the magazine’s “The Back Page,” the humorist Edward Gorey depicts a man plagued by a condition identified as “Seasonal Confusion.” The befuddled fellow can’t decide what time or season it is, whether he should hurry or wait, get out of bed or jump back in. Next to his bed is a circular rug with a labyrinthine pattern, which never stays the same; in each of the four cartoon frames it changes. This variability is quite intentional on Gorey’s part, for he goes to some trouble to make the first two rugs appear similar to one another, though they are not, and to make the third and fourth rugs appear similar to one another, though they are not. On the wall of the man’s bedroom hangs a Janus-faced picture. This is a pictorial representation of the state of going (deciding on) two contrasting ways. Hanging over the bed is a rectangular picture of the knotted or nowed type of amphisbaena. Confusion reigns in the fellow’s head and symbolically—mythologically in the interior design of his bedroom. Rather fascinating is the fact that the over and under coiling of the amphisbaena in the first and final frame of Gorey’s four frame cartoon are the same; whereas the coiling in the middle frames differ from these, but are identical to one another. In other words, the amphisbaena

pictures arrange according to a chiasmic *AB:BA* pattern. The serpent tied in its middle into a horizontal figure of eight, which is like an X turned on its side and closed off, displays chiasmic or chi-like progression over the course of the four cartoon frames.

²⁰ This treatise has benefited tremendously from the creative work of commercial artists and their ability to reinforce verbal messages about the products plugged by the rhetoric of their visual language. The example I am about to give is perhaps one of the best illustrations of the foregoing statement. It was a fortunate find I was eager to share with the reader. But due to the length of the description to relate it, it was necessary to relegate it to the Notes.

A Max Factor television commercial viewed in Washington D.C. 5 Aug. 2002 (Channel 4) associated the X form and concept of infinity. The form was the assemblage of a long shiny lipstick dispenser at a 45-degree angle and its equally long shiny cover at a 135-degree angle. The resplendent lipstick cross-resided between the words *Max* (the word fittingly ending in an XX, to make another subtle connection with the slanted cross) and *Finity* (the word neatly beginning with the F of *Factor* and having the same number of letters as the second word in the company's name). The selling point of this beauty marketer's latest lipstick was the product's unrivaled long-lastingness. The X-*Finity* or infinity implied that Max Factor's newest lipstick product promised lasting power bordering on the infinite. The bold Xshape more than snared the viewer's eye, which is job one for visual advertising. The X reinforced, by the prowess of its physical meaning, the commercial's hyperbolic message about infiniteness.

²¹ To create the infinity sign on my computer one first selects the type called "Symbol" and then presses the Command key simultaneously with the key for 8.

²² In algebra, x is the first unknown. The second and third unknowns are, respectively, y and z. These are in contrast to the constants, the first of which is designated by the letter a; the second, by the letter b; and so on. Following Descartes, if there is only one unknown in an algebraic equation, x is it. By this reasoning, x is as the most prevalent unknown and ranks as the quintessential unknown. This prevalence and ranking holds in and outside mathematics.

X and Y are the critical variables (respectively, the abscissa and ordinate) of the coordinate grid system.

²³ One commonplace non-mathematical example is the X-ray. This was "the name given by Röntgen to the rays in question, expressing the fact that their essential nature was unknown" (*OED*). In linguistics, an X-question is a question which can not be answered by a simply 'yes' or 'no.'

The X is also generally used to express that which is unknown. The letters Z and Y can also be brought in to indicate that which requires designation but is questionable. For example, "She wanted to see whatever would pass the time. Cities X, Y, and Z would do." As in algebra, however, if there is only one term requiring designation, X is elected for the job: "She wanted to see whatever would pass the time. City X would do."

Kenneth Burke in *Permanence and Change* provides an example of this last way of using X. Speaking of the term *escape*, he writes that it "came to be applied loosely, in literary criticism especially, to designate any writer or reader whose interests and aims did not closely coincide with those of the critic. While apparently defining a trait of the person referred to, the term hardly did more than convey the attitude of the person making the reference. It looked objective, as though the critic were saying, 'X is doing so-and-so'; but too often it became merely a strategic way of saying, 'I personally don't like what X is doing'" (16). Burke's point is that *escape*, in being employed "in many ways," became a useless, empty term. X could be anything and in being anything, was really no thing. My point is that X is the customary mode by which we can 'name' the unnamed, somewhat 'tie down' the variable, and partially 'get to know' the unknown.

²⁴ *The Encyclopedia American International Edition* entry on “X” indicates, but does not elaborate on the antiquity of the practice.

²⁵ I have borrowed what Laura Kendrick has to say about putting one’s signature to paper. But a surrogate mark isn’t the same as writing one’s name, because with the particularity of handwriting “all the deliberately designed differences, incongruities, and intricacies [...] give the impression of life and constitute an individuality” (24). Obviously a × barely does any of that for the individual unable to write his signature and, thus, the qualifier of “for all practical purposes” (which has the advantage of adumbrating that the practice of using the X in place of an actual signature was done for practical purposes).

²⁶ The U. S. Postal Service’s “Delivery Notice/Reminder/Receipt” form (PS Form 3839, Nov. 1999) has a long rectangular area for one’s signature. Just ahead of that area, are two directives to guide the person filling out the form: the word *Signature* and below that, an X. The X appears to serve two purposes. First, it reiterates that a signature is required. Secondly, it marks the near location where that signature is to take place. This second service is in the letter’s X-marks-the-spot capacity.

²⁷ A memorable example of this is Philip Gross’s poem “Service.” The poem is about X, who is “in service/probably not lovely, no one’s daughter/in particular.” By the device of personification, Gross references the serviceability and the self-effacing nature of a feminized X. See Gross’s *Manifold Manor*, 1989.

²⁸ Illustrative is a department store commercial. The television promotion for a fall sale wanted to promote that the old in clothes (summer’s clothing) was, figuratively speaking, out. Not only was this the case, the store had said “no” to carrying what had become out-dated and out-of-season apparel. It conveyed this message by showing a line up of three dressing rooms, with several pieces of clothing scattered about, obviously left behind and rejected by customers. On the front of each dressing room door appeared a super large X, which was enclosed in a box. That sort of marking alone could have ‘said’ that the out-of-date styles were to be removed by the store, the X signing obliteration or elimination. But the box also enclosed a ‘NO’ to further accentuate that the department store, promoting itself as up-to-the-minute in fashion, wasn’t about to let such rejected, passé clothing linger around and get in the consumers way while shopping for the latest thing. Given that an X of itself and superimposed on something pictured, a thing meant to be expunged, the store’s ‘NO’ was redundant. However, the redundancy underlines that X is another way of saying ‘not,’ ‘no,’ or ‘not this.’ The commercial was for the now defunct Hecht’s department stores (of The Hecht Company) and appeared on a local television station 15 Aug. 2002 in Washington D.C.

²⁹ The poet is Philip Gross and the poem is “Service.” (See also Note 27). Gross’s title refers to his “X” as being something of a “scullery” maid “on her knees,” a “daughter” who is unclaimed (“no one’s”), anonymous, and “in service.” Rather fascinatingly, the poem ends on a strong Christological note. Gross evokes communion and Christ’s sacrifice (his “Service”?) with “This is her flesh” “as soft as yours” and the assertion to “taste/of” that flesh, with its savor of “musty [...] earth, but sweet./In memory of X/take, eat.” Philip Gross. *Manifold Manor*. New York: Faber and Faber, 1989. 34-35.

³⁰ An Internet web site that makes available what it calls “uncategorizable writing” takes advantage of an X in its name. The site is <http://www.Altx.com/home.html> and it is where Alt-X Press can be found. Presumably the ‘Alt’ stands for the Alt on computer keyboards, a key that is also often the Option key. The idea appears to be that Alt-X Press provides readers with the option or alternative of texts that do not fall within the usual, nameable categories of discourse. The Press is interested in “new media art and theory.” Its hip, pushing-the-limits ethos gains by the X in its name.

Worthy of note, too, is the site and Press logo: “Where the digerati meet the literati.” The X, shape relative to X, is apposite for representing the place where intersection or meeting happens.

³¹ Hand surgeon Frank Wilson acclaims the “momentous, complex, magical move[ment] of the human hand” made possible by “thumb opposition” (342, endnote 17). Doctor Wilson emphasizes the unique properties of the pollex, noting that “the combination of strength, independence, and versatility sets it apart” from the other fingers (138–139) and then illustrates how it “can carry on a solo act” (139). During his physician’s tour of the hand, Wilson cites the antepositioning of the thumb on page 137. Like X, the thumb demonstrates a “balanced interplay of opposing pulls” that account for its “complex movements” (136). For one specimen of the thumb’s ability to “accommodate” see 137. However, accommodation is a general hallmark of this miracle finger. Finally, it is interesting to note with respect to X that a back-and-forth thumb gesture is used to suggest the idea of exchange (137).

³² Illustrative is Lawler’s distinction (about which many would disagree) between “the vital and mysterious X of poetry” and “the ABC discursiveness of prose” (120).

³³ In a chapter from his book *Made in America*, Bill Bryson indicates that different eras tend to favor certain sounds and letters in the closing syllable of a product’s name. For some reason, which Bryson does not explain, “products dating from the 1920s and early 1930s often ended in *-ex* (*Pyrex*, *Cutex*, *Kleenex*, *Windex*), while those ending in *-master* (*Mixmaster*, *Toastmaster*) generally betray a late 1930s or early 1940s genesis” (“The Hard Sell: Advertising in America.” Rpt. *Language Awareness: Readings for College Writers*. Ed. Paul Eschholz, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2000. 565–577). Interestingly, *-ex* seems to have had a greater appeal at building and maintaining a brand name than *-master*, at least the *ex* products Bryson lists are still with us while the *master* ones have faded from sight.

The lasting allure of X can be appreciated in the degree to which advertisements and commercials continue to flaunt the letter to pitch their products and services. X-tra or eX-tra, as well as other variations, with or without hyphens (e.g., X-cellent, eX-traordinary) are forms that appear widely, as for example, in a 2001 television ad for Revlon mascara. The same can be said of books titles, captions, newspaper lead-ins, etc.

With respect to cryptically hip, I have in mind the popular television program *The X-Files*, which dealt in the occult. It maintained a record-breaking long television life because of its large following. Schorow states that “The Cult TV series the ‘X-Files,’ [...] has enhanced the hipness of the letter X” in present day American culture. The show inspired and generated more X-ness, if you will, with the 1995 novel *X Marks the Spot*. The book by Les Martin is based on the television series created by Chris Carter. A follow-on show for an audience responsive to the hipness of our special letter is *Murder in Small Town X*, a reality television show that premiered in the summer of 2001.

Webster’s Word Dictionary explains the association between the word *cryptic* and the notion of something hidden. The “Greek *apokryphos* meant ‘hidden.’ The root verb *kyrptein* ‘to hide’ is also the source of the English words *crypt* and *cryptic*.”

³⁴ In *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, the Black Muslim leader called himself “the most articulate hustler out there.” When one considers that “Little” had been the revolutionary’s surname, we gather the impetus to come up with a replacement. The need for another last name (one that wasn’t a diminutive) was obvious in the case of a leader committed to wholesale, sweeping change. Selection of X was a savvy public relations move. The aptness of the choice of this Muslim name strikes us in retrospect as even more fitting when we consider how the X- or chi-rhetorical figure has associations with revolution and conversion. Name changes (he called himself ‘Detroit Red’ before assuming ‘Malcolm X’) and reinventions of who he was and what roles he wanted to assume, reversals in philosophy, causes, and commitments, and various other autobiographical twists and turns mark the personal, religious, and

political career of this complicated man. Malcolm X and his countercultural views became exceptionally controversial. It was, therefore, apt that his moniker celebrated a bold cross figure, one that is a physical emblem of controversion.

X is such a hot commercial property that Malcolm X's widow and Spike Lee, who directed an early 1990s biographical film about the legendary activist, clashed over promotional rights to the letter (Schorow).

³⁵ The American punk rock band X, formed in 1977, deliberately took this name because of its cryptic connotations (*Brewer's Dictionary of Names*). Even better known is the group INXS. This rock band had a 1990 album entitled 'X.' The compact disc featured a bold, blocked red X across its face.

Event planners and advertisers frequently oversize the letterform X in their literature or use × or X in place of 'ex.' For example, while I was writing part of this chapter the University of Maryland College Park sponsored a late-night event for undergraduates. It was promoted as the "Xtreme All-Niter" (see, e.g., *The Diamondback* 22 September 2000, 10.) The posters and different advertisement formats displayed across campus had a visual heyday with X. Multiples of X were emblazoned across the entire poster or ad, or it 'shouted' as a gigantic letter in the official name of the event. This same kind of X-reliant promotion was done for a community event for teenagers called "Xtreme Teen Program's End-of-the-Summer Blowout" (see *The Bowie Blade-News* 23 August 2001, A1, B1). There, again, X was the draw.

And this from a 1998 *Boston Herald* article on the popularity of X in American culture: The television show 'Xena, Warrior Princess' was given this name, even though the main character's name was pronounced 'Zena.' The co-producer used the unpronounced X intentionally, because his boss had once told him that a word spelled with the letter X becomes more mysterious (Schorow).

An example that combines all the qualities of X touched on in this paragraph was the formation in the winter of 2000–2001 of the erstwhile XFL, an at-the-time new football league whose promoters and investors intended it as a competitor to the National Football League. XFL was short for 'Extreme Football League.' The abbreviation was advertised far more than the longer title. The League featured free-for-all, no holds-barred kinds of football playing. The radical, extreme players weren't held to the usual rules and regulations. Repeatedly throughout XFL broadcasts, viewers were bombarded with the name of this new sports enterprise. A huge, powerful looking black X that looked as though it had been on steroids assaulted the eye and then would be immediately followed by the letters XFL in red superimposed upon the pumped-up black X. The Aphrodite X-factors were the scantily clad, breathy, extra energetic cheerleaders. One of these pom-pom 'girls' coincidentally advertised her physical assets X-wise when she let viewers in on the secret: "I love the camera and the camera loves me" (10 Mar. 2001; televised game between the Orlando Rage and the Las Vegas Outlaws).

The promoters of the XFL made prodigious use of X. The memorabilia was saturated with the letter. The Skycam was renamed the Xcam. The Los Angeles team went by 'Xtreme'; another team with X in it was the 'Memphis Maniax.' Chicago's franchise took the title 'Enforcers'; San Francisco's team, the title 'Demons.' These last two titles are characteristics easily associated with X. The Memphis title, with its play on mania, gestures to the wild (card) aspect of X. Brawny, audacious-looking X's were ubiquitous. The venture capitalists and promoters behind the XFL counted heavily on its premier visual to make their fortunes.

³⁶ These qualities were exemplified in the long-running television show *The X-Files*.

³⁷ The hostility Singer's painting received at the 1884 Salon caused the painter to move from Paris and relocate in London.

³⁸ One example stands in for many that would be as illustrative. I have reference to the comic strip "Mutts" that appeared 18 Aug. 2007 in the *Washington Post*, C11. The strip was composed of three blocks. In the first block, a bird overhears a crab 'cussing.' The bad language is represented by four

picture symbols: a swirl, a star, #, and a lightening bolt. In the next block, the bird asks the crab if it can't come up with "a better adjective" (emphasis original). The final block depicts the crab's improvement asked for by the bird. This so-called better term ends up heightening the first adjective; in other words, a more severe level of swearing. This second, more obscene picture 'word' is also shown by means of four symbols. Two of these symbols are repeats: the original swirl and the bolt of lightening, somewhat larger than in its first rendition in block one. But now the swearing adjective has two new symbols: a hand-drawn sideways cross and a set of crossed bones with a skull above. For the comic strip author and his reader, these two crossing symbols connote a worse or more obscene display of cursing.

³⁹ *Picture and Text* reveals the tendency on James's part to designate portraits by the subject's name. At other times in his book, he refers to works with names he makes up for the occasion (which perhaps are the names he personally remembered certain works by). For example, he refers to another Sargent portrait as "The Hall with the Four Children" (106). Expediency in writing may be the cause for these tendencies not to use, at least in the essays about artists and illustrators in *Picture and Text*, the official title bestowed by the artist and circulated in print media (museum or salon catalogs and programs, newspaper and other art reviews, etc).

⁴⁰ The three adjectives are excerpted from Michael O'Sullivan's critique of two separate 1999 Washington, D.C. exhibitions showcasing the expatriate American painter, who O'Sullivan nominates a "Finicky Genius." O'Sullivan describes entering the exhibit at the National Gallery of Art and catching a distant glimpse of "Madame X." He writes, "Visible from 50 yards away through an open passageway, the full-length portrait [...] has been hung well into the middle of the show, but the drama and sensuality of Sargent's masterpiece suck you toward it like an undertow" (N56). Here we have the "tantalizing" and deadly aspect of the picture. O'Sullivan, however, isn't descriptively done yet with the power of the painting. He continues, "Don't be surprised if you feel your pulse—and your pace—quicken as you rush through the show's first several rooms to get a closer look at it," the picture that "scandalized audiences at the 1884 Parisian Salon at which it was first exhibited" (N56).

I attended this exhibition and believe O'Sullivan has it exactly right. The portrait is fabulously sirenic and irresistible and even disarming to the point of disabling or enfeebling (at least one's body), and thus it would appear the commercially astute Sargent deserves the public relation's "genius" title for conferring an X cryptonym on the portrait. It made a bigger name and gave additional notoriety, where there was plenty to begin with.

⁴¹ A fully dressed female deity from Western antiquity with part of the garment slipped down unto her bare shoulder connotes the goddess of beauty, love, and fertility. This slipping shoulder garment is the identifying visual feature of Venus. It is the feature art historians apply to distinguish Venus from other goddesses with a similar provenance. This precise depiction, duplicated across Greece for centuries, was then passed to the Romans. The Romans continued the tradition. See www.gettymuseum.org.

⁴² In their discussion of the versatility of X, the Humez brothers explain that "tinsmiths and brewers of strong drink used a system of single, double, or triple X's to advise the consumer as to the consistency of the alloy and the potency of their beverage. X as a designation of the strength of the maker's product seems to have carried over to the manufacture of high explosives, and at least one brand of male contraceptive, in more modern times" (*Alpha and Omega*, 168).

So potent has the letter become in contemporary American advertising that when Apple came out with a new operating system, Mac OS X, the X caused considerable confusion. Despite the fact that generations of Macintosh operating systems are distinguished by a progression in number rather than letter, the X form used by the company has been taken for an alphabetic sign. For example, in one advertisement featuring what the experts are reporting about the latest system, a reviewer from "BusinessWeek" online spells out for his readers that the X refers to the number. He writes, "I think every Mac user should give OS X (pronounced OS Ten) a serious look" (Charles Haddad qtd. in

“MacZone” 104m. 7). At the same time it should be pointed out that in the past the numbers for the Macintosh operating system were always given in Arabic rather than Roman numeric symbols. We can speculate that the computer company’s decision to go not with 10 but with X, a symbolic switch hitter that can go either way alphanumerically, was done to exploit the glitz of the commercially hyped letter. Along this line, another reviewer in the same MacZone advertisement applauds “the Mac platform’s beautiful new interface,” calling it “is as sexy as they come.” The comment simply would not have worked had the system been named ‘OS 10.’

⁴³ To illustrate, consider the imaginative work of fiction “The Destiny of Nathalie X” by William Boyd. Boyd is an author of six novels, a screenplay, and several short stories, among which is “Nathalie.” The full title of the story is also the title of the eccentric art film being produced in an eccentric fashion as the story unfolds. The movie is described by one character, a conceited, celebrated film reviewer, as an “Extraordinary film, extraordinary” which is “Surreal, bizarre [...], sometimes downright incomprehensible” (Boyd 7). Everyone seems to find the film, or rather more exactly the manner of its making, altogether radical and mesmerizing. It focuses on a captivatingly beautiful young woman, the Nathalie X of the title, who makes the most ordinary activities look extraordinary and vice versa. Like X, the character (or is it the actress?) is impenetrable. In the film’s closing scene, Nathalie X takes out not a fake, but a real gun and starts shooting. Several men are really hurt in the filming of the shooting. This is a realization, if you will, of the debilitating and fatal effect she has on her male viewers. Boyd’s use of X is altogether apt, for fatality hangs about X. It is probably no coincidence that the last name of the second actress who is briefly considered to play Nathalie X is called ‘Cross.’ (Boyd seems to be playing one of his many games here. *Cross* isn’t needed because the film has an X. This makes *Cross* redundant to the story as well.)

What is worth noting, too, is the titular “destiny” collocated with the letterform X. That which is destined to happen cannot be resisted: it is irresistible. Such is the case with the film’s alluring protagonist. It is also the case that she, the director, the soundman, the reviewers, and certain repeat onlookers on location during the filming are all drawn toward an unavoidable disaster.

The second example is the 1999 film *Pola X* directed and co-written by Leos Carax. The word *pola* is an acronym from the initials of the French translation of the Herman Melville novel that inspired the film. Melville’s *Pierre or The Ambiguities* is the work of fiction with which the French movie director had identified since early adulthood. Carax admits he is drawn to insolvable stories and contradictions generally. Along these lines, we are not surprised to learn in an interview of Carax that Henry James’s *The Wings of the Dove* and Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain* are other literary favorites. See Leos Carax.

The X in the title in all probability was added to the acronym *Pola* to suggest core qualities of the film: its many juxtapositions, ambiguities, and mysteries and, too, the strange, bizarre atmosphere throughout. The X appears to relate, as well, to the protagonist who gives himself up to something violent, dangerous, and desirous, an intensely sexual relationship with an alluring, pale and ghostly young woman who claims to be a ‘sister’ (i.e., a kind of sisterly soul mate) to Pierre but who isn’t a real sister. She is, if you will, an unaccountable, but irresistible halfway sister. This incestuous-but-not-incestuous relationship between the haunting Isabel and the ‘brother’ she takes up with destroys the serenity and comfort of Pierre’s previous existence. He descends into poverty and madness. The dark-haired, otherworldly Isabel, who stands in contrast to the film’s radiant blondes, proves a fatal, indeed, an X-factor for the ‘brother’ she adores.

David Cox (“Film of the Month” for June 2000) opined that the film “refuses to recognize conventional boundaries, while Dave Kehr of *The New Yorker* raved about the “elliptical manner” and “extra, ineffable touch” permuting the production. Patrick Z. McGavin of “The Hollywood Reporter” considered *Pola X* “deeply unsettling.” From the remarks of these movie reviewers, it would seem that Leos Carax knew just what he was about when he added the X to his title.

⁴⁴ Aphrodite could help or harm, as she saw fit (Whittlesey 23). For the association between the goddess and the cross see *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*. Ed. Maria Leach. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1972. 264. The goddess could be a malefactor or benefactor. She had other contradictory attributes. When describing a Michelangelo drawing of a woman's head, Swinburne takes some 'poetic' license and thinks of this represented woman as "the deadl[y] Venus incarnate," Venus, of course, being the Roman name for Aphrodite. This description has Michelangelo's figure as "beautiful always beyond desire and cruel beyond words: fairer than heaven and more terrible than hell."

Swinburne's word depiction is interesting on several counts. Michelangelo's incarnation of Aphrodite emphasizes her 'beyondness.' Kenneth Burke points out in *Language as Symbolic Action* that beyondness is always a condition of crossing over into another realm. Also noteworthy is that despite the contraries that make up this Aphrodite counterpart, hers are "clear features." She is "round and hard to the eye" in her "erect and stately" figure. These different features are held in common with X.

All the quotations from Swinburne appear in Patrick Bade. *Femme Fatale: Images of Evil and Fascinating Women*. New York: Mayflower Books, 1979. 12.

⁴⁵ The goddess wore a decorated strap called a keston. According to Maureen Alden in her article published in *Costume*, Aphrodite's strap was a cross band worn on the front and back of the torso. It formed a kind of saltire or St. Andrew's cross. The double-X strap made its wearer irresistible to the opposite sex. It was worn about the breasts in front and emphasized them. In Homer's *Iliad*, Hera borrows Aphrodite's keston in order to succeed with her seduction of Zeus.

When interest in the feminine figure and female sexuality was emphasized in the 1920s, the keston enjoyed a revival in the form of the modern brassiere. In fact, it was called the Keston and for many years the Keston was essentially another name for the upper undergarment of women. With Aphrodite's special strap we have many X aspects: an alluring cross form (doubled in this case), enticing and possibly forbidden sex, and a reference to that which is usually meant to be covered over, undis-clothed.

⁴⁶ The quoted material is excerpted from a short feature in which Septime Webre, the Artistic Director of the Washington Ballet, describes his theatrical background and director's philosophy. He describes his "impulse to connect with an audience" by reliance on the cheeky, playful, and dramatic. Rather fascinating with respect to "Madame X" is Webre's observation that his artistic philosophy traces back to the first drama he wrote and produced around age ten. The play's lead character was a femme fatale whose claim to fame was her "recurring ennui." Ever since, Webre has liked to put "across the footlights" those who exude an unnamable X factor. "First Person Singular." *Washington Post Magazine* 24 Sept. 2006. 24.

⁴⁷ In their chapter, John Cawelti and Mary Flannery did not designate X a "dominant symbol in popular culture." The phrase is the title of the book in which the Cawelti-Flannery chapter appears. I borrowed it, thinking it has warrant, if only by the example that concludes this paragraph.

⁴⁸ In Nov. 2001, I spotted this billboard while driving. It promoted three television shows, the names of which were not specified. Instead, the shows were presented by way of three photographic-like drawings. The typography of "X appeal" was huge in the billboard; it greatly outsized the small amount of other writing there. At the bottom right of the roadside display appeared "XFX," indicating that the shows aired on the cable channel F/X. The third letter of XFX had the same font as the second letter. However, the initial X was somewhat exaggerated in size and color to the other two letters. Also, it was made to stand out because it was much more like cursive than the compatriot letters, which were typographical (something like a Helvetica font) and quite blocky in appearance.

I predict we could be hearing and seeing the term *Xiness*. Its appearance seems inevitable. When it comes on the scene, we will immediately know that it means 'sexiness.'

⁴⁹ An E or e in front of X has almost become a rarity in advertising and commercial naming. We have become accustomed to seeing Xpert, Xtra, and Xtraordinary. Businesses have followed suit. If you start to pay attention to the names, products, and services of businesses (on their vehicles is a good place to start) with a small mind to X, you will be astounded by the letter's proliferation. A company that makes commercial first aid kits calls itself Xpect First Aid and, per custom, the first letter has an exaggerated representation, whether in referring to the company or its products.

⁵⁰ This phrase appears on the video box cover for the movie entitled *X-Rated*. The film claims to have "Put the 'X' in Sex." X has become more than synonymous with sex; it is what sex is about. X has in an odd sense subsumed *sex*.

⁵¹ Otto determines "the 'erotic' is analogous to the 'holy' [...] in having in the main no means of linguistic expression" to fully convey what it is to feel or to undergo either experience (47). For the German scholar, the "idea of the holy" comes down to a phenomenon "beyond conception or understanding" (13). Although he doesn't say so directly, he intimates that the "overplus of meaning" (xvii) descriptive of the sacred applies, also, to eroticism.

⁵² From page 77 of a Neiman Marcus by Mail catalog (Code BST02) July 2002. The description was as follows: "Black sleeveless top features sexy crisscross back."

⁵³ Starting in 2000, Tiffany & Co. began to feature Picasso's X jewelry in its catalogs. By the 2001 holiday season, Tiffany was devoting more catalog space to this jewelry from the Picasso fashion house. In its "Holiday Selections 2001" catalog, Tiffany advertises its own X earrings and pendant (31), which it describes as "cross-stitch." In another of its catalogs, the fashion house displays jewelry not molded in the shape of X, but making decorative use of the X pattern, for example, earrings which have a series of X's ringing the rounded shape of the silver earring.

X-shapes and crisscrosses in jewelry have become extremely popular. I say that, yet I'm not sure that it might be more accurate to state that these have never gone out of favor. A Ross-Simons 2001 Christmas catalog described a necklace as follows: a "Long, luxe drape of round CZs [cubic zircons] crisscrosses in the front for a tied tassel effect." On the same page, "Black and white CZ X earrings sizzle in sterling silver." In a different Ross-Simons catalog for the same holiday season, the ad writers had in mind the familiar idea that X equals kiss with their description of a pair of "gold X earrings": "Two big kisses are extra sweet." In this same sales catalog, X's formed out of diamonds are arranged in a series around a ring banded in diamonds to make for a "sparkling lattice motif." In a Ross-Simons Fall 2002 catalog, customers could have oohed and aahed over a large "criss crossed" diamond arrangement set between two lateral diamond bars. The association of X with love highlighted two other items from the same promotional mailer. The first, a lattice heart pendant, was described as "Cross your heart," and featured a crosswise arrangement of individual diamonds shaping a heart outlined in more diamonds. The second was described as a "Ruby-love (.70ct. t.w.) pendant crossed" by X's forming a "14kt gold lattice." These days, many other jewelry brochures feature and other jewelry merchandisers display precious or semi-precious stones and materials shaped (for earrings, bracelets, necklaces, pendants, brooches, etc.) in the prominent design of the diagonal cross shape. That the crisscross shape endures in jewelry evidences that it is a perennial design with humans.

⁵⁴ In his piece in *USA Today*, Michael McCarthy finds that the "e industry has been one of the leaders driving this growing trend" to use X in marketing products. He briefly cites Jaguar's relatively new "X-type" model and the manufacturer's website's prominent featuring of a glowing X to sell the scaled-down, though still luxurious version of the ultra sleek and super expensive larger models. I guess the glitzy X is meant to counter the lack of exclusivity that comes with the often-heard identification of the car as "the more affordable Jag." Affordability can sell cars, but if you are Jaguar you don't want to give up a long-standing reputation among consumers as the producer of exclusive, highly desirable "motor

cars.” Presumably, X will preserve the image of exclusivity for a Jaguar model with a ticket price lower than the larger, really pricey models.

McCarthy explains in more detail the importance of X to Nissan. This automotive company had expected to sell only 50,000 Xterras when the new model came out in 1999. However, the sport utility vehicle has been consistently selling at an annual rate 30,000 higher. The company attributes this high sales volume to marketing the car as an SUV that is all-around extreme. McCarthy reveals that the “X in Xterra is no accident.” Nissan says it coined the moniker as a way of linking ‘Generation X’ with ‘extreme terrain.’ ” The sales volume is due to a linkage that appeals to many within the Generation: it is for those who already associate themselves with the need for a machine that has extreme capabilities and it is for those who aspire to that view of themselves. The X in the name “speaks the language” and the desires (aspirations) of many buyers. Nissan believes that “language” helps them in a market in which they could become “the victim of a consumer backlash against gas-guzzling SUVs.”

Beginning in the early 1990s, the twenty-fourth letter of the alphabet began showing up on cars. The letter, with its cachet, was a way to distinguish one model from another. Models with X or x have proliferated since. Three casual surveys taken while driving came up with the BMW X5 4.4i, Town and Country LXi, Avalon XLS, Sentra GXE, Explorer XLT, Escort LX, Altima GXE, Camry DX, Accord DX and LX, Civic LX, Acura X6-LS, Mazda, MX-6, Stanza and Nissan XE, Thunderbird LX, Subaru WRX, and Quest GXS. The automobile industry ‘does business’ and hopes to get business by X. Acura’s new-for-the-twenty-first-century \$90,000 model NSX sports the letter.

One of the best examples of this business philosophy occurred when Nissan replaced its ho-hum Pathfinder with a brand-new vehicle in 1999, its up-market Xterra. One automobile review of the time explained, “sport-utility vehicles have become high fashion as well as high-traction.” The reviewer applauded Nissan’s take-charge SUV: “the Xterra has the right look for this kind of vehicle. It has aggressive stance, muscular sculpting and pronounced wheel flares.” Later came the Urban Assault Xterra. Xterra is sexy and strong and the capital letter that “assaults” the consumer’s eyes helps to underline the commercial image. Nissan makes much of the X with ads (online and traditional) that refer to “XtremeXterra” and “Xcursions.” (For the quoted statements see Al Hass. “Nissan’s X terra is Handsome and Able.” *Philadelphia Inquirer* 9 May 1999. 15 Sept. 2001. <www.auto.com/reviews>.

For what it is worth, trucks rely far less on the charisma of X. The only truck noticed during these on-the-road surveys was Ford’s F-XLT. We know that the F stands for the manufacturer and the other three letters are a familiar shorthand for *excellent*. The paucity of the X for truck models argues for the letter’s sexy image. Trucks are associated with demanding physical work and vehicle manufacturers want to project an image that speaks to their trucks as rugged, practical, and up to hefting heavy loads. The SUV, which is a hybrid of the sporty car and truck, can go either way—use the X, as with Xterra, or not. The trend has been for SUVs to exploit the letter for model names and feature it in their advertising. X conveys a sense of excitement and adventure for both the soccer mom and the weekend warrior.

⁵⁵ For the marketing of cars using X, see the previous note. For an X-named video game, which requires an exceptional degree of X button hitting but fails to live up to the exhilaration and brazenness of X, see Aaron Curtiss. “Be an Avenging Angel in ‘Messiah’; ‘Slash-Em-Up ‘Maken X’ Unexciting.’ *Los Angeles Times* 22 June 2000. C8. 2 April 2001. <<http://www.web.lexis-nexis>>. In November 2001, Microsoft launched itself into the video game console business. Facing competition with Nintendo and Sony, companies well established in the manufacture and promotion of electronic games, Microsoft chose to name their console the X-Box. In 2002, when I wrote the previous sentence, I anticipated that the X in the name would enhance the product’s attractiveness to the teenage consumer. Since then, the enormous success of the X-Box suggests that Microsoft’s marketing department made a wise decision.

One recent film with X in the title is Leos Carax’s *Pola X*. A music album by Andy Summers bears the title “The Last Dance of Mr. X.” New Balance promotes “performance cross-training [...] for the extreme workout mindset” with an athletic shoe called the “WX889 X-Treme.” The two X’s insure twice as much of what X can give, thereby doubling its allure and, potentially, its sales. One of the first entries into the virtual reality television lineup was “EX-treme Dating.” According to James Poniewozik. “Hot

Tubs and Cold Shoulders.” *Time* 12 Aug. 2002, 56–58, the show often builds suspense on the basis of X’s—that is ex-lovers and ex-spouses. The visual promos exaggerate and distort the X in the show’s title, which accords with the sexual preoccupation of the action. A strong sports/competitive theme runs throughout these kinds of shows that play off sleazy, far-out thrills. In this respect, the X highlighted in the program title is no surprise. It goes along with the precedent of EX-treme sports.

Companies seem almost compelled to throw an X into their names: e.g., Bre-X Minerals Ltd and ebiX.com (an insurance company). One can’t help but notice how the second company literally makes a ‘big thing’ out of the letter, by having it either be the single capital within the title or, in the logo rendition, by making the one diagonal of X curvy in shape and a different color from the gray of the rest of the logo. One of the world’s largest financial management groups is called AXA, which takes the ABA form. Companies that want to project an image that they are on the cutting edge turn to X. XEmac is the name of a software program used mainly on the Linux operating system (notice the final x). To promote this system and get more computer users to try Linux, free software for graphic applications was developed. The name? “X.” See Mann, Charles C. “Living with Linux.” *Atlantic Monthly* August 1999: 80–86.

X meaning *extra* is a popular abbreviation that shows no evidence of wearing out. Instead, the trend has been toward doubling the letter. Arrid has registered the ‘XX’ of its ARRID XX deodorant. According to the product’s front label, XX stands for “EXTRA EXTRA DRY.” The back label tells us that the “exclusive formula” is for “when you want to get extra, extra close.” The label designers hint that theirs is a pharmaceutical product (and draw on the ethos of that hint) by the front label’s R_x arrangement, wherein the first X appears to be almost a subscript to the second R in the word ARRID.

One example of fast food X-ing will suffice. It is interesting in that it has connections with media images and the idea of X as a flashy superstar. In the summer of 2002, Subway began a campaign of promoting sandwiches dubbed “The Xtremes.” The X in the promo on the billboards outside the restaurant and the signs inside turned the sandwiches into movie stars with the announcement “Now Appearing: The Xtremes.” The headliners in Subway’s latest “photoplay” or “concert” were pictured. Below each sandwich luminary appeared the exhortation to “THINK XTREME.”

As for the X in the names of prescriptions, this is a phenomenon noticed by this author over the last half dozen years. (It can’t be determined if this may trace back to the tradition of a small X at the bottom leg of the letter R to stand in for the word *prescription*. I would suspect this isn’t the reason for the wide scale faddishness of X in drug names.) *Nexium*, *Celebrex*, *Vantrax*, *Flomax*, *Fosomax*, *Valtrex*, *Aciphex*, *Trimox*, *Paxil*, *Lanoxin*, *Biaxin*, *Xalatan*, and *Tobradex* are examples of trade names that are not derived from the drug’s chemical composition. Whoever came up with the name *Vioxx* seemed to want to double his bets. The orthography supports the case for the exceptionally high use of X in prescription drug names, because the second X is superfluous. It adds nothing to the pronunciation of the word.

Many over the counter and prescription drugs not only make use of X in their name, but often the ads overtly play on the letter in one of two ways. Some exaggerate it visually, as is the case with the type display for *Celebrex*, whose commercials and advertisements present the name’s last letter in a slightly larger script form, which serves to set it apart from the single font used for all of the name’s remaining letters. Parenthetically, this is the same phenomenon as that of other consumer products. In the television and print advertisements for MATRIX hair products, the X is treated differently and deliberately made to stand out from the other upper case letters. In one of the company’s print ads (2001), the X was boxed in a block. The color inside the block contrasts with the background of the other letterforms, none of which receives the emphasis of being singled out by having a block.

The second way of playing on the X in drug names has to do with the idea that the medicine provides patients something extra and desirable, an advantage (the convenience or infrequency of taking the medicine, the dosage, improved results, quickness of relief, etc.) over alternative remedies. An example of this is the commercial name *Zithromax* for the antibiotic azithromycin. Often the visual differentiation and the sell about extras work hand in hand.

Interestingly, many prescription X’s come at the end, rather than the beginning of the word. Perhaps the end is selected under the assumption that this placement will cause the effect to linger longer in the

reader or listener's mind. Or, conversely, the thought may be that a terminal X seems less to 'shout' some aspects of this letter. With an X placed at the very end, the health profession can exploit positive connotations of X (innovativeness, cutting-edge science, etc.). Too great a prominence as the starting letter might risk connotations (sexiness, edginess) that would be inappropriate for medicine. The ad men and women for Xanax, however, gambled on an initial X. Perhaps having their drug's name begin and end with the letter that pitches potency would deliver a subconscious message of double strength.

⁵⁶ In a Pottery Barn catalog (Spring 2002), X marks are superimposed over sketches of individual sofas and chair arms for which slipcovers are not advocated. Interestingly, the catalog's editors felt the need to include forewarning X signs to reinforce the verbal message "non-recommended furniture types" printed directly above the three illustrated examples. As with the overhead signs (which appear on their own and not over another sign or picture), the X appears to do double duty: it cautions and it signals what should not be or is advised against.

⁵⁷ For more on the fascinating story of Dr. Carl Friedrich Goerdeler, who was eventually caught and executed by the Nazis for his efforts to undermine what he recognized early on as a "perverted and destructive fanaticism," see A. P. Young. *The 'X' Documents*. Ed. Sidney Aster. London: André Deutsch, 1974. Deplorably and fatefully, the British Foreign Office mostly dismissed the contents of the six X documents as hyperbolic and alarmist. It believed the warnings of the once Mayor of Leipzig were distorted and not to be fully credited. One member of the Foreign Office wrote in February 12, 1939, "It is a pity that Dr [sic] Goerdeler tries to curdle our blood by overstating his case" (238). In September of that year, Germany and England were at war and British blood wasn't just subject to curdling, it was literally being spilled. Dismissing the X Documents proved an irretrievable, fatal mistake, a mistake that might have saved millions of lives.

⁵⁸ Jess Cagle. "The Next Action Hero." Rev. of XXX, dir. Rob Cohen. *Time* 5 Aug. 2002: 61–62.

⁵⁹ Stephen Hunter. "'XXX' Meet Mister Muscle: When Diesel Powers High-Octane Spy Flick." Rev. of XXX, dir. Rob Cohen. *Washington Post* 9 Aug. 2002: C1.

⁶⁰ The name *Xander* appears to be cropping up of late. It was also the name of a male character in the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.

⁶¹ The seventeenth-century French author wrote, "The sign brings the customers." This quotation appears in *Fables*, Book VII, fable 15.

⁶² Desson Howe. "'XXX': Rated Duh." Rev. of XXX, dir. Rob Cohen. *Washington Post* 9 Aug. 2002: "Weekend" 37.

⁶³ This information was garnered from one source that took me to a second source: first, an advertisement that appeared *Washington Post Weekend*. 28 Feb. 2003, 14; the second, a website for a local bar-dance club, www.JAXXROXX.com.

⁶⁴ According to ancient stories, the Sphinx commits suicide after Oedipus solves her riddle. In this respect, the monster and X are crosses, mutilators, and obliterators in/to themselves. This is one reason that Italian sarcophagi, from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, would regularly feature a sphinx; actually two, for, in this application, they occur in symmetrical pairs.

The riddle of the sphinx is a question that linguistically turns on itself: "What is born with four feet, becomes two-footed, then three-footed, and, lastly, returns to four feet?" The puzzle was obvious in the extreme. It was the most inexplicable non-mystery in the world and, therefore, of the utmost perversity.

The question put to men, and it was always men, by the female Sphinx is often alluded to, though actually stated far less often. I am appreciative of Pesic's quotation of it on page 32 of his *Labyrinth*.

The Sphinx's august or imperial stature was due to her control over mankind, not just in originating and posing a perplexing riddle, but also in having the power over a desire to solve difficult problems. In many regards, the mythological Sphinx speaks to human pride. It may not be surprising then to learn that the august Julius Caesar chose the Sphinx for his personal seal, under the presumption that he had provided correct answers to a variety of onerous problems confronting his empire. Sir Francis Bacon, always one to explore the secretive and occult, opined that those who can solve great riddles are, in his words, "born for empire." Considering Bacon's notorious ambitions and congratulation of his own problem solving, this opinion spells a self-serving motivation.

⁶⁵ Derrida refers to the apophatic aspect of X in that the sign signals an "address to the other" ("Denials" 5).

⁶⁶ According to Barbara G. Walker, Varro (the Roman writer of the second century B.C.) described the eleven great sibyls, each of whom held a unique item of symbolic meaning attributed to her. One was the Sibyl Cimmerica who carried a cross. It will not escape notice that this particular sibyl's name indicates an oracular priestess especially fantastical and possessing a hybrid (cross-combining) nature. This cross-bearing sibyl may have been extraordinarily important to the eventual Christian interpretation of the sibyls, because some sibyl attributes were later assimilated into Christian lore in the belief that these women, venerated for their clairvoyance, had foretold the advent of Christ (Walker n.p.).

The name *sibyl*, like "the comparable name of the Goddess Cybele, [...] meant 'cavern-dweller' " (Walker n.p.). The cave symbolizes the hidden and secretive aspects of the mysterious sibyls. Furthermore, the cave was a point of entrance and access to the underworld, the place of the dead. It was believed these priestesses summoned up and consulted dead spirits. It would be in character, then, for these potent, esoteric women, all of whom were supposed to deal in perplexity and death, to be associated with a cross form.

⁶⁷ In the second stanza of "The Message," the disgruntled lover talks of the prospect to "crosse both/Word and oath." In editor's comments for his volume of *The Complete Poetry of John Donne*, the esteemed scholar and professor of English John T. Shawcross notes that Donne's *crosse* means 'cancel' (Donne 25).

⁶⁸ Lotus Notes (Version 5) uses a × in an enclosed circle for deleting an item. By clicking on this icon, the user of Lotus Notes does away with the chosen item. The encircling of the × is not unique in that all of the program's selection icons are presented circles.

⁶⁹ In chess, the meaning of × is 'takes' (Liungman 140).

⁷⁰ As an example of this phenomenon I cite a request by a county government to its citizens. The county wants its residents to separate their recycled items into two separate containers: one for papers and another for cans, bottles, and jars. In its public campaign, the county states, "Never mix the two." Citizens are instructed to get a second recycling container or told "you can choose a container of your own, and mark it with a large 'X' for recycling." The "large 'X'" on the citizen's container is to prevent it from being mistaken. With an X on its surface, it ceases to be just a container, but becomes a null container. Through nullification, another identity comes to be: a recycling identity.

This is a very interesting use of X in that there occurs both a subtraction and an addition of meaning. Without the X, the citizen's container might itself be taken to be an item for recycling instead of a container to be emptied of its contents and left for the citizen to use over again to hold items for recycling.

This advertisement appeared in at least two different paper media: *The Washington Post's Anne Arundel Extra* 23 Aug. 2001: 24, and *The Bowie Blade-News* 23 Aug. 2001: A5. The same information was posted the same month at the website for Anne Arundel County, Maryland: www.aacounty.org.

⁷¹ A nice example comes from a newspaper report on citizens of Beijing protesting the confiscation of canine pets. The animals had been literally pulled from the homes and from the arms of owners by civil authorities. After implementing a one-dog per household policy, as well as a general ban against larger canines, the Chinese government started to round up pets. The harsh, naturally unpopular actions brought crowds out into the streets of the capitol.

One of the article's accompanying photographs captured a line-up of protesters. One protester carried a large stuffed toy dog wearing two 'signs.' One of the signs was a red diagonal cross. The cross was placed, from end to end, on a white, oversized surgeon's-type of protective facemask positioned over the toy dog's mouth. The second sign, directly underneath the mask, read, "Don't hurt me please!" The cross symbolized that the animals targeted by officials had been muffled, entirely prohibited from having a 'voice' in their confiscations and executions. In its display of blocking, fixing, and gripping and in its associations with nullification and death, the oblique cross fostered the protesters' remonstrance against the Beijing government's muzzling of rights to speech and expression. The fact that the cross is a mute emblem also adds to its potency in the present context. *Washington Post* 15 Nov. 2006: A12.

⁷² The need to fill in what is left out is the very *raison d'être* of the crossword puzzle. Compilers of these lexicographic puzzlers adhere to the classic principle that goes as follows: "I need not mean what I say, but I must say what I mean." The rhetorical figure based on a cross advises how compilers can insure the cryptic clues that are a regular feature of most British crossword puzzles (*Brewer's Dictionary*).

⁷³ I recently discovered what I think is a great instance of this arrangement for the not there. A Verizon publication (2007) lists all the channel options for its new fiber-optic television signal conveyance. Each channel number and title appears in a colored box that is very small in height, but long in its horizontal dimension. In the final box, a single X appears. It specifies that channels not yet created are expected in the future. The X designates what is presently unavailable; it designates what is absent at present. The X gives hope of more to come, the hope of a forthcoming. The confident- and decisive-looking X excels in such messages.

⁷⁴ *Brewer's Dictionary* informs that crossroads, because they were places of foul play and dirty work, became strongly associated with death. Those committing wrongs were frequently executed and buried at crossroads, the scenes of their crimes. Also, individuals excluded from the Church's holy rites (e.g., suicides, criminals, the excommunicated) were at one time buried at crossroads.

According to legend, when a vampire comes to a crossroads, a stake awaits him (Banta 104). Presumably the double cross (of stake and roads) proves too much and he 'gives up the ghost,' he gives up being one of the undead. This is another instance of transformation and conversions between absence and presence at a place of nexus.

⁷⁵ This fascinating use of X was completely unknown to me, but was pointed out by Susan Cowles. She recalls seeing it frequently in older comics and cartoons (for example, those of the 1930s and 1940s), but has noticed it less frequently in contemporary animation.

I take particular interest in the fact that the character is rendered ableptical, that is, literally eyeless. The X's don't cover the eyes, but rather, stand in their place. The substitution of these prominent features creates a sense of blinding and blankness. This represents absence perhaps even more completely than if an X had blocked out the figure's entire body. More than anything, this absence reinforces the role of X as indicating vacancy. The icon represents that they are 'out' of sight. In this usage, to lose sight is to lose self.

More evidence for this view can be found in Susan's observation that X's are used typically to indicate the mental vacancy of both death and unconsciousness (as when characters are "dead drunk"), but they are not used to represent normal sleep. However, the X's do not necessarily give the sense of a permanent loss of self, as Susan cogently notes: we know that the unconscious character will eventually regain consciousness, and anyone familiar with the cartoon medium knows that a character can die in one episode and reappear in the next with no apparent ill effects to him or to credibility.

⁷⁶ A local company that provides spray-on bed liners for trucks is called *Line-X*. With its "exclusive" *Line-X* formula, truck owners receive several protections and guarantees. Two of the more important of these are featured in its ads: "Serious Protection. Killer Looks." Seven filled-out X's appear in the small ad. These visual emblems promise to deliver exceptional sealing and bonding: X-like functions.

⁷⁷ Excitement and death come together with X. Witness the names the once-upon-a-time XFL players gave themselves and put on their jerseys, names such as "Death Blow," "The Mortician," and "Fist of Doom."

This bit of information comes from an article published in a magazine covering video and other kinds of electronic games. The article's anonymous author expected the video world to begin to produce and pitch their own game versions, no doubt because of the sex and violence that sells so many of these games. Parenthetically an ad for one game "Motor Mayhem" on the second page of the article reads "In this league, It's Victory [...] or Bust." Double-entrée is obvious in *bust*, obviously insinuating the well-endowed, scantily clad robotic warrior-woman pictured above the sleek "motor" car. But of more interest to the present discussion of our potent letter is the violent language—e.g., "decapitations" and "bloodbath" and "Blitz style"—used to describe the XFL, its activities, and its self promotion. The byline to the article's title "All Access XFL" also underscored the violent nature of the XFL and its aggressive attack on (competition with) the National Football League. It read "Whether you like it or not, the XFL is taking traditional football [the NFL] by the nape of the neck and shaking real hard" (54). Within the article, we read that the XFL Chairman Vince "McMahon and his pet XFL project have taken a buzzsaw to the image of pro football" (54). Metaphorically, the violence extended off the playing field and the unspoken message appeared to be that McMahon hoped to "bloody" the competition and make a corporate, commercial "killing." This article was published in "Play Station." Apr. 2001. 54–55.

⁷⁸ X² – The Threat is the name of one game (released in 2005) that claims to be the "ultimate test of combat, tactical, navigational and entrepreneurial skills." In many of its iterations, the X in the game title and in graphics is 'muscular' or in other ways threatening. The story line is set in an alternate world, aptly named "the X-Universe." The X is used to suggest not just an alternate cosmos, but a riddling, "uneasy" one in which just about anything could happen to its inhabitants. The promotional material intrigues the game buyer with the idea that it requires one to "Trade your way through the space lanes and achieve mogul status." X² – The Threat boasts that it involves "a huge variety of commodities within a truly dynamic and evolving economy" and the player will explore "lucrative trading routes" and can come to "Acquire and command" hoards of booty. The game's player must also "Fight your way" with and against a cache of amazing weaponry, always with the thought that "your next move could be your last as the Universe reacts to your actions." If the gamer can't get enough thrills, he can find more at the X² – The Threat website.

⁷⁹ *Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*. Rev. Standard Ed. Ed. Herbert G. May and Bruce M. Metzger. New York: Oxford University P, 1965. See page 1008.

⁸⁰ *New Geneva Study Bible*. New King James Version. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. See page 1268, Footnote 9:4. The wide scale execution during Passover caused the transgressive and transformative Christ to serve as the Passover *sacrifice*, a word whose sundry antinomies John Drury catalogs (229). The slanted cross with its rigorous crisscrossing continued to have connections with ideas

of adjudication and the possibility of release from the dark forces of autocratic punishment in the ‘judgment of the cross’ instituted in Charlemagne’s reign. The ordeal required the plaintiff and the defendant to endure their arms self-held to an oblique cross across their chests. The sufferer who held out the longer won and, thus, determined the case. Here is another instance of X associated with an unknown (between two persons, who is in the right?) and with solving that unknown. The “cross” entry in the *Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* supplied this information.

I am greatly indebted to Hugh Pettis for setting me on the path of the X in the Old Testament and its connection with the Christian cross.

⁸¹ Maria Leach, ed, *Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*. New York: Funk, 1972. 265.

⁸² Christian, especially Catholic, representations or replicas of the cross frequently have ‘HIS’ marked on them. This three-letter monogram stands for “*in haec salus*” meaning “in this salvation” (Olderr, 85), where *this* is an indexical pointing to the physical cross.

⁸³ Steven Olderr indicates that “crossed legs, right over left (the traditional position of Christ’s legs on the cross)” became attributed to his crucifixion (54). Other attributed forms are a staff crossed with a sword and a sword crossed with a torch (85).

Olderr explains that the terms of symbolism lack particularity: “Attribute fades off into emblem, emblem into association, and so forth” (vii). Although these distinctions are difficult to finely mark, he suggests that we can think of an attribute as “an object closely connected with or belonging to a specific person, office, or event. The keys to heaven are an attribute of St. Paul” (vii).

⁸⁴ The two lines aptly serve as the opening to “The Crosse.” See Donne, *Complete Poetry*.

⁸⁵ XP or chi-rho, which is a pairing of the twenty-second and seventeenth letters of the Greek alphabet, became a shorthand monogram for Jesus Christ, because of the use of the first two letters of the Greek Kristos or Christos (for Xrio□to□). XI represents the Greek initials for Jesus Christ. The X without any other letters also emblemizes the dual nature of the crucified Nazarene. An X followed by a C: these are the first and last letters of the Greek *Christos*. XC is another way to betoken the namesake of the Christian faith. See Olderr 85 and also Whittlesey 217.

⁸⁶ This shorter crossbeam is miraculous, for it is frequently associated with the arms of Christ lovingly reaching out to embrace or enfold mankind. See, for instance, Michelangelo’s poem “On the Brink of Death,” where the speaker declares “My soul [...] turns to His great love on high./Whose arms to clasp us on the cross were spread.” Michelangelo, Buonarroti. *Sonnets of Europe: A Volume of Translations, Selected and Arranged, with Notes by Samuel Waddington*. New York: White and Allen. n.d.

⁸⁷ Theology is infused with “the principle of negativity,” writes Kenneth Burke in his *Rhetoric of Religion* (23). The transcendental is a matter of things understood in terms of that which they are not. Heidegger’s Non-Being is a prime example of the negative principle. We describe God as immortal, immutable, infinite, and unbounded, terms that are all negatives (22).

⁸⁸ The immense Gothic cathedrals were erected “at crossroads, where land or water routes met.” So imparts William Bryant Logan in “The Cathedral As Crossroads.” *Parabola* 15:104–11. Such dynamic hubs clearly had practical value in a time when transportation was limited, uncertain, and dangerous. But, too, crossing locations for the materialization of an awe-inspiring place of worship further enunciated the Christian message for a largely illiterate population.

⁸⁹ In Old English, *axsan* was the term for what became *ashes* in later centuries. Whatmough and the *Online OED* note the spellings. That the precursor term included an *x* might have given extra significance to the ceremony, especially for those who were literate (mostly the church) and for whom individual letters had powerful connotations and could suggest divine inspiration.

⁹⁰ The words *crisscross*, *christ-cross*, and *Christ's cross* are synonyms to designate “the mark of the cross cut, printed, or stamped on any object” (*Century Dictionary*); that is, the “mark of a cross in general” (*OED*). *Christ-cross* not only can refer to a diagonal cross, it also means the alphabet and carries the conceit that Christ as Word is the alphabet, incarnated in religious texts (Kendrick 46, 58). As an expression of “the beginning and end; the Alpha and Omega,” it labels a God whose dominion admits neither the constraint of time nor of space. Relatedly, *christ cross-row* also designates the alphabet, but as a fixed, delimited series, with a definite first and a definite concluding marker (*Century Dictionary*). The idea is of a God whom mortals must rely upon to find their own spiritual beginnings and redemptive ends. Henry James made a practice of christ-cross rows. In his working *Notebooks*, the writer systematized a pentad of closely lined-up diagonal crosses to designate the end of an entry.

⁹¹ The Humez brotherhood suggests two possible derivations for the connection between the sign and the idea of kiss. The first of these is that X stands “for Christ as love.” The second is that “the sound of the letter as it appears in our Roman-derived alphabet, which used *X* to represent *ks*, rather than the aspirated *k* sound for which *chi* was used in the alphabetic writing of the eastern Greeks.” “Hard to say” which of the two is responsible is the comment offered by the authors (168–169).

⁹² In the back inside cover to his *Writer's Guide and Index to English*, Perrin supplies his “symbols for marking papers.” Between the two pages, almost seventy revision symbols are supplied. Curiously, Perrin lists X twice. Among such symbols, it alone receives a double entry. Either Perrin was himself guilty of carelessness (i.e., inconsistency) or carelessness requires students to be on double alert, which is bound to leave them only doubly confused. See also 522.

⁹³ The website Amazon.com, for instance, uses the X surrounded by a circle with the circle inside a square to guide those who visit the site to the spot that when selected will supply an image. The image ‘waits on’ the spot’s selection, not coming ‘out’ until the X-target is ‘hit.’ I first noticed Amazon’s use of the X in January 2002, but suppose it had been used for much longer. No doubt the appropriateness of the X never caught my attention. I suspicion the same applies for most people. It just seems right to have an X to mark a spot upon which our attention would be directed.

⁹⁴ Consider how the cross hatching of artists enables them to provide outlines and express fine, even terribly minute details and distinctions.

⁹⁵ This last statement might appear a refutation of the entire first half of this chapter. Why bother with X at all, if we are only going to consider it now as visual image? X has incultured layers of symbolic associations, what Bernard Berenson once called in the world of art “over meanings.” X has both associational meanings and inherent ones. The latter are formal, structural, and logical. The associational meanings devolve from the inherent. As with other powerful symbols, X legislates over both meaning types.

At the same time that it is a symbol, it is a letterform or sign. All letters have a certain presence on the page. If they didn’t, they wouldn’t have made it in their jobs as alphabetic signs. “A letter is a sign: to be recognizable is of its essence” (Gray qtd. in Firmage 118). Each Roman letter, based on the necessity of being “objectively ascertainable,” developed in time into “an unmistakable character” (Firmage 159). But whereas distinctness and simplicity of form are hallmarks of all the alphabet’s letterforms (Firmage 19), I believe X stands visually apart from its brethren.

⁹⁶ Even movement, which is what most captivates the animal and human eye, ultimately depends on shape identification. For the primacy, to vision, of motion or change see *Visual Thinking* (20–21). This identification of a structure depends on object preservation, as Piaget shows in his examinations of the young child. Determination of objecthood, that is, object preservation develops over time and is not an innate ability.

⁹⁷ Symmetry entails a central point or line and most typically is a phenomenon of the horizontal axis.

⁹⁸ Expensive picture albums, for instance, will sometimes show two or three X or X's sewn across their spines. This over-sewing is meant to duplicate the real cross lashing that once bound all books.

⁹⁹ Such a description could be something resembling the following: 'To draw out an X, one's pen or pencil would start in a presumptive upper left-hand corner and move across to a bottom right-hand corner; then one's pen or pencil would start in an upper right-hand corner and move across to a bottom left-hand corner.' Formulaically, this could be represented as the superscripted chiasmus $L^a R^b : R^a L^b$ or, even more simply, as $LR:RL$.

¹⁰⁰ This idea came to me when reading Orhan Pamuk's *My Name is Red*. See pages 20 and 80. I have since done this closed-eye experiment with friends. None was hard pressed to perform the cross diagonals.

¹⁰¹ Peirce's own confounding discourse, replete with complex, self-invented terminology, can easily contribute to interpretation difficulties and confusions. Furthermore, Bryson is particularly concerned with getting to the pictorial aspect of his *chi-rho* example and with this emphasis he could have rushed to conflate iconic resemblance and indexical pointing to the exterior world, which is what interests Bryson. Icons and indexes both re-present, but they do so through different means. Bryson's concern is with representation. By collapsing the icon into the index he obtains the larger representational point he is making in his argument. Finally, Bryson may have fixed on the index because of the attentional aspect of this kind of sign. Peirce writes, "Anything which focuses the attention is an indication" that "connect[s] itself with some other experience" (qtd. in *Essential Peirce* 8). This attention-grabbing quality, as subsequently remarked in the text, seems valuable as well to Bryson for his own rhetorical purpose.

¹⁰² The use of *superficial* in this sentence carries no negative connotation. It is used in a neutral sense. Specifically, it references the letterform's surface (i.e., planar) appearance, and, consequently, accords with the notion of physicality and the visual indicated by the other adjectives.

¹⁰³ The *mighty* comes from the poet's "Anecdote of Canna." The two other descriptors are from "Extracts from Addresses to the Academy of Fine Ideas."

CHAPTER THREE

SAME DIFFERENCE

That everything is always different ...
 and the same: a poet's wisdom.
 Actually, wisdom *tout court*.
 —Susan Sontag, *Where the Stress Falls*

When you give them half a chance,
 [they] get you in two ways. They're never one
 thing only. They hit you through the eye,
 and they hit you through the mind.
 — remarks on the art of Sol LeWitt¹

X-NESS AND CHIASTICITY

The X/X gestalt was surveyed in Chapter Two. This survey stands up the remainder of the treatise, with its examination into the verbal and cognitive affordances of chiasmus. A claim central to the treatise is that the strategy of chiasmus puts X-ing into language practice. It might be more accurate, though, to say that in an image-schematic, elemental sense, X-ing puts the strategy of chiasmus into language.

This last sentence, with its turn on the sentence previous, shouldn't be written off as mere straining for clever in a treatise on chiasmus. To the contrary, the statement intentionally remarks a critical difference making. When presented in language, chiasmus depends on, incorporates, and formally simulates, adjusts for, and then releases into propositional content the materiality, 'actions,' and 'personality' embodied and, therefore, educible in the crisscross form. In spoken and written language, the cognitive strategy/verbal figure imitates the visual, kinesthetic, spatial, and attendant aspects (e.g., psychological) made flesh within and by the X/X cipher. Through a vital physical charisma, the alluring, sovereign 'body' of X and X can

be said to pre-draw (i.e., inscribe ahead) the chi-figure. In this self-demonstrative (pre-forming) or iconic preliminary drawing, the visually assertive X, per usual, has its way(s). The diagonal icon passes its dictating personality to its namesake operating in the propositional rather than in the strictly visual-symbolic realm. A figure in its own right and realm, chiasmus retains within each of its discourse enunciations the likeness of \times/χ , and, therefore, the signification potentialities of \times/χ . The chi-figure bears, invigorates, and devises along the same boldly-scored, decisive lines as its forebear. The descendant figure and thought strategy conforms along the lines of and be-holds according to the fore-mark; it remains, in general form and in meaning possibilities, answerable and true to (like) its stanch antecedent. Through formal likeness, chiasmus inherits that which is sensible and meaningful in and persuading about \times/χ , the decussis or crisscross gestalt.

Each chiastic locution pockets from this large inheritance, but selectively rather than completely. Within each chiasm lies the crisscross, with its hoard of Gestaltian riches.² However, when it comes to this wealth, a chiasm will always be discriminatory. Only certain aspects from, but never the entirety of the form–meaning base are profiled. An extraordinarily fine-tuned discrimination by persons originating and receiving a chiasm goes on, by and large, under conscious radar. The crisscross *Grundform* provides a tremendous meaning stockpile. We pick and choose from its variety and profusion as needs be: that is, according to present (contextual) requirements or wishes. The profiling applies each time that we propagate our own or we interpret someone else’s chiastic construction.

This cutting and pasting, if you will, from our crossing endowment obtains from a very general cognitive program of subtracting, replacing, subordinating, and abstracting. This program is exquisite. And, mostly background. Our recruitment from the crisscross gestalt and our image schematic understanding generally is skillful and intuitive. To the degree we ‘speak’ the vernacular of CROSSING as well as SYMMETRY, BALANCE, ENCLOSURE, etc., we are all fluent in chiasmus. Proficiencies along the lines of those described are part and parcel of our all around cognitive economics: a predilection, because of the necessity, to “expect correspondences,” to regularize and connect over phenomena, physical and other, and to detect

and project selectively (Turner, *Literary Mind* 117). Through these wise mental investments, we compensate for and extend our “single and local” existence (Turner) and derive order and sense for that which would otherwise lack both.

It is time to assay certain ways in which the crisscross gestalt and our resort to it afford cognitive pay offs. We perceive and we interpret the crossbeams comprising \times and the slanted ligatures comprising X as composites in which a crossing pair mutually agree with or mutually resist one another. But in addition, we may perceive and interpret the beams and ligatures as ‘acting’ or ‘moving’ both at once and to equal effect, obtaining a kind of mid-positional agreement–antagonism stand off. Under certain conditions, we view cross bars as more consolidated than antagonistic or as more antagonistic than consolidated. On this aspect of the crisscross gestalt, four general categories are available for recruitment. Whether we read assonance or dissonance or some apportionment of the two, including the halfway composite, varies as to the creation or interpretation we end on.

Starting with a seemingly innocent reading of the elementary crisscross gestalt, humans propel into a complex polysemy of association–dissociation read-offs (projections) and interpretations. From a rudimentary perceptual understanding (image schema) of two bars that lie athwart themselves, we may project, for instance, metaphoric emotional thwarting that is configured through chiasma honoring, inviting, or, at the least, amenable to such an emotional reading. One or more aspects of the gestalt sponsor will be profiled in the course of the projection and configuration. Emotional thwarting might focus on feelings, states, events, or persons judged dependent when they should or would otherwise be individuated or, judged leaning or weighing upon, cutting into, or straddling one another. Emotional thwarting might be deemed adversely, if not cruelly (i.e., crux-like) interlocked; fixed or rigid; intense or strained; double-handed or double-edged; ambiguous (oblique); and so on. Interpretations can be astonishingly complex, as when the thwarting perceivable in the crossing gestalt may promote the chiasmic representation of irresolution, with its woes or perhaps pleasures, or, conversely, may promote chiasmic resolution, from an outcome felt to be other than had been hoped for. In the converses just touched on, other aspects of the crossing gestalt are likely to be

recruitments contributive to a thematics of resolution or of irresolution. Thwarting, adversiveness, and repulsion are inherent in the Gestalt. Importantly, a diametric feature typology—harmony, assonance, complementation—is also inherent. We choose, as the local situation warrants or encourages, from the crisscross gestalt’s reservoir of elementary, universally meaningful and intelligible properties. The features, *in toto*, of the crossing image schema stand at the ready for sponsoring projection and chi-ception.

Our preferential conscription from the meaning-laden \times/χ treasury mostly happens automatically and with no conscious fanfare. The degree of transparency and automaticity of on-line conscription is such that recruitment and usage are essentially conducted unproblematically, what we idiomatically refer to as conceptualizing that happens ‘unthinkingly.’ Which is to say, our understanding of \times/χ goes mostly without saying. Chi-ceptualizing, which owes to, as it profits from the crisscross template (gestalt), organizes mental events that also seem to exist without thinking or occur absent saying. Nonetheless, thought activists and organizers they most assuredly are. Chiasmus and \times/χ operate in the mental milieu of the human species through the architecture they possess in common. This architecture exists *subspecies* the imperial \times/χ that mammoth figure—“giant,” “vital,” “parental”—that positions, as the poet sagaciously opines, astride man’s conceptual “horizon.” As Wallace Stevens also makes allusion to, this vital parent, with a gigantic, proctoring stance and straddle, mounts for humankind colossal posits: intermediation and intersection.

The rest of the treatise presses on this issue of going without saying (non-saying, for short), the relatively un-thought about manner in which we proceed to cogitate when in the company of chiasma. The discussion wends its way so as to explore the spatio-physical signature of the subliminal cross gestalt operant within chiasmus. These crossing operations total up and principle cognitive structure that proves to be of monolithic proportion in human activity. The present interest is not in *explications de texte*, although contextual explanation will be needed to better evaluate how a given chiasm channels meaning outcomes and how the person originating and/or the person receiving it are/is likely to have conceived the situation in which the chiasm appears. A major objective is to lay bare the conceptual commonality

between our two figures \times/X and chiasmus, which, in being true to their spatio-physical selves, substantiate and underlabor (mean) well beyond themselves.³

The split personality of chiasmus is investigated throughout the remaining pages. Investigation will show, for instance, the chi-figure sometimes patterns certainty, but at other times, confusion; sometimes patterns amity, but also adversity; patterns composure, but at other times, discomposure. The contrariwise mechanism applies its gears to accommodate absolute stasis or unending alternation. For every facilitation–output attributable to chiasmus, a contra-facilitation–output can be found. These diametric effects proceed from the chi-figure because they proceed from the figure’s diametrically-structured stamp \times/X . A chiasm, as many others have said, can switch and posit contraries and extremes; but what has been just now noted, that chiasmus is a cognitive system that itself switches and posits alternatively between contrary, extreme outputs is a thesis that I believe is a new cultivar to the chiasmus literature. The thesis extends the contention, also sown here, that the mechanics of chiasmus are inordinately complicated and shifty. However, our summing up of chiasmic complexity doesn’t quite end here. Mirrored chiasmus machines reflexivity. Thus, it is that no small thing: a co-referential instrument (Lakoff, “Sorry” 99). With input from Lakoff we gather that because chiasmus is reflexive, it is, in general and in the singular, “never one thing only.”

The project elects as its methodology a highly accessible model used by George Lakoff. In a chapter published in *Spaces, Worlds, and Grammar* (Fauconnier and Sweetser 1996; see Lakoff in Bibliography), the searching beams of Lakoff light upon a fundamental system by which we conceptualize the complexities of the self, specifically, a metaphoric division of the individual into two ‘persons.’ The topic of duality set forth in “Sorry, I’m Not Myself Today” isn’t of direct concern here, but rather the procedure by which Lakoff uncovers it. The methods Lakoff requires of himself in his chapter, I adopt here. His approach is to locate recurrences over the phenomena under examination enough to hypothesize a cognitive system accountable for those phenomena. Chronicity allows an examiner to arrive at distinctions and to determine what the recurrences might verify more generally. Lakoff hunts up significant structure, that is, structure that can reasonably account for systematicity. Although this isn’t exactly his

phrasing, Lakoff aims to uncover structure that can steady a certain amount of prediction. But as he is careful to stress, inconsistencies within the system do not negate it; rather they convey the complexity of the phenomenon under scrutiny. A structure or mapping from structure can perform contradictory entailments (116), a finding germane to chiasmus as an important organizing system within human cognition.

Any “general scheme” or system, if it registers the “cognitively real, should be extendable to novel cases” (100). This extension to the novel, an extension that Lakoff flags, is crucial to his hypothesizing and to mine. A candidate that would be warranted as a legitimate cognitive system must hold enough generalization strength that it can conduct over a spectrum extending from the pedestrian to the virtuosic and, with respect to that spectrum, it must prove essentially unproblematic as to both creation and reception. The specimens of chiasmus in this and the next chapter illustrate of chiasticity the virtues Lakoff stipulates of cognitive systems in the main, as the specimens show too the complexities and qualifications present in those systems.

The treatise maintains as its working assumption that chiasmus performs as a cognitive system. It is a tool for organizing experience and for transmitting that experience. In its organizational duties it relies on its own pattern to perform projections from that pattern. The pattern is a unique exercise in and negotiation of likeness and difference. Chiasmus is an encapsulation of extent and division and, therein, a modeler of extent and division. Chiasmus is an encapsulation of symmetry and side-by-sideness and, therein, a modeler of symmetrical and lateral relations. Chiasmus encapsulates two members in one larger whole and, thereby, models for two-in-one experiences and, more generally, part-to-whole experiences.

The three cases of encapsulation–modeling in the preceding paragraph barely start on the long list of form-wise enterprises in which chiasmus engages. Happily, we have the remainder of the treatise to advance on this list. What matters at this juncture is an overarching claim: that through self-modeling, that is, the pattern that it exhibits in simple, chiasmus figures a diverse, but principled group of ideas and propositions. We discover through retrospective analysis that

the figurations devolve from the spatial logic, spatial persuasions, and spatial concepts borne out in the formal systematics of this pattern of seeming simplicity.

Of particular consequence is that the logic, persuasions, and concepts referenced in the sentence previous flow from spatial relations. These spatial relations are the bases for notions of likeness or association and difference or dissociation, which, critically, parent all conceptualization. This chapter and the following one explore how chiasmus patterns a vast assortment of meanings, all of which have space and the spatial crisscross *au fond*. Chiasmus is a form to which meanings are naturally paired by virtue of that form. Chiasmus, thus, is a meaning capacitor. Its capacities, in no special order, include:

Double or nothing, double standard, two for one, two as one or two making up one// Between Scylla and Charybdis, falling between two stools, betwixt and between, caught in the middle// Double bind// Turning tables or upside down, upending, toppling// At odds, tug-of-war, tit for tat// Either *this* or *that*, better *this* than *that* (choice taking), or neither *this* nor *that*// Reversing, back-and-forth (see-sawing) movement or activity, fluctuation, oscillation// Doing right by one, by two, by halves// Right *versus* wrong// Shooting down one by the other, playing one against the other// Vicious circle// Round and round, wheel of fortune// Shifting sands// From pillar to post// In it together // Having it both ways, the two-way street// Hanging in the balance, suspension, stasis// Meeting one another half way, compromise// In, done, or obtained by halves// Interchangeability// See-saw (*mutatis mutandis*)// Neither better than the other// Nothing of the kind or quite another thing// The false choice or false dichotomy (it is not correct to say ‘*AB* or *BA*’)// No telling (much of) a difference, indifference// Much the same (thing), one and the same (thing)// To have one is to have the other, indivisible, inseparability, inescapability// At a standstill, without a shadow of turning// *Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose* (the more it changes, the more it’s the same thing)// Cast in the same mold// *If-then* arguments and *tu quoque* (Latin for ‘you too’) sentiments or arguments// Ebb and flow// Eternal cycle or return, perpetuity, infinity// Two ways round// What goes around, comes around// Feedback or reciprocal looping// Restlessness, edginess// Confused, chaotic, helter-skelter, loopy// Circular argumentation or reasoning// The ‘Catch-22’ dilemma or circumstance// Non-sequitur// An undistributed middle// Claptrap (flawed, empty, specious argument), tautological thinking, pseudosyllogism, solecism// Centrism// Conditionals, e.g., If *this* than *that* and *vice versa*// Causality, e.g. If *this* causes *that*, than *that* returns *this*

Table 1: Chiastic Affordances

The table above is not meant to be comprehensive. The entries, which admit of overlaps, comprise neither a table of contents to nor an item-by-item checklist for what follows, although several of these chiasmic capacities are met with in this and the subsequent chapter. What Table 1 is good for is this. It enables a sense of the meaning range, but also the versatility and suppleness of chiasmus beyond what Chapter One has already suggested.

A final comment. The discussion takes as elemental a thesis common over contemporary cognitive studies, but perhaps most simply and elegantly set out by a mid-twentieth-century expert in the common denominators identifiable in man's social conduct. Edward Hall, that wonderfully keen observer and reporter of human behavior, maintains, "all cultural behavior is biologically based" (*Silent Language* 61). Very much in the manner of Kenneth Burke, Hall does not let readers forget that, for all man's sophistication, he is a "physiological organism," and his forms, symbols, and systems are the progeny of his corporeal existence (61).

Hall determines that small precincts as well as wide swaths of human behavior are dictations and recordings of "hidden rules."⁴ These "rules" abide in patterns, each of which "exists almost entirely out-of-awareness" (71, emphasis original). Hall goes further yet. He concludes that conditions of inattention foster a high level of patterning (72). Especially applicable to the study of chiasmus is the anthropologist's finding that "formal patterns offer a great deal of leeway in the way they can be expressed" (123). In his text, *leeway* is a key, accentuated term (see, e.g., 112, 131, 155, 157). A pattern's "boundaries," although not written down, are intuitively known. Our intuition of the hidden rules and implicit parameters of chiasmus is exquisite, in the general way of patterns, be they formal or informal. To start to unearth this deep facility, we must probe the evidence available to us: the chiasmic pattern's meaning affordances.

*A CERTAIN JUSTICE: ARGUMENT VIA THE CRISSCROSS*⁵

For millennia, artisans of the Middle East have crafted convoluted, densely patterned carpets. The sumptuous designs of these knotted and woven piles organize according to exact

serial progressions of four-ways round continuous inward bands. By the symmetric progression of precise pattern match, admirers fluently ‘follow,’ as they also predict the decorative reasoning and formal harmonies of the fabulous intricacy. The ornate, involved, yet intelligible geometry caters to humankind’s symmetrically-‘minded’ eyes. These two-dimensional creations’ multiple decorative bands logically and geometrically conform to the stricture of a center as they observe the limits of successively diminishing quadrangles. The bi- and quadra-symmetrical patterns that advance toward, as they organize from a mid-most point (commonly marked by an elaborate or dramatic emblem of special significance) accord with another stylized concentric creation woven by and venerated by ancient Middle Eastern peoples: chiasmus.

So seminal was chiasmus in cultures of the ancient Near East, cultures with a zealotry for symmetry and the regimented line, secular prose usage ranged to a practice that we find startling. Chiasmus plied the legal discourse of these cultures. By the day’s custom, lawyers fashioned protracted chiastic compositions to moot their cases. Beyond its intriguing foreignness, the practice comments on chiasticity in general and, by extension, on the compact chiasmus with which moderns have far greater acquaintance. For us, the protracted or macro chiasma is an oddity. However, it is important to remember that for a very long time the extended epistrophic and bi-lateral structure pivoting on a central hinge, an axis of symmetry, was an expressive form familiar to, and, in fact, an expectation of, the literate and non-literate members of many societies and cultures. Notwithstanding that it has become antiquated and now seems peculiar, the macro chiasmus can serve as a general primer to our subject. As we shall see, the formal features and rhetorical consequences of the macro chiasmus are nearly all a viewfinder to its much smaller cousin.

The legal compendia of the ancient Semitic scribes followed a prescription of concentric symmetry. These earlier legalists guided their reasoning by a deliberated series of statements that led to a halfway point. At this marked juncture, the presentation took a sharp turn. By exactly reversing step-by-corresponding-step back to its opening remark, the argument produced a mirror image of its first half. The mirroring completed a circuit, which explains why

the macro chiasm is also titled an ‘annular pattern’ or ‘ring composition.’ The looping-back formulation was the standard blueprint for legal argument in the Near Eastern world, the discourse of which was broadly and heavily steeped in double designs (Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation* 58, 60; Welch, *Chiasmus in Antiquity* 13), in verbal and logical organization that parallelism arranges (Jakobson, “Grammatical Parallelism” 400), and in giving priority to repetition, inversion, bi-cola, equilibration, complementarity, and ring formulation (Porten; Bliese; Welch).

The extended juridical chiasms are a species of the macro chiasms that proliferated before, during, and, for a century or two, after the time of Christ. These larger chiasma were common to the poetry and prose of both secular and ecclesiastical domains and they appeared in oral narration and in written texts. They followed one of two basic formats: having a couplet center or a singlet center. The singlet or couplet refers to a separate proposition, almost always formally, linguistically, and semantically of a piece, usually a line of poetry or a prose statement or clause. Formula examples for the doublet center chiasm are *ABCCC-DD-CCCBA* and *ABAC-BB-CABA*; for the singlet center, *ABABCCCBA-A-BCCCBABA* and *ABCDE-A-EDCBA*.

These four examples come nowhere near exhausting the permutation potential of the macro composition. In an era when annular composing was the custom within important communication venues, variants on the basic *AB[...]:[...]/BA* floor plan were welcomed as creative challenges. No doubt ingenuity and license with the basic plan proved to be a great source of pride to, perhaps even professional competition among, practitioners whose constructions strike modern readers as a kind of linguistic architecture. Indeed, the macro chiasm goes by the designation “terrace pattern” (Bliese). The terraced structure develops from the transverse lengthening of lines from the two cordoning ends of the mirror precincts as they erect a center zone or the terracing develops from the outermost lines of each of the precincts keeping a length equivalent to the center, but with each of the interior diametric components progressively shortening as they ‘step’ centerwise in paired formation.

The “peak” (again, Bliese) of the chiasmic terrace formally and functionally resembles the

architectural center of a pitched roof or of an arch's extrados. This linguistically-constructed peak also results from an axially-designed, seemingly upward 'movement.' As is the case with its architectural counterparts and with our experience of high locations generally (e.g., mountaintops), the chiasmic peak marks a seminal or climactic point, one that draws the ears and eyes and tends to hold them in stillness and concentration for an extra period of time. Normally (although not necessarily) the peak of the extensive chiasmus is the uttermost component in linguistic length; but, far more importantly, it is the meaning summit and, therefore, a place of inbuilt pause and reflection. This last word reiterates, with more than casual fascination for us, the reflective force of any axis of symmetry, even when it is premised by theory alone. The architecture of the macro chiasm advantages itself in the manner of built volumes constructed according to the formal dictates of a strictly enforced axial organization. That is, it obtains balance, stability, clarity, and the presumption of correctness from a coherent arrangement that comes about from a 'heightened' (accentuated) center in relation to strictly conforming and, hence, enframing sides (Lotz, *Architecture* 71, 25).

In correspondence with the axial principle in architecture and with the prominence, triumph, and extra meaning for humans of elevation, the chiasmic peak achieves and exalts. A peak has many physical and psychological indexes, including yearning, accomplishment, and superiority. Because of its strong indices and because the center of any bounded annular form is formally pronounced and, hence, cannot be optically ignored, the macro chiasm's structure of equi-valence is formally ordained to stage and highlight the supreme or, minimally, give pride of place to what matters most within the extended composition. An innermost region readily functions as a *sanctum sanctorum* to enshrine and show to 'highest' advantage ideas, events, and beings, most especially of the divine variety. This axial pinnacle is visually, psychologically, and symbolically ripe for the surprise, drama, and tension that inter-involvement spawns. For instance, the centermost location in the religious or liturgical chiasm may raise a major tenet, point up a sacred or exoteric moment, or elevate messages of warning, struggle, upheaval, fervor, or other strong emotion. The location is especially apposite when the tenet, moment, or message relates to ideas (e.g., the agonistic or oblique) resident within the crisscross emblem

and gestalt. The religious chiasticist often would exposit an intentional ambiguity or paradox of great import at the axial node of his structure's intercrossing lines. In the manner of all crossing phenomena, whether veridical or theoretical, the harmonious, profound, or thorny formally depose at the inmost site of any crisscrossing occurrence. Here exactly, at the cross hatch's very center, the extremes of associative and dissociative matters are most at home.

Where the *idée matiere* peaks in the extended religious chiasm, the compositor of the legal variety enjoyed a formally sited slot for a host of persuasive options. At the high point heard and noted by the mind's ear (a super-segmental) and spotted and remarked by the mind's eye, a crucial rhetorical question can be hung in the air, emphatic negation or denial can be pitched, strong reversal and antithetical ideas mounted, and illocutionary shifts (e.g., direct address, commands) templated (Bliese; Watson 147)—deductory ploys commendable to the religious as well as the legal presentation or pronouncement.⁶ Students of the macro chiasm have identified these rhetorical exploitations of the middlemost location; but it is not difficult to hypothesize others: for instance, increasing affiliation or developing communion with the audience (see Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 178). The prerogative of the physical and conceptual center, whether in architecture or in symmetrical linguistic structures, is to attract and pin the attention, to gather and focus thought. Not nearly as often commented on, but certainly felt by recipients of the macro and micro chiastic structure is the degree to which the center formally reaches across to integrate the lateral panels that make up the greater share of the composition. Christian Norberg-Schulz instructs that it is by the in-gathering, stable center (the *stabilitas loci*) that a thing condenses into “conspicuous totality” (*Dwelling* 29).

The modern architectural theorist also instructs about the other half, so to speak, of the conspicuous totality; namely, that while the center brings the sides into line to install a perimeter delineating and encircling the whole, the perimeter lines compass, conform, and, therein, erect a center. Center and perimeter complement and, hence, function on the other's formal behalf. It might be noted that this reinforcement between center and perimeter replicates the formal gearings performed under the direction of chiasmus. We would note, too, how this is an instance of the PART-TO-WHOLE image schema that plays a prominent role in chiastic form

and function.

Installation of a center by a perimeter and the reciprocal installation of a perimeter by a center count as little more than a given in architectural and art theory, or rather it would be more accurate to assert that this is a concept about inter-relation so ordinary as not to be much bothered with. Because it is generally taken for granted in these disciplines, the full throat given the concept by Norberg-Schulz makes his a particularly valuable contribution. He underlines in his many texts that the sides of a bi-laterally symmetric whole regulate the center and the center, the sides. This cross regulation and formal interoperability can be visualized in Figure 6, an illustration reproduced from Rudolf Arnheim's *The Power of the Center*. In his book's discussion, Arnheim elaborates on the *vice versus* relation between center and contour. These spatial relations are conveyed through a pair of Palladian ground floor plans.

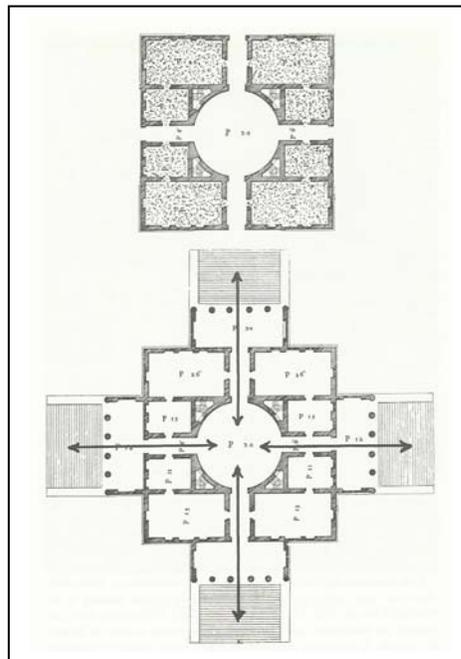


Figure 6. Arnheim. Ground plan, Palladio's Villa Valmarana.

As quick as a viewer of the floor plans puts eyes to Palladio's spatial configurations, her mental juices flow. Importantly, the viewer's ideational interpretations and impressions erupt

minus words. She immediately gathers the inside-to-outside correspondence and the outside-to-inside correspondence, and, too, the larger (i.e., comprehensive, inclusive), reciprocating correspondence extant between the two ‘smaller’ ones. The provocation of these logical correspondences, with the intrication they optically and mentally exact upon the plans’ viewer–reader, would transpire without the double-headed arrows (specifying processional directions) imposed on the lower, somewhat more detailed representation of Palladio’s quadra-symmetry. Split the four-way Palladian symmetry of either architectural ground plan in half lengthwise and you end with arrangements exhibiting a familiar symmetry of left-to-right–right-to-left. This is the bi-lateral symmetry that we ‘read’ with the same, if not greater aptitude than the less frequently encountered four-way symmetry that Palladio executes for the Villa Valmarana.

Mutual dependence of part-whole relations presides over the crosswise linguistic structure as *per* the gestalt. Said somewhat differently, chiasmus works reciprocally, which is its natural or, more correctly, formal *vice versus* way: from the exterior, development two ways to the center, and, from the center, development two ways to the exterior. This double, reinforcing development contains material, architectural (structural, formal), and logical authority.

To more clearly explain its structural characteristics, a Biblical terrace will be examined with a view to its macro chiasmic architecture. A specimen from the New Testament’s Galatians is reproduced below. It is provided most especially for your visual consideration. Its graphic representation adheres to convention, scholarship’s long-standing custom for displaying the extended chiasm:

A The **heir** remains a **child** and **servant** (4:1)
 B Until the time appointed of the **father**
 C When that time came, **God** sent for his **Son**
 D Made under the **law** (4:4)
 D To redeem those under the **law** (4:5)
 C Because ye are **sons**, **God** sent forth the Spirit of the **Son**
 B That ye cry Abba, **Father**
 A That ye are no more a **servant** but a **son** and **heir** (Galatians 4:7)⁷

The indented layout brings added notice to how the inverted, concentric pattern of the macro

chiasmus turns inward toward, by means of a double advance on, a formally pinpointed and semantically salient nucleus, the couplet *DD*. The inwardness reflects a march or movement toward an axial (nuclear) locus. This march proceeds according to a sequence that can be formularized as *outside-to-inside : inside-to-outside*. The *outside-to-inside : inside-to-outside* ‘movement’ is evident in the Palladian ground plans (again, whether or not they have directional arrows pointing a course of proposed or hypothetical progression). The linear formula’s colon marks the formal axis of reflection and the midmost place of chiastic construction. The *outside-to-inside : inside-to-outside* description captures the formal plan of the structure, but also points up the shaping mechanics and lends, perhaps, a clearer view to the image schematic weightiness of the *AB:BA* pattern. The description records the temporal experience we have of this distinctive pattern. It also records the pattern’s robust spatiality, both in the semantics of the words and, iconically, in their material display on paper.⁸

The semantic apex of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians manifests and suspends at the linear intersect between the *ABC* and *CBA* sectors. “Made under the law to redeem those under the law” pledges a miraculous, recondite exchange, God’s Son for human sons, under condition the latter uphold the Son’s divinity. So compelling is the chiasm that rephrasing the idea performs a chiastic locution, just said, as though necessarily. Redemption as recompense for faith in redemption is the perfect and just (balanced) trade off. By God’s calculus, the tit-for-tat must needs be total; one-for-one is the only fair, absolute (whole) deal. As has been observed, exchange, part-to-whole, and balance are natural attributes of our embodied experiences generally, but also with respect to crossing. Through its crosswise heritage, chiasmus is the right “custodian” (to repeat Paul’s term) for fairly seeing to the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

The Galatians chiasm brings before the eyes of the viewer–hearer a kind of assuring tablet.⁹ This linguistic tablet’s most important dispensation situates uppermost and centerwise for God’s heirs to perceive and to fix their thoughts on: the divine order of promised salvation in return for faith. Not remarked, because they busy themselves tirelessly and wordlessly in our conceptual background, are two of our most valuable metaphors, CONTROL IS UP and

ESSENTIAL IS CENTRAL (Lakoff, “Sorry” 116). This lack of remark is not specific to Paul’s presentation of orthopraxy. Instead and most critically, it typifies our broad-spectrum inattention to the elemental organizing equipment that is at the core of our reasoning, learning, representing, categorizing, and other cognitive ventures.

The chiasm reproduced above locates authoritatively and critically at the physical center, the absolute crux, of an epistle that is, in its entirety, one oversize chiasm (Welch, “New Testament” 214). At the centripetal point (the couplet) of the ring within a still larger ring (the Galatians in full), God’s Son stands to man as the living promise authored by God the Father. This most monumental and poignant of aspirations attains (in-gathers) promotion by a peaked form that, by its orderly, concentric disposition, hoists the hopes and lifts the spirits (souls) of humanity doomed otherwise to run aground of death. This Pauline chiasm nicely exemplifies for our interest how cross-diagonalized lines formulate a juncture—a turning point, a monumental moment, a watershed, or a crossroads—leading to a magnificent finality: “no more a servant but a son and heir.” The chiasm honors in its own self-agreeing, seemingly incontestable structure an “appointed,” lawful act that ascends to a center that is formally promised, because it is formally sited, and that, therefore, ‘bespeaks’ of sublime promise. The formal delivery system, itself straightening, consummately shaped, double involving, and self fulfilling, impersonates God’s lawfulness and promising contract with man. The system messages the idea and models a structure of honoring (formal agreement). Contracts, in the exacting manner of chiasmus, specify, arrange, involve, and obligate two sides. The parallel lexicalization within opposing panels (sides) cross lashes the panel pair and, hence, establishes a whole formally tied together. The reverse parallelism entails polar opposition within a larger spectrum or frame. The setting up occurs by structure alone, structure absent semantics. The structural covariance of a chiasm formally mimics (iconizes) and, hence, is well formed to house a two-sided covenant subsisting between contrary or polar beings and possible contestants, specifically in Galatians, immortal God and His mortal creature. The *ABC-DD-CBA* form constrains and, thereby, epitomizes the abidance revealed by and required of a palindromic Father. This categorical, democratic, fair-minded (equal-sided) covenant, erected upon multiple chiastic

layers, hails as mortal man's "Magna Carta" drawn up with the Absolute of Absolutes.¹⁰ That chiasmus is an absolutist, a right-in-itself affair, is a rhetorical windfall for Paul.

The disciplined design of the macro chiasm, most especially its regimenting of centricity, captures our stereoscopic visual system. But the pattern also registers aurally. Our hearing system, also dual input, inclines toward the repeating of words, phrases, and larger sequences within the macro chiasm. The human ear, the first organ developed *in utero*, is an exquisite shape detector. It responds to the audio features of the macro chiasm, including the marking of a center. It perceives the vibration, cadence, rhyme, pace, and tunefulness of the many, layered repeats that ensue from macro chiastic patterning. The ear will certainly track the symmetries Paul's chiasmus perpetrates, because humans possess an acute sensitivity to symmetrical arrangements in sound (Campbell 16, 24). Actual awareness on the receiver's part might be minimal, but repetition and symmetry are nonetheless sure to influence. Musicians and poets presume upon this awareness and influence.

Obviously a reader has the advantage of aural plus visual input. Nevertheless, we know from research on music reception that the listener identifies patterns that conduct spatio-visual image correlates. Music "sculpts" images by organizing sounds "into shapes, patterns, figures, and mathematical proportions" planned for by composers and intelligible to their listeners (Campbell 34, 31). Among the images heard are some of the basic shapes of geometry. One of the more prominent of these image shapes is that of a concentric circle around a dot in the middle (33). Poetry and so-called oral literature operate from the presumption that listeners detect, respond to, and find meaning in sounded shape forms. Although chiasmus is an eye-ful and although it supplies us with 'new eyes' to look out on and re-categorize the world, at the same time, it is never not a sounded thing.

With respect to the strictly aural reception of the macro chiasm it must be remembered that the form was acknowledged for its effectivity and affectivity in eras when the majority of the populace lacked literacy or could boast only a qualified literacy, when oration was the preferred medium for formal communication, and when reading matter, by modernity's standards, was scarce for literates and semi-literates to try out their reading skills. The point to

be made is that while my disquisition deploys a vocabulary more visual than aural, chiasmic outcomes discussed are detected and measured aurally along lines (remembering our William James) with meanings comparable to those detected and measured optically. The aural reinforces the visual and the visual, the aural. As with so much else with chiasmus, it ensures its way, at least, twice over.

Linguistic arrangements demonstratively architectural and angle-bracketed in profile could have easily been a formal flirtation for the twentieth-century architect Le Corbusier. I suspect that with his own diorthotic eye and mind, his geometric tactility, and his savoring of the super-lucid profile, Le Corbusier would have been unable to resist a projection of regulating lines onto the macro chiasm. To try out this thought experiment, let us first observe two instances of the Swiss architect's standard linear overlays applied to a single building (Fig. 7). Le Corbusier's overlays were always rectilinear versions of oblique crosses. They were drawn thus to recuperate the angularity and symmetry proper to the architect's principles for building the entirely legible, faultlessly-proportioned edifice.

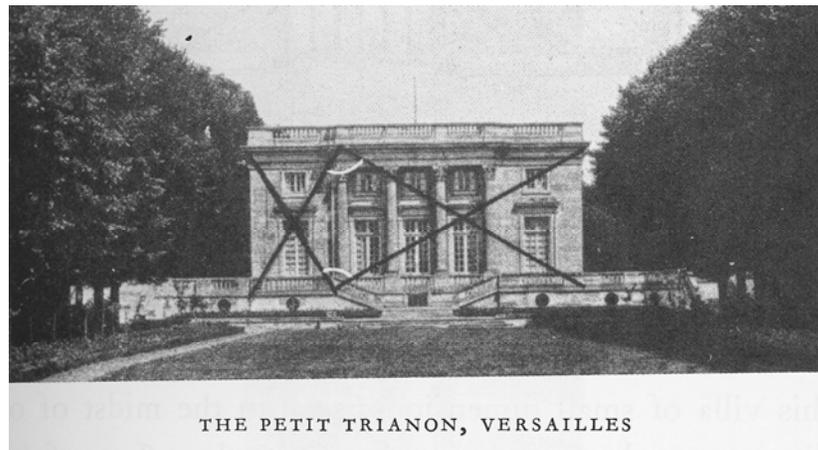


Figure 7. Le Corbusier, Regulating lines.

Directly following this viewing of two of his regulators, we impose a regulating line *ala* Le Corbusier on the *Galatians*' contractual 'tablet.'

A	The heir remains a child and servant
B	Until the time appointed of the father
C	When that time came, God sent for his Son
D	Made under the law
D	To redeem those under the law
C	Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of the Son
B	That ye cry Abba, Father
A	That ye are no more a servant but a son and heir

The built world's, and certainly Le Corbusier's preferred form and ideal organizing principle, the rigorous 90-degree angle, brings forward the acute design of macro chiastic architecture and the pointed nature of its parallelism and cross juncture. The experiment's regulating line imposition functions as though we had laid a folding ruler at a right angle over the Galatians tablet, positioned for the purpose of giving measure to the chiastic structure's geometric form. Few would argue that the sharpness and strictness of the form is other than assertive and compelling.

Le Corbusier declared that architecture demands of the master designer that he "carve the lineaments of the outward aspect" of his volumes (218, emphasis original). The reason? "Contours are the touchstone of the architect"; his creation stands and falls, physically, visually, aesthetically, and philosophically, according to its firmness of contour. True architecture reassures. It is certain and legible, in all respects. It announces as a sharply sculpted silhouette.

I would have us focus on two ideas from these rousing epigrammatic declarations. The first is that the outward aspect or contour of a built form, especially if it keeps to the 90-degree angle that both architecture and Le Corbusier canonize above all others, resembles the finely chiseled line. The previous century's great architectural designer-theorist purposely chose the word *carve*.¹¹ The architecture of chiasmus, as we can see by applying a collapsible ruler or a regulating line, is, in imitation and entitlement of X/X, highly cut, of a precise, finely lineated form, firm and steadfast to the eye and, to eye and mind, certain to stand and endure. The

design of chiasmus, in imitation of \times/X , cuts and puts across two deliberate ways. We might claim of the rhetorical figure, in the spirit and accentuation of Le Corbusier, that it is a metrical construction where “the fraction of the inch comes into play” (214, 216). That chiasmus is imperial and a precisionist—incisive, fastidious, and inclined to Le Corbusier’s ideal of architectural “severity” and “austerity” (220, 204)—gives reason why it excels at *prosecuting* and *executing* the ideas it designs. The discursive, rhetorical version of its visually assertive and visually imposing intaglio is made to always cut two ways. Chiasmus aims toward, when it doesn’t outright achieve, an excruciating exactness and dictation, qualities that contribute to its being an assuring, persuasive, near-compulsory form for eye and ear alike.

Moreover, chiasmus is, with respect to its architecture, linguistically exact onto itself. This magnificent property is an inheritance from its ancestor, the mighty signatory \times/X . Due to a perspicacious, precisely-scored contour and that everything within this beveled border has its appointed place, chiasmus persists in and rhetorically insists upon its own right, completed being. In this important regard, it strikes us as ringing true as well as insistently. As will become more apparent, it isn’t easy for a recipient to extricate herself, whether wittingly or unwittingly, from an argument chiseled to the exacting fit and finish of chiasmus. The chiasmic blueprint builds for a finely, but rigorously cross-timbered, circumscribed edifice, one that can stand on its own (two feet), ordered, deliberate, complete, and purposeful onto itself. Yet, because doubleness must precur unison or even the striving after unison, the chi-figurer has a zone of work cut out for it. Fortunately for chiasmus, it can fall back on its very incisive self, the sculpted goodness (suasion) of its own sheer form, to epitomize and, therefore, effect beyond itself.

The inverted concentric design of the large-scale chiasm goes over the full round of a series of ideas not once, but twice. The binary formula is efficacious in that deliberating once and then once more in parallel makes doubly and quite neatly sure. Duplication better guarantees an argument seemingly inclusive and, therefore, compelling. Duplication bestows emphasis and communicates steadfastness. Moreover, the impressive iterative organizing, particularly as it involves inversion, and the internal affirmation across pairs of sectors and their

elements are rhetorically pressing. The reverse repetition entails an orderly going back over of prior material. This rehearsal ups the emphasis ante, while it adumbrates that ‘here are ideas worth considering a second time, worth re-collecting.’ Rehearsal by inversion weighs in a formulation’s positive reception if only because it relays that trouble has been exerted in the production. The doubling and reverting transforms an otherwise straightforward series into a rigorous, stylized system. And a system, as we shall see, is a whole other thing.

Figured arrangements of orderly succession “are easily grasped, satisfy the understanding, and, what is more, have the capacity [...] of enabling certain elements to find their place in a series” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 503). Linguistic strategies of repetition and order provide the feeling of presence, and presence matters for it is a rhetorical imperative (115). In *The New Rhetoric*, Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca cite Jean Piaget to support their remarks on the necessity of presence in human argumentation. A critical precept of Piaget is that we can only account for and exclaim over what our senses respond to. This attention spurs comparison and estimation. With our inveterate curiosity as instigation, humans depend for our thinking on setting two things side by side (116). By two’s we size things up and are able to judge one from and, possibly, over the other. Only comparatively can values come out. To undertake any argument a speaker or writer must first make present and then “enhance the value of some of the elements” ceded presence (117). I would have us consider that such ‘elementary’ presentations and valuations manage a kind of potent figure/ground activity in argumentation. This activity is developed further along.

The remark about two items placed alongside one another by the authors of *The New Rhetoric*—which is explained relative to spatiality and just generally better developed by Robert Vischer and Rudolf Arnheim (respectively, pre- and post Piaget)—,¹² opens up several issues germane to chiasmic structure. Quintilian tells that in devices of well-ordered succession, “Before proceeding to the next step, one stops on those before” (qtd. in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 504). These devices are linguistic renditions of the psycho-perception of side-by-side presence making. Proceeding along, because formally presented with and guided by a stepwise (i.e., orderly and incremental) argument encourages a recipient to give pause, if only

of an infinitesimal interval, to each part. When the parts have been doubled in a presentation of diametric pairs, presumably the persuasive bonus multiples as well. I would add that an arrangement of sheer precision and orderly method lends rule-and-line authority as well as rectitude, the prestige of which are welcome by all rhetors, but perhaps especially profits those putting forth propositions in religious and forensic forums.

The stepwise halting, which Quintilian brings to special notice, may exert other favoring outcomes. Orderly, pausing conduct is likely to be deemed a dignified manner and suggestive of someone decisive about his business. Those who aim to move or motivate congregants within a church, synagogue, or mosque value stateliness and resoluteness, as do those who want to persuade judges or juries in a courtroom and steer them to a decision. If you would have others deliberate over and defer to your propositions, deliberation in the course of presenting those propositions can increase the favor of your reception. Horace identifies that putting “elements together in just the right way” creates a modest ensemble (169). The carefully measured presentation can please the hearer as it bestows on the presenter a Senatorial dignity (169). A pausing conduct and orderly succession will most likely strike the audience as *thoughtful*, in both senses of the term, and any such appearance will help to secure or, at least, further enhance a speaker’s ethical standing.

Stepwise advancement proximating a considered ‘staircase’ arrangement evokes visual, perceptual, aural (rhythmic), dynamic and static, kinetic and motoric memories and, thereby, involves gestalts of concern here. These gestalts and our deeply imprinted memories and understanding of them hold great significance in respect to our reception of the macro chiasmus and also the micro. An inclined, terraced (stair) silhouette and notable stepwise pacing bear out what *The New* rhetoricians testify about methodical succession in general. They appraise methodical succession as conferring a rhetorical benefit: “perception of an order is almost always envisaged as a progression” (504). Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman take for granted that progression spells movement and that pointing the receiver in a specified direction and channeling and propelling him along a course way constitute rhetorical advantages supportive of all categories of argumentation.

Under the regimentation and geometry of the protracted chiasm, a recipient is urged to advance, one by one, along the course of ‘steps,’ taking ‘up’ each in turn, until arriving at the ‘top’ or ‘peak’ of the ‘staircase.’ She lands at the top flight and relishes the moment and her ‘observatory,’ the arrival pre-positioned and the ‘spectacular’ view (the linguistic–propositional content) neatly pre-arranged for her. As a rule, macro chiasms conceive a series that “are constructed for the sake of their middles,” as Fahnestock wisely observes (101). The longer pause (the moment just now mentioned) transpires before the individual proceeds, one by one, back ‘down’ the series of steps that are familiar because they are afore-experienced.

Along the symmetrically inclined–declined course of chiasmus, our recipient ‘moves’ or ‘travels’ rhythmically and with assurance, the way and positions of the stairs (the direction and propositions) arranged considerately ahead. By the modifier *considerately* is meant that the stair’s course is formally prepared, a definite way of proceeding: deliberate, organized, legible, ‘clear-cut,’ we could rightly say. The movement and arrival of the chiasm processioner seemingly come to pass as they should. Movement moves and arrival arrives according to the very order of succession pre-scribed, meaning, pre-scored—because ultimately X-scored—in advance for the processioner. The clear-cut, step-by-step terrace event/structure has the feeling of eventuality and super-inducement, feelings directly traceable to the pressures of a set form. Symmetry carries expectation(s). Better still, symmetry delivers as expected.

The carved or scored contour of the macro chiasmus emerges from the strict, incisive incrementalism of subsequent and consequent lateral halves at an even cross tilt. The second lateral functions, relative to its facing subsequent or antecedent, as a *consectary*, in all senses of that term: “A consequence; a deduction, a conclusion, a corollary” (*OED*). The chiastic consectary naturally demonstrates *consecution*, from “follow closely, overtake,” “as a CON-+sequi,” a pursuit (*OED*). In modern usage, *consecution* refers to a logical succession or train of reasoning, but the word originally meant ‘attainment.’ Pursuing and following, attaining and arrival—activities and feelings we intuitively associate with succession and progression and which are inseparable from our experience of chiasmus—, undergird the very nature of form itself. This proposal of form as pursuit and fulfillment (attainment) is at the heart of the

“architectural rhetoric” and structuralist mindset of Kenneth Burke.¹³ The proposal serves as the jumping-off point of Chapter Four, where we explore Burke’s doctrine on psychology’s innate relation to form. Connectedly and as we shall treat shortly, Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman allow for the weightiness of perceptual as well as psychological factors to explain human reasoning, including argumentation (116–117). By a larger allowance on the parts of the rhetorician twosome, orderly succession evokes a variety of psychological and emotional “sensations” (150). To this allowance, I submit that the logical succession or consecution of a deliberated series, especially one so markedly, symmetrically sequenced as chiasmus, makes *consentients* of receivers. This point also will be treated.

The perceptual, psychological, and emotional factors sketched above apply not just to the macro chiasm, but also to its smaller cousin. These factors, paradoxically, have been the very basis on which chiasmus has been discounted. Samuel Bassett is a case in point. The Greek scholar of the early twentieth century grumbles that chiasmus is “artificial and contorted.” He draws this conclusion strictly on the basis the device mimics a crisscross. To substantiate his conclusion, he lays out a Homeric chiasmus of four words (two adjectives to two nouns) according to crossed diagonals. For Bassett, the cockeyed, oblique character of the cross is reason enough to pin a ‘specious’ label on the crisscross motif in language. According to this man whose scholarship took grammatical structure as subject, the chi-figure comes by its negatives through its physical resemblance to the crisscross. Chiastic ‘misdeeds’ are back-assigned from the skewed cross. Bassett ventures that chiasmus is equivocal because the crisscross is. This chiasmus sceptic deduces of the linguistic rendition of the cross that it is “indistinct” (a synonym for *oblique*) and forced, that is, a distortion of the natural “linear” order of language, and, seemingly, of experience at large. Suffice it to say, these deductions cry out for larger explanation of chiasmatic unnaturalness and indistinctness.

In Bassett’s judgment, the crisscross is proof enough of chiasmus as a design sure to contoruplicate, skew, or falsify what should be straightforward and natural. He begrudges that there may be a “psychological factor” to this faulty figure, by which he has in mind the inversion of two duplicated items in proximal relation as forging “a central figure on whom the

attention is focused” and as causing a possible formula for continuity. Despite having “qualities of beauty,” the device is most likely “a rhetorical trick of style,” an eye-catching fast one available to pull things over on the unsuspecting. Bassett, who in the final analysis seems more confused by this “ornament” than really aggrieved by it, offers that it may be “emotional.” His reader doesn’t know whether to take this adjective in a negative or positive sense. With a commentator so obviously flummoxed by the chi-figure, *emotional* could go either way. For lack of an explanation, Bassett’s reader remains befuddled as to what to make of the modifier.

Cedric H. Whitman, a name perpetuated by his study of the ring composition of Homer, admits that though the epic singer persistently draws upon annular or chiasmic organization, including the plan for the entire *Iliad*, this organization may have remained largely, when not entirely, unsuspected by those listening to the singing of the fabulous epics. Another possibility, thinks Whitman, is that the symmetry and other outcomes of chiasmus may have stirred up only vague “emotions” or feelings, that influenced listeners in “strange,” unspecifiable ways. Whitman considers a third option, a variant really of the first. He advances that the “most amazing virtuosity” of ring structure stayed buried treasure. Whitman strains to make sense of the chiasmic virtuosity he considers wasted on Homeric audiences. He ends by trotting out a dozy of an explanation: throwing off an imperceptive audience by hiding his formal means may have been the poet’s very mission. The literary artist (and, ostensibly, a few favored, sophisticated others, Sir Cedric W. possibly?) hits on the treasured rings (255–256) because unshared knowledge is not just the artist’s prerogative; it is what distinguishes him as an artist! Whitman’s contention is that Homer, in the same way as artists that followed in his artistic wake, relished the idea of hoodwinking a dull audience, simply because he could, and because conning those entertained by and delighting in his epic tales ‘expresses’ his literary smarts and artistic superiority. This elitist, wacky ‘figure-in-the-carpet’ interpretation, which reduces art to narcissistic cunning (artfulness in the extreme), would buy few full subscribers today.

Still, some explicators have taken related, if partial, stances along Whitman’s lines. Max Nänny partway supports and is therefore pleased to lodge Whitman’s contentions in his own. Nänny voices that in terms of reception, chiasmus can be “largely gratuitous [...], a kind of oral

or rhetorical residue,” the value of which has “dwindled to a mere” decoration (Nänny 76). The superfluous-to-audience chiasma destitute of “semantic function” fall into the category of mnemonic ploys or compositional struts. The inconsequential chiasma matter only as artistic conveniences to aid the epic compositor in his handiwork (76).

Nänny labels as playful one sub-category of these semantically-vain chiasma. A callow James Joyce was prone to the playful or capricious chiasm. This type consists of harmless fripperies a poet or artist tosses about for his own entertainment. The individual who takes up these play toys is apt to quickly outgrow them. In short order, the literary artist learns to do better. Sounding halfway a Whitman, Nänny believes audiences must indulge, even endure, the playful and other semantically-empty chiasma due to the deference owed art’s practitioners. Nänny grants chiasmus a certain degree of wiles, but he tends to write off the figure as a fanciful strain on conventional, more appropriate, and more serious means of expression.

To shore up his decoration interpretation of chiasmus, Nänny cites a study of annular organization in the ballad. David Buchan concludes that chiasmus mainly was an expedient for the balladeer’s “oral creation” (qtd. in Nänny 78). When a society’s mentality was oral, the ballad writer was beholden to spatial formulas. This conclusion by Buchan, if logically expanded, indicates that chiasmus should have vanished with literacy’s proliferation.

I don’t conjure these chiasmus-disparaging commentators as straw men, but rather they are cited because I wish to underline that in each one’s opining about chiasmus he raises spatial, physical, perceptual, and psychological, including emotional, aspects legitimate to the figure and these aspects point to its persuasive capacities. By a funny twist, the commentators fault chiasmus for the very qualities by which it wields its rhetorical accomplishments. Although space doesn’t permit, the same twist magnifies in the oft-praised work *Celestial Pantomime* by Justus George Lawler.

Wiser by far than those named above are Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca. They endorse Piaget and the Gestaltists in the principle that as soon as presence is acknowledged or arranged for (becomes sensible or presented), the realms of perception and psychology arrive. Perception and psychology are not segregated rooms the doors to which we can chose to open or not as our

mind pleases. In the words of Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman, presence “is a psychological datum operative already at the level of perception” (116, emphasis added). With this accentuated and important pronouncement we telescope back to William James and Merleau-Ponty: to the human mode as the percipience (early sensing of) and the psycho activity of the spatial idea (see, also, Hildebrand, esp. 269). Chiasmus, by its spatiality, is not now and again (separately) perceptual, nor is it now and again psychological. It is both, inseparably and invariably.

Spatiality, energized through metaphoric projections and metonymic linkages, is legality’s silent co-partner. Topological space predominates in jurisprudence, perhaps, in part, because the law had its beginnings in land boundaries and territorial measures and disputes that arose thereon. In fact, the starting points for legal officialdom are the determination of ‘grounds’ and the ideal of having a ‘full extent.’ Laws and rules are ‘boundaries’ laid down; they are the ground rules of a government. A government’s citizens live ‘under the law’ that establishes the legality and extension of that government. Those who don’t abide (keep within) the law’s boundaries risk sentencing as outlaws. Lawyers consult ‘holdings’ for guidance in their *defenses*, a term which is itself a spatial derivative and projection from REASONING IS PHYSICAL COMBAT. They chew and wrangle over the issue of standing, which has involved spatial, physical, and force dynamic meanings (Turner, *Reading Minds* 119–120). Jurisprudence seems to have little acknowledged these image schematic, embodied rudiments. That the law comes to be spatially developed we needn’t examine specifically, but only generally and then in relation to the macro chiasm and, by extrapolation, the micro.

Widely speaking, jurisprudence has small tolerance for the exorbitant, for cases, issues, evidence and exhibitors, rules, rulings, or reasoning outside the scope of law. Judges are quick to scold prosecutors, defenders, and witnesses for being ‘out of line,’ that is, exceeding (trespassing beyond) what is deemed (judged) allowable and, hence, presentable within deliberations. The term derives from *exorbitata*, ‘to go out of the track.’ To be EX- +*orbit*, is to be outside the ‘orb or disk’ (*OED*). That which deviates from the usual course or standard track, an orbit or sphere, lacks relevance. It has no bearing.

Legal relevance grows out of a metaphoric notion of spatial limitation, interestingly of a circular (disk- or orb-like), bounded spatial zone. The scope of law permits just the centric, the “reasonable or appropriate”; it’s exclusive even about the facts it will allow (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 346). The law bars or puts curbs on the eccentric, the irregular, a thing that falls outside and, thus, fails to keep within the regular, therefore, well-defined, well-delineated, because entirely delimited, circular course (*OED*). The ‘proper’ and ‘relevant’ are, in metaphorical, categorical, and schematic senses, spatially realized items, corresponding to what Kenneth Burke designates the fully “circumfered” (*Grammar* 77–79). The circumfered, naturally enough, differ from the off track, the out of bounds: the antonymic ‘improper,’ ‘forbidden,’ ‘disallowed,’ ‘unlawful.’ Chiasmus exploits the spatial dependency of the proper and relevant, a dependency not reserved just to legal affairs. Exploitation occurs through chiasmatic figuration of an absolute: a fully contained, self-sufficing, completed space.

The way to understand the spatial figuration of an encircled–bracketed chiastic space is through chiasmus as an operator of O’s and X’s. It is as a dupleXer that chiasmus can encircle and unify. The concept of chiasmus as circumscription relates to its origination in cross-scription and the special symmetry of reciprocal course ways (lines and paths) that are the stamp of the CROSSING gestalt. The chapter’s next section takes up the subject of how chiasmus draws a perimeter (Goffman’s frame), which is always meaningful to humankind, whether it is crossed or not crossed. We will continue with the macro chiasmus to develop the O-ing, the circle- or disk-scribing, of the linguistic strategy in general.

KEEPING IN MIND

A lawyer should set himself the example of sticking to the scope of the law, the case at hand, and the argumentation that supports the case. By straying from the orbit of these, and in particular by not staying strictly to the circumscription of his own developing line of argument, a lawyer’s lapses greatly increase the odds the opposing side will carry persuasion’s day. Digression works against the Near Eastern legalist declaiming his argument or writing out his brief in times past, just as in times present.

Quintilian forewarns how the weighty burdens and responsibilities of the oratorical commission can cause those under them to “indulge their bent or relax their efforts” (17). Should he relax his attention, a speaker soon strays from his train of thinking or loses track of his argument’s direction (Quintilian 17). Listeners will think less of the orator who sidetracks himself and throws off his argument from a partway course (line) of development. They will quickly tune out the miscreant orator who puts them “to too much unnecessary trouble” and they will discount him, along with whatever he has to say.¹⁴ Or, Quintilian counsels, the audience will simply doze, presumably from having lost orientation. Lacking a clear course to follow, participants cease to be involved (in the orator’s coil or disk). Clearly then, they won’t be winded and won round. Presumably all rhetors, not just those in legal forums, ought to avoid what Quintilian estimated a forensically reprehensible, because an avoidable outcome: a “client left in the lurch” (149). As contrasted with a courtroom’s witnesses, a judge or jury had better be led, that is, have his/its reasoning seeded along a continuous, strictly regulated, and fully legible line that both models and encourages consecution. Obviously, the orator who remains true to an orderly circum-script stands a better chance of not being dismissed by those persons he means to involve and constrain within his argument’s orbit.

The same can be said for the composer of written briefs and forensic discourse in general. In the *Ad Herennium*, writers are advised against “the danger of departing from the letter of the text” (81). The Middle East’s legalists, in practice long before the rhetorician from Rhodes collected his precepts, intuited that a cross diagonal template would permit them, as it allowed other orators and authors, to trace out, anchor, and ensure a firm holding to entire texts or portions of texts. These scribes assumed a composition built from a crosswise ground plan would steer an audience and sway it their way. The assumption has basis in that the crisscross *Grundform* enjoys powerful properties, engrammatic and organizational, symbolic and aesthetic.¹⁵ Chiasmus maps a reliable and sensible way to see by.

Semitic scribes well knew an orderly, succinct, wholly legible argument that hangs tightly and plaits sturdily together and that doesn’t leave logical, reasoning, argumentative, evidentiary, or explanatory gaps stands a rhetor, lawyer or other, in good stead. The rhetor’s

tasks require having everything that needs be there present and accounted for, relative to the entirety, and weighted, as is appropriate. He advantages his rhetorical cause by ensuring all components are dispensed rightfully and inter-related in such a way as to form a complete, unimpeachable whole. With this multi-tasking performed, the rhetor may obtain or better realize the binding effect in composition that encourages the same on an audience. A sizeable rhetorical bonus comes to those who arrange an argument that gives every appearance of deriving of its own accord. A harmonious internal structure is the surest means to this outcome. Chiasmus is made for each of the afore-mentioned attributes of argument. For the aggregate, there's no such. That the *AB[...]:[...]/BA* formula confers these rhetorical desiderata rests, significantly, on symmetry's spatial laws and the meanings symmetrical spatiality can afford.

SYMMETRY GIVES PROOF

Chiasmus worships at the feet of Symmetry. He doesn't make a lawful move without this Exactress. Whatever psychological, perceptual, kinesthetic, dynamic, static, and aesthetic powers he wields, he owes pretty much to her pretty, meaningful lines and captivating disposition. That Symmetry has exceptional presence and is conducive of integrated wholes; he does, through imitation. That she is metrical, measured, rhythmic; he does, through imitation. Her wisdom assuredly follows from being both like wise and reverse wise. The same goes for Chiasmus. That we attend Symmetry and are constantly on the lookout for her pleasing patterns is to his gain. We keep her close in mind, because she minds designs along lines corresponding to our bodies, our embodied experience, and our percept and concept expectations. Symmetry gives us a mirror for and to our selves and for and to nature. Symmetry's chiasmic protégé apes her reflections, recollections, and other mirror fascinations and quirks. She is the imperative he can only hope to be—able to model.

Symmetry is a system. It casts and certifies a spatial whole. Since we depend on "conspicuous totalities" for discerning and formularizing the world, its objects, and our relations to both, symmetry is crucial to our minding of world, objects, and relations. We favor and even demand the symmetric arrangement because we make out, but only on

occasion with any conscious attribution, how it is filled with inevitability. Chiasmus sets to reason through the profound systematicity and gratifying completeness of the symmetry of bi-lateralism. The rhetorical might of the macro chiasma rests in the mammoth cognitive machinery of bi-lateral symmetry. This symmetry is the formal realization in spaced language of a function of \times/χ . Language, we know, is steeped in lateral practices of all kinds.¹⁶

The antecedent and consequent sectors of the macro chiasmus reverse duplicate over a central axis, a halfway location relative to the beginning and ending lines. The matching beginning and end ‘draw’ by the mind’s hand and eye a perimeter that holds, between them, an associated, balanced, con-tracted whole.¹⁷ Further creative and reinforcing of that profoundly signifying circumference is the mirroring between the sectors across the circumcenter. The two sectors equilibrate and compose a whole with what, in effect, is a *left-to-right : right-to-left* mirror ‘movement’ or ‘exchange’ of content ‘handed’ over and between the axis of reflection. The reciprocal (inter-changeable), concerting halves approve of (agree on) one another; that is, they execute an argument harmonious and even-handed, because propositionally parallelistic, equilateral, and balanced.

That the sectors con-form and complete each other suggests that here’s an argument that totally ‘adds’ up. As *per* symmetry, the argument culminates neatly, expectedly, accordingly, that is, having pursued (kept to the orbit of) its own internal logic. We remind of how Langer, Cassirer, Merleau-Ponty, and Burke identify a form or symbol’s permanent influence as the consequence of its spatial outlines and relations and the structural logic that devolves uniquely from its inherent spatiality. The receiver of the macro chiasmus feels that all that need be said has been, each proposition, with its ideas and facts, treated and repeated. By deliberating once and then once more in parallel reverse, the bi-lateral chiasm appears to cover the matter in full, giving the impression of having told the whole truth and nothing but. The internal logic and the antecedent–consequent completeness, not to mention the sheer aesthetic pleasure and niceness of twice-ness trace to the double-scoring lines of \times/χ inflected not just in space but in language, too.

Repetitio and *reversio*, figures in their own right, bestow not just emphasis and

insistence, the overt, impressive systematicity is itself pressing. Contents aside, the methodic, punctilious, purposive nature of the *AB/[...]/:[...]/BA* pattern carries exigency that, in turn, can reflect positively on the pattern's adopter. For most audiences, making doubly, deliberately sure implies completeness of treatment, which, in turn, contributes to the sense the chiasmicist has acted diligently. Lawfulness of form conveys purposiveness of argument as it confers propriety, if not also probity, on the argument-maker. With retrospective study, we gauge how, during chiasmic reception, exigence and ethos build on one another. This mutual building between exigence and ethos, which likely has no compare among figures of rhetoric, goes a distance to account for the chiasmic article's exceptional suasive pull on receivers. The cross synergy of persuasive effects has the very nature of the transverse figure. Chiasmus self-demonstrates how things can be warranted good or worthwhile merely through being in relations that appeal to us. Among relations, symmetry and the balance inseparable from symmetry are more than privileged. They are initial and proving, our very means for judging and knowing.

A fully formed, fully sounded case of 'figurability,' as Louis Marin would phrase it—the macro chiasmus is, after all, appreciably rhythmic, chiming, and echoing—boasts a thoroughgoing integrity. Formal integration stems from constituents of a harmonious composition¹⁸ that associate via cross linkage or crosswise development. Linking or developing proceeds by the manner and form, including the isometry and dimetry, of \times/X . It hardly needs be said that \times and X are hatched by repetition and reversal. Forms having the dissymmetrical operation of reflection—that is, where one side can be bent-, folded-, pleated-, or double-backed and theoretically superimposed upon and matched with the other side by the action of a reflective plane or axis—are ideal programs for when a rhetor wants the receiver to reflect carefully, to think and then, with a bit of a pause, think again. Its superimposing translates into that which is extra imposing, not least because the form itself is a completion. Chiasmus has a way of taking things deliberately and seriously, in a deliberate, compounded series. It shows how *series* and *serious* are close relatives. With this relationship, it is easy to see why religious and legal deliberators and wisdom dispensers are fans of chiasmus.

The serious-mindedness of chiasmus is not some add-on capacity. It grows out of the sheerness of an owned and especially imposing steadfastness. Even if we don't agree with the message of a macro chiasmus, we may still follow (track) along the sequence. The tracking may be just barely registered. If nothing else, we are 'forced' to admit to our selves, in a manner of speaking, that a rightness of form is or has been at work. Again, this may remain subliminal. This formal rightness makes resistance on the part of recipients more challenging, despite that the recipient may disagree with the argument or detect a flaw in its presentation. In a formal sense, the recipient will still take the point that has been presented in a steady, continuous seriation. In fact, she almost cannot not take the point, because she has fashioned it, as it were, along with the originator. I mean by this last remark that receivers of the macro chiasm, as with the micro, seem almost bound to feel the repetition and reversion, the echoing and mirroring, which are inclined to take us to reason.

In the course of apprehending the formal pattern, an audience becomes involved in a cooperator's role. Cooperation amounts to a "measure of agreement" (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 494) whether or not audience members accede to the reasoning developed, accept the pertinence and legitimacy of the evidence submitted, favor the presenter's personal temperament or prosecutorial style, or endorse the positions taken by him or her. The content of the chiasm and the person and demeanor of the chiasticist notwithstanding, the audience invests in the formal side-to-side pattern and lends it con-side-eration. This investing is not a matter of conscious choice, but rather of the compelling nature of the form itself, a compellingness that devolves from embodied concepts that are image schematic.

Depending on various circumstances, not least of which are one's familiarity with the macro chiastic form and a possible or even likely expectation of 'seeing' or 'hearing' it, recipients may do more than just keep up with the presenter. Having once got hold of the distinctive pattern of cross structuring, they may begin, either unreflectively or semi-reflectively, to anticipate the phrasing to come. They may feel themselves get into the clip of the writer or speaker or they may just catch at the repeating and reversing effect. No matter the level of anticipation felt by the recipient, the experience is involving. We commonly

describe such an experience as a person ‘entering’ a pattern or ‘falling’ or ‘getting into’ it. Slang relates the experience as ‘getting a groove (on),’ as though by our response we don a pattern and are surrounded by its conduction. Such participation can have a subtle self-congratulatory aspect that works on behalf of the argument unthreading ‘before’ the receiver. The anticipation matters as it is the equivalent of nodding approval in the head. This silent, perhaps mainly unconscious approbation can be quite powerful. To the degree we subliminally ‘see’ or ‘hear’ in advance ‘where he’s going,’ we are less inclined to resist the rhetor’s progression or fault it. It is irresistible in the sense of our having fallen into the form’s line, its annular, centrifiged, balanced layout. We track along in a preconscious mode, keeping to the cross-linked layout. Once part of the pattern (participants), we find it onerous to get ‘off’ or ‘out.’ The *AB[...]:[...]/BA* sequence can’t be simply escaped, at least while the chiasm is unspooling and we semi-tracking the release or even outright tracking ahead. This formal disposition can cause recipients to be predisposed to (prior to its final word or element) the chiasm’s overall proposal. Through what may be even a minimalist sensing of bi-lateral symmetry, recipients turn consentients.

This involvement must be seen in light of a larger issue: namely, the likelihood of being won over by locutions assuming an *AB:BA* pattern. The persuasion speaks to the imposing, compulsory aura of chiasmus. The thought conductor’s aura is hereditary, passed to it from the crisscross that is its formal hallmark and impetus. As developed in Chapter Two, \times/χ conduces visual obligation: it is exceptionally compelling and forceful to optical attention. A composite of obliques equally set to (fastened on) one another, \times/χ obliges attention (*ob* meaning ‘inversely’). As to the obligatory aspect of chiasticity, it is too large to inspect at one sitting. We will return to it now and again, although now with more focused attention than in succeeding pages. We continue with our macro chiasm, but, as noted previously, the remarks comment on the more compact variety.

RIGHT IN ITSELF

The imposingness of chiasmus cannot be overestimated. We have already mentioned

facets of reception relating to this particular characteristic, but one of the primary ones has been kept off stage until now. This is the matter of self-corroboration. Agreement to self is ultimately spatial, although one might not necessarily suppose this to be the case. Self-corroboration occasions from the inward turning of a precinct such that it rests squarely on and with itself. Self-corroboration amounts to keeping space exactly to itself, which we intuit as a rightful order and approve of as a rightful disposition. Another way in which to view auto-agreement is as an in-facing from two sides. The logical, which is to say, spatial entailment of self-involution is the self-sufficiency of a precinct delimited to its own extent, twice over. For exemplary purposes, picture the pleasing precision of two in-facing volutes visually ‘tied’ together by the extension of a console. To corroborate with the self, a twosome, with some degree of extension, must exist *a priori*. In addition, they must engage one another precisely, which is to say, congruently. An entity’s internal engagement, most particularly when it proves a totality, is especially engaging to outsiders. Complete congruence is, by definition, seclusive and humans can hardly ever resist that. According to Hall, in an astutely-judged, insightful study of pattern, “the drive toward congruity” appears “as strong a human need as the will to physical survival” (*Silent Language* 135).

Beyond its internal division by axial reflection, chiasmus expresses another segregation. It expresses a contextual segregation. Chiasmus strongly impresses as a form that sets itself apart. A chiastic locution emerges from the evidence it holds within its self-enclosing contour, the same evidence it arranges to the specifics of the several symmetries of \times and X and the perfect rotational-symmetry of the circle. If we think back on our Galatians specimen, we can appreciate how Paul, of his own regimented composing, ‘circumnavigates’ a regimented course. He ‘arrives at’ a goal, which automatically becomes the halfway point of a round trip. From this marked circumcenter, he takes pains to track back along his outward-bound route to end at the very place where he embarked. This center, which is subsequent to the extension or motion of rounding-back upon the first leg of the journey, is, like the top of a stairway, a landing: a midway place to pause and take (into) account.

The discourse navigation of the macro chiasmus executes a complete trip that divides

into equal (con-forming) parts. The internal conformance maps a crosswise design. This metaphoric circuit is equally apparent in the micro chiasm. Every chiasm, by definition and performance, sets down a peri-meter through the correspondence between a matched pair of ‘outer’ or ‘framing’ elements. It is only by their cross-symmetry that they turn delimiters, circumscribing or O-ing and trans-‘fixing’ or Xing what follows after the beginning element and precedes the final element. As earlier described, the elements to either side of the middle, relate one-to-one as they also relate to the middle. They ‘progress’ incrementally or metrically to this innermost point, a locus of concentration. And they ‘call to’ to or ‘reach across to’ one another (depending on whether an aural or optical emphasis dominates) to conscript a precinct, by which I mean the extent or space of the individual chiastic project. The conscription is a contraction, the latter a vital idea within chiasticity. The axial point/line organizes (symmetricalizes), inter-associates, and equilibrates the elements around it and they return form (centricity) back. The double-way succession organizes a thoroughly constituted (both sides across), concentrative whole.

Through its pronounced contour topologically and geometrically wrought, chiasmus puts on a display of self. We may choose to identify this as one manifestation of the assertive, poised self-display of the classical structure. Chiasmus enacts *temenos*, the Greek paradigm of a world that formally sets itself off from its surround.¹⁹ *Temenos* was the formal ideal in ancient Greece. It held this honor on the presumption that a material realization of all of classicism’s tenets would consummate a complete segregation. The ideal structure stands truly by virtue of its own formal fulfillment: its being a thing sufficient and, hence, not a part of some other thing. The classical structure and chiasmus give the appearance that they, on their own, close the argument, are sum and substance, the last word.

In a manner apropos of classicism generally and *temenos* specifically, the chiastic composition stands out (forward), by complying with an altogether inward orientation. The whole of a chiasm is, metaphorically speaking, in-turned. The elements within a panel appear to ‘look across’ or ‘look over’ a shared axis to their equivalents in the opposite panel and, of course, *vice versa*. Because of the stringency of its concentric symmetry and inverted

parallelism, the contour is in-curved, a particular instance of the in-turned. Architecture recognizes these spatial quotients of in-turning and incurving as having special, obligatory meanings relative to construction and aesthetics.

In-turning is basic to keeping a spatial precinct. Curvature derives from a continuous reciprocity, a tangible give and take, between the vertical and horizontal axes. Mathematically, visually, and in other respects, the curve generates from one compromise after another. The circle's curvature is the perfection of this compromising generation: that is to say, the precision of a one-to-one ratio between the vertical and horizontal. Le Corbusier enters that lines or "bands [that] are incurved or bend over [as though folding, better] display themselves to the eye" (216). In-curved or in-bent lines or bands possess an incisiveness that man's optical system mostly finds irresistible, and such lines are all the more persistent if they themselves are of an incised manner.

An interose or in-turned shaping, especially if it assumes incurvature, initializes, when it does not fully actualize, the process of setting apart a construction. These arrangers of space enclosure (*temenos*) work hand in glove with what Hofstadter, on a different topic, identifies as "well-reasoned phenomena." He identifies the constituents of the well reasoned as systematicity, consistency, completeness, expected elements in expected formations, and tightness of internal linkages (102). We could rightly say that these factors are borne out in the chiasmic construction. Each factor on its own is a power to reckon with. Together, however, they erect that mental powerhouse, the well-reasoned argument, mighty in itself, demanding and commanding thought, and difficult to reject or override.

The inward folding of the Galatians chiasm makes tight by its alignment and that alignment's shaping of a whole. Orderliness and tightness of part to part strongly urges that nothing required to make a totality has been left out. Each proposition has not only its twin, but each of a pair totally mirrors the other's designated place, placement seemingly made right (formed correctly) by virtue of being doubled and partile. Formal self-agreement sets an example of agreeableness. Being exact onto and fully harmonious to self creates a winsomeness, psychological, aesthetic, and rhetorical. Through a placed allegiance to one

another (i.e., a spatial correspondence), the framing constituents of a chiasm throw a barrier around the *AB[...]:[...]BA* locution. The whole derived from a bounding frame deflects all exterior invasions; it nulls and voids what it, on its own determination (perimeterization), casts out of bounds. This formal steadfastness to self implies there's no in stead.

By delineating (grooving) what's in, a cordoned-off construction gets tight rein on the receiver and masters his adherence. A construct that 'answers' lexically to its own key terms and 'answers' semantically to its initial phrasing and proposition and that demonstrates a systematic, coherent rhythm of progression and regression appears purposeful, well reasoned, and circumspect. Seemingly, nothing irrelevant exists within, for all that's there has been taken into account, confirmed. As Derrida might enter, "remainders" have been dispelled. Seemingly, all's right, autonomous, and sufficient in the chiasmic world.

In the *Essays*, Montaigne opines that the legal argument "hems you into the enclosure" (291), that is, the enclosure it self-circumstantiates. Montaigne has in mind that the forensic presentation mustn't furnish opponents the least bit of an opening or wedge. Logical gaps and other holes are sure to let the air out of a less than hermetic (i.e., internally agreeing, sealing) argument. On the basis of our embodied experience, we intuit of a construction formally closed and logically airtight that it can forbid extrication: that is, it can prove beyond alternative and above reproach (penetration). Due to its being tightly rule bound and sharply circumscribed, a chiasm can strike recipients as totally solved, the argument done up and done for. To gainsay, much less escape, any construction that persists in its own corroborated, completed self challenges a recipient and requires exertion.

With chiasmus, not only will recipients feel "Bound by the mere neatness of the formula," as Henry James once wrote on another topic, they will feel bound by the sheer strength of its visual logic. In *De Architectura*, Vitruvius speaks of the "*logos opticus*" as vital to arrangement and construction. The morphology of logical vision proceeds from the inter-related concepts of symmetry and balance (*De Architectura*, I.ii). I contend that chiasmus materializes and arranges according to the Vitruvian principle of *logos opticus*. The larger chiasm and the micro variety stimulate a kind of thought picture, the visual logic of which a

recipient registers at some level of awareness. Even though the level may be vague, she ‘hits on’ the visual logic inherent in a crosswise ensemble. She senses steadiness, lawfulness, and sureness of a full, safe return to the construct’s start. Expectancies are patterned, which are subsequently met, even if both are subtle rather than prominent registrations. These expectancies and their fulfillment are symmetry’s attraction and meaningful gift to us. Symmetry harbors assurance.

Having got ‘sight’ of the cross patterning (the symmetricalization) of a chiasm, our viewer–reader or viewer–listener falls into the line of presentation and argumentation. She feels the pattern’s groove and persuasive containment. In effect, she succumbs to the formalities and constraints of a *logos opticus*: the symmetrical, balanced diagonal cross. The crisscross and chiasmus, because they are orderly, precise, and computable by virtue of their spacio-visual definition, give reason (pattern) ahead, for their being and form, that is, give before the time of their actual completion, the time when the end, metaphorically speaking, loops back to and connects with the beginning. The visual logic of the bi-lateral symmetric construction conjoins us in its resolution in that we can read off a second half of this recognizable pattern from a first, with ‘read off’ meaning ‘read ahead’ and with *read* being a near equivalent to *see*, *hear*, or *sense*. A chiasm has in its persuasive favor that it culminates designedly, expectedly, ever so neatly. In thus doing, it avoids surprises, these last being the lawyer’s most feared tripper-upper. Chiasmus examples visual reasons for siding with and being brought into line. It provides recipients the sight of internal- or self-correction (agreement). It epitomizes, in its own in-built cross linkages, the double registration, corroboration, exactingness, autonomy, and inescapability it would effect. This is witness and evidence, prosecution and advocacy of a kind hard to beat.

WINSOME AND LOSE SOME

Cicero avowed, “those things which are complete in themselves are superior to those which stand in need.” We take this comment on face value, which admittedly can be a dangerous practice. But if our preference for completeness requires explanation, an answer

would seem to rest in Cicero's own last word. Completeness satisfies; but, less than a totality leaves us wanting. And who needs that?

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca quote Cicero as a demonstration of efficacy (qtd. 87). These authors indicate that entities that are complete in themselves (and what is more congruent and complete than the one-on-oneness of bi-coordination?) are efficacious in argument because people widely favor the self-sufficient and autonomous. Rhetors can presume on their listener or reader's preference for the complete-in-itself over the less than complete. Under most conditions, self-sufficiency can be counted on as a desirable given. Few would disagree and that's the point.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca amaze with the fingertip fineness and the detail with which they assay mankind's assumptions about values and preferences, such as the complete, the whole (as compared with its constituent parts), the urgent, the unique, and the irreparable. Because of this fine touch and detailing, it is all the more curious the degree to which they don't notice their own settled values, as for instance, that they presume the incomplete must be a negative or that the univocal must count as a good (119–120). I don't raise this curiosity to take these authors to task. In the end, their inattention (for lack of a better name) inadvertently forwards their case about taking values for granted. My purpose rests in chiasmus, for it was with regard to this argument–thought conductor that the Perelman–Olbrechts-Tyteca inattention came to my attention.

The *AB:BA* formulation surfaces all the way through *The New Rhetoric*, but not as a topic in its own right. The pattern does present, however, in a remarkable number of excerpts mined from the writings of others. Across a tome of five hundred plus pages, Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman support their arguments with a liberal sampling of selections and passages from outside sources. What dawned on this reader upon a second reading and then with a decided view to chiasmus was how large the number of the text's evidentiary samples are chiastic. I am not aware that this has been reported on before.

The consequences of this report are double-pronged. The first prong has to do with the degree to which these cogent theorists and scholars of rhetoric talk around chiasmus.

Commutation (for *commutatio* or *chiasmus*) makes a paltry appearance in the treatise and, even then, treated to a somewhat dismissive appraisal (428). The second and only other mention happens in passing, a phrasal reference to *antimetabole* (444). But call an *AB:BA* pattern commutation or antimetabole, the authors have exceedingly little to advise about it. This absence rises to the extraordinary because of their focus on rhetorical figures and because of their primacy of association and dissociation in the theory of *The New Rhetoric*. The treatise's installation of association and dissociation as principal "mental schemes" (190) in argumentation and reality development (along with acutely associated topics, such as transposition and value conversion: see, e.g., 182 and 79) would seem to beg treatment of chiasmus.

But, something other than this treatment happens. The *AB:BA* form comes aboard increasingly as the authors turn to chiasmic samples to reinforce or exemplify what ends up a panoply of ideas, including Cicero's supreme, the thing complete-in-itself. Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman don't identify, much less credit commutation in the commentary accompanying the samples. However, their recruitment of chiasmic passages to adduce a wide ideational spectrum has criticality for this treatise. The recruitment attests to the ductility of chiasmus at securing meaning and attests to the prolixity of meanings tooled by its *AB:BA* organization.²⁰ The absence of naming and commentary divulges another chiasmic penchant: that of not giving itself away.

Longinus lauds such formal modesty, as *The New Rhetoric* authors take note of and underline: "No figure is more excellent than the one which is entirely hidden, so that it is no longer recognized as a figure," registered the intellect who composed *On the Sublime* (qtd. 171). To the degree the whereabouts and wherefores of chiasmus aren't taken into argumentative account by Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman, the figure scores rhetorical points as it, simultaneously, extends beyond what they class as figure. In brief, what at first struck me as incongruous, an almost willed blindness to the configuring schemes of chiasmus came to make sense: 'revelation' of a device that subtly constrains as it warrants (puts form to) an aggregate of ingenious complexity. The extremes and the contradiction of covertness and overtness are entirely in the nature of chiasmus.

Figural or instrumental concealment, just spoken of, does not zero out declarations offered shortly ago about ways in which chiasmic form influences recipients. Presentment and anticipation go hand in hand with form, the idea cultivated by Kenneth Burke and awaiting us in Chapter Four. To effect persuasion, as the *New Rhetoric* authors exemplify by their own inattention to commutation, that which channels thought needn't involve higher or focused attention to the channel itself. In its verbal articulation, chiasmus (i.e., as formal blueprint) may or may not elevate to conscious thought. With the macro chiasmus, the mere fact of extension would seem to increase the likelihood of a pattern considered at a more conscious level. But, this is not necessarily so. Real apperception of the pattern that engineers chiasmus ranges over a continuum from the inconspicuous to the highly conspicuous. This is not surprising as those who recruit chiasmus, more often than not do so without consensus. My friend's extemporaneous *fric-frac* specimen, presented in the Preface, is but a single case in point.

But, whether consciously minded or not, the essential *AB:BA* arrangement applies to mind and contains regulatory value to thinking and meaning delineation. This is a property favoring cognition on several grounds, not least of which is that any organism can lend conscious thought to a mere fraction of its activity. The attention allowance must be restricted (constrained) for the organism's energy is. We must skimp and save on speculation if we are to have construing energy enough to survey presented fields and gather up significance, much less give thought over to precincts we create for ourselves and share with others. The small allowance we have in our cognizing pocket keeps us indebted to what gives over thought easily, to that which we needn't pay excess heed. This is the value of the gestalts, the elementary spatial forms we are equipped to easily and instantly cognize. In themselves—that is, by their simple spatial conduct and self accord (internal synchrony)—, these forms “behold something which expresses a thought,” in the testament of Le Corbusier (153, emphasis added). Their elementary spatial being and, therefore, thoughtful holding funds a needed and welcome share of the conceptualizing bill. As said, conceptual status is not reducible to awareness of the instrumentation supportive of it and its resultant products. In truth, extremely casual or no notice (largely or entirely keeping to background) and the automatic factor the greater share of

our conceptualizing, from the ordinary to the awesome. Longinus concurs. The subliminal antecedes the sublime. The second prong is now up for address, as it relates to and expands on the first.

EXTERNALS NEED NOT APPLY

To get underway, let us take up a chiasmic passage from *The New Rhetoric*. It originates with Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet: “Death has no distinct being which separates it from life; it is nothing but a life coming to an end” (qtd. 191).. We read about the Bossuet excerpt that it establishes an “indissoluble unity” between ultimate terms, *life* and *death*.²¹ But, accreditation of this meaning to the chiasmic form should not be looked for in *The New Rhetoric*. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca provide an item illustrative of association, one that happens (coincidentally?) to own an *AB:BA* pattern, and it is taken as given by the commentators on Bossuet that a specific kind of association comes about. Accounting for the coincidence, much less conceding any attribution to the chiasmic pattern, has no listing in our two authors’ job description.

Chiasma routinely arrange for unity. But the read out of unity as effectuated through chiasmicity amounts to a multiplicity. Under the accomplished baton of the chiasmus genus a symphony of unities can be heard. For all that, it is not possible to predict ahead of time exactly or entirely what association arrangement will be conducted or whether association will be conducted at all. Chiasmus is just as likely to take its *AB:BA* symphonic genius over to the dissociation performance hall. The *AB* antecedent to a *BA* subsequent can play and be assuasive of tunes dissonant as well as assonate.

Paul’s pivotal message set down in his Letter shows one unity in the association typology of chiasmus. His extended chiasm oversees a lawful pact between God and man. While intimating a future of familial relationship extending from deity to man and a conditional pledge of intense sacredness (a spiritual raising) for the lesser party, the chiasmic pattern formulates an ideational consolidation or jurisprudential contract. Unity, here, is a *contract* (CON- +*trahere*, ‘an equal or mutual drawing together’), one share of which has to do with

God's Son as body, of divine Flesh agreeing to contracted word. This share is iconically and aptly performed through a *contra-* or isilateral form, signaling the creature's body and its symmetry that God fleshed and perfected in the first place. The couplet center of the Galatians chiasm itself pivots on redemption: (*under the law*) (*redeem*) (*under the law*). Redeeming relates to reforming or reshaping, of changing one's ways or turning them around, firstly a spatial exercise. Exact placement of *redeem* at the chiastic hinge, the axis of turning, literally posits the crux of the entirety of the apostolic Letter. In effect, the entirety of Galatians is pinned down or fastened by the letter's crisscross. The formal medium underscores the mediatory or negotiatory nature of a relation in which each side expects the other to deliver on a promise of his good offices. Negotiation and com-promise, as we will further learn, are good graces under the formal pledge of chiasmus.

Within the God–mortal alliance, the parties called upon draw together and draw up a contract, but they remain distinct. Along with this distinction, there is also the sense of alternatives weighed and of sides having things to bring to the (negotiating) table and things to receive in return. Getting in return, in kind, and in 'appointed'-ness—these are recurring chiastic operations. Implied in the Galatians chiasm is a sense of turn taking between mortal and immortal, with God in his supremacy and munificence having made, through a divine foresightedness, the anterior move. Reciprocity, which constitutes a substantive association plotted by chiasmus, often works in league with negotiation.

Although affinity is inherent in Bossuet's sentence, the chiastic form executing that affinity does not inspire a back-and-forth movement. Motion entails change, and the French writer declares for the immovable. His rendition of the changeless erects what Whittkower calls *belli secura quiesco* architecture. Bossuet describes a foregone or congealed state, as is appropriate to a fatal hypostasis, an underlying reality, essential and inescapable.²² In addition, life and death are conformists. Through the circumferential mirror of chiasmus, death dissolves to life, and, life, in converse turn, dissolves to death: a double dissolution that miraculously turns "indissoluble" union. Dissolution hasn't a part in the Pauline message. God and man engage in an annectent relationship, where they, in effect, come paradoxically out and out

together and shake hands on an even deal. Bossuet's *life–death* involvement adds up to a different association, one of integration.

The *life–death* conformity lacks the deformity, excoriation, and anguish outcomes chiastic unity can well figure, as later discussed. In fact, it is the antithesis. The human species is multiply, not to mention tragically caused to distinguish *life* and *death*. Included somewhere among causes is our terminological limitation (no pun meant), no language bequeathing its speakers a word for the conflation of the two absolutes. We hit upon here one of the superb gifts of chiasmus: the capacity of the genera to bandage dissociated entities, even diametrically opposed ones, and ‘heal over’ and soothe (solve) their differences. This healing or solving can compensate for the lacuna of language and so give voice to many human longings for parity, amity, and/or completion. Chiastic repairing proceeds by way of literal re-pairing. This bridging of rifts or fractures a chiasticist would eliminate brings back to mind the nullifying or X-ing and the smoothing or O-ing intrinsic to chiasmus.

A third, but far from final association type warrants a brief look. Like the previous pair, it implies an incontestable or, shall we say, tamper-proof argument. A hardy enthusiast and formidable scholastic of the *AB:BA* formula, Ralph Emerson penned this sparkling chiasm: “The Universe is all chemistry, with a certain hint of a magnificent Whence or Whereto [...] opalizing every angle of the old salt-&-acid acid-&-salt, endlessly reiterated.” The universal iteration transpires within a heavily “bounded world, bounded everywhere” (qtd. in Decker 137, emphasis original). The lengthy sentence's *A* and *B* terms are formally compact, rendered all the tighter and intense typographically through hyphens (in place of white space), through curly, iconic ampersands,²³ and, grammatically through brachology (a missing coordinating conjunction, *and*, between *acid* and *acid*). This flagrant intensification coerces the chemical and philosophical basics of salt and acid into two distinct entities: a salt-&-acid entity and a reverse entity, acid-&-salt. Emerson's two ‘reagents,’ swirling within his glowing chiastic retort, vacillate (*opalize*, i.e., vary) in a ceaseless temporality (*Whence*) and inter-involving spatiality (*Where*to).

X-ing and O-ing, the “angle” and the circle, essentialize the universe's chiastic

“chemistry.” Chiasmus not only cultivates the *perpetuum mobile*, it is commonly delegated the task because of its iconic figuring of back and forth periodicity. The eternal round is the immutability of the mutable, the Heraclitean philosophy in a single proposition. In order to attain eternity, exclaims Burke, man requires “a linear progression to end all linear progression” (*Religion* 223). Chiasmus is made to order for just that. The contra-versing, contesting formula persuades of the inconvertible. It also persuades of the irresolvable convertibility within a torus, contracted or colossal, of the incontestable. Emerson catches at what Langer identifies as the excitement, as well as the contradiction of life. While permanence “is the constant aim of living matter,” when immobilized, the life form disintegrates; its “permanence [lies in] a pattern of changes” (*Feeling and Form* 66). Chi-thinking, by deploying crossing and cingulation, commodifies the “duality of permanence in change” (Langer 67).

The alternation instanced in the Emerson chiasm coordinates with a common body gesture where a person’s two arms are extended before her and the palms of each hand automatically ‘face’ upward. The position and the hand orientation mimic the open pans of the beam balance that exchange places in space. With this cross-cultural gesture, the right hand’s lifting in space accords evenly with the left’s lowering and then the left hand’s rising accords with the right’s lowering. Oft times the alternating continuum of rising–lowering, a kind of circulation, will extend a millisecond or two beyond the expression it physicalizes, almost as if a physical balance is still seesawing or quivering before it comes to rest in place.

This (*up*) (*down*) : (*down*) (*up*) movement ‘calculated’ to an alternation of the right and left hand is a gesture rooted in our somatic understanding of physical balance and the reciprocity of equilibration. In *Gesture and Thought*, David McNeil uncovers the coordination of hand gesture with thought or “idea units.” Our “Introduction” established that the body and its early-on and constantly reiterated physical and psychic experiences constitute the starting point, which is never not present, for making sense of the world. Merleau-Ponty tackles how the body avails the “horizon latent in all our experience and [is] itself ever-present and anterior to every determining thought” (*Perception* 92). Gesture furnishes a window by which we can look back to this “ever-present and anterior” horizon. In the seesawing or pan-handling

between “salt-&-acid” and “acid-&-salt” we recognize the bodily, material, and spatial bases, working transparently, to our thought about alternation.

TESTING AND CONTESTING STEPS

Before bidding farewell to Galatians, we will place *The New Rhetoric* alongside it a final time. Its authors, as already said, bring notice to Quintilian’s report about the involving nature of the stepwise series. Quintilian indicates that a series essentially guides the recipient to remark the parts that make up an orderly progression. The series can be just two or three items. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca consider the efficacy to argument due alone to ordination’s internal linkages and the rhythms the linkages forge (503). The development ordination carefully controls mounts to a summation or climax, which itself operates as “a figure of order” (504). This development leads to a sense of increase or intensity and arrival. Our authors specify, once again, that presence and purpose naturally devolve from these persuading effects.

With sly casualness, *The New Rhetoric* team inquires if a series building action and “increasing determination” through separation (steps) isn’t “just as much a matter of diminishing gaps?” (504). To their question, the authors respond, rather wantingly, with an all-purpose “Doubtless the viewpoint differs from one hearer to another” (504). To put this quotation in other words, one recipient will concentrate on the diminishing of gaps within a series, another on the increasing of gaps. Although development is minimal on the part of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, their question is a crucial one and no mere or idle ‘just.’

A rephrase of what is being asked may elucidate its importance. ‘Can’t a series as likely lessen as well as increase the sense of segregation? the sense of parts?’ Earlier in their text, our authors apply the idiom “it is but a step” (177). This phrase cautions that steps, physical and other, easily lead to slippage. If we take ‘but a step,’ we are well on our way, for better or worse, to an advanced location. The thing about steps, as the idiom warns, is that we may not take the notice we should. At the same time, steps are inescapably consequential, in life and in argumentation and, as Darwin noted, in cognition.²⁴ The import of steps, or more generally the incremental, is enough that in *The New Rhetoric* *step* and *stepping-stone* warrant entries in the

book's Subject Index. Steps, more than just literally, are two-way streets. By them, things can drop into place with bare notice or with exaggerated or quite certain notice.

At a remove or two, but in effect, Rudolf Arnheim broaches this issue in *Art and Visual Perception* when discussing how we process shapes and the meaning of spatial subdivision in relation to our visual processing. Arnheim's focus is on the compositions of painters, sculptors, and architects, but his findings are widely applicable, since they articulate basic principles of human perception and psychology. Spatial subdivision is necessary to humans across all perceiving and conceiving spectra. Goethe's decree, quoted by Arnheim, that "*Erscheinung und Entzweien sind synonym,*" that appearance and segregation are one and the same (*Visual Perception* 73), is a notion we have general acquaintance with, if not specific quotation in *The New Rhetoric*. However, Arnheim surely would be unpersuaded by Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman's 'one-sees-this, one-sees-that' explanation of subdivision *versus* continuity. He, by contrast, probes the issue of unification and segregation and concerts the two under the explanatory umbrella of our observance of the "law of simplicity" (74). This law is a fundamental of Gestalt psychology.

For present purposes, we only need to summarize Arnheim's winning example of how one artwork and a second, despite their similarity of subject, symbolism, and formal presentation, result in two diametric treatments of part-to-whole. The two are famous



Figure 8. Brancusi, *The Lovers*.

sculptures, Constantin Brancusi's *The Lovers* (1908) and its inspiration, Auguste Rodin's *The Kiss* (1886). In Brancusi's work (Fig. 8), the two embracing figures are "fitted so tightly that the unity of the whole dominates the subdivision, the two human beings" (74). In Rodin's sculptural cognate, domination reverses; the spatial whole succumbs to the unconquerable independence of the two figures. These are the extremes that prove the rule that the relations between part and whole of a recognizable shape are commensurate: "the appearance of any part depends, to a greater or lesser extent, on the structure of the whole, and the whole, in turn, is influenced by the nature of the parts." Neither part nor whole "is ever quite self-sufficient" (78). In sum, the relations between part and whole are mutually inflected and inter-reliant. Parts must have some measure of completeness, if they are to count as parts and if they are to have identity enough to group with other parts to compose a totality. And contrariwise, a totality can only consolidate as the consequence of parts that 'summon' one another through their formal fittingness and concord across their larger whole. This summoning matches up, marries, and consummates an entirety.

Perceptually and conceptually, man is a perpetual archeologist looking to excavate wholes and their equally meaningful fragments. It follows then, when in the company of the orderly (segregated) series and, in particular, the incisively part-to-whole-whole-to-part arrangement of chiasmus, a recipient will sense, at some unspecifiable level, partitive and unifying properties. It isn't that one person will perceive the steps and another person the staircase, but that in an orderly succession, the individual recipient will perceive herself in the presence of both steps and staircase. We have Arnheim's assurance and our own experience insuring that you can't have one minus the other.

The New Rhetoric's investigators rightly judge that patterns and rhythms, which are the outgrowth of part and whole relations, can, of themselves, underwrite adherence. This is a valuable contribution, as is the recognition that arguments may succeed, in some real, warrantable degree, due to their invocations of visual gestalts. These judgments, which are principles within the present project, have been promoted by the sound work and judgment of Jeanne Fahnestock. In *Rhetorical Figures in Science*, she anatomizes how visual patterns

‘drawn’ by figures such as antithesis, incrementum, and chiasmus don’t just urge their discursive lines of argument, the figures epitomize these lines through visual arrangement. The visual arrangement mounts a visual argument and suasion. Fahnestock accredits the “mirror-imaging” and visual balancing of antimetabole for a sizable share in its “conceptual and argumentative work” (124–125). Coming in for credit in this work is also the figure’s syntactic tightness, which, I would offer, translates into a visual and spatial compression. In her prefatory comments to antimetabole as a conveyer of visual schemes, Fahnestock includes its resilience under Aristotle’s “test of convertibility; the double is known because it is ‘double of a half’ and the ‘half is ‘half of a double’ ” (qtd. in Fahnestock 125). This whole-to-part and part-to-whole test, which might be subsumed under the aegis of symmetry, can be extended over into the spatial-physical-visual realms, where the results annotate antimetabole as they corroborate the application of Arnheim’s observations above.

Poetry instances that a “partiality [...] reminds of the need to keep moving.” The association between a part of a whole and movement, delivered by the poet and theorist Mary Kinzie (49), is applicable firstly to optical proceedings. Vision operates on division and motion, professes William James. The eye subdivides the incumbent sensed space into areas of different discrimination and does so with an acuteness and impressionability that outrivals all of the body’s other perceiving modes. Through the fovea’s exquisite sensitivity and especial concentrating anatomy, the retina creates a difference by finding spatial “coalescence,” the equivalent of Merleau-Ponty’s spatial “unity.” With a unified shape in view, the retina ‘cuts it out’ for attention and identity, while letting that which is spatially outer “lapse” for a period of time (*Principles* 183). This is to perceive and conceive of one thing over others. “All perception of shape,” contends James, “is perception of contours, and first of all these must be made sharp. Motion does this” (176, emphasis original).²⁵ Motion in the environment “is the most immediate of all space-sensations” (281). Motion is a space separator and it excites immediate notice to that which occupied the sensed space, but been unattended until it heads off from where it first had stood stationed.

A fascinating experiment that James invokes bears on how parts within a whole relate to

spatial change, which is to say, motion. The experiment begins with a rectangular block that is vertically divided into halves, with the left side white and the right, black.

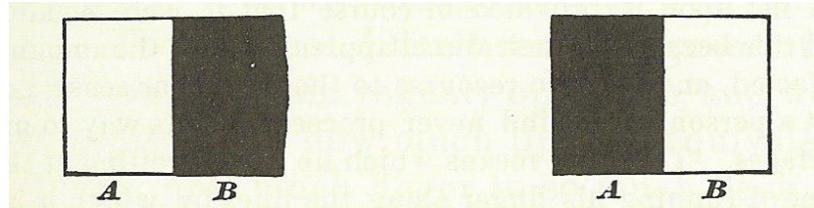


Figure 9. James, Successive difference over simultaneous difference.

In the diagram above, excerpted from Volume Two of *The Principles of Psychology* (175, Fig. 53) the halves are labeled immediately below the block's precincts: *A* and *B*, respectively white and black. This divided rectangle represents a contrastive and subdivided vision in simultaneity. A small distance across the page from the rectangular block James first describes to his reader is a second rectangle. This one is identical in size, shape, division, and black and white shading, except the black and white are reversed. Like the first block, the halves are assigned *A* and *B* designations that are according to their left followed by right sequence.

In viewing the pair of close together divided rectangles, the same contrast persists, except that black and white sectors alternate locations within a given rectangle. Most significantly, when the viewer's eyes transition from the first block and then the second, beyond two contrasts, a third and larger contrast and meaning transpires. As James interprets, the one effect of "simultaneous difference" followed by the second effect of the same difference value induces an "addition" to them: "first in *A*, which, a moment ago [was] white, has now become black; and second in *B*, which a moment ago [was] black, has now become white" (175). The chiasm that James deploys epitomizes the phenomenon under scrutiny. But far more critical is that the experiment attests to how an alternation in space, even when kept to a minimal, strictly controlled-for degree, creates a significantly greater outcome. James identifies this "successive contrast" on top of the two simultaneous contrasts as a triple fold increase in alternation, thus showing the enhancement to vision of motion over rest. For our purposes, the double-block experiment strongly supports how when a bounded region divided into halves alternates

spatially (flips ‘upside down’ or ‘right side up’ in space), the reversal occasions movement, as we see it, and that motion instigates a very much heightened response in a percipient. A spatial region shared by two constituents *A* and *B* converted to an identical region, except that *A* and *B* have switched places exhibits far more visual status due to its successiveness and motion than would an *AB* region alongside a second *AB*. The experiment that James reports on affords this present discussion a scientific and empirical explanation for the visuo-spatial and psychological salience of chiasmus over, for example, the rhetorical figure of antithesis (minimally, *AB:AB*), and it contributes to our appreciation of the benefit to memory of locutions that have the spatial and visual triple effect of chiasmus. Furthermore, the experiment suggests how the “sharp” contour of chiasmus can cooperate with the motion its conversions domicile.

In putting to bed this section, we can bid goodnight via Emerson’s stunning chiasm. Better than any locution I have come upon it illustrates how a single word within an *AB:BA* presentation can coerce meaning. With its rarity of use and its evocation of lovely sparkle and visual richness, *opalize* functions like a chemical reactor possessing powerful conversion properties. The word helps neutralize *acid*, an obvious reference to life’s acerbity and bite. In addition, *opalize* maneuvers the interpretation of *salt*, a word rich in connotation and contradictory associations, including the Biblical ones that Emerson would likely not want to entirely discourage. The maneuvering directs to a positive sense: that is, interpreting the term not as pain and embitterment but, instead, as basic to life and as giving savor, and consequently enlivening for this last value.

While *opalize* passes a different convertibility test than the one Aristotle poses (i.e., it directs semantically), nonetheless, it brings us back to the matter of logical (isometric) relations, for which the philosopher’s test does examine. The symmetry of chiasmus itself logically requires that *salt*, or more specifically the word that fills its slot in the *AB:BA* form, ushers in a notion capable of being *acid*’s semantic opposite, if only for the occasion to which Emerson puts it. If *salt* and *acid* are too alike then logic would have it that the writer’s angularity (disparity) disappears and with that disappearance the loss of the splendid, resilient Emersonian toggle back and forth between the two. Chiasmus autofigures and self-checks the contra-rotation it describes.

This oscillating chemistry between sides correlates with the optical ‘magic’ in today’s plastic refraction grids with their two exchanging visuals and their ‘continuum’ as we toggle our hand in opposing directions.²⁶ These modern refraction ‘toys’ perform a side-to-side changeability like a balance swinging between extreme spatial positions; thus, the comparison with chiasmus.

The Emerson passage aids in accounting for the joint contributions and layers of language and form to meaning. The foregoing paragraph highlights how form, through the logical demands inbuilt by spatial pattern, engraves or impresses (shapes) meaning. This logic, with its ‘law and order’ compulsion and its visual logic are a rhetor’s great helpmates. The two logics accomplish a goodly share of his persuasive work for him. Intelligible, logical forms (Gestalt psychology’s *good* form) minimize audience fatigue as they guide audience assent. It follows then, the deputizing of chiasmus to prosecute cases in the law and to press reasoning and argument outside the legal domain. What better than to have a logician and a visionary minding what needs minding?

A MIRROR COLUMN AND ITS LESSON CAST TWO WAYS

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The cautious seldom err.
— Confucius, *The Confucian Analects*

Great truths take care of themselves.
— Henry James, on Mathew Arnold

Lucky for later generations, the Greeks of antiquity were inveterate carvers of inscriptions. Modern historians especially are indebted to this prolific epigraphic activity for its primary evidence riches (Hornblower 7). At their simplest, the inscriptions had a petroglyphic function. They were cairns that announced a boundary twofold: by their ground placement and by a terse message of property ownership cut onto a naturally smooth surface of stone or a dressed one. A boundary stone’s message frequently took chiastic form.²⁷ Obviously, surfaces of larger dimension could accommodate lengthier and more detailed inscriptions. These bigger stones held information with relevance to the citizenry at large: financial transactions and accounts; kinship lines; territorial, legal, and jurisdictional assertions; and political and

commercial relationships and agreements. These more expansive *epigraphica* also regularly appeared in chiasmic form.

The two inscription types, compact and expanded, establish that the *AB:BA* scheme was not just for the select audiences of historians, philosophers, rhetoricians, dramatists, and poets. The so-called man in the street (and his fellow residing in the outskirts of towns) regularly passed by chiasmic announcements meant to inform, advise, restrict, or warn him.

The Greeks found meaningful use for chiasmus in their practical and pedestrian communications. The adjective *meaningful* attains especial sanction from J. K. Dover, a twentieth-century scholar of the word practices standard in Greece around two-and-a-half millennia ago. Dover establishes that the inscriptional syntax shows deliberation and choice on the parts of the originators. The syntax must not be explained away as mere attempts at elegant variation or as woolgathering or Homeric nodding. Dover concludes that differences in the syntactic order in a given inscriptional utterance reflect a conceptualizing of differences in the relations between the items represented by virtue of that utterance. One example given of this conclusion is of an alteration in the order of words to describe tribute payments that matches the alteration in the payment circumstances (55).

The facility of chiasmus for agreement, conformation, and consolidation, for paired and inverse relations, and for proportional ratios accorded with inscriptional needs. Typical is this chiasmic inscription that proclaims a fifty-year treaty to ally neighboring city-states: “If anybody proceeds against the territory of Amyntas or of the Chalkidians with warlike intent, the Chalkidians are to help Amyntas and Amyntas the Chalkidians” (qtd. in Hornblower 229). The illocutionary inscription has a subsequent section, the purpose of which is to reaffirm a your-enemy-is-my-enemy reciprocity. This subsequent section employs chiasmus to establish a trade partnership that will support the just-stated military one. It specifies that the commodities of the Macedonians, governed by Amyntas, and the commodities of the Chalkidians can be exported across their respective territories (230).

Reciprocity has been nominated the root of personal and public relations in the Greek world (Hornblower 78). It makes sense that chiasmus was particularly apposite for the

inscriptional writing that performed and recorded so much of the day-to-day commerce, negotiations, law, and politics within a city-state and between sovereign states, provinces, and colonies across the Aegean peninsula. Then as now, these affairs and their arrangements come down to proportioning two-sided obligations and benefits.

Inscriptional chiasma were omnipresent in Greek culture. They penetrated the culture, even to its mythology. The mythic hero Theseus devised a cagey chiasm, one he crafted presumably to increase the prospects for peace between adversaries. With the indiscrimination that chiasmus can formally deliver on, the Athenian king's *AB:BA* inscription performs an arbitrator's delicate job, accomplishing it masterfully, but ever so obliquely. In effect, the inscription puts two enemies on territorial notice. The chiasmus conducts a warning off of war, violence, destruction, and death, but indirectly, without a whisper of these horrors. The tale is short and to the point. It runs as follows: "Theseus, to settle a border dispute, once raised a column inscribed: *This is not the Peloponnesus, but Ionia!* And on the reverse: *This is not Ionia, but the Peloponnesus!*"²⁸

On its face, this ultra spare chiasmus appears exceptionally simple. But, because this is chiasmus there's an adverse face: it isn't simple in the least. Theseus's chiastic activity manages our thinking as adroitly as it does the Ionians and the Peloponnesians. We are all accessories after his chiastic fact. This fact involves a variety of issues—classicism and its column, architecture, borders and delimitation, an impasse (*stasis*), argument and logic, a two-way balance, crossing and crossroads, contest and resolution, and the phenomenon of 'in-itself.' These are notions inherent to chiasmus. These issues comment beyond the single chiasm attributed to Theseus, the hero legendary for intricate maneuvers and cut-to-the-quick as well as turn-about solutions.

Theseus discerned that a column and a chiasm, with many commonalities between them, make the perfect couple. The two forms echo each other in multiple ways, thereby extending our understanding of the antiquarian mindset. It is a commonplace that the degree to which any modern knows the Greek column, she knows the Greek enterprise. Classicism does indeed utter from the column's grammar: specifically, its noble execution of the architectural orders.

Chiasmus, too, designs an extremely orderly architecture, and its systematizing also evinces strong attachment to classical principles.

The standard by which classical architecture came to be denominated is based on whether a building's design is unmistakable (Benevolo 60). To preclude misreading, the classical language draws on elements that are ageless, visually simple, and when collocated, few in number. Furthermore and with importance to our topic, classicism depends on "associable elements" that turn inward, that is, demonstrate "intrinsic proportions" (52). Classical grammar arranges elements along uncomplicated, interose patterns that cohere into symmetric wholes that are beyond mistake. A purely geometric precision and outline ensure that the resultant unity of composition 'reads' as detached from a larger context. Built to these principles, the composition materializes that formal and rhetorical ideal: the fully self-sufficient. Serene, unruffled, complete-in-itself, classicism brooks no uncertain terms. Its compositions emanate from an immutable architecture procuring an immutable look. By a like determinedness of formal structure, chiasmus can compose the would-be certitude.

The classical composition cuts through potential conflicts, so as to minimize controversy and dilemma. Any element possibly jarring, contentious, or superfluous goes by the board. A structure of strict positioning and ingathering of its constituent parts into a seamless assemble formalizes an aloof calm. Here is another quotation of the *temenos* ethos early discussed with respect to Paul's macro chiasm within his Letter to the Galatians. Classicism obligates a scrupulosity and insuperability of form. To meet these formal obligations, bi-lateral symmetry rests supreme. This symmetry's hemihedrals coordinate and mutually compose the soluble and, outwardly, the unassailable; they organize the untroubled and, outwardly, the consummate. Architectural hemihedrism translates in classical literature's celebration of parataxis and compositions of equal divisions with which the distribution of matching elements is equally arranged (Sypher 16). Discursive classicism exalts in the same precepts of ratios and rhythms of correspondence, coordination, and equivalence (Sypher 33). The Parthenon's display of these precepts constitute their most magnificent exemplification.

The standalone column is the archetype of ancient Greek architecture. Dressed or not, the column imitates the human, nimble, stepping forward, and ‘dancing’ (Soltes 39). At the same time, the column, in its inheritance from quarried stone, imitates its durable, hard line ancestors in their function of spotting a place, erecting spatial–placial division, and declaring spatial dominion. The erected stone and the mounted column are meant to bid notice. And indeed, a single column intrudes on the landscape and takes a wedge out of open space. It is prepossessing in its visuo-spatial appropriations. In the ancient world the column serves the same iconographic purpose as the tree or the doorway; it designates an “order-maintaining center” (Soltes 24), while it delineates segregation and orientation. Almost like a human, but in stone, the column plants its two feet in a pair of realms, therein marking one side as against another or designating a face or front as against a back. By its own steadfastness (set-in-placeness) and visual salience, the segregation remains there for all to spot and cast attention upon. Like X, it stands forth, qualifying as the exemplary, because inescapable place marker, witness, and functionary. Through its sheer vertical presence, the column creates a state of spatial and other varieties of intermediation. A single column ‘negotiates’ between sides up against one another or ‘restrains’ opposing sides from clashing over the borderline that it, in fact, formally lays down by being plumb upright. These spatial properties, as well as their disparateness, the column shares with chiasmus.

An intermediate has charge of an inspirited place of godlikeness or it conducts superhuman or heroic transformations (Soltes 24–25). As an invariable center or halfway place, the single freestanding column performs a priestly (*pontifex*) role as a bridge or connector that reaches across a pair of divided spheres or spaces. It has the challenge of maintaining amity, of keeping two ‘in line’ and not acting out on their territorial (spatial) opposition. A column not only enables thought about the Other; a column demands it. Engaged in otherness and the transformative, the column acts as a blatant guarantor of concertedness. It is the equivalent in architecture of the crossroads and the exceptionally visual, exactly guiding X mark. We need not beg poetic license to assert that the standalone column is architectural cousin to the discursive chiasmus.

As chiasmus circumscribes its inscape, the column is incisive in its landscape. We look up to these vertical cutouts, whether they have inscriptions or not. Theseus rhetorically pockets by mounting his inscription on a column's high. As noted already, we operate under the assumptions that CONTROL IS UP and REASON IS UP (Lakoff, "Sorry" 116). These spatial metaphors favor any display above our own height and especially one that towers. Upwardness or stature possesses, well, stature. It also smacks of overrule and power. But of even greater spatial import, the column (whether Persian, Greco-Roman, Asiatic, etc.) segregates and keeps its own firm ground. A column acts paradoxically: it is a severer and a securer.

Prototypically we view the standalone column as set down in a champaign, which, in our minds' eyes, is where we plunk Theseus's double-scripted column. The word *champaign* refers to open land, but it has two other definitions relevant here: (1) a field of battle, and (2) a field of inquiry or a sphere of observation or operation. Carving out his concise message on the visually and physically incisive, formally harmonious, yet 'double-facing' column, Theseus works a chiasmic champaign to check, because it seems to overrule, a military one.

The freestanding column proclaims a center and a go-between wherever it appears. Its arbitration is of a commendable, but scarce sort in the human universe: total impartiality. The concept of impartiality is understood based on our embodied experience of physical balance in space. When erected and holding upright, at a 90-degree angle precise to the horizontal, the column exhibits no physical preference. It favors no angle other than the right one. From whatever position it is beheld it keeps itself the same, being that it is thoroughly counter-sized and counterweighted.²⁹ A column, cross, or stone had best not lean for if it does it is not long for this world. Before succumbing to gravity, the leaning edifice strikes its viewers as quizzical and disturbing (Rushdie 4), conditions that instinctively cause us to tilt our heads in a position away from the vertical. The tilted entity usually needs to "be nailed down" if it is to have any chance of being made fast and sure (Rushdie).

We suppose of Theseus's column that it is absolutely upright. It is a supposition that we don't stop to think on, but the Athenian king's reputation as the conqueror of the world's greatest space puzzle (Labyrinth) and his history of heroic exploits would seem to disallow

another interpretation. However, the greatest factor in the supposition is the configuration of his exactly balanced, exactly divided columnar inscription. The rock-sure, steady, plume upright pillar of the mythical hero and his inscription making its ‘faces’ acknowledge the Ionian-Peloponnesian contro-versy and division, as they insist that neither side has a turnover of or gain on the other.

We automatically envision Theseus’s column as erected midway between the Peloponnesians and the Ionians. His divided message straddles a vexed spatial territory, sliver thin. Column and chiasm boost one another physically, spatially, and visually. They reinforce one another rhetorically. Theseus proves the exception to the rule that “Every dispute tends to expand to a third party, who increases it by taking sides” (qtd. in Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 196). By means of a side-to-side appliance, he delivers an exception by taking neither side. Through formal gearings, he contrives a Solomonic solution of fifty-fifty. A more diplomatic appeasement has not yet been discovered and it is the one most likely to put the lid on the grumbles and grouses of a pair of border adversaries who cannot be otherwise compelled to reach a *détente*. The proverbial lid is a suspension, the idea of which flows most especially from our embodied understanding of BALANCE.

The chiasm Theseus originates is the equivalent of a set of scales. In each pan, he figuratively drops an equal weight, thus ensuring a balanced solving scheme. The figurative pans on the surface of the columnar upright settle in equilibrium. By this equilibration, the pans are physically commensurate, horizontally coordinate. Critical to the balancing is the inscriptionist’s double *not* usage. The Ionians have a firm and equal purchase on land that is the firm and equal release of the Peloponnesians. And *vice versa*. It is the doubling of the *not* that controls for the release, the giving up half to the getting by half.

The double *notting* records a situation both associative and dissociative. The two sides split a difference, the border between them, and presumably the Peloponnesians and the Ionians achieve a peaceful settlement, the equivalent of physical suspension (settlement) between the pans of a balance scale. By cutting the disputed land evenly, with no tipping of the balance even slightly to one side, Theseus’s decree has the logical wherewithal to keep two from going

at one another's throats. He must apply, however, a double-edged, reciprocating form, one that reverse allows and one that reverse disallows, double negates or double *not*'s, one contestant to one. As long as the border disputants honor the chiasmic arrangement (i.e., don't trespass the pacification line) and don't tip it (i.e., don't disrupt the preciousness of the equilibrium), they are apt to reap the harmonious benefits of equalizing their (territorial) difference. It requires a concerted effort on the part of border contestants (and others in inimical relations) to stay apart and *not* engaged in hostilities. The crossing form that proportions reversely can logicalize the non-event. A double negation in discourse, a figuration in language of the diagonal cross, can nullify (cross) crossed swords.

Theseus's column–chiasmus combination portrays the role of equivalence and the goldenness of the middle way in the mindset of the ancient Greek world. The Greeks insisted on the dialogue and the dialectic approach to order a reasonable argument or philosophy. Their architecture required structures to be inter-associated, understated, dispassionate, and faultlessly balanced and exactly executed. Under the dictum that perfection demands commensurability between opposites, they expected the column to balance the impulses between curved and straight.³⁰ They also believed that in order to achieve “lucid and cogent” articulations within the material universe, laterals must conform a “geometrical outline” that turns inward (Benevolo 53, 44). This incurvature frames an internal logic that is ruled and reasoned by the form itself. Such logic will be both solving and incontestable, that is, debarring any intrusion outside its own circumscription. The Greeks honored that which is content on its own, what Burke identifies as the “considered in itself,” because its values are intrinsic (*Symbolic Action* 41). Only the self-sufficient, because it exists beyond history and is irrespective of influence, can exhibit ageless truths and display intrinsic beauty.

This last pronouncement derives from William Ivins' provocative *Art and Geometry: A Study in Space Intuitions* (see 16), which considers the Greek approach to spatial perspective and explores it as a point of reference for interrogating Western spatial perspectives of later eras. The Ivins' reflection might call back Proust's circumscription, Goffman's framing or bracketing, and Burke's circumfered as curbs on space bequeathing that exclusivity and

impenetrability we baptize ‘beyond time.’ This exclusion of outside contingencies, mastered by association and dissociation of space, adds further reason for the Greek commitment to bilateral symmetry.

These properties of the column and chiasmus put us in the right direction to ascertain why a mythological hero of Greece would employ two symmetrically autonomous structures, self-balanced and self-checked, to publicize a wholly unequivocal edict and to concert a symmetric proportioning of give and take. Column and chiasmus control the viewer and listener’s adherence. There’s no getting round them, because their rational and deterministic design and utter smoothness fend or glance off that which would penetrate, which would try to make itself felt as an instead. The stringency, repose, and self-sufficiency are affordances in the classical mode.

An envoy: The source for the Theseus chiasm is *Sight and Insight* (1959). Alexander Eliot’s stimulating book centers on visuality and visual culture, art and its reception. Despite its timeliness, alas, it has passed into anonymity. Eliot brings up the Ionian–Peloponnesian inscription halfway through a chapter devoted mostly to Diego Velázquez. But the inscription is cited not for any interest in chiasmus as a topic of its own worth. The chiasm quotation that I excerpted from Eliot’s monograph appears as given in a paragraph islanded on the page. It is semantically tied, but only through a Velázquez-to-Theseus analogy and even then indirectly. By Eliot’s penetrating lights, the great painter is a conqueror of mirror effects and vanquisher of art’s “mirror-realism” worlds (107), subjects Foucault delved into with considerable detail, but apparently without awareness of Eliot’s work. *Sight and Insight* leaves it to readers to draw the connections between rhetoric’s mirror figure, not so identified, and the irresistibilities of “the quicksilver” slice (“immediacy”), “exactitude,” arch “mystery,” trickiness of “memory” (return) and of stasis joined with movement, and other “alchemical” potencies and mirror conversions and scheming in the masterworks of one of European art’s canonical figures (106–110). Eliot takes for granted his readers will link the wile and intrigue of the “mighty” Velázquez with that traditionally ascribed the victorious figure from Greek myth. An instrument without anything approaching the notoriety of Eliot’s named painter or his named

hero, the mirroring chi-figure is nevertheless equally capable of their fabulous subtlety, insinuation, and stratagems.

“TEA FOR TWO”

A protagonist in a novel is described as “a bank-robbing philosopher, or a philosophizing bank-robber.”³¹ Readers may view the word inversion slightly urbane, but most likely they soon put the remark behind them. We might inquire whether ostensibly trifling trade-offs of this sort really count for different? Does such an adjective-to-noun exchange in the *BA* segment descriptively re-install what basically amounts to the same notion in *AB*, albeit a notion tinkered with on the surface level of language? Are *bank-robbing philosopher* and *philosophizing bank-robber* twins whose adjective-noun switcheroo adds up, in the final analysis, to a semantic negligibility?

The *AB:BA* arrangement reminds of algebraic equations of addition (e.g., $3 + 4 = 4 + 3$) or multiplication (e.g., $2 \times 5 = 5 \times 2$).³² In algebra (the word, from Arabic, means ‘restoration’) any number added to one side of an equation must be added to the other half to restore or satisfy equality between the halves (Rosenbach 1). The commutative principles specify that the value remains unchanged despite the interchange of the order of the quantities. Reverse alteration or one-to-one inverting, across the equation sign, of elements added to or multiplied by one another does not transform numeric outcome. Numeric balance is maintained when each side compensates in full quantity for the side opposite the equation sign. The two sides prove invariants, ‘concurring’ on what they amount to. Each half of the mathematical expression $A + B = B + A$ and each half of the $A \times B = B \times A$ expression results in an oppositely ordered, but exactly balanced (equal valued) version of the other. The halves display value equivalence and agree on what they mean. We conceive the laterally arranged expressions as symmetrical in form and mathematical identity.

If we move from the abstract system of algebra, concerned with value products, back to the abstract system of language, concerned with different meaning products, do we find an analogous situation? Since mathematics keeps a tight dominion to ensure its “numbers behave,”

whereas language indulges its notoriously misbehaving words (DeLillo, *Names*, 208), we would probably suspect the analogy has limited extension. That is, the phenomenon of irrespective or indifferent ordering and value invariance (dictated by the commutative rules) applicable in the case of algebraic equations with a similar arrangement, begins, in English, to fail when put to a semantic test.

Still and all, we might have reason to question this last statement about semantic invariance and irrespective ordering in English when, in fact, we put to an empirical test what is arguably the most familiar line from an American show tune. An occasional Cole Porter collaborator, the accomplished and even more prolific lyricist Irving Caesar composed the words of the irresistible “Tea for Two.”³³ With the highly telescoped line “tea for two and two for tea,” the conjuncts of Caesar’s catchy verse strike hearers, at least at first or second acquaintance, as semantic equivalents. The compressed, dizzyingly turning “tea for two” seems to say the same thing as, to be semantically synonymous with, the equally compact and affixed, exactly flip-flopped “two for tea.” The lyric’s highly convivial, bordering on tippy state of cheery teasomeness dissolves into a clubby, cozy twosomeness and vice versa.³⁴ The word *tea* tips (flips or inverts) smoothly and flows effortlessly into *two* and *two* tips back to *tea*,³⁵ the whole executed with an ease and imperturbability reinforced by the amiably matched rhyme and syncopation of the immediately following and just as insouciant “me for you and you for me.”

The whimsicality and whirl of our test line succeeds by its own jaunty internal rhymes, the excessively alliterative, jokey lexis, and the clipped, punctuated short parallel phrasing—all performed by a playful chiasmic top that spins round on its own tip, the conjugation *and*. The chic conviviality of “tea for two and two for tea” indeed tallies with a Cole Porter-esque smart set, persons clever with quips, zany with verbal flippancy and razzmatazz (double-talk), and too blasé to care much about distinctions, including those complicating or keeping apart an intoxicating (*me*) (*you*) : (*you*) (*me*) colligation. Taking things frivolously, to have them pretty much either way or, for that matter, any which way (with this set “Anything Goes” and opposites might just as well be their reverse³⁶) is the song’s gist. This is romance concocted to

the day's *sprezzatura*: smooth and nonchalant, glib and smartly careless.³⁷

Glided along and swayed by the smoothness, the glibness, and the suave indifference, listeners likely hear an essential synonymy between the commutatives “tea for two” and “two for tea.” The tightly coupled, one-to-one reverse transcribed phrases seem as closely arranged and perfectly matched meaning-wise as the song’s “side by side,” romantically involved and proposing to be tied marriage-wise. Irving Caesar counts on two things to insure there’s no bothering over niceties, no troubling over ‘mere’ semantics: first, our wanting as listeners to figure and flatter ourselves just as smartly unflappable and indifferent as the lover pouring out the lighthearted lines and, by that disregard or shrugging off of difference, just as easy and impulsive over an invitation to have a “fling-with-a-wedding-ring,”³⁸ and second, a rhetorical figure swirling and serving up a confluent concoction: droll, ultra chic, airily indifferent.

Our first inclination may either be to dismiss or to just plain miss any sort of meaningful difference between the refrain’s two halves. However, if we give more than a cursory listen, we will probably discern that the opposite ordering does not really create two halves that are exact semantic equivalents. On analysis, most will intuit that “two for tea” differs semantically, albeit ever just slightly, from “tea for two.” Although *tea* and *two* neatly coordinate on opposite sides of the lyrical line’s coordinating, equating conjunction, the changed order of the two words precludes an exact replication of meaning.³⁹ The shift in word order brings about a shift in meaning, however small.

That this is so emerges from an easy meaning test (Bolinger, *Aspects* 120), one that gestures to H. P. Grice and his maxim of manner,⁴⁰ in which, by posing to a second conjunct a hypothetical question whose answer is made to obvious order for the first conjunct, we discover the two chiasmic halves are not equally adept at answering the tailored question. “Tea for two” is not quite as well *meant*—not “efficient,” as David Bolinger would say, or not, to use now Gricean terms, “well-mannered” and “cooperative”—as “two for tea” when replying to the hypothetical question ‘How many are invited to the afternoon’s party [where tea is served guests]?’⁴¹ The response “tea for two” is less straightforward or upfront than its reverse, which places the most relevant information (the information sought by the question-asker) foreword.

Cooperative talk is “orderly,” straight to the point.⁴² By putting off the *two* (especially with redundant and therefore extraneous information), “tea for two” falls short of providing maximal relevance to the question and prompts the listener to wonder what additional meaning could or may be insinuated by this slightly indirect talk.

The question test establishes that a response inequity exists between the lyric’s implicatures (to use Grice’s vocabulary); namely, that “two for tea,” by its indirection, implies and, hence, means something other than its syntactic converse. That the *tea*-for and *two*-for implicatures are not exact coefficients with respect to meaning leads us to conclude that semantic difference arises as one of the pair of key terms within each of the lyric’s halves assumes a secondary placement or supporting grammatical position to the other term, which the posed question is, in effect, either ‘searching’ or ‘seeking’ to obtain or ‘intending’ to evoke. By chiasmic crisscrossing, the first *two*, which occupies a subordinate grammatical slot to *tea* in the beginning half of the lyric, switches in the subsequent diametrical half into a primary slot. A reciprocal change of place occurs with *tea*. By their exchange of grammatical slots authored by chiasmic turning, *tea* and *two* assume opposite turns at the syntactic roles of lead and support.

“In languages like English, the syntactic roles are the primary determinants of word order, while in languages like Russian and Czech, pragmatic considerations have a stronger effect” (Mithun 17).⁴³ With so-called free-word order languages (Hendricks 44) such as Russian and Latin,⁴⁴ a locution’s conceptual structure, that is, the “form in which thoughts are couched” (Jackendoff, *Patterns* 188), has wide license in arranging lexical constituents. With our language, however, a systematized (i.e., grammaticalized) ordering constrains lexical arrangement. In modern English, subject–verb–object (SVO) functions as the entrenched, conventionalized, and prototypical word order.⁴⁵ This rigidified SVO means that initial or “fronted information is in the focus of attention” (Payne 10), a fronting that makes the subject the clausal prime. SVO and a focality in which what is first is foremost account for a language, one which when written proceeds from left to right, exceptionally sensitive to left-handed or first place positioning.

Syntax in modern English, generally speaking and along with the topos that what gets

attention (focus) is ‘first and foremost,’ instantiates the orientational metaphor IMPORTANT IS FIRST. With respect to the domain of language, this metaphor calls up the PATH image schema and at least two other spatial metaphors, LANGUAGE IS MOTION ALONG A PATH and LANGUAGE MOTION IS A LINEAR SEQUENCE (PATH). Although spoken and written language are both thought of as path-like, because of their differences in delivery, IMPORTANT IS FIRST may denote qualities that are spatial, temporal, or, with graphic discourse, spatial and temporal. The space inference of IMPORTANT IS FIRST receives fuller capture in its specialized versions, IMPORTANT IS FIRST IN A LINE (OR SEQUENCE) OF PLACES or IMPORTANT IS FIRST IN A LINE (OR SEQUENCE) OF POINTS. In sum, with a language like English where meaning depends strongly on word order, what is most important or what most warrants, carries, or conjures attention in rendering relations between objects will be aforesaid, positioned as the first point or place.

Focality, which emerges from our human need to conceptualize objects in relation to one another according to some order or rank (Jackendoff 194),⁴⁶ differentiates subjects and objects from one another and is the basis of the asymmetrical syntactical roles prescriptive of grammatical subject and object. Within a given predication, the subject positions and ranks as the focal point. The object, on the other hand, lacks subject focality or what linguists name focal attention. As observed by Ronald Langacker, a founding father of cognitive linguistics, the range of this subject–object asymmetry extends such that it applies “even for predications that designate symmetrical relationships: X equals Y is not precisely equivalent semantically to Y equals X” (*Foundations* 231, emphasis original). The choice by Langacker of these two complementary sentences in elucidating syntax and semantics with respect to asymmetry and symmetry is not only an especially astute one, as will become apparent presently, but these sentences, suggestive of mathematics and which lean towards a formulation in algebra (although not necessarily), nicely bookend our previous comments on algebraic equations. As a result, it will be beneficial to preserve the earlier commentary before us as we proceed with Langacker’s observations.

In the first of these relational predications, X holds the greater attention; it “stands out [in our conceptualization] as the entity being assessed” (Langacker 230). In this same

conceptualization and the predication expressive of it, Y plays a different role. Y takes second place to the paramountcy of X, the entity granted primary scrutiny and assessment. As a result, Y implies something slightly different than X, its otherwise existential co-equal. Given that grammatical categories are “inherently,” inseparably semantic,⁴⁷ with the exchange of grammatical categories in “X equals Y” and “Y equals X,” focality parcels out respectively dissimilar packages of “semantic content” (Langacker 18) to what are otherwise interchangeable—because equally null, equally unknown, equally arbitrary—algebraic symbols (or algebraically functioning tokens).⁴⁸ The almost universal asymmetry of relational predications and the critical role of asymmetry generally in meaningful distinctions, the point of which is underscored with Langacker’s X–Y sentences, brings forward the asymmetry that presides over syntactic arrangement. In sum, then, Langacker supports that meaning in English is highly sensitive to spatial placement, specifically, sequences of left to right and first and second. The asymmetry of left–right and first–second sequences within English is a feature that chiasmus can go along with or it can excise so as to develop symmetry.

PUTTING DOWN EQUALS

The whole idea of a chiasm can be to indicate a slightness of difference or to articulate relative indifference. Blurriness between or indistinguishability of the meaning between the members of a chiasm can be the very point of the saying. To speak of the inutile may well require chiastic utility. We are habitually impervious to these applications of chiasmus in the way of its other meaning diplomacies.

Chiasmus can twist the seemingly important into the trivial or *vice versa*. It is a favorite for capsizing solemnities, for knocking the excessively rigid, and for winding up the dull and monotonous—all the while, rolling tongue in cheek. As proof, we need only call to mind a few of the chiastic flippancies tossed off by Oscar Wilde. But Wilde’s *AB:BA* shenanigans are far from unique. Consider this one example from a contemporary novel. Readers of Daniel Handler’s droll *Adverbs: A Novel* chuckle to themselves at the humor purposed by this chiasm: “ ‘The Black Elephant Masked Ball turned out to be a Masked Ball held at the Black Elephant,

a bar over on Grand' ” (202). This turnabout is not exactly a revelation to the reader (the appositive restates a fact known),⁴⁹ though the fact of the turnaround that occasions some mild surprise in the speaker puts one over on him. The inanity and idle silliness of the turning and the effort that goes into it are the point of the chiasm. The pure delight of a ‘simple’ turnaround we experienced with “Tea for Two.” However, the Black Elephant chiasm has an extra rhetorical, iconic punch. The chiasticist plays against his round form so as to heighten, by comparison, the deflation and flattening conducted by that rounder we call *chiasmus*. In this kind of subtle manipulation of form, Handler avails himself of techniques often located in poetry.

The Elephant is one of many chiasms in a narrative rife with quips and happy with puns on idioms and set phrases.⁵⁰ The second chapter of *Adverbs*, aptly enough entitled “obviously,”⁵¹ commences chiastically: “The movie was kickass, which was appropriate, because tonight it was called Kickass: The Movie” (9). Chiasmus can be the very figure for stating the obvious and remarking the unremarkable. Once more, Handler pressures form against form. He plays off contemporary America’s penchant for the quasi-explanatory appositive in the titles of its entertainments. We have become inured to the needlessness, but also the vanity of movies with the swagger “A Movie,” novels with the appendage “A Novel,” books proclaiming “The Book.” Handler upends one habituated formula, which tends toward the pretentious, by another form. These accessories to the obvious, pointless fact—a film, novel, or book—get pointed up by being pivoted back on themselves.

Chiasmus can make painfully, tediously, or ridiculously clear what would be obvious to the blindest of the blind. For instance, a young woman in *Adverbs* endures an orientation for a lowly, temporary position with no perks and pathetic pay. She is informed by her mindless, malicious, permanently out-of-sorts boss, “ ‘Pretty much what happens is, you facilitate the creative expression part. You’re a creative expression facilitator. Get it?’ ” (34). The chiasmus, about which there is not a single thing to get, delivers an explanation as lackluster and menial as the new assistant’s dead-end job and as empty-headed as her informant. The pat, humdrum phrasing feeds into the message’s obviousness and utter monotony. While enacting the

speaker's cross-grained disposition, the remark wryly shows up an individual incapable of the very topic on which she pronounces: creative expression. Our ability often to get ahead of the chi-figure—that is, to get ahead of its pattern's trajectory and, thus, anticipate or project the ending—, in combination with its facility, at times, to conduct a deadpan feel, performs a deadly banality in keeping not just with the assistant's job but, in fact, her life at present. The chiasmic phrasing also adheres and contributes to a philosophical outlook within the novel. This philosophy is most frankly expressed when it is tendered in a passing question put to no person in particular: “what is the point, [...] why this yo-yo world giving us things and yanking them back?” (166). Handler handles language with a sprightly, sure touch and he has an ear attuned to the mundane, hackneyed, or idiomatic phrase. He twists such set phrases in order to sensitize us to the settled, the folderol, the blandness or the blankness of our pedestrian lives. Handler's readers relish his droll dislodgements of the hyped solemnities and crises that comprise contemporary America. Chiasmus runs throughout *Adverbs* as an appliance of displacement. The novelist's chiasms, oft times reconfigurations of idiomatic (fixed and staid) constructions, reveal the bubble-brained, frivolous, and inane. As shifters out of place, they also compel an opposing slant on that which otherwise appears rigidly fixed in place.

The same poking fun, fostered chiasmically, appears in a theater review send up, punningly entitled “ ’50s Setting Greases ‘Midsummer Night’s’ Skid.”⁵² Shakespeare's comedy set in the era of doo-wop, bobby socks, and flared poodle skirts ends up a preposterous rendition, where “instead of a ‘Midsummer’ production set in a ’50s high school, it gradually approaches a ’50s high school production of ‘Midsummer.’ ” The chiasmus, which brings down the review's curtain (it is the article's final word) and the “gyrating” production along with it, accords with the nonstop twirling, Hula-Hoop loopiness of the actors' over-the-top mugging, which makes a “blurred” silliness of the whole thing. What set out to be distinct (inventive, original, and provocative), alas, bobs about and dissolves into the indistinct and dim (witted).

Handler's chiasms, set within a larger narrative, contribute to the portraiture of those caught up in their own characterless private (self-contained or self-authored) worlds. As we shall witness in the next chapter with James Joyce's Stephen Dedalus, the reclusive personality

knows chiasmus intimately. Handler, however, chiefly harnesses the amusing, gently wisecracking side of chiasmus. He has no truck with the morbid or saturnine. Handler's chiasms are in the frothiness and foolery spirit of (*tea*) (*two*) : (*two*) (*tea*) and have the temperament of the theater reviewer's sporting sally.

Through reducing, dismissing, or obscuring difference, chiasmus demonstrates a pattern for crafting wily, but withering appraisals. We can trace this capacity for difference reduction to the uniformity that symmetry entails. As Emerson correctly noted, "equivalence and indifferency" are related terms (238). The equivalence of chiasmus, along with antithesis and oxymoron, advanced the outcries of the philosophically and politically unflagging rebel-poet William Blake. Vehemently opposed to his age's adoration of human progress and perfectibility, Blake took on two of its fountainheads. Of Voltaire and Rousseau, he wryly and dryly opined that they "throw the sand against the wind,/And the wind blows it back again."

The pop stars of Continental and British intellectualism, famously sardonic and irreverent, scoffed at notions of mankind's insufficiency and reliance on divine goodness, which were venerations in the life of the poet. Blake's *sand-wind* turnaround proffers, semantically and formally, that the mocking in the mouths of Rousseau and Voltaire is "all in vain." By an *AB:BA* appraisal, Blake coolly cuts the Enlightenment's idolized intellectuals and arch-spirits to players of a mindless, zero-sum cosmic game or futile charade in which they erroneously hold out that man's empires are unbounded, for he can even contravene what God ordains. The two titans, through the agency quashing and agency upending chiasmus handily and equably administers, paradoxically dispense with themselves: they are left to an arid patch, each man throwing sand in his own eyes. The ambidextrous chi-figure includes self-defeat among its versatilities. A form inclined to show up the specious, suspect, and empty figuratively ropes in the eighteenth century's hoopla over Voltaire and Rousseau and those who might subscribe to their libertine tracts. Although hardly known in his own time, William Blake's literary and visual art campaigned for the abortion of the social, economic, political, and other immoral orders "chart'd" in the streets of London and cruelly "marked" on the faces of the city's poor and outcast. Not surprising then that this tireless reformer should take up an

instrument of thought and persuasion committed to reconsideration and re-writing (and, presumably, righting), to reverse change, and to toppling.

Ironically, a distinction drawn by a chiasm doesn't necessarily add up to something of consequence. It can figure a distinction without difference. Chiasmus easily tosses out slights, in part because it jerks around and because of a flair for feints and sleights-of-hand. As attestation consider this extract from another modern narrative. A Nazi Commander addressing his junior officers assigned to newly occupied Italy references a regional patron saint: “ ‘Some sort of bishop in the reign of Pope Sixtus the Fifth.’ He pauses for effect. ‘Or was it Fiftus the Sixth? Difficult to keep all these popes straight’ ”⁵³ The cavalier joke, a kind of neat verbal pirouette, solicits from the Commander's captive audience “smiles all round.” The reflexive one-liner and feigned self-posed question “ ‘Or was it Fiftus the Sixth?’ ” procures an offhand quality, though with a razor-sharp edge. The jokiness with a dangerous bevel, dismissive register, and the severe twist and turnabout comment on the mannered, superficially charming Commander who estimates anything Italian either primitive or vulgar, and who, on a dime, blithely turns and orders up the torture of priests and other innocents, regional persecution, and wholesale execution. For the German invader, whether (*six*) (*five*) or (*five*) (*six*), there's no difference and simply no matter or consequence, though, ironically, he makes, by his remark, a matter of it. The irony is one he intends and relishes.

When the order between two items can go either of two contradictory ways, significance should know it can take a dive. The smooth, unresisting slide from one order to its diametrical opposite via chiasmus can clearly give the slip to importance. By his Parthian shot, a quick crook of the first order to its own diametric obverse, the Commander sidelines and, thus, kills both orders. Interchangeability can belittle. The transposing swirl of the *AB:BA* pattern can drain import or value. Where there were or might be two with difference, now there are none different. In the same way a head that's tilted can perform a mocking or insincere gesture, so can a tilted remark. Head tilting, like X, has an expressive flair for the wink, the oblique, the feint.

Chiasmatic shifting, switching, and folding between syntactic sides promotes sleights of

semantic hands. Such promotions comport with, because they are inheritances from ordinary experiences of shifts, switches, and folds in the spatio-physical world.⁵⁴ Disappearance is a recurring, familiar outcome of these experiences. One of the more important of the disappearance varieties is self-effacement, which, because we easily conceive of chiasmus as, in many respects, a faced phenomenon, and because either it outright sports or it implies a centrally located ‘seam’ or ‘fold’ (the axis of symmetry or reflection) finds frequent metaphoric outlet. In the Nazi chiasm, the two popes end up effaced and, worse yet, because of the smoothness and efficiency of chiastic switch-ery, they impress us as participants in their own self-erasure. That is, chiasmus has the rhetorical ‘beauty’ of seeming to arrive by its own accord. Adept strategists who intend to praise or to condemn aspire to this self-logic, met with in the Galatians macro chiasm. In discounting the syntactic order by a double rejection (reversal), the *AB:BA* strategy can semantically discount, even cross out, the very ideas grammatically arranged for. In the Commander’s chiasm whoever was the right pontiff is reduced to a negligibility, a zero sum. The Commander cunningly hits at both pontifical possibilities, such that each possibility undercuts the other. This twice over undercutting leaves each scenario (the *AB* and the *BA*) to appear inconsequential, vain, and foolish by the demoralizing (undermining) presence of a considered and matched alternative to itself. Each pontiff, in a sense, is made to call the other’s bluff, and both decline and disappear in the concealing folds of crossed mutuality. Worth noting once more is that receivers are loath to step outside the circular bounds of a chiasm, it being such an encapsulating, self-agreeing locution. That which comes to a draw, when it is normally of consequence, can slide to the far less consequential. Two particularized pontiffs, who can each take the other’s place, cut down significance. What’s left is sheer insignificance.

The popular movie critic for *The Washington Post*, Steven Hunter, pans a new release that trades almost exclusively in the tiresome stock of the youth picture.⁵⁵ Hunter introduces *The Adventures of Sebastian Cole* by disclosing to his readers that this “is pretty much your usual stepdad-gets-a-sex-change movie.” What is surprising about the movie is how very unadventurous and unsurprising (plot-, production-, and genre-wise) it proves. Nearly all the

film's citations have been done to generic death, as the critic underlines in his disclosure with its sniggering "pretty much." Hunter complains that the director of *Adventures* abandons what little interest the film attempts at one point in order to resume "the usual youth-pic stuff: girlfriends, drugs, drunkenness, followed thereafter by drunkenness, drugs, and girlfriends." Hunter's droll summation nips, but not explicitly. The circling form, more than the words themselves, scores the cut: namely, that the filmic "document" mires in its own dull round. Hunter, in fact, disparages the inanities attendant to lazy citation (i.e., duplication) and vacant "spin." The same scoring attribution holds for the chiastic swapping back and forth, which, in Hunter's specimen, affords no plus. The repetition thus carries the futility of a supplement absent augment. Here the compounding of items equates to a mind-numbing lack of originality and a heap of monotony. The protraction of "followed thereafter by" creates a dexterous on-the-page postponement, as though there might be some hope of 'suspense' and, thus, a reward for the audience. But, of course (i.e., by the patterned course of chiasmus), any inflection of a favoring sort in the present context gets back defeat; specifically, a lessening echo of return. An echo of inconsequence and disparagement seems to be almost heard in the dingdong chiming within the Hunter and pope chiasms.

Lessening or eliminating difference—a declination in the way of the periclinical X or nullification under the sign of X—can produce a favorable, exalted, or even wondrous outcome, or it can produce the reverse. Whichever which way, it's a transforming or transcending. Transcendence depends on reposing, the very activity chiasmus enacts in every iteration. The examples point up Kenneth Burke's insistence that transcendence can be up or down, or both.

Negligibility or coming to nothing is chiastically sounded in *Hamlet*. The newly wedded King Claudius declares " 'Thanks, Rosencrantz and gentle Guildenstern' " to two of his courts' prominent hangers-on. With only a small pause, Queen Gertrude tolls " 'Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosencrantz' " (II.ii.33–34). The courtiers receive notice, commendation, praise (of a kind), thanks, and dismissal through an economic pair of strokes. The verbal strokes succinctly figure a complex com-plex that on surface might look innocent enough. The King and Queen's indulging of language both hieratic and cursive implies a godlike aggrandizement

within the courtesies they extend.⁵⁶ The chiasmus fabricated by the royals' analogous and conjoined utterances passes, on a superficial level, for a simple and twice as pleasurable, because a ringing pleasantry. On its surface, the cordial ensemble shows, on surface, the stateliness, solemnity, and visual ceremony and formality of the planar X. Then, too, it gives off more than a whiff of affectation, inflation, and artifice in a tragedy of notorious duality.

This whiff tips off a less-than-amiable (shall we say less than *gentle*) undercurrent. The inordinately precise repetition, turn, and finish of the two-to-two salutation, well, it's a lot of self-monitoring, lexical and phrasal consorting, and ostentation played within a very compact linguistic realm. Chiasmus can exhibit a strained air or a too-clever-by-half character, especially when it has the precious feel detectable in the monarchs' collocation. Facility, as a skillful Montaigne appreciates, can arouse suspicion. However, the courtiers don't suspect that they have been dealt a royal putdown: namely, dubbed doubly tedious because 'ruled' one-for-one the very same. The King and Queen's squinting construction, a nudge-nudge-wink-wink preciosity, in combination with the addressees' ingenuousness and self-blinded sycophancy, results in the latter remaining oblivious to the slight concealed in the chiasm the crowned heads intone. As a consequence of their names and, thus, their very persons made fully interchangeable, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern shrink (compress) to faceless, deadly-dull ciphers. The contrivance in charge of the cutting down divulges to the play's audience that these followers at court are monotonous (likely, but then literally, beyond endurance) and, hence, count for little or nil.⁵⁷ Each gentleman, adversely affixed by a 'mere' formality, will serve as well; either (or neither, as it turns out) will do.

The audience must both 'get' the chiasm's suggestion of courtier diminishment and, at the same time, feel that the addressees don't. For such double-dealing and ambiguity an ambidexterian needs be hired. We must pick up on the fact or at least suspect that these anglers at court are quite possibly out of their league: out-angled. It is important that we be put on guard for the 'rot' (wary where the courtiers are not) and, in this vein, encouraged to see Hamlet's trepidations about the current state of affairs as having some legitimacy. Thus, Rosencrantz and friend turned, perchance, cat's-paws by a super polished turn of phrase

launches suspicion about the court as a place of scheming. All of this duality, intrication, and intrigue, which Shakespeare's chiasm brilliantly pulls off and compresses to very small ambit, bespeaks of the facility and wrench of the rhetorical tool as well as the two who ply it so smartly.

On account of bi-lateral symmetry, chiasmus can evince the isotropic; that is, show no preferred direction (Genz 73): there's no weighing between isotropic bi-laterals, no favoritism of one lateral over its alternative given that they are exactly, totally two of a kind. When sporting isotropism, chiasmus has the ability, rather quirky when you think on it, of presenting the absence of preference, the absence of partiality between sides. Chiasmus can chose other than to incline. It should be said that this non-aligning or equivocation accords, not uncoincidentally, with the presence-of-absence control earlier ascribed to the wonderfully eccentric, perversely-minded X/X.

The isotropic, haunted by the status quo, explains the blasé tone detectable and the impassive attitude felt in the AB:BA vocalization that Claudius and Gertrude collocate. These various chiastic outcomes follow on X, which, though it seems the height of directness (in the chiasmus here, chivalrous thanks), emits alternate angles, divergence, antithesis, obviation, thwarting, repealing, etc., not any of which bodes well for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (R and G). The effortless overturning of surnames and successfully veiled runaround hint that manipulating these two won't present much of a challenge. Royal impassivity courteously disguised, the instigation of a smooth, cloaking design, and a ready capacity to covertly work over consociates who are predictable (alike), readily exploitable (because imperceptible), and equally replaceable and, therefore, infinitely vapid as well as disposable—need I say that it spells the doom of the word-framed pair. It's sure to be a cinch and a *double entendre*: that is, already laying (and lying) in wait through a formula that conducts crookedly (double-jointedly) and that encloses and forecloses. If ever there was a construction of finishing off, chiasmus is it.

The chiastic aptitude to minimize, if not outright preclude difference is worth further emphasizing. The courtiers don't count as different (meaningful) as far as the crown's concerned. Each stands the other's makeweight, thanks to the formal reciprocity and balance

that chiasmus is given to pattern. “Distinction [without] differences in the things differentiated” smacks of the contrived: either a fancy or the useless (Corbett 139). For the monarchs, their courtier pair’s utility is short lived. Any distinction between R and G for the self-serving, agile royals would be a fanciful pretense. Their reckoning positions G and R beside the point—an idiomatic locution that reminds that chiasmus literally splits, builds from, and then lies evenly on two sides of a center point, real or presumed. Chiasmus conveys the redundancy of G and R, and, hence, their superfluousness. The transposing of *gentle*, applied first to one side of a twosome and then the other, is dexterous and extraordinarily accomplishing: it brilliantly machinates a sideways commentary the sarcasm of which the audience catches hold of. The catching, the audience savors, especially because reception arrives on the sly, figuratively ‘on the cross.’ The satisfaction to audience members of being on the furtive, in-the-know side of the hoodwinking adds to the deviousness of those who have afforded members this satisfaction.

These rhetorical effects would not have reached the heights they do without a modifier and its crossways positioning. Duplicating any modifier and exchanging it between proper nouns in synonymous constructions automatically causes it to receive a salience and scrutiny that would not otherwise occur. These syntactical procedures induce the same salience and scrutiny outcomes for the proper nouns that are modified; and, too, they draw the two nouns with their modifier-in-common much closer semantically. The *gentle* switch insures, within a summing up construction, the courtiers are cut to featureless, nondescript replicas of one another. The lesson of inter-changeability rests on telescoping or folding two into a singularity, which adumbrates the unimpressive, ineffectual, incidental. It is an uncomplimentary reductive mathematics where two equal one complete zero.

Adjective crisscrossing sets up that to the newly installed monarchy, R’s as good as (*gentle*) as G and *vice versa*. Therein lurks a ridicule-loaded question: ‘If R’s *gentle* is exactly exchangeable with G’s and the other way around, what need for two fully alike?’ Exacerbating the redundancy quotient is Shakespeare’s adjective choice, the honorific *gentle*. Because it is a courtesy term of wide, neutral application in the Elizabethan era, *gentle* barely pays homage to persons already presumed noble. The term, especially since doubled, proves superfluous and

because of that calls attention to its own dubiousness, which, of course, speaks to the genuine-challenged speakers. Therefore, when ascribed to the courtiers in quick, duplicated order, *gentle* falls flat and diminishes rather than distinguishes the gentlemen. For Claudius, whose rights to the throne, to Denmark, to the allegiance of the proud Danes, and to his brother's only just lately occupied marriage bed are not beyond question, gentleness added by two is so much weak tea.⁵⁸ R and G or G and R, what matter the combination and permutation? What be the gain, when either man's monarch-indemnifying value counts for naught?

The chiasmus not only gives audiences a heads-up about R and G's having become superfluties as well as a possible first glimpse into their fate, it also covertly cables about the figuring speakers with their half gestures and half-refigured court. The inverted, interose chi-figure with its savvy, nuanced shifts likely nods to the posturings rife within the Danish court. The chiasm presided over by King and Queen has an empty, unctuous sound. Chiasmus can purpose a hollow ring. In the *Hamlet* specimen, that emptiness not only epitomizes the vacuity of the chiasmus addressees, but it takes on thematic relevance to the rotted-out "state of Denmark." By my reading, the tie between the wedded chiastic members characterizes, too, the conjugal knot between Hamlet's mother and his father's usurper/murderer, most particularly, the twisted, subversive nature of their "incestuous, [...] adulterate" marriage (I.v.43). Furthermore, the chiasmus lends itself to two different readings of Gertrude. In closely echoing the declaration of Claudius, Gertrude can be interpreted a passive type. Due to her rejoinder's having a mechanical and perfunctory flavor, the Queen has been labeled an incurious, obliging wife who takes her cues directly from a husband-king. When read this way, she, too, appears a pleasing cipher, a mere functionary who toes Claudius' line and his power of preemption and dictation.

Nevertheless, readers cannot help but own that the royal chiasmus has a guarded as well as honed quality. Chiasmus can suggest the hatched (contrived and forced) and emphasize the con-sorted and slyly con-figured, traits I believe are identifiable in the Claudius-Gertrude construction. There's no denying, the two work at/as one and are adept at subverting order and switching things about. Flying under the smoothness and ease of the seemingly offhand

everyday courtesy, the strategic, considered, and carefully measured and plotted find guise. The lexical tradeoff and alternate word placement in the address to R and G, which, in fact, Gertrude punctually gives the seal to,⁵⁹ perhaps hints of ascription to something less innocent and less seemly to this “most seeming-virtuous queen” (I.v.47) then critics often assume.⁶⁰ After all, she does couple, tie, and turn the trick. Howsoever the Queen puts a coronating touch to an endorsing figure and howsoever she may replace one husband–bed partner for another, blood-related to, but quite the reverse in type, the audience guesses that two artfully figuring and crossing on the diagonal and substituting wholesale definitely raises the chances of one monarch, if not a closely involved second, good for subsequent calculations and double-crossings. At the least, to speak in a circle adumbrates insincere, even specious talk that has the potential for other kinds of encompassment, and to engage in shuffling and sidestepping language smacks of evasion and subterfuge. Dodging (di-verting) and intrigue ripen within the sumptuous, but acutely grooved plum Denmark’s royal pair dish out.

Chiasmus, by its crossing and rounding, smoothes out and over difference. It can also distinguish the ‘distinction with little difference.’ This is a phenomenon familiar to all of us: the distinction that carries little weight, influence, matter, size, or consequence. A little difference, as we also know, can easily slip into no matter at all. As noted earlier in the Galatians section with the comments of Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman, we can slip over small gaps (steps) in an orderly succession. As we shall investigate shortly, chiasmus is equally adept at informing and then glossing the wide chasm as it is the infinitesimal gap.

AGAINSTNESS AND POSSESSION: DANTE’S BY SIN POSSESSED

Though usually supposed beneficial, knowledge can vex, even harm and torture us. Thoughts that we can’t let go of, we almost invariably portray through personifying metaphors. Such thoughts, just like human stalkers, trail, haunt, badger, plague, and harry. We conceive them the torturers; ourselves, the victims challenged with evading the rigors of their grasp. Believing, at times, we have managed to sneak past their clutch, we feel all the more defeated

to discover they have bedogged us and were there, at our backs, all along. When catching hold of us again, which is really our re-registering of their vigilance, these contrarians are up and at the bullying they excel in. Keeping a close, if not fixed hold on us is their forte. They can make for what the spatial idiom designates a ‘tight spot.’ Under circumstances awaiting discussion in paragraphs upcoming, the tight spot can turn cincher. It can become a round in which the victim is caught up in a self-perpetuating inescapability. Such machinations are made for the machinery of chiasmus.

These sorts of THOUGHT IS A PERSON and THOUGHT IS A TRAILING PERSON metaphors, with their potential for twisting-back-on-self (back-tracking or back-trailing) entailments, regularly work hand in glove with chiasmus. As an illustration, a high school student who learned of Stalin’s death camps in a Russian history course found herself stalked and then imprisoned by that knowledge. The teenager found she could not stop thinking about the brutality of the camps and man’s capacity to rain pain and anguish down upon his fellow man. To an interviewer recording her retrospections, the student explained, “ ‘One day, I was knowing these things, and the next day, I was living in them and they were living in me.’ ”⁶¹ She discovered herself in “a harrowing state of apprehension, [where] the pain never left” her. So “excruciating” was this knowledge haunting and entrapment that “in an attempt to escape the horror chamber her own mind had become,” the young woman attempted suicide. This breakout plan failing, she was confined once again to the torture chamber in her head.

The separation of individual and the individual’s knowledge, critical for egoic and psychic control, became permeable in the student’s case. Chiasmus figured this virtual permeability, which has analogues with biological osmosis. In the case of the psyche, however, such osmotic-like effects don’t produce steady- so much as very unsteady-states. The teenager became mentally and emotionally shaken, her thoughts and her thinking grossly inter-joined (shaken together). We customarily use the idiomatic metaphor *unnerved* in such cases, as though one’s nerves have gone missing, which permeability could naturally occasion.

The even exchange of the student’s chiasm articulates a neurosis: that is, where one group of thoughts consumes a person such that most everything else gets blocked out. A second

biological analogue is commensualism, described in Chapter One as a topic conducive to chiasmic explanation. In the case under analysis, co-mutualism proved destructive rather than beneficial: a downward spiral induced by thinker and thought feeding off, depleting, and adversely affecting one another. For this particular thinker, the dual relationship evolved to a condition nearly irrepressible and all but unlivable. She was no longer in charge of, but instead trapped in her own thoughts and incongruously ‘existing’ in them. An acute double-mindedness quickly developed into a *both/and* psychological trap: the double bind of victim-subjecthood/victim-objecthood. This is the picture of mental aberration, the mind paralyzed, diminished, and unable to escape its terrors, its own thoughts. An individual’s mind haunting her mind is a head gone terribly wrong.

The young woman’s chiasmic utterance was extemporaneous and not an abstruse or highbrow creation. Although it encapsulates a grave life experience not personally endured by the majority of those reading about it in the published interview, nevertheless readers have no difficulty making sense of what the chiasm means. What is more, they are bound to feel at some immeasurable level the verisimilitude of the verbal arrangement to the experience it describes. The *AB:BA* structure—doubtless not consciously premeditated by the speaker as a device to persuade of her situation nor a subject having been studied by those to whom she communicates—epitomizes, as it testifies to, the self-identified “ ‘total state of mind’ ” imprisoning the thought-oppressed sufferer. A double-pronged, self-in-turned, self-involved structure on its own, chiasmus ideally suits experiences, fictional or factual, of being “ ‘immersed’ ” (obsessed), fixed (fixated), and that drive persons futilely (two-ways) round and/or rakes them back and forth, “unable to stop” so as to “escape” the thoughts that maintain tight hold on them. Even after leaving college, this eventual psychiatric patient “continue[d] to dwell, in her mind, in a concentration camp.” Her thoughts concentrated (centered)—a recurring facility, too, of chiasmus—on the prison camps and the cruelty inflicted within their impounding walls. Unconsciously, the prison is a projection from our common spatial metaphor *THOUGHT IS A HOUSING/DWELLING PLACE* to relate an onerous pre-occupation that leads to an abnormal, self-injurious mental state. Later in the discussion the topic of mental and emotional

obsession delivered ala chiasmus will be dealt with in more detail. But now the discussion takes up another corporal, but this time corporeal, as opposed to mental, manifestation of chiastic mutualism. This corporal world counts as a true hell for its author is Dante Alighieri.

The twentieth century's 'perfection' of large-scale punishment—the gulag, the prison camp, and the ethnic-cleansing detention center—indite humanity's inhumanity. The esteemed theorist of *The Divine Comedy* John Freccero connects Dante's 'reverent' torture chambers to modern analogues (108–109). The connection strengthens Freccero's contention that, for all the allegorical exegesis put to it, Dante's hell remains inveterately corporeal, meaning that it chiefly signifies as a chronicle of the human psyche and man's earthly existence (94). This student of the *Comedy* goes on to develop an issue underlined by Eric Auerbach, specifically, that the memories of their former existence are really what consume the wretched souls condemned to medieval Christendom's netherworld. The foreboding inscription that awaits all who enter Dante's hell, reader no less than sentenced sinner, throws each into terrifying uncertainty and retrospection. Since beyond the forbiddingly inscribed gate the future precludes promise, memory haunts each spirit who passes beyond that portal. The soul is interned by and sentenced to the recollection of his life before death. And, as with any absolutist milieu, every memory holds its own punishment, and the more poignant the memory the more stinging the lash. Sinners grow more aggrieved and pained by life, but the turn back to it is irresistible.

Tracking along hell's sinister (toward the left) spiral, Virgil and Dante descend the darkness to the *Malbogia* (Circle VIII). The two sojourners happen on a swarm of vicious snakes encoiling a soul. The angulation is meant to silence this resident for a blasphemous gesture against God. This strangulation constitutes the Circle VIII's lighter fare. A main feature follows, a spectacle of mounting terror that focuses on the punishments doled out to those who on earth had wormed their ways into the pockets and possessions of others. In the feature's opening act, four thieves, all Florentine nobles, are themselves snatched and pinched at. Though Canto XXV's opener entertains the Florence-born Dante, it is nothing compared with what ensues. The next act is a spectacle that leaves Roman guide and Italian pilgrim in total disbelief.

The main show gets underway with two of the Florentine quartet appearing as demon monsters and the compatriot pair arriving in human form. Over the episode's course, these distinguished become counter distinguished. The serpent-like monsters prey upon the human souls, triggering a transmogrification of their physical persons. And a reverse predation occurs. These predatory persecutions are complete: that is, trans-substantiations that involve both. The devil corpus turns into human corpus; human corpus, turns into devil. The lengthy scene of double disfiguration in two pairs advances through chiasmic description. Anatomical parts of a victim exchange with the identical or near identical part belonging to his victimizer. We read a chiasm with the tight cluster of $A^1B^1C^1:C^1B^2A^2$, a configuration that is itself emblematic of the agonizing congress of the opponents under description: "The tongue once whole and apt for speech was splayed/Into a fork; in the forked tongue the split/Closed." (trans. Sayers 230: Canto XXV.133–135). Chiasmus articulates, while it simulates in its own structural disposition, reciprocity and transfiguration: the reptilian skin of a devil transforms to human skin and the converse, human to reptilian. The brutifying vacillations between creatures—each one a perplexing, blurring "change, re-change, and interchange"—conduces by an astonishingly "strange corresponding symmetry" (trans. Sayers 231, 230: XXV.142, 103).

In her translation (1949) of *L'Inferno*, Dorothy Sayers interprets Canto XXV as a lesson on the failure to draw ethical distinctions. In life, the thieves cared nothing for the difference between thine and mine. As the consequence of this indifference, in the afterlife they "cannot call their forms or their personalities their own, for in Hell's horrible parody of exchange the 'I' and the 'thou' fluctuate and are lost" (Sayers 231). John Ciardi, in his *Inferno* translation published six years after Sayers's, corroborates her explanation of the punishment decreed the thieves. He determines "the thieves must steal from one another the very shapes in which they appear" (Ciardi 219). The former filchers and embezzlers make off with the single belonging an abject sinner might call his own in this realm of total dearth, his self. This pair of distinguished translator-scholars spotlights the corporeal loss the thieves endure as fitting punishment for rifling and confiscating what they had no claim to. Justice procured by tit-for-tat accords with Dante's precise algebra of revenge. Sayers and Ciardi are not incorrect.

However, I find the Canto tutors readers in a greater lesson yet. This tutoring achieves sharp relief through Dante's chiasmaticity, which has major charge of the Canto's numerous polarities and blendings. Each thief passes through three stages. A sinner starts with a certain shape. Let us designate it a^1 . This shape then undergoes a conversion to a second stage, an improbable, vile blend or hybrid, b . Following on this heinous amalgamation, the sinner returns to a definite shape, an a , but one diametrically opposite in semblance to the original form. We'll designate it a^2 . Symmetric operations cause the brutish serpent to be carried over into the brutish human and *vice versa*. Symmetry also focuses the reader's attention on the medial state b , the indistinct purgatorial phase in which Dantesque showmanship is at its pinnacle. With this $a^1 b a^2$ arrangement, Dante literalizes the strictness, severity, and fearsomeness associated with symmetry. Besides its hard rule, symmetry's axial duality controls for the hideousness and aberrance of the hybrid and the revulsion it elicits.⁶² The hybrid is an in-between state, neither a no-man's-land (existence) entirely nor a no-monster's-land entirely; but, instead a chimerical borderland. The interstitial or between zone chiasmus instigates is a primary concern in Chapter Four.

Consistent with his savor of the fantastic and recondite, Dante hybridizes the hybrid. He forms it into a mottle of the blended and clear, as though pulling the exteriors (the definite a^1 and a^2) inward to equivocate and, hence, pervert the complicated blend (b) by, of all things, certainty. The blended aspect is such that the human-brute composite is "both of them and neither" (trans. Ciardi 216: XXV. 74) or, the same passage by Sayers's translation, a "perverse" image "both at once and neither" (trans. 229). This purgatorial zone, which is the skewed synthesis of a dialectic of human thesis and fiend antithesis, superinduces a mind-boggling mal-sight. The form and substance disparities between victim-victimizer heal over and patternize, by chiasmatic devising, a chimera in which "no trace of juncture could be seen" (217). The chimera's strange anatomy is, at the same time, semi-logical and rendered with what Robert Pinsky, in his brilliant translation and analysis of the *Inferno*, accurately identifies as the episode's "quasi-scientific detail" (340).

Chiasmus manages these contradictories, which have a counterpart in contemporary

science's research into cellular regeneration, repair, and replacement. Genetic engineers use the power of the cell to divide and differentiate in order to transmogrify human anatomy:

"Recipients of stem cell transplants are the world's first generation of regenerated people, a seamless blend of old and new."⁶³ Not dissimilar to the audience reaction Dante sought, biological human hybrids have drawn fear of and anxiety over the anomalous. The prospect of corrupting, even monstrous creations from hybridizing experiments have left anxious some persons and religious groups.

Fortunately for the apprehensive, Dante has no access to the biochemist's laboratory, especially since he likes to insert a kink into his genetics. He insists on the chimera's possession and overt exhibition of a visual clarity that records difference. Despite a seamless conjoining, the human thief-demon retains separate heads, for a period of time that plays like a film's freeze-frame. During this freeze, the chimera literally looks to itself to face off and stare 'the other' squarely in the eye and *vice versa*. The "face to face" stance is archetypal of foes and lovers,⁶⁴ both of which, we'll find, bear on the interplays of chimeric 'halves.' However, in the present circumstance, the stance represents the defiance between rivals. Each is both victim and victimizer literally incorporated to a penalizing singularity, the idea of which has both an incongruous and yet logical feel to it. Dante undercuts the seamlessness he postulates chiastically, doing so by a distinction of faces and eyes. Until a thief's unicephalism returns, each of the four transgressors, in whichever incarnation phase (space) he/it happens to be in, possesses the means to lock on the enemy, a corporeal and ontologic opponent, and by this staring down visualize the contorted horror that he wreaks and that is reverse-wreaked upon him: "he eyed the monster and the monster him" (Sayers 97). It is a look to the death. In his cinematic-like scenes, Dante's direction breeds logic with antilogy. He compels shockingly 'live performances' of fearsome deadlocks. These freeze-framed scenes mesmerize hell's visitors and Dante's viewership (i.e., readership). This ultra tense one-to-one visual locking of 'actors' critiques an inward, psychological type of viewing. It is a deeply scarifying vision, a fictional instantiation of Theodore Roethke's perspicacious judgment that "In a dark time the eye begins to see."

The heightened duality and involutedness of the thief–demon relationships, the Canto’s exorbitant chiasmaticity, and the self-inflexion special to chiasmus encourage that this artistic director has something more sinister and ironic, more recursive and abject, more doctrinal and apostolic up his sleeve than what Sayers and Ciardi advise. Freccero elucidates how the very idea of “face to face” references the Pauline doctrine of facing up to the truth in order to see Truth. According to Freccero, this doctrine is critical to Dante and thus to the reader who would understand the fearful pit as “Infernal Irony,” whereby an equilibrated connection exists between conduct in life and punishment in death. The thieves’ face-to-face lock on one another or, more specifically, Dante’s insistence on this *en face* symmetric inter-/intra-viewing amounts to an admission of the ironic truth of the sinner quartet’s corruption and punishment. By definition, irony requires seeing two sides and a difference between them, the very arrangement chiasmus programs for. The chimeric conjunction isn’t just a replay of thievery and a reprisal of thieves stealing between themselves, although these have explicative legitimacy. Such a storyline falls rather doctrinally flat for the irony-ridden Dante.

By my reading, the Canto ominously signals thief and thievery as actants in a penal mode, the Sinner stealing from his Sin and Sin gaining from his Sinner. This stringent reciprocity makes for a tit-for-tat theatrics far more insidious, involving, and savaging. What’s espied “In a dark time” is the beseemingness of the sinner comporting with his soul’s innermost compatriot–enemy: his sin of choice. Virgil and Dante witness an episode through the figural permutations of chiasmus storying sinners and their thwarting transgressions. In life, the story’s actors were intimates and fast friends; they satisfied one another and were ‘in deep,’ as the saying goes. However, in the underworld, the deepness comes back to bite: the ‘companions’ face off one another and battle across themselves. Rather than standing by, they now stand up to one another, stealing alternatively. Collaboration bent back upon itself to transform and install contest: these are shenanigans well conspired (formed) by the cross-/mirror-figure. Here is a darker, more bitterly ironic psychomachia. And it conducts under the masterful direction of chiasmus, with personification acting, if you will, an important player.

In this psychodrama, Dante pulls off a literalization that pictorializes and narrates (in an

capsizing of Lessing and his famous chiasm) the idea of trans-gression. The linguistic machination is largely afforded through the meaning possibilities of a trans-deive, one shifty in the extreme. At the height of Canto XXV's action, chiasma spin tales of sin mutating into sinner and, conversely, sinner to sin. Not unlike a double helical involution, the two enemies intertwine and "blur." They haunt one another as in life, but in the darkness of the lower recesses the sin of appropriating from others retroflexes: it appropriates its own otherness (personhood). This pliancy is the height of irony.

In the Stygian blackness, Sin paradoxically comes to light and to 'life' (animation) for the soul who might have chosen a better associate on earth. The invigoration and enlivening possess an 'infernal irony,' namely, a mordant "symmetry," the last Dante's insisted-upon term. Symmetry evinces formal self-perpetuation, but perpetuity is the last thing a soul wants when coffered in a torturing precinct. Where the earthly concession to Sin went unnoticed, in hell things take on grinding notice and infinite, literally biting re-minder. An indulgence in life has a reverse symmetry in death: absence of all lenience. A sinner's eternal punishment is payback time for a double lapse: the sin itself, but even more, his having closed his eyes to its corruption and his total absorption in it. Worse still, this transgressive blindness to one's transgressions blots out the resplendent light of He who honors the most perfect symmetry and graceful balancing act, that of surrendering mine (life) for thine (sins), of tendering my goodness for your wrongdoing. Dante's belief system has its theological foundation and personal adamancy in the principle that "sin [is] an aversion from God and a conversion to lower things" (Freccero 85). Hauntingly, the suffering of the thieves rests in not being able to shut their eyes (symbolically, their memory) to their conversion to thievery and to the just desserts from that perverted adoption, namely, inter-conversion with mortal sin for all of time. In life, thieving stalks and is ever ready to embezzle; in death, thieving ultimates in a twist: the stealing of the thief's very body. An even greater twist is that this stealing isn't conducted on the sly, but brazenly in his face. This is another ironic adverting, for it is an in-death upturn of the sinner's in-life *modus operandi*. Chiasmatic two-way torsion figures the inexorableness of the double torturing that thief and sin enact upon one another not once, not twice, but for all eternity. Each

thief endures an ultra mean time, a ceaseless intermediation between attacker and attacked. Dante underwrites the cruel hoax of getting back as good (evil) as one gives (takes) through repeated applications of an instrument of uniformity that twists a cross over and intertwines a double torso. Once more, we meet the eternal round. Yet again, we confront an X-ing that plaits and in-volves in order to revolve.

Self-excoriation is about as sinister as it gets. But sinister is a sealed deal when performed in what Kenneth Burke identifies a “purgatorial mood,” which he defines as an alternation perpetuated because it has been cast into the absolutely routinized (*Philosophy* 138). In their transgression, Sin and Sinner become routine at spelling one another and working in league. In life and, appropriately then in death, they band together. These two wage (sin, corruption) and contract as one, which, of course, is a feat commonly scored in the key of chiasmus. The binding of a contract perpetrated chiasmically we met with in Galatians. However, there is a considerable difference. Dante’s contractors forge a hybrid. Theirs is a mutual ambiguating and a contraction of mutual harm, rather than shared good. The contractors play a confidence game; Paul’s parties, man and Son of God, cooperate to bring to fruition the Creator’s divine principle.

Throughout the *Comedy*, inseparability (two intertwined into one) operates as a core concept. Inferno-interring depravity, by Dante’s lights, ‘evolves’ from the inter-reliant collaborations of a sinner who pledges to his sin and a sin that tempts ‘its’ sinner. In life, the two yearn for, target, and tug upon the other in crossways fashion. As with the diagonals of \times/X , they shore one another up to construct a rigid totality. A bad gamble and gambit, this *pas-de-deux* between the sin-inquisitive sinner and sinner-‘interested’ sin, for, in the condemnatory afterworld, the intimacy ‘lives’ on in self-perpetuating, excruciating iterations that are antilogically death-defying but yet death-enacting. The earthly partnering, as in the case of Florence’s thieves, ironically cross tethers and twists the intimates in a perpetual Inquisition. One difference now, though. The pair that ‘sought’ each other out in life turns incorpored and, in a paradoxically preservative death, will never out.

In God’s punishment camp, sin physically and visually, faithfully and ironically

concentrates and implicates the sinner. On earth, sin slithers its supple way into lives and takes up ‘residence’ (incorporation) because the sinner desires its intrigues. The two grow to be a commission. Sin and sinner have their wanted way with one another, *The Comedy*’s first Canticle insistent on cohabitation, an insistent stance that points up the embracing and wholly binding nature of transgression.⁶⁵

Dante’s chiasmic narrative piece deals out a horrifying new twist to penal confinement, that of self twisting back on self, and it casts a disturbing light on our inner (psychological) tortures, insecurities, and self-divisions. In this respect, Dante offers a late medieval Mannerist whose allegorical stagecraft dramatizes, with chiasmic mimesis, the involutions, intricacies, and unease typifying Mannerism. The combination of severe constriction brought on by oblique intersections and the rigorous, *ad infinitum* cyclones between integration and disintegration creative of the indeterminate accords with the signatures of Mannerist artists and architects: their aberrant spatial constriction or overstressed foreshortening; their unexpected or severe physical, especially bodily, torquing, twisting, and spraining; and their torturing, some past recognition, of certainty and ease. These anti-classicism techniques heighten psychological tension and drama for the purpose of enunciating rigorous dissonance. For this same purpose, Mannerist writers were devotees of chiasmus. Chiasmus is ambidextrous: it can devise on behalf of the classical mindset and it can devise on behalf of its counter mindset, the anti-classical. Shiftiness and counter-productions are first lists in its playbook.

The strains on possibility resulting from the Thieves of Florence episode isn’t intended to churn out the wholly unimaginable, although it entertains along those lines. I say this because the episode is under the control of a half-logic, much of it inherited from our embodied experience, which is coherent and reasoned. The strains are to remind readers of the adverse sinuosity of sin, how this pliant coils its way into the person arrogant enough to replace his Maker with what ironically returns on him his own undoing, aspects of which are prepared for in the serpent–soul opener to Canto XXV (the lighter fare earlier referenced). By Pinsky’s exegesis, Canto XXV subtilizes a “snake-ridden,” sexually adventurous scene to relay the contortions of the deviant psyche (sinner). The risqué sexual congress adumbrated, it seems to

me, is a natural endowment of the at-a-skew X. It isn't mere coincidence, the flinty and defiant as well as deviant look of X. It is the very form anterior to and stenciling the chi-figure Dante deploys for transgression's defiance and deviance. Chiasmus is the function of X.

The grandiloquent archfiend of *Paradise Lost*, we recall, advances by an adverse, coiling plot line. He conveys along divergent, confusing currents that, chiasmus-like, come up to meet his own curling trails and encircling evasions. The sinuousness and perversity of a bending-backwards anaconda, such as the *Malbogia*'s chiasmus constrictors, has a visual and meaning analogue in the uncanny, so-called impossible (double) snake picture that Ray Jackendoff sketches in *Patterns in the Mind* (176). Jackendoff's title ushers in a final observation. Snake, fiend, and chi-thinking, the last volatized through one of humankind's dominant mind patterns, can counterturn, involute, and constrict things into novel forms, unaccountably twisty and alien, conceivably (an intentional word choice) monstrous and unholy.

IN-SIN-UATION

When ordinary things feel odd
and odd things normal, be careful.

I like it best when everything's
Doing what it's supposed to.

Kissers kiss, roofers roof, matter matters.
— Galway Kinnell, "Conversation"

In cranking its double winch, chiasmus can instigate a combination for evil purposes. The champertous possibilities innate to chiasmus and, indeed, its formal nature have associations with the nature of evil. Henri Bergson declares that "vice has often the appearance of the curvative of the soul" and evil displays a "moral kink" or "crooked twist" of perverted will or diseased appetite (69). The oblique suggests the immoral, a failure to be straight or upright. The oblique's associations with wickedness are rooted in spatial interpretations, as for instance, that obliqueness maneuvers depth (Arnheim, *Visual* 262) and only in spatial depth do we get occlusion, the cover the wicked employ, due to requirement or temperament, to sneak their

under deeds. Perversion, “angularity,” and “undercutting,” especially when smoothed by a canny hand, are presumed the “cruel” instruments of the conniver who “must always work on others” or diminish them (Kinzie 27, emphasis original). According to Bergson, evil’s bent or deviant persona exhibits a rejuvenating streak. Ostensibly, because vice fixes on corruption and has need to see it through to completion, evil maintains an affinity for “moving in a circle of reincarnations” (Bergson 70). The inferno’s thieves sport (pun intended) on an unmerry-go-round of never-ending incarnations. The counterfeit and false, synonyms for evil, imply a condition of doubleness, the other side of or getting ’round the good or true. DupleXing must precede duplicity. *Repetito* can rumor the obsession of the wrongdoer (Freccero 99). Return can prove compulsive and gripping, and vice can make a go of these. Evil is always a strategy; it likes to leave nothing to chance. Chiasmus, with its sure, inverting strategy (e.g., the exactitude and tradeoffs of the Theseus inscription) and the properties and machinations that follow in the wake of that strategy, would seem tricked out for evil ways.

That the sinister can take up quarters in the X-ing figure is appreciable in an, on face, simple chiasm on the relation between New York City politics and the City’s famed theater district. A radio announcer hypes an upcoming program with the topic of “how Broadway plays politics and how politics plays Broadway.”⁶⁶ This audio lead-in, its light ‘play’ or punning on *play* notwithstanding, suggests something beyond shared agency, something not quite on the up and up between the theatrical and political realms. We infer, and rightly as it turns out by staying tuned, that the realm of New York politics works the seemingly very different (artistic) realm of theater to extract its advantage and *vice versa*. Each gets to the other: gets an angle and edge on its competitor for an especially beveled (cutting) interaction, one that X-ing scores. Especially, or at least doubly malicious is the condition where two parties manipulate the other for their individual benefit or reward. These reciprocal ‘games’ often belong to the *super-sophisticated*, a term with an aura of evil. Super-sophistication, which solicits the idea of addition, also calls up superimposition, a spatial quotient. We envisage two leaning inward, each on the other, to suborn the ‘rival’ and, thus, advantage the self. This inward lean or bent follows on the strict ligatures of X and the adamant struts of X. Spatial proximity and evil are

intimates. Chiasmus, born of duals and crossing in close quarters, arrives with an instinct for double and false dealing. Since these quarters are involutorial, a system connecting two pairs (from the *Century Dictionary*), and that the pairs also play host to turns of revolving, the parties can intrigue either by turns or, simultaneously, in an unholy unison of mutual, perhaps unsolvable entrapment. That the convolutions can prove revolting, “Whence and Whereto” (remembering our Emerson) they meet, is an innate (inbuilt) possibility.

Warning of the “traps of reason,” the poet Octavio Paz writes on a subject he knows well: written composition. He counsels about the “crimes of language,” where the writer “must erase what you write/write what you erase.” These maddening “crimes” are a kind of sublime infuriation, which Paz really wouldn’t have any other way. The erasure about which Paz’s chiasm focuses its interest names the subtractive aspect that is the other half, if we can put it so, to the additive aspect of the associating chiasmus. What one side gains in the chiasm, the other loses. And exactly and most obstinately *vice versa*. Chiasmus epitomizes a stealing back and forth on the lexical and syntactic level. The sign and the sign purged realize a “symbiotic connection” of the kind that Arthur Symons, for a related example, announces in his own chiasm on the fluctuation between “artifice and simulacrum” and “truth and fact” (2). Symons ascertains how the ebb and flow between the two polarities, like the waters of his beloved Venice, can lead to the “lose of the sense of solid reality.” Neither of these two literary artists protests the fluctuation or instability his respective chiasm outfits, but this is no mere literary game or pretension. This fluctuation operates like a pendulum that refuses to hold still. This refusal refuses identity—identity being an occupier, a position of place.

In our notice of the subtractive property of chiasmus we need to reference X first as our arch nullifier, but also as prolific mediator on behalf of the absent. X is the emblem and gestalt presiding over the contradiction of the same different from itself. The lines of X have an angle on one another. They integrate and disintegrate, involve and separate, add together and, at the innermost, divvy up, yet hold between them whatever the innermost is. Intrigue and allure, confusion and consternation get rolled into one, when chiasmus manipulates cross and circle into conundrum.

Dante's corrosive 'comedy' propels laughter born of sardonic bitterness: man's realization that his suffering comes at his own besmirching hands.⁶⁷ The irony at the heart of *The Divine Comedy's* first Canticale utters a language in which chiasmus is at home. Chiasmus and irony deal in double awareness and work and succeed by self-citation. Irony undermines its own representation in that it negates while it affirms, and it is always potentially unstable (Freccero 103). It works by indirection: usually the more coded and oblique, the more cutting or biting its effect. Irony, like chiasmus, gives off a detached and restrained air. And, resembling the latter, irony guides things in reverse. "Characteristically it speaks words of praise to imply blame and words of blame to imply praise." The audience who picks up on irony does so through the "recognition of incongruities," that the goings-on depart or vary in meaning.⁶⁸ With irony and chiasmus more is suggested than first meets the eye, a quality we have encountered in *X*. Given Dante's "rhetoric of revenge" and the use of language that "is turned back on itself" as Freccero underlines (107), the poet's combination of irony and chiasmus is a most fitting election.

Canto XXV's chiasms conceive category shifts that re-shape and re-classify the ordinary into the extraordinary. Shifting falls naturally to chiasmus, the dealer who thinks nothing of his usual fanning together of two favorite packs of cards, the same and the different, and who relishes the re-orderings he cuts by them. With chiasmus, one thing can assume a new perspective relative to a second or it can become the unexpected, unusual, or additional cause of another. At times, two items out-and-out switch orientations, and such dyadic displacement can madden or bedevil. The Florentine Thieves switch about their identities at the behest of their contriver and his *AB:BA* device. However, before their 180-degree transformation, they occupy, for an extended and focused-upon time, a middle ground between opposites. In their drawn-out, cryptic interlock, they are both brute and human, both predator and prey, both sinner and sin. More fascinating yet, they are both consonant—seamless, indeterminable which is which—and dissonant—determinable as brute and human, as evident in their face-to-face, eyeball-to-eyeball standoff.

Dante wants the best of both meaningful worlds, those that chiasmus is game for,

alikehood and difference. He images for his poem the *both/and* of entities and the *both/and* of chiasmic association and dissociation. He and chiasmus are ingenious like that. The instrument cleverly befits acts of defamiliarization. By undercutting the familiar, what Victor Shklovskii called “making strange,” and by playing two sides to the middle, chiasmus can raise the routine to sublime heights or plunge it to grotesque depths. It is regularly the case that a challenge to fashion the strange, the baffling, or transcendent results from vocabulary insufficiency. In *A General Rhetoric*, Group Mu opines that lexical insufficiency requires one of two procedures: (1) a new word, or (2) shifting the meaning of a pre-existing word (37). Chiasmus covers for lexical gaps but its procedure differs. It counter-shifts a pair of existing terms. What results tends to be more actional, and at times, provisional, than strictly lexical, but for most of all occasions it turns the trick of repairing for word lacunas.

In *Genesis*, God lectures on the intimacy of sin to man. The Creator warns Cain on sin’s rapacious “desires.” Sin, He counsels, “couches at the door” of transgression, ready to spring if humankind undertakes to ‘open’ it. *Genesis* teaches that sin and man are close, particularly as the former has it ‘in’ for God’s creature. Dante swells religious text in his depiction of sin and sinner as cross insinuator caught in a circle of reincarnations, predators alike in their insatiable appetites of reverse aggression (trans-gression). Emphasis on the twifold aspect of corruption cedes a more complex, more modern drama than *Genesis* sets out. The medieval poet depicts man as warranting his just punishments through his own fault, his own most grievous fault: namely, hungering for and pursuing iniquity rather than seeking the divine. Man’s never-ending agony in the afterlife follows in suit from Godless pursuits in this life.

The word *pursuit* and ideas about it should recollect the chiasmic track or orbit and the idea of keeping within bounds. But, with the Canto XXV chiasma, Dante stresses coercion, an infernal connivance and pact, and grisly confinement of encircled and countervailing in-mates. For purposes of comparison, Coleridge’s “ ’mid cloisters/dim” also alludes to a less than positive enclosure. But the British author’s enclosure differs in respects and degrees from that of the Italian allegorist’s, although each is controlled for by the same rhetorical instrument and thought capacitor. The effectuation of one poet as compared to the other departs considerably.

A woeful pathos hangs over Coleridge's work, which his chiasm has a sensitive hand in producing. The concision in form and extraordinary brevity of length of his chiasm further confides, while epitomizing, a very diminished spatial sector and, too, a somewhat precarious or afflicted state warranting consolation, this last not a factor in the chiastic depictions of the nefarious souls. The thwarting and stringency Coleridge has in mind remain velleities and, as such, don't begin to approach anything close to the caliber of gruesomeness and hyperbolic vexing met with in Dante.

Moreover, Coleridge's chiasm doesn't concern with the notion of reflectivity, which rises to a nightmarish quality in *The Inferno*. Reflexives spell co-referentiality. Accordingly, reflectivity entails mutual commenting and, with this, the possibility of competing claims.⁶⁹ Mutuality, exclusively at the linguistic, but not the semantic level, and competition and confrontation carry no issue with Coleridge. But it is by double alignment that Dante figures a malign relationship of confronting, clashing wills in the Sin-Sinner chimera. The malignity is all the worse for the claustrophobia induced by an instrument that self-generates two ways to a middle by the per-verse-ness of a *backward-and-forward* : *forward-and-backward* comeback, a return on iniquity. An instrument of incurving and instrokes is an intensifier. Therefore, the comeback or reprisal intensified confers punishment that is dealt out simultaneously in memorial and for real. The reflective or speculative movement transpiring between one entity and another accords with the incongruous, "dizzying reversibility" of a phantasmagoric subterranean world, the orientations of which are incurably retrospective, as Freccero testifies (102). The monstrous reflection by a mirrory circuit and torturing cross discharges a self-perpetuating round of savagery and violation. With his Circle VIII chiasma it as though Dante puts in these figured rings two equally nasty scorpions, face on and with tails curled back. These turn into a hate-filled crossbreed, a kind of equivocal stalemate (a whole), which then splits so its constituent parts, demon and sinner, can trans-violate across the axis that they had mated (con-formed). By one seemingly modest figure the Florence aristocrats are put to a wring-wrought oscillation between parts and wholes, associating and disassociating, creating and collapsing, materializing and dematerializing, affirming and disconfirming.

X and O are exponents of both the beautiful and the violent. When violent, the X becomes a mortifying, bedeviling crux; the O becomes imprisonment and constriction forbidding escape. The chiasms descriptive of the transmogrification of the thieves are strongly suggestive of a devilish contraption, infernal tangle, deviousness, and freakishness—none of which have a place in Coleridge’s chiastic production. The English poet’s “ ’mid cloisters/dim” possesses a beguiling sorrow and vulnerability far too delicate and softly tintured for what Dante has in mind for the thieves self (reflexively) incarcerated in the hyper-real wards of Circle VIII. Through chiastic encirclement and crisscrossing, the pair of poets, each with an eye kept to the celestial, epitomizes the (spatial) concept of intimacy. Though neither proffers a congenial, harboring enclosure, their chiastic intimacies keep a wide distance.

WONDERING ABOUT AND WANDERING BETWEEN THE *MISE-EN-ABYME*

It is not a trivial matter to incorporate
infinity into a theory [...].⁷⁰

The Dante chiasms from Canto XXV cast a *mise-en-abyme* twiceover: firstly, owing to the abyss in which sinners are thrust and, secondly, owing to the infinite into which they plunge. The *mise-en-abyme* speaks the esoteric language of iteration and isomorphism, of stricture, framing, encapsulation, of recursion and looping sequences, and of displacement within a confined placement. The displacement within the *mise-en-abyme* is of several calibers: visual, psychological, and more. Recursion inaugurates the concept of “sameness-in-differentness” and it comes close to entering the rarified realms riddled by paradox and infinite regression (Hofstadter 148, 127). Two mirrors placed face to face are the archetype of visual renditions of the *mise-en-abyme* and its Droste effect. The *en face* positioning is critical, for the phenomenon serves up and has the participant contemplate an interface that is a realm apart. M. C. Escher, Istvan Orosz, and Saul Steinberg, admired for their clever optical high-jinx (a *jinx* is ‘a turn about’), are pictorial practitioners. Their magnetic, sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly duplicitous compositions are gauged to set viewers athinking. Cross- and self-

referencing, intensifying inwardness from two sides, and the disquiet and disorientation of the *Spiegelbild*, specialties all of Escher, Orosz, and Steinberg, are at the core of the *mise-en-abyme*. So, too, is a crux.

Chiasmus is up to these arch calibrations and, thus, quite at home in the quizzical fields the properties constrain. One specimen testifies to chiasmus as accomplished director of the abyss and the infinite. The specimen originates in a recent collection of essays concerned with how re-contextualizing or re-presenting concrete objects puts to the test assumptions about inalterable materiality, identity, and meaning. In her “Introduction” to *Things That Talk*, the editor alerts readers to “the *mise-en-abyme* effect” that makes identity problematic. Identity’s problem is meaning’s. The effect, explains Loraine Daston, can be read in “a picture of a gangster reading a newspaper made out of newspapers about gangsters” (18). Although Daston doesn’t identify chiasmus here (nor do the authors reference it anywhere in their respective essays), she adduces that the locution evidences the quirkiness and the unsettling or bewildering disturbance of the *mise-en-abyme*. The paradox of a patterned, blatantly contoured thing that designs dislocation is the one certainty of this problem-inducing phenomenon. Daston presumes that a circular and in-tilted discourse arrangement offers as formal courier to convey the *mise-en-abyme*. We identify that courier as chiasmus.

Reflexiveness, which is rather adamant in the *gangster* chiasm, calls attention to a thing itself by in-volving a second look. It is this second look, a strict, inward-turned sight, which complicates the thing in the first place. Since no two things are ever apographic, absolutely, one hundred percent identical (despite our enduring desire for “the Sovereignty of the Same,” as Foucault terms it), introducing a reflexive, which by definition must be backward and “variable” (Lakoff, “Sorry” 91–92), is sure to introduce disparity. A thing, even a self-sufficient one, grows involuted and convoluted by consideration taken to the power of two. Reflexiveness comments on identity and our ability to actually designate what is or can be determinant.

In the view of Kenneth Burke, reflexive language automatically entangles us in the ambiguities of identification (*Language* 239). Reflexiveness tampers with distinction, and, Burke stresses, perturbs what seems tied down, distinct, certain in itself (239). Reflexivity

fluctuates from the wholly intrinsic. We know that which fluctuates catches our attention and sets us to wonder. Wonder, because it is embedded in conjunction and disjunction, in fact, is agog with chiasmus.⁷¹ Reflexivity entails deviation within likeness, which puts reflexivity right up the alley of chiastic confounding. The lexical flux within Daston's *mise-en-abyme* chiasmus bears out Burke's observations on reflexivity and its fluctuant, confluent nature. What Burke would doubtless call the "mazy motion" (*Language* 210) of the interchangeable nouns *gangster* and *newspaper*, undermines distinction and, hence, intrinsicity. The noun *fluctuation* operates as formal analogue to the picture material and material pictured that sinuously loop back and back on one another. This enigmatic mirroring between mirror pairs unleashes, as it regiments, ceaseless replication and reductive return. It performs a perverse twist resembling the "mazy" recursion that inheres with one mirror reflecting and reducing a second mirror reflecting and reducing back, *ad infinitum*. The incongruousness of recursion and its unsettling effects, including the sense of identity diminishing or slipping away from us in a continuously absenting flight, is suggestible via the mirror-image making and the destabilization that we can choose to profile in the constrained returns of certain subspecies of the crisscross figure. This subspecies will be taken up later, particularly as it relates to the use of the copula, *to be*. Daston's *mise-en-abyme* chiasmus examples this recursive flight and the bewildering entrance into a relentlessly (infinitely) voiding place (an abyss). Thus, the figure adept at stabilizing and making inert a self-sufficient state promotes the obverse, a state replete with malleability and relativity and potentiating chronic alternation.

It must not go unrecorded that the *AB:BA* design's recursive subspecies incites from associative chi-thinking. The dissociating chiasmus, which by definition tips in favor of one side over another, has no quarter with recursion. Dissociation, by its throwing a negating spanner into the grammatical and semantic works (e.g., *not*, *no*, *never*, *doesn't*, etc.), dispels recursion by absconding, if you will, with its necessary second mirror. An opposing mirror must exist to be a reflector of a first condition of mirroring; in other words, each proposition must serve as an exact backward match to its polar reflector. A negative on one propositional side tilts the balance of the mirror counter-mirroring mirror that is prerequisite for the *mise-en-*

abyeme. That is why the following emendation to a Nietzsche maxim—despite its being weighed down in repetition (*conduplicato, ploce, isocolon, and epanodos*) and despite its percussion on the word *void* that would seem to mobilize a *mise-en-abyeme* state—routs recursion: “It is not that ‘man would sooner have the void for his purpose than be void of purpose’ but that human beings would rather be void of purpose than have the void as their purpose” (qtd. in Casey, *Getting Back* xi). Though recursion initiates the complex and indeterminate, it stays clear of that which dissociates *a priori*. Recursion depends on double conditions where we can say, something along the lines of, ‘the reverse is also true’ or ‘the reverse is the same thing.’ The banning of chiastic dissociation in occasions of recursion is rather an interesting finding, since recursion is much the wonder-maker and wonder heavily recruits refuting or negating devices to make its marvelous cases.⁷²

One take-away from the paragraphs preceding this last is the astounding ease with which we intuit what among the chiastic affordances warrant highlighting in a given chiasm. In the chiasm by Daston, we don’t presume *gangster* and *newspaper* to be integrands awaiting a total amalgamation at the crossing and encircling hands of chiasmus. The chiasm urges us to a place along, but clearly not at the terminus of a spectrum stopping at absolute indistinguishability. Indeed, any kind of absolute, for-all-time integration would disallow the instantiation of a back-and-forth recursion. An incongruous, interminable alternation (Burke’s “mazy motion”) succeeds from the *gangster–newspaper* chiasm and we are full participants in that particular meaning succession. The facileness of chiastic profiling, well exemplified here, reminds of our facility with metaphoric profiling.

Daston’s notation of “the *mise-en-abyeme* effect” is her segue to the subject of foremost interest in *Things That Talk*; namely, the chimera effect; but it, too, is treated with no mention of chiasmus. This absence is perplexing given the strong etymological tie between *chimera* and *chiasmus*. But beyond etymology, the non-show of *chiasmus* is odd for additional reasons: figuration is the leitmotif in *Things That Talk*, and the chi-figure has such a large speaking part (discursive presence) in the book’s many essays. Daston’s assessment of chimera is ultimately ontological and epistemological in that it grows out of fundamental concerns with chimerical

becoming and being and how this peculiar ontology delves into issues of identify, determination, and knowing. In many regards, the reader could conclude that Daston's chimera inquiry is a study in certain aspects of chi-thinking, although minus the lure that the term *chimera* may have for a post-modern readership schooled on Derrida and friends.

This is not the forum to review all that Daston divulges about chimerical 'talk,' or more accurately, chimerical thinking. But we can record some of her observations that bear on chiasmic cognition. Chimeras are "composites of different species" or of different origins. Their "fusions" of opposing matters create "impossible zones of material transition" and imaginary transition (emphasis original). Daston alludes to these fusions as exhibiting both evanescence and inexorability. The second of these, inexorability, apparently is aided by a semi-logic from chimera that juxtapose, contract, and 'domesticate' the "disparate, fragmentary," or "contradictory." The most important of Daston's observations on chimera have to do with the paradox and tension natural to their operations at intersects and that these qualities induce a density of signification. This density is of the caliber of the anacostism, compound interest, that chiasmus generates by its playing at duals. Tension, paradox, and the other portmanteaux features of chimera are reasons for its qualification as one of those things that Claude Levi-Straus delegated as "good to think by" (Levi-Straus qtd. in Daston 20). Elaborating on this, Daston concludes that chimera "instantiate novel, previously unthinkable combinations" (24, emphasis added), the advantage of which is to open up fields of inquiry and understanding beyond the conventional and beyond singularities. Daston names this type of cerebration "Thinking with things," that is, where we adopt a "mode of thinking with things" acquiescent to intersection. Fields of overlap or "lines" of intersection, seemingly, install a position for and a proposition about things unsuspected. Chimera advantage us in that they "epitomize and concentrate relationships that cohere without being logical in the strict sense, much as images [...] or certain figures of speech—allegory, synecdoche, prosopopoeia—condense, displace, and concretize" (20). We wait for Daston to next appoint chiasmus, with its iconic and figural domination over compression and reduction, reversal and replacement, and its materialization as well as its facileness with the mathematics of addition, division, duplication, and totalizing.

Since she doesn't make this appointment, we must do it in her place. Chimerical thinking, I contend, is but one category of chiastic thinking. Chiasmus may not be Daston's "thing," but Dante intuited that unspeakable chimera have chiasma to thank for their uncanny selves.

Robert Graves's "Warning to Children" pulls 'innocents' farther and farther, further and further into an unknowable zone. The poem has the specter of the *mise-en-abyme*, a sophisticated conceit that entails enclosure, generally involves ideas of pursuit or movement (literal or figurative), and leaves the individual having been in presence of the inscrutable and feeling 'off kilter.' Chiasmus, as Grave's fantastic poem illustrates, is a deft conductor of the conceit's orchestration.

Children, if you dare to think
 Of the greatness, rareness, muchness,
 Fewness of this precious only
 Endless world in which you say
 You live, you think of things like this:
 Blocks of slate enclosing dappled
 Red and green, enclosing tawny
 Yellow nets, enclosing white
 And blank acres of dominoes,
 Where a neat brown paper parcel
 Tempts you to untie the string.
 In the parcel a small island,
 On the island a large tree,
 On the tree a husky fruit.
 Strip the husk and pare the rind off:
 In the kernel you will see
 Blocks of slate enclosed by dappled
 Red and green, enclosed by tawny
 Yellow nets, enclosed by white
 And back acres of dominoes,
 Where the same brown paper parcel—
 Children, leave the string alone!
 For who dares undo the parcel
 Finds himself at once inside it,
 On the island, in the fruit,
 Blocks of slate about his head,
 Finds himself enclosed by dappled
 Green and red, enclosed by yellow
 Dawny nets, enclosed by black
 And white acres of dominoes,
 With the same brown paper parcel
 Still unopened on his knee.
 And, if he then should dare to think
 Of the fewness, muchness, rareness,
 Greatness of this endless only
 Precious world in which he says
 He lives—he then unties the string.⁷³

The poem's speaker pulls innocents, the "Children" of direct address, deeper and deeper into a marvelous realm. We must count ourselves among those enthralled and pursuing the wondrous unknown. Innocents and readers are 'called' forward into an unknowable zone that starts out miraculous and awe inspiring, but turns perilously inspirited. The turning is oxymoronic and uncanny; incrementally developed, while, at the same time, appearing to happen abruptly. The prepared yet precipitous about face in "Warning" is engraved by the sure, excising scalpel of chiasmus with its reflective surface so shimmery and alluring that it can throw one off guard. First shrouded in alluring mystery, the result of a stepped or indented progression of overwhelming ideals, the world then metamorphoses into a sinister diametric. At the moment of utmost tension, the speaker cries out to warn the children not to enter the "enclosed" zone, for a glance ahead sets him into the throes of mortal fear. The "greatness, rareness, muchness/Fewness of this precarious world" recoils on itself to a syntactic and semantic counter-wrench. The 180-degree torque upturns and routs the allure. The allure's obliteration adumbrates a most toxic condition. What had been a world of phenomenal, mesmerizing beauty becomes entirely recast. With the overturn, the obverse side comes forth. Revealed, if you can call it that, is a cat's-cradle that dares one to even try to imagine, much less give voice or name to it. Chiasmus, a simulacrum in discourse of \times/X , enables the unsayable and unnameable to at least be thought of.

Through the mirror reflection and other persuasive capacities of chiasmus the burgeoning world flips to a globe of inexplicable horror and suffocating, no-exit diminishment. The cogs of the chiastically-powered logic and mirror machine gear an encoiling of petrifying reconstruction. The children are endangered by the most aberrant and baneful and cryptic of states: illimitable constriction. Chiasmus programs the Chinese puzzle box of mirror retreat into an ever-voiding space. Space propagates space, with the emergent districts growing more fiercely charged at each incremental step backwards toward some indefinable and unattainable. Behind this ultra-strange spatial program we spy the rigorous perimetrization, intricate cutwork, hard-line mirror regression and subtraction, yet baffling illiminality of chiasmus. What other

than the scrupulous, yet arcane Xyster is equipped to so encipher and is fitted to the trick of dividing and cutting down in precise increments without end.

Graves establishes a series of chiasma, which start to interknit not too far into the speaker's presentation. They 'progress' to a state where the description begins to angulate back on itself and the reader, following in the knitting progression, suspicions something new and possibly sinister curling back upon her. Shortly thereafter, the speaker 'unties the string' releasing dangerous entrapment. We have become familiar with this spatio-psychological closure the *AB:BA* formula entrenches. The formula's multiple appearances in "Warning to Children" also organizes for the replacement of an original and seeming "truth and fact" by an ultimately more potent, malevolent "artifice and simulacrum," these the pairs of opposites with which Symons performed his chiastic tricks, including the creation of the murky and trying and the sense of intrigue. Graves's chiastic usages, while they provide for these last effects, also nuance "truth and fact" to a matter that surpasses Symons's, while ensuring that this supposedly more reliable side of things succumbs to the quiddity of its counterfeited side, the one that induces such horror in the poet's initially exultant speaker and, infectiously as well as logically, induces the same in us.

Most intriguing is the mirror-figure's inherent and iconic reflectivity to stand up ideas of recursion. We have seen how chiasmus affords the concept of the eternal return. The *mise-en-abyme*, abstruse sub-category of the eternal return, is assumed to be two identical precincts reflecting back equally on, but each modulating the other. One mirror duplicating and returning the reflected image within its mirror mate and *vice versa ad infinitum* is the standard explanation of the specialized mechanics: mirror mirroring mirror mirroring mirror, for a time and to spaces, incised and wearing without end. This contradiction of eternal trade-off and reduction between identicals cranks by a cognitive appliance in which an identified figure becomes the ground that hosts the figure and, then, that ground and figure switch identifying places and epistemological duties. In other words, mirror *A* mirrors mirror *B* and conversely, mirror *B* mirrors mirror *A*, and conversely and conversely, with no end in sight, as we are like to say. Such rigorous mechanics must be channeled and powered by a perpetual 'motion'

(motivating) machine. Logic ‘tells’ us such a machine must toggle between two equals and alternate between roles of agency: of actor and acted upon. By its robust faculties at reverse ordering figure and ground and reverse ordering agent and the entity acted upon, chiasmus fits the difficult bill of the *mise-en-abyme*. It’s *AB:BA* architecture sees to the intersecting, reductive mirrors. For this peculiar conceit and its rigging of irresolution, chiasmus is the perpetuator of choice.

The *mise-en-abyme* might be described as a mind game whose primary rule depends on dialectical thought. In Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe’s discussion of dialectical negating and nullifying, he relates how a dialectic can only originate from a state of contradiction (57). Lacoue-Labarthe is especially provocative in that he interprets the dialectic’s recondite behavior in relation to space and spatial control. The dialectic is “an enclosed space” that houses and regulates contradiction. At the same time, the subsuming dialectical space is itself contradictory; it is both a deposit and reserve for polarity, yet at the same time, it provides an arena of “decline and disappearance [and] sacrifice” (57–60). The dialectic meticulously safeguards (throws a fighting ring around, if you will permit) and sets a place apart wherein contradistinction, a struggle between two, can transpire.

Lacoue-Labarthe emphasizes the way in which the cordoned arena that is the venue for in-fighting, in its dominance over identity, controls for and muscles space such that the distance between a pair of contestants becomes “extremely small or sometimes, indeed, at the extreme limit, non-existent or imperceptible” (58). This latter spatial state, a supreme symmetry of two-sided appropriation—two-sided surrender, is the sort obtained by Dante’s thieves. It is in their spellbinding transitional period between monster and man, the halfway one of precarious seamlessness, where they realize an eerie midpoint exactly balancing the contradictories of mutual possession and dispossession. Dante doesn’t mention the words *balance* or *centerhood*, nor does he utter the faintest sound about spatial districting. Yet, the image schemas of BALANCE, CENTRICITY, SYMMETRY, and ENCLOSURE function within and constrain the conceiving of the crisscrossing chiasms that initialize the eccentric theater and mount the theater’s logical illogic.

The same silent functioning holds for Graves's several chiasms, but with a difference. In "Warning to Children," the poet's chi-thinking emits a space that Lacoue-Labarthe no doubt would designate as one of permanent "paradoxical infinitization" (65). The same chiasmic formula oversees two perverse and indurate spaces: Dante's unaccountable, homologous hybridity that is inscrutable because of endless fluxing and Graves's ever-tightening infinite recession and diminishment in which homology is precluded. While incentivizing districts different in their spatial typology, chiasmus guides a multitude of effects: ambivalence within metathesis; psychic struggle, loss, pain made worse by an inescapable immuring; time at a strange, yet magnetic or at a traumatic twist. These and other effects prove synonymous across the poetic pair. Synonymy of this kind signals principled aspects. Such are the recurrences that Lakoff demands of any candidate for cognitive system status.

FRUSTRATED TO NO END AND BEAUTY IN THE END

Expression of everything is possible, whether
it is a hellish paradise or a heavenly hell.
—Ernst Barlach⁷⁴

how beautiful it is, all round
—Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*

The mother of a child with a severe brain condition tells a radio audience about his medical condition. The gist of the boy's problem, she reveals in a chiasm early in the radio interview. It was evident that her summary explanation using the *AB:BA* formula was delivered extemporaneously; it was not a prepared statement. The woman's son suffers from a rare type of autism that radically affects a person's ability to concentrate, to comprehend his environment, and to communicate with others. This type is at the far end of the spectrum of autism disorders. The woman summarizes the boy's affliction plainly: "If he could see, he couldn't hear it. If he could hear it, he couldn't see."⁷⁵ Although this child's hearing and seeing are intact (physiologically normal in individual function), his brain prevents any simultaneity of aural and visual perception. Due to an undiagnosed anatomical abnormality or neurological dysfunction or both, his brain elects hearing, but immediately shuts down seeing or it elects

seeing, but immediately shuts down hearing. Never do the twain overlap. In one way of speaking, the two capacities are bizarrely complementary—in their severance from one another. It is a double dissociation: at no time does the boy experience the total audio input–visual picture unison that advantages the normal child in her discovery, learning about, and characterizing of the world. As you would expect, the boy’s brain impairment has been extremely debilitating in all regards to his development and function.

From birth, the child’s exceptional autism sentenced him to an uncontrollable on-and-off switching between two vital sensory modes that are especially critical in the early years of child development and learning. The oscillation is extra perverse: an endless loop—of disruption. The condition, best described by a contradiction in terms, because it results in volatility and unchangability, is in the character of the ouroboros and the frustration that inheres from rigorous involutions onto self. Lacking the capacity to see and hear at one has been a frustration almost beyond imagination and has kept the boy a bewildered captive. Over the course of the radio show, his mother related the unsuccessful trials of family, medical doctors, neurological researchers, and autism therapists ‘to reach’ her son. The goal is to somehow ‘release’ him from this unintegrated perceptual existence that makes for a living hell. The reach is for a boy who has retreated into himself, even beyond the isolation that plagues the so-called average autism patient. The boy cannot escape himself.

That the child is trapped in his own psychological–affective–mental world and unable to escape its bizarre circulation, that is, to make real contact beyond himself and to gain a sense of an outer reality, was what any listener could predict as a consequence of his parent’s descriptive chiasm. Prediction ability has no basis in foreknowledge of this particular case or acquaintance with cases, rare as they are, of a similar nature. Instead, prediction arises by extrapolations from universal image schematic understanding. SYMMETRY, BALANCE and, most especially, CROSSING and ENCLOSURE are high on the list of image schema that enable our prenotions and projections about the boy’s circumstance. Without any foreknowledge of the kind just now qualified, another pre-knowledge, supremely common, yet supremely valuable, does guide our conceiving, interpreting, and even anticipations about the circumstance. That other pre-

knowledge we have met in this project: it is our repertory of corporeal-spatial knowledge.

As explained, a reciprocal disruption to a neurological network gains linguistic and logical outlet via a double dissociative form, chiasmus. This double dissociation type gears artist Man Ray's chiasm "I photograph what I do not wish to paint, and I paint what I cannot photograph." For Ray, one artistic enterprise precludes the other. This comparison brings out how we are prompted to conclude that something in the artist, at least by his chiasmic accounting, switches off one activity/skill/technical perspective when the second is chosen. Painting and photography are for Man Ray diametrically opposed. His chiasm and the mother's have a second aspect in common. Neither constructs a middle ground or a place of compromise. Diametric relations that remain unresolved can put no faith in the middle ground. Neither negotiation nor compromise may be in the cards for them. A third commonality is that within each chiasm, a sense of permanence is conveyed. This permanence partially owes to the exactitude and rigor of the fierce symmetry of the chiasms, as well as the fixing, fastening, or bolting in place that we associate with crossing activities in our everyday experience. This aspect of permanence, which encourages the feeling 'here is an arrangement that is bound to be just as it is,' adds to the rhetorical might of chiasmic locutions in general.

Ray's chiasm that conceives a dyad of oscillation between artistic disciplines does differ from the mother's. His has nothing frustrating or entrapping about it. Doubtless that is because he entirely calls the shots, unlike with the autistic child. The boy has no control over the switching station in his head, a station that denies the ability to see what he hears or hear what he sees. The switching-back chiasm articulates and models a sharp whipping-back action, one that repeats *ad infinitum*. Man Ray is not put to an audio-visual cross-rack.

A system that associates pairs across a spatial region can order up semantic impairment. This same system that loops round can organize that which revolves, but never evolves. Those caught within that entrapping circle make no headway. They face disappointment; that is, they can't reach, achieve, or satisfy a point beyond where they

haven't already been. Such an absence of mental development is the stuck-in-place circumstance with which the autistic boy's family has heartbreaking acquaintance.

The playwright Eugene Ionesco, whose memoir took the chiasmic title *Present Past, Past Present*, observes how if you touch a circle it may turn vicious. The boy's nightmarish round is of just such a ferocity. Chiasmus and the vicious circle are intimates, in more ways than one. We obtain acquaintance with the circle's sequestering of the violent and the beautiful in the Harappan Double Spiral (Fig. 10), an ornament that pre-dates Christ by approximately two thousand years (2600–1800 BC). This primal cartouche, with its flexuose shape and constraining, involutions lines, looks to be a strong contender for the infinity sign's predecessor. We interpret the sideways-eight sign as a familiar of the vicious circle.⁷⁶ The infinity sign materializes, as though magically and paradoxically, by an ostensible twist of the wrist to rotate backwards a circular band into a double list.



Figure 10. Replica of double spiral twist pin, Harappan peoples, Indus Valley.

The twist seems simple enough to materially effect, but is far from that in its other effects, that is, in its visuo-logical manifestations. The infinity sign and the Spiral Twist are physical characterizations of that which turns and crosses on itself in space to stay within and entomb itself for all of time's extent. They are representations of the inconceivable and, as such, they must be faithful to an "impossible" single obligation, that of "recurrently duplicat[ing] itself interminably" (Derrida, *Aphorias* 16). In *Aphorias*, Derrida recruits chiasmus to relate this obligation to interminable duplication. Vicious circle, Spiral Twist, and infinity sign lissomely

incurve and install, move and fix themselves in congress and hence, in-congruously: that is, to spin, in place, illimitably. It would appear that these constructs are spatial and temporal enigmas humans are unable to do without. Although exotica, they are not empty gimmicks, not in the least. They have a real and valuable sense to them that we understand through are embodied minds. Also fascinating and apposite for the present discussion, they are bi-lateral, crosswise systems that coil inward and concentrate on themselves in the style of the chiasmic construction.

The slinky, Lissajous curvature of the Double Spiral articulates a formal tradeoff between two that are the same and, yet, are different. An *A* coloration claims a reverse placement to the *B* coloring on one side and then the *B* to the *A* on the opposing lateral. The anfractuous badge is a visual argument that ‘speaks’ on its own formal behalf. It uses its inherent expression and logic (recalling Burke, but Langer and Merleau-Ponty, in addition) in the same manner as does each very basic, recurring form and symbol specify meaning according to its innate spatial pattern. No one needs to interpret for us that the badge’s reciprocals twist and turn endlessly, or, we might write, chiasmically. The Spiral explains itself on its own. Or rather more properly, the twisting, turning, and oscillation materialize according to the Spiral’s particular form and we recognize what the form’s spatial relations mean by our image schematic memorializations of such twisty-turny spatio-physical actions in the everyday world. Doubtless the eternal genuflection (motion) will remind of the torturing, conjugating tornata of the Florentine thieves, punishment for their worming misdeeds on earth. Notable is how the ornament’s viewer stares at a ‘pair of eyes’ that stare back with equal intensity and inquiry. The double viewing has an alluring and alarming, engrossing quality.

If you perform a dictionary lookup for *chiasmus* and if a sentential or clausal example is entered, there is an extremely high probability that the locution will be chiasmatic.⁷⁷ Chiasmus abets circular arguments of all stripes. In logic, a vicious circle, when it is a demonstration, involves two propositions, each of which erects the other; when the vicious circle is a definition, it involves two terms, each of which defines the other.⁷⁸ It is a short step and slippage from the vicious logical demonstration or definition to the double back of chiasmus

and its inclination toward frustration and leaving the internals wholly dissatisfied. Chiasmus and the vicious circle clearly are in the nature of each other.

The vicious circle forbidding a logical, confirmatory end and disallowing arrival at a place different from where one began are subsumed under the visual code of the ouroboros. The circling-back snake, depicted either with its mouth ready to bite its own tail or with the mouth already clamping down on its tail, flashes dual aspects. The ouroboros symbolizes the continuity of life, the totality of the universe, and the eternal. The circumrotating serpent that pre-scribes its own completion cultivates the principle of self-fertilization. It emblemizes perpetuation and personifies time (Battistini 10). In Giulio Romano's *Allegory of Immortality* (ca. 1520), an ouroboric snake circles above the head of a beautiful, yet horrific half woman-half monster. The two creatures are physically paired in the painting because of their close symbolism, the Sphinx as icon of man's inescapable destiny and the 'supreme snake' as icon for that which is 'bound' to happen, the eternal return of the supreme circularity of nature and time. Sphinx and snake extract trepidation. Romano's painting cites the fearsome aspect of the ouroboros, namely, that it is a state where what comes back to bite you is in the nature of a hieroglyphic orbit, your own generation.⁷⁹ This self-destruction is what sin and its fraternal twin temptation are all about. The ouroboros messages the perversity of double-subsumption and double-consumption, which are rendered better or worse because the angulation (circulation) never tires. Certainly for Dante, an inexhaustible hybridity ramps up his show and better cranks an exhibit apropos eternity than some 'lesser,' because exhaustible perversion.

Dante's chiastically-realized thieves endure the rigors of an ouroboric existence. This existence is vicious in the extreme because it is a cycle that bans outlet and knows no satisfying end. Owing to its devious, fiendish 'persona,' sin is an imposing and supremely tortuous devil. It gets its teeth in you and you in it and the two of you con-sinuate a vicious cincture. That which is ouroboric can execute a sado-masochistic Self, simultaneously destructive and consuming. This two-sided execution puts us in reach of why anti-drug campaigns heavily rely on chiasmus to iconize and power up warning slogans. The ouroboros is a sinuous cycle that builds on, yet contradictorily destroys itself in the obsessive manner of the addict. Drug

consumer and drug become cross-hooked. It follows then the association between a drug habit and the idea of a fix. In chiasmus and the vicious circle the two halves become equal partners of dual dependence that fixates one, just like a Dantesque thief, in an amplexus of furious self-dissolution and futile suffering. For thieving sinners and drug addicts, existence reduces down to a ‘great round and fury signifying nothing,’ absolutely no gain, no exit, no good. The self-attacking snake stands for a “closed system” (*OED*). The same holds, of course, for chiasmus and the vicious circle when they are in their nixing moods. The closed system, which is committed to self alone, allows neither release nor respite. As we have seen, no instead exists by a system that is fully involuted and entire onto itself.

Associated with chiasmus and the serpentine, the vicious cycle holds desire. All three, because of intense redundancy, can become, when desire-ridden, commemoratives of loss or regression, minimalism and insularity, emptiness or frustration. Desire is spatially conceived, a place beyond where the individual presently finds or frustratingly lands herself. Desire and its frustrations, therefore, often proceed appositively with the *AB:BA* pattern.

In the haunting novel *Across the Bridge of Sighs*, a major character is brought emotionally and financially low by a tragic personal loss. She decries her frustration in a chiasm that approaches a summa philosophy uttered by a summarizing soliloquy: “to maintain your illusions you need a fortune, but to make a fortune you have to shed your illusions” (Rylands 176). Her family’s fortune and cushioned existence may be taken from her secondary to the death of her younger son. Her solitary-like chiasm reflects both the double whammy state of affairs that hangs over her head and an *either/or* response: either one faces up to the truth or she runs from it. Following this rumination, the character accepts that no compromise position, no half-fix will repair things to their original condition.

This novel is set in storied Venice where bridges, which are forever experiences, link together the disparate and where bridges and crossings are laden with meaning. This meaning is workaday and ceremonial, just like chiasmus and its handling of the subject of desire looked for and desire lost. However, unlike the purpose of the physical bridge, the *AB:BA* formula can connect terms for the sole purpose of disassociating connection, of erecting frustration’s sighs.

Desire, by its nature, solicits, a word related to *soliloquy*, *solitude*, and *solipcism*. Chiasmus can solicit agreement only to attack and take a bite out of it. The sinuous, supple twisting back of chiasmus can sidetrack desire. Under the sign of \times/χ , chiasmus transmutes the material into the null or deadly. More frustrating than these, one cannot get.

On the other hand, chiasmus can conspire a beautiful, double-fulfilling accord. In John Robinson's mathematically inspired catalog of large art works, his *Dependent Beings* (1980) has few rivals in twentieth-century American sculpture (*Visual Mind* 136). Through material division, the smooth and stipulated (hammered) surfaces symbolize the titular dependents. The 3-D 'circle,' of equal height and width, conducts a sinuous Moebius-like 'cross-referencing' that merges a pair of contrary, polished and patinated, 'sides.' The sculpture narrates difference held in continuous synthesis. Robinson fashions an ouroboros in bronze, substantializing the emblem of permanence and connection in difference. Like a material version of chiasmus, *Dependent Beings* *vice versa* versals (material dualities and independents) into harmonious dependency. Perversion is the farthest thing from the mind in viewing Robinson's sumptuous work. The twists of *Dependent Beings* are tonic, not "queer" or "subverse" complications, as Burke would phrase it (*Counter-Statement* 14, 17). Robinson pacifies independents by arranging them into absolute incorporation. Through this formal conquest, he achieves an exceptionally supple concurrence and perfect repose. His visual chiasmus offers up a tangible pledge to one of life's intangible mystiques (Sarton 344): a harmonious suspension between independents.

The intriguing regularly commissions chiasmus to suggest its intrigue. The beautiful, sacred, and the mysterious likewise commission the figure to suggest themselves, as in this specimen: "mysteries interfere with problems—or, irony of ironies, ... the key to the problems lies in the mysteries!"⁸⁰ Japan holds the cherry blossom sacred. To enlighten Westerners about the "paradox and riddle" at the flower's "inner heart,"⁸¹ as well as to convey its oxymoronic essence (i.e., its bittersweet munificence), the contra-diction of chiasmus is formed for the intricacy. The enigmatic blossom has "to do with the idea of beauty as death, and death being beauty, the one interdependent on the other." The person who voiced the preceding, who

identifies himself as an aficionado of the “ultimate flower in Japanese culture,” attempted to impart some sense of the ineffable: the cherry’s transmutation from “transient beauty” to “intransient beauty.” To communicate the oblique or amphibolic (meaning ‘both around’) obliges a *waka*, a special Japanese verse reminiscent of the haiku. Like chiasmus, the *waka* copes with impossible or incongruous ideas through an absolute precision of form, namely, “a precise number of syllables in a precise sequence.”

A conflation of crossing and rounding in chiasmus can be highly creative of equipoise and commensuration. Consider the deployment of the chiasmic formula to relate a ‘beautiful’ generative Tartarus between the filmic auteur and his acting muse:

David Lynch’s “Inland Empire,” the latest example of filmmaker and muse, puts [actress] Laura Dern through hell. Or you might say Dern is storming through hell and dragging Lynch with her. Either way, director and actor burrow toward each other from either side of the camera and arrive at something singular. (Zak)

The newspaper article in which this chiasm appears is rife with chiasmic citation and, correspondingly, with references to polarity and singularity, divergence and unanimity, conflict and resolution. For instance, Laura Dern’s intrigue emanates from factors of contradiction, that she is “both blank slate and suggestive force.” The article’s author Dan Zak applauds the way in which Dern and Lynch run at a full tilt against one another, and yet, when their weapons (talents) cross their individual forces make tally. When an actor’s talent becomes the director’s adjuvant and the director’s talent becomes the actor’s adjuvant, actor and director may create a cinematic *non plus ultra*. Zak observes of Dern and Lynch’s professional tourney how “the art of inspiration works both ways—through the portal of the camera—as director and actor summon a genius from each other of which they are incapable alone.” Ideas of “burrowing” as a means and of a “portal” as a channel or medium to facilitate the movements of the director and the actress toward a divine meeting attain iconic underwriting through chiasmus and its centric or axial emphasis.

Zak’s chiasm and his remarks are loaded with visual and bodily citations. He leans most heavily on the point of any crisscrossing: He leans on the particularity of the centric, the place where muse and director meet up and then amalgamate. The Dern–Lynch duo forges “an

intimate collaboration” such that between them they effortlessly “communicate volumes.” Zak accents the collaboration’s addition to a state beyond a mere two. This addition is the *tertium quid*. The third is quite another thing, a thing apart and far greater than just two. It is meritable as a space or ground distinguished from either side of its ‘parent’ grounds. By definition, a *tertium quid* entails two anterior to it. The hybrids of Dante, fashioned to boggle the mind, are just such derivatives. We suppose the *tertium quid*, which both carries and transcends its genetics, a supervention, fanciful or magical, unnatural or supernatural. It is an in-vention. As genetics and creation are critical to the ‘conception’ of the *tertium quid*, creativity, imagination, and inventiveness customarily attend its birth.

The two filmic partners view one another as equals in their parenting of a transcendent creation. From this equality, they conceive a singularity. It is through their two equal (equally contributive), but different (director and actor) sides that they hit upon a mid-space. Zak develops his reasoning about the director–actor collaboration in Wittgensteinian fashion. That is, the reasoning proceeds along the lines readers find in Wittgenstein’s “puzzle picture” between alternatives, where a hypothetical viewer profits from one “larger understanding” that yields quite exceptional organization (198^e). Wittgenstein focuses on the intimacy of two entities that are not alike, yet which turn especially formidable when brought together. A dyad’s creating of a “larger understanding,” an issuing forth which Wittgenstein is like to praise, belongs to the category of betweenity. Creation, physical or mental, we ultimately interpret through image schematic understandings about space and our bodies in space. Our standard ways of talking about the mind’s conceptions and its conceiving (the words are unavoidable) are spatial in origin. Zak’s article presents the Lynch–Dern collaboration as forging a “shorthand” or intimacy, which we understand intuitively in spatial terms: an abbreviated, because overlapping centricity whereby two’s in-tensity (a positive agon-izing) adds to three: the creative ‘offspring.’

It should be italicized that the parallelism of the Zak chiasm quietly structures the critical idea of a fully shared center point. The parallelism is not especially focused on in the chiastic presentation, but the center most definitely is. But, the center depends on the parallel

arrangement. To obtain a compressive, semantically dense center that is suspensive, fully intensive requires an essentially balanced condition. This ‘requirement’ has its explanation in our perceptual and corporeal schema about space relations. This focal disparity is salient, as well, in the hybrid chiasms in *The Inferno*. Behind the mind-boggling of their respective chiasmic scenes, Dante and the modern writer depend on a semi-logic implicitly understood by the embodied mind of man. This is the inexorable logic of space.

Isak Dinesen asks herself, “If I know a song of Africa . . . does Africa know a song of me?” If the answer to her aching question is in the affirmative, then the continent and the inquirer achieve parity: Africa and a lover of Africa ensconced in the wonder and rapture of co-sensibility. A beautiful tranquility, a tender and almost amorous amity, could be realized with a yet-to-be, suspended ‘Yes.’

This associative chiasm taken from *Out of Africa* does not speak of impartiality or indifference; rather, it speaks of partiality. It breathes not a word about beauty, harmony, and serene, if emotion-laden repose; it utters not a word about immense fondness; nor mutuality of affection, deference, and respect; nor desire to preserve a deep tie. There’s no heartfelt longing to be lexically pointed to on the page. Yet, these and their like lie in the writer’s parallelistically-posed question.⁸² Or, put more correctly, an engraving conduit for their expression rests in chiasmus. The firm embanking sides, the formal pattern, of the *AB:BA* channel give some reasons for why Dinesen’s question echoes within itself, but also why the locution plays about, as it etches and lingers, in our minds.

We are unlikely to give overt thought to the crisscross template that frets and shapes Dinesen’s locution and Zak’s, although we register the sounding and shaping at some lower level of awareness. The registration is a feeling of a form, specifically, a form of duplication and crossing. Similarly, we are unlikely to be aware of the formal mechanics, Hall’s “hidden rules,” that cause us to understand the general idea of confirmation that both locutions exhibit. We sense or feel the confirmation, but again, with minimal, if any, attribution to the mechanics or realization of our active involvement in them. It follows then that we don’t attend our profiling acts that occur at even finer levels: for example, that we zero in on (profile especially)

centricity and intensity in the film reviewer's chiasmic observation, but take away most especially parallelism, parity, and repose (stability and balance) from the autobiographer's chiasmic question.

The crosswise instrumentation of chiasmus presses upon us, and its prodigious effects, we exquisitely select among. The 'pressing' or affecting and the fine point profiling are what the final chapter investigates, with particular focus on the topics of centricity and betweenity. That examination, in confederation with Chapter Three's discussion now concluded, emphasizes that we invest little, if any conscious care in thinking up and figuring out chiasma. Automaticity is and proves why we are such adepts in our origination and reception of a chiasm. The "rules" of it, we care very little for. Why would we? We know them beyond recognition.

¹ Richard, Paul. "Sol LeWitt, A Master of the Art of the Idea." *Washington Post* 10 Apr. 2007. C1, C2. Sol Le Witt was an artist and sculpture much admired by Marcel Duchamp. His "Four-Sided Pyramid" can be viewed in the National Gallery of Art Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

² For some, whether the X structure casts itself over or rests under its verbal personification may be cutting definition with too fine and abstract a pen. Undeniably and importantly, the prepositions point to issues of explicit *versus* implicit, container *versus* contained, greater *versus* lesser; in other words, influencer *versus* influenced. I have taken a stand that X informs the verbal figure.

The dilemma between explicit and implicit influence is one that chiasmus itself appears made to solve, if we follow a favorite inclination of its: namely, a middle course. Rather than standing overtly above or subtly supporting beneath, the compromise position would be *across*. As discussed, chiasmus is made to formulate a balance or negotiate a compromise between divergent viewpoints.

I feel comfortable claiming that X rests *across* chiasmus. X informs the verbal figure crosswise from end to end. It may be more to the point to speak of the X effect. X shadows the chi-figure.

³ One concern I have is that many terms applied throughout the remainder of the discussion are fraught with multiple meanings, are confusing, or pose other problems. The term that most worries me is *similarity* along with its innocent-seeming, but tricky cognates, *alike*, *like*, *identical*, etc. In truth, no two things or events can ever be absolutely the same. Heraclitus wasn't making it up. Those who study pattern recognition or artificial intelligence have long struggled with what constitutes "the same." Everywhere they turn, and we with them, qualifications beset us. Equivalence decisions in these fields generally require that ranges of acceptability be established, but, of course, these ranges are more or less artificial and subject to variation and disagreement. Thus, there end up being ranges that range according to too many factors to even begin to summarize. Paradoxically, the more one wanders in the realm of the same, the more lost she is likely to feel herself.

If the situation weren't problematic enough, Amos Tversky came along in the late twentieth century to interject layers of nuance and complication to the topic of similarity, with its associated topics of selection, belief, judgment, and reason. To merely thumb through his brilliant tome *Preference, Belief, and Similarity* (2004), defeating in size and complexity to mere mortals, is enough to send screaming from the room anyone whose work even remotely touches on Tversky's bugaboo topic. I don't have solutions to the similarity dilemma other than these: to acknowledge the fascinating work of Tversky and his colleagues, and to ask that commonsensical inferences on this writer's part be permitted, or at least indulged.

⁴ We don't stumble over an "unconscious pattern," explains Hall, but retrieval of it into consciousness demands "meticulous, painstaking, and difficult" work (126). Modest results is the watchword: "Even the best of informants can never describe" these patterns (126). Mostly, we "work in the dark."

⁵ The jacket cover to P. D. James mystery *A Certain Justice* 'splits' into two halves by a vertically positioned silvery knife. The knife represents the "thin-bladed" murder instrument at the heart of *Justice*. The title alludes to the murder victim and those suspected of her death—lawyers all. The jacket's knife blade literally glints like a mirror. And, the flashing intensifies when a reader tilts the book from side to side, chiasmus-like. The knife 'slashes' down the absolute middle of the jacket's word displays. The *double-entendre* that inheres in the author's *certain*, but more importantly the idea of justice as a balance on which both sides of a case is weighed are wonderfully referenced by this vertically split, mirror-like design. The design cites the double-edged aspect of the law and the back-and-forth weighing (in both the legal and novelistic realms) of just whom the killer might *turn* out to be. Chiasmus cuts down the middle. It can also split a difference, and, in its contradictory fashion, heal difference.

⁶ Watson presents an example of a large-scale chiasmus that begins “A lawsuit.” in his chapter on Biblical Hebrew poetry in Welch’s anthology (142). Three of the six major sections of Leviticus expound divine law. The codification often enjoys the concentric symmetry of the large-scale chiasm.

⁷ Welch, John W. “Chiasmus in the New Testament.” In *Chiasmus in Antiquity: Structure, Analyses, Exegesis*. 214.

⁸ Per Aage Brandt, distinguished professor in cognitive semantics at Case Western University, reads an “A – B — B – B” formula as representing a “temporal unfolding.” Without question, this is a correct reading. But the unfolding of the arrangement in time is no less spatial for that. Music and speech are linear, and, in a pure sense, not spatial in the way that term is generally taken. However, humans are compelled to describe these activities as spatial, due to the fact that is how we conceive and express them. Musical notation is spatial, though what it represents isn’t, strictly speaking, spatial. But, even this is debatable. For instance, how could we think about notes as other than spatial differentials: that is, as other than higher or lower in value and longer or shorter in duration. No expert in the abstruse calculus of musical theory, I know enough not to try to further develop the music analogy.

However, I can say that like any formula, the *AB:BA* one is not sufficient at capturing the entirety of the entity that awaits or requires a re-presentation. The formula cannot be the entity itself; it is only partial and it is subject to the many and general limits of representation. The *AB:BA* formula and the crisscross motif, what Dr. Brandt identifies as the “spatial graph of crossing diagonals,” are different, but not opposing representations of the same phenomenon.

Like the *AB:BA* formula, the compositional diagonals of the crisscross are also temporal in two ways: (1) epigenetically, and (2) if we perceive an overlapping area, we understand that as the consequence of a second to a first action. It seems to me that perspective is everything. For the architect, designer, and artist, an *AB:BA* arrangement, by which I mean the bare formula, is first and foremost spatial. Hand the identical formula to a linguist or other student of linear phenomema (again, holding off any explanatory or contextual information) and it is likely to be interpreted as temporal. Those who study the macro and micro chiasmus focus on spatiality. This focus is not because we are experts in matters of space, but because chiasmus distinguishes itself among linguistic objects for its spatial structure. That structure draws all eyes and ears, not just those of chiasmus enthusiasts. The visual and aural feelings evoked by a chiasm have to do with a form of a certain structure. The structure has spatial properties that principle an assortment of spatial experiences. Temporal properties also obtain, but these aren’t felt nor do they figure—bearing in mind Langer and Burke—to the degree of the spatial ones. Chiasmus is both a spatial and temporal phenomenon and it frequently takes the latter as subject. Still, spatiality weighs more heavily in our origination and in our reception of chiasma. This weighing is not just a matter of structure, but also of mechanics. For instance, alternation is a topic chiasmus regularly provides for. Alternation has aspects of spatial and temporal change. However, commentators attribute alternation as handled by a chiasm as deriving from the lexical-spatial trade-off over the *AB:BA* span, rather than the pattern’s unfolding in time. This attribution, of its own, reinforces how we turn to space sooner than time to think on the spatial, the temporal, and, that largest category, the spatial-temporal. In his latest publication, Steven Pinker expands on space’s hegemony. He writes in *The Stuff of Language* (2007), “A state is conceived as a location in a space of possible states, and change [alternation] is equated with moving from one location to another in that state-space” (47). Our concepts about chiasmus and our conceptualization achieved by chiasmus are additional pieces of evidence of our cognitive prejudice toward space and spatial relations.

Burke and Langer tell us, in effect, to follow our feelings (perceivings) with respect to form. Feelings are the best indicator and promise of form; the reason being that the two are interconnected. The present project builds from the foundation of what these scholars of form claim of it: form is what feeling ‘gathers’—for it is sensible.

I thank Dr. Brandt whose personal correspondence and commentary has pulled back the curtain to these prodigious, complicated, and most stimulating issues.

⁹ It also echoes in the ear. The second of these is no less influential than the first as to our response and interpretation of the macro and the micro chiasmus. However, the treatise's focus is on the optical sense.

¹⁰ This designation of the "Letter of Paul to the Galatians" derives from commentary in *The Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha*, Rev. Standard Version, Oxford UP. 1965.

¹¹ In *Towards a New Architecture*, Le Corbusier insists on contouring as a fateful test. It is his sensitivity to and handling of contours that determine whether an architect transcends to artist or remains but an engineer. When the architect functions as sculptor inviting in "profile and contour" to cut his masses, he leaps to that superb creator: "the plastic artist" (218).

¹² I find this a most careful, yet peculiar choice for the illustration purposes of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca. These scholars could have selected widely from Piaget to make their point, but they decided on this example. Just exactly why, I'm not sure; although it certainly serves my purpose.

Vischer describes "simple seeing [as] always a relatively unconscious process, for the impression received is still undifferentiated. [...] It is a characteristic of the spatial object that it appears to human perception as something side by side and therefore as an instantaneous presentation of its Idea" (93, emphasis original). Vischer spells out what *The New Rhetoric* scholars leave almost entirely implicit in their coverage of side-by-side perception and presentation. Linkages of these topics to spatiality are a need unmet.

¹³ The remarks are by Richard Lanham in an essay with the title "Bistable." I regret I cannot give the reader the full title or the citation.

¹⁴ The words in quotation marks are those of William Zinsser, author, educator, and modern specialist on writing. Zinsser, like Longinus, traces the cause of a "snoozing" reader back to a negligent communicator. Zinsser is adamant about who is at fault when a reader nods: "It won't do to say that the reader is too dumb or too lazy to keep pace with the train of thought [of the writer]. If the reader is lost, it's usually because the writer hasn't been careful enough" (157).

Zinsser credits readers with modesty: a willingness to presume any communication lapse, difficulty, or obstacle must be some failing on their part. Their initial inclination is to put themselves to the task of filling in for gaps or of going back over the material to seek correction, all of which is performed under the unspoken assumption the communication difficulty in some way rests with them. But this generosity on readers' parts does have its limits and, likewise, their tolerance for correcting what isn't clear or is just plain missing. I presume the same generosity and the same limitation extends over to those who are recipients of oral communication.

The views of Zinsser appear in his contribution to *Language Awareness: Readings for College Writers*. This recommended essay, appropriately entitled "Simplicity" (pages 155–158), appears in the Bedford text published in 2000 and edited by Paul Escholz, Alfred Rosa, and Virginia Clark.

¹⁵ Etymological consultation aids in the special use here of *engrammatic*. The word *engram*, composed of EN- +*letter* (the latter understood as a trace), suggests the value of a letterform and its internalization as involved in memory (traces).

¹⁶ These practices? Everything from the direction of letters within words and words within script to gesture, a topic that has grown huge, especially with the work of David McNeil.

¹⁷ For some interpreters, narratives, texts, or their major parts are deemed symmetric when their beginnings and ends 'connect' through repetition (Rabinovitz 38). This view takes considerable license with what the chemist, physical scientist, and geometer define as cyclical or helical symmetry. But, then again, we are all symmetry seekers—it making sense to and for us.

¹⁸ The macro or mega chiasmus is a resource used by biblical scholars in deciding on the integrity of a given book, letter, or gospel. In their article in “New Testament Studies,” Porter and Reed explore the “possible use [of the macro chiasmus] in determining the literary integrity of Philippians” (213). Other scholars of the good book writing in Welch’s anthology take up the same subject of chiasmus as a means test for the provenance of a particular biblical text. The prevailing view of laborers in the biblical chiasmus field is that the composing of an elaborate, large-scale chiasmus presumes an integrated whole. This whole, in turn, presumes a single author, someone who could contrive and fully work out all the correspondences between the parts or sections of the macro structure. Chiasmus by partnership or by committee is assumed unfeasible.

Of course, the weak link in this view remains the real possibility that modern biblical scholars, especially those predisposed to hunt up chiasma, may force a chiasmic finding and make deductions about integrity and authorship based on their own creativity rather than that of the originator or originators. This is a real problem. In his groundbreaking work on chiasmus in the *New Testament*, Lund shows himself relatively undisturbed by the level of creativity and, at times, ingenuity he displays in “locating” large chiasma.

Interestingly, Lund’s so-called locating frequently requires his own re-locational exertions, about which he advises that other scholars may also have to engage on occasion when they want a pattern to conform to chiasmus. Lund willingly shifts lines to supply “missing” counterparts (171). His rationale for moving lines to acquire (some would use the word *manipulate*) a chiasmic product proceeds by circular reasoning: if he is “reasonably certain that [...] a parallelism might be established” by moving lines here and there (171), then the “results thereby obtained would appear to justify the alteration” (214). The resourceful Lund also owns up to subtractive practices to ensure certain results; that is, techniques that leave *New Testament* lines out because they interfere with or disturb what would otherwise appear to be a *AB[...]:[...]*BA composition (172). Lund’s ‘sins’ of omission and commission are not unique. They raise larger questions. The largest of these is in regard to the human impulse toward having symmetry, even when it requires tinkering here and there so we can feel confident about its presence.

¹⁹ *Temenos* is a key manifest of the formal temperament of classicism. The built structure of classicism inaugurates from di-symmetry. This embodied spatial configuration conducts a strong exertion of a continuous contour. A fully inscribed boundary ‘releases’ an entity from the spatial terrain. By the release, it comes into its own and becomes known. The classical work emerges as though fully cast, like an Aphrodite sprung from the sea. This is how we appear to ourselves: self-realized and a thankful ‘relief’ from space. Warm though we are, the chill and remoteness of the classical work rests substantially in its formal alienation.

Chiasmus regularly inherits classicism’s remoteness. We can account for this aloofness by the fact that chiasmus and classicism have a formal tie to one another and to the ancient world, the greatest manifestation of which occurred in Greece. The Greek requirement was for coherence from correlative members, the parts of which were precisely measured and ordered to equivalency across an axis. The ‘square and cross’ pattern, which can be rectangularized or circularized, assumes an organization essentially chiasmic.

a b c b a		a b a
b c d c b		b c b
c d f d c	Mother Taxis	Mother Taxis Simplified
b c d c b		a b a
a b c b a		

It is through the “combinatorics” or permutations of the chiasmic pattern (called the ‘mother taxis’) that the Greek structure materialized (Tzonis and Lefaivre 23). Through the art of combining from the chiasmic or mother formula, the structure surfaces, credits itself, and strives toward what has been called by Tzonis and Lefaivre a “cult of purity” (1).

²⁰ Again, it is interesting the degree to which *The New Rhetoric* authors take for granted the outcomes of chiasmus. For example, they consider of chiasmic locutions the creation of “pungent argumentation” or “provoking” argumentation (276, 428). They estimate of such locutions a “unitary” result due to “simple description” (the adjective is questionable, in my view) and elsewhere they discuss how the key terms of a different locution are “brought together but made an individuality” (333, 394). It is not that these different interpretations are far apart, but that the authors appear to see no reason for inquiring into the formal mode by which the outcomes come to be figured. In each of these cited cases, the *Rhetoric* authors curiously avoid any chiasmic attribution.

²¹ Inseparability (unity) is a featured accomplishment in the chiasmic repertoire. Olbrechts-Tyteca and Perelman cite a passage from one of their favorite authors that relates the intimate relation of two opposites through the *AB:BA* pattern. The relating comes under the forge of chiasmus and the materials are *life* and *death*, pairs that frequently become products of chiasmic manufacture. The one-sentence chiasm by Jacques-Benigne Bossuet “form[s] an indissoluble unity,” in the analysis of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (191). Their readership as well as Bossuet and his readership are sure to concur. Consistent with their handling of their other chiasmus excerpts, the *Rhetoric* analysts here neglect the role played by the device that controls for the pre-existing “whole” or “indissoluble unity” they identify. Their interest is in Bossuet choosing first a dissociation approach to his subject, in an excerpted passage, and then a second approach that presumes an association. However, Bossuet’s chiasm achieves beyond just association. It rises to a more specific condition, one that Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca in fact acknowledge. The mechanics of this raising remain in the background, simply taken for granted by the passage’s *New Rhetoric* analysts.

Worth repeating is that chiasmus and the multiple articles that come from its pattern go unremarked upon. They are presumed, in themselves, unremarkable. Or, perhaps, our rhetorical scholars wisely determined not to touch what has been deemed “the most complex figure” (Fonagy 16), an equation-like figure only a mathematician could love or a mixed-up personality only a Freudian could analyze, as Ivan Fonagy comes near to implying (*passim*).

²² Bossuet’s beginning and terminating of his sentence with the idea of death contributes significantly to the feeling of fatality.

²³ The exceptional curl, twirl, and ringed nature of the ampersand, written twice over, have iconic value. An ampersand epitomizes the rounded, twisty, bounded chiasm that is the nub of Emerson’s striking utterance.

²⁴ Somewhere in *On the Origin of Species*, I can’t recall where, Charles Darwin remarked that what man can’t divide into steps (increments), he can’t grasp or make sense of. Incrementalism, of course, is at the heart of his theorizing about evolution in the natural world.

²⁵ At this juncture in the discussion, James has in mind the muscular movement of the retina for he continues with “the impulse to move our organs in perception is primarily due to the craving which we feel to get our surface-sensations sharp” (176). However, he thereafter develops the notion of environmental motion, which is a stimulator of the sharp contours he describes.

²⁶ The spatial-temporal fluctuation facilitated by parallelistic structure in language has a correlary in a modern visual that has become quite popular, especially among advertisers. When we slightly rotate in our hand a plastic refraction grid (originating in a pair of, usually, photographic images), one image from the grid arises, seemingly, ‘out’ of the other. The first image ‘comes back’ when we reverse the first hand rotation. The two images move back and forth between themselves and within the plastic format, coming ‘forward’ and disappearing in turn of each other. The ‘magic’ of the format replicates the powers of chiasmus: to swap between sides and, thereby, alternate between what they ‘show’ in a seamless

transitional interrelation within a set space. Even the handedness ‘built-into’ and conductive of the refraction device’s translations correlates to chiasmus.

²⁷ The single message could be chiasmic, or, other times, the same idea on one stele appeared in a chiasmic reverse to another stele, both of the same date (Dover 1).

²⁸ This quotation appears in Alexander Eliot’s *Sight and Insight*, 106.

²⁹ The assumption made is that this is the most perfect of columns, the circular one. The smoothly dressed circular column is the column prototype and, we would suppose, the one chosen by Theseus to match and, thus, further emphasize the rounded form of his inscription.

³⁰ Panofsky explains that in “antique optics and art theory (as well as in philosophy, although here only in the form of analogies) we constantly encounter the observations that straight lines are seen as curved and curved lines as straight; that columns must be subjected to entasis (usually relatively weak, of course, in classical times) in order not to appear bent; that epistyle and stylobate must be built curved in order to avoid the impression of sagging” (*Perspective* 34).

³¹ The quotation, by Tibor Fischer, is from a column in *The Believer* 2 February 2004, 73. Fischer’s comments are on *The Thought Gang* (1994).

³² Early in my inquiries into chiasmus, Mark Turner brought to my attention the algebraic chiasm. I have to thank him for giving me this important heads up. Later, in a draft of Jeanne Fahnestock’s *Rhetorical Figures in Science*, I discovered that she had looked at the commutative principles. She mentions them in this context in her text: “the commutative laws provide a blueprint for a particular class of arguments epitomized by the antimetabole” (134). From these laws, she turns to a discussion of symmetry in the figure.

It would not be surprising that with a system in which an equality sign rules over its operations that chiasmus might crop up in an explanatory role. For example, in a college algebra text I found the following as the sentence introducing the subject of factoring: “Often in mathematics we find it advantageous to express a product of several algebraic factors as a sum; and equally often, under different circumstances, we find it advantageous to do the reverse—express a sum of terms as the product of several factors.” Notice how this chiasmus even includes words that reference the chiasmic operations of equilibration and reversal and the matter of difference. Quotation from Mueller, Francis J. *Intermediate Algebra*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1960. 91.

A final comment. Originally algebra was mostly stated as written rules. This kind of algebra is called rhetorical algebra and is distinguished from symbolic algebra, which, as the name indicates, is symbolic in nature. The algebra we are familiar with uses alphabetical letters as generalized number symbols. See Rosenbach 1.

³³ A 1996 obituary on the death of Irving Caesar (at age 101) informs that the lyricist had over one thousand published songs. Perhaps as famous as “Tea for Two” (from the highly successful show “No, No, Nanette”) is “Swanee” which was set to the music of George Gershwin and memorialized by Al Jolson (Srvero). Caesar worked with a large assortment of other big names on Broadway, including Richard Rogers and Oscar Levant.

Cole Porter composed more than eight hundred songs, a large corpus, but not as vast as Caesar’s. Furthermore, of the songs he wrote, over half were not published prior to Robert Kimball’s *The Complete Lyrics of Cole Porter* (published in 1983). These facts and other information about Porter come from Kimball’s brief, but helpful “Introduction” to *Lyrics*.

³⁴ The merry-go-round quality of the two recurring chiasms conspicuous within Caesar's song bestows a tippy or tipsy property, perhaps keeping with *tea* as a sideways reference to alcohol. It is worth noting that 'tippy,' beyond denoting unsteadiness on one's feet, also refers to concentrated tea (i.e., tea with a lot of tea buds) as well as to being fashionable, smart, chic. Irving Caesar's chic tea (tea for those fashionably in the know) perhaps is an oblique, or maybe not so oblique, reference to alcohol, which of course has the potential to make one tippy. Interpretation of the term *tea* along this line comes from two sources.

First, the *OED* tells that *tea* can be an off-hand reference to alcohol. Second, in addition to Caesar's lyrical composition, a "two for tea" appears in a very well know love song by Cole Porter ("From This Moment On") in which a gay twosome have in mind celebrating (whooping it up) and "ridin' high." Porter's songs and the college shows, musicals, and movies he wrote for typically drip (literally in "Absinthe Drip") with references to alcohol and booze, cocktails and shots; bars; being out on all-about-town sprees, making a night of it, or slumming in joints and dives (these last two in "Let's Make It a Night" from the long-running Broadway musical and later movie *Silk Stockings*); and being generally in various alcoholic states: buzzy, tipsy, high, or thoroughly blitzed. Along the same line is one of Caesar's hit musicals, "A Night Out."

The same gay abandon occurs in Caesar's lyrics (e.g., "I Want to be Happy," although perhaps not to the degree of what we find with Porter. In the latter's lyrics references, some indirect, but others blatant, to alcohol and drugs (cocaine, most famously, in the often censored "I Get a Kick Out of You"), engender his songs with a blasé, even dégage attitude that borders on recklessness. It can be a relatively short step from a couldn't-care-less outlook or attitude (e.g., "To Hell With Everything But Us" and "Why Should I Care?") to a careless one.

Porter, however, is not an exception to the entertainment of the times, which in large part was intended as a countermeasure to the economic despair of the Great Depression. In the musicals of the 1920s and in Broadway shows and Hollywood movies of the 1930s a well-heeled, sophisticatedly mirthful and careless attitude was *de rigueur*. Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire, on the boards and big screen, were paragons. Their sort of extraordinarily moneyed, who-cares, its always "A-Night-Out" life style is what Woody Allen humorously, but poignantly plays against in "The Purple Rose of Cairo, set in the 1930s.

And now a concluding comment that returns us to the opening remark of this endnote. In a featured song in "No, No, Nanette," Caesar iconizes the subject of rings with a rounded double clause construction: chiasmus! The song's recurring line is "Too many rings around Rosie/Never get Rosie a ring." Caesar apparently enjoyed X-ing forms. In fact, he has a song with an X in it, or to be more exact three: "There's More to the Kiss Than X-X-X." Caesar's wink could well be the first publicized instance of *sex* as requiring X alone. Even if it is not, the title plays up how wily and variable a character X is.

The word *cozy* appears in the lead-in to "Tea for Two": "Cozy to hide in, to live side by side in." Things tend toward coziness in Cole Porter as well. As witness the following song, with the title and refrains about "My Cozy Little Corner in the Ritz."

³⁵ In the opening chorus to "No, No, Nanette," Caesar's refrain repeats the line "Just flip-pant young flap-pers are we" (see "No, No, Nanette"). The same song has "Part-ting parties with the smart-ties." These lines show that the qualities, such as internal rhyme and alliteration, which are typical of Porter hold also for Caesar.

³⁶ If there is one song abbreviating the life style messaged in Porter's corpus it would be "Anything Goes." The 1934 song takes its title from the name of Porter's big hit, a Broadway extravaganza that defined musicals for the rest of the decade. The song's lyrics exclaim that the times are unshockable. The world has turned upside down, as lines from the second refrain make clear: "good's bad today,/And black's white today,/And day's night today." Blasé indifference, of category and outlook, predominates and, where there is difference it doesn't merit one's engagement. Offhandedness rules. This laid back coolness really required one to strike an attitude, because it stood in stark relief to the grinding,

unglamorous concerns of the Great Depression. The pain and slog of the Depression was the real backdrop to the light fictional fare dished out by Broadway and Hollywood.

³⁷ John Updike finds that, while generally delighting those in pursuit of it, love in the songs by Porter nonetheless “is wry, jokey, casual, and even weary.” So wrote John Updike in his Foreword to *The Complete Lyrics of Cole Porter*. Ed. Robert Kimball. New York: Knopf, 1983. xi.

The *tea-two* and *you-me* chiasma can take a brisk, clipped, syncopated pace or a very leisurely, drawn-out tempo. I have heard renditions performed *ritenuto* (held back tempo) and *glissando*. But whichever of the two general performance types, a smooth, devil-may-care attitude prevails in the lyric delivery. With either delivery, the chiasma bubble, like champagne, of their formal accord.

³⁸ This line is not Caesar’s. Rather it is original to Porter in the jaunty song and song title “Fated to be Mated.”

³⁹ Bolinger describes correlative conjunctions as being strictly equative in function. This “very small class” of function words, comprised of “just the two words *and* and *or*,” has “just one purpose; to join together elements of equal rank” (*Aspects* 74).

⁴⁰ The maxim of manner, which has to do with how information is conveyed during conversational acts, holds that a speaker should be perspicuous. To that end, the speaker’s job is to provide information “with reasonable dispatch” and in an unambiguous, clear, orderly manner (Grice 47). The critical term here is *orderly*. Unless one is willing to be accused of being indirect and therefore flouting the underlying conversational principle of cooperation, the speaker will want to directly provide the information requested of her. Question askers generally expect the most direct of answers. In this instance, the most cooperative response to “How many for the afternoon’s party?” or to “How many will be having tea?” is “two.” Thus, “two for tea” is better suited as an answer because it responds with what is specifically asked for and expected.

Admittedly, replying “tea for two” isn’t especially indirect, although it could easily register by the listener or be meant by the speaker as an indirect reply having an unlooked-for implication as compared with the more straightforward, the more literally up-front, and thus the more cooperative “two for tea.” Just as the manner of “tea for two” is only slightly indirect with respect to the test questions, the meaning between it and “two for tea” is slight. But however small the meaning difference, it counts.

⁴¹ “How many guests for tea?” or simply “How many for tea?” could just as easily be the hypothetical question(s) in which the asker expects to be told the number of persons. Anything else is superfluous. Superfluity is suspicious in Grice’s cooperative scheme. Extraneous information raises its own questions in the mind of the listener.

⁴² Cienki notes “that maximal informativeness (and related notions such as honesty)” is associated “with being oriented forward as well as straight” (“Straight” 118). The metaphor at work here is TO BE MAXIMALLY INFORMATIVE IS TO BE ORIENTED (STRAIGHT) FORWARD. The positioning or ordering of the most relevant information directly and without the obstacle (the diversion) of unnecessary information accords with Grice’s notion that well-mannered conversation is direct and orderly. Only by giving directly the information sought by the question-asker and avoiding indirection can the question-supplier be judged maximally helpful or cooperative.

Although the difference between the “tea for two” and “two for tea” answers may appear very small, nonetheless the respondent with “two for tea” comes across as more forthright and obliging with the information looked for because of having been more forward (immediate) in providing that information. One can be judged upfront or straightforward if he or she literally forefronts what has been specifically requested or what is specifically needed by his or her interlocutor.

⁴³ Mithun concludes that “In a number of languages, the order of constituents does not reflect their syntactic functions at all, but rather their pragmatic functions: their relative newsworthiness within the discourse at hand. Constituents may be newsworthy because they introduce pertinent, new information, present new topics, or indicate a contrast” (58).

⁴⁴ In his study of grammar and literary style, Hendricks gives a helpful instance of the flexibility of word order in Russian. He writes: “the constituent words of the Russian sentence *Lenin citiruet Marksa* ‘Lenin cites Marx’ can, theoretically, occur in any order: e.g., *Marksa Lenin citiruet*” (44).

In his discussion of word order, Bolinger brings in Latin as a contrast to English: “As any high-school Latin student will tell you, the arrangement of words in Latin is comparatively ‘free.’ As far as the most vital part of the message is concerned, the bare facts of who does what to whom and when, it makes little difference whether one uses *Pater puellam amat*, *Pater amat puellam*, or *Puellam amat pater*. The form of the words—declension of the nouns and conjugation of the verbs—puts them in their proper relationship. No such freedom exists in Modern English” (*Aspects* 117).

⁴⁵ Bolinger reminds that English once had the kind of word order flexibility found in Latin. In Old English, “case endings and verbal inflections [were] much like that of Latin, providing the hearer with the clues he needed to make the right word-to-word connections and leaving the order of words comparatively free” (*Aspects* 117–118). Most of the inflections in the language disappeared between the tenth and fourteenth centuries. This inflectional loss, which led to a “stiffening of word order,” had profound effects on English grammar (119).

See Langacker’s *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, Volume I, for specifics about and distinctions between grammatical entrenchment, conventionalization, and prototypicality.

⁴⁶ In “Viewing in Cognition and Grammar,” Langacker contends that no conceptualization (unless possibly divine) is free of a vantage point that favors one entity for focus over others within a given field. For each conception, one element is always singled out as focal. In other words, “every linguistic expression confers this special status [of focality] on some element within the conception it evokes” (159).

⁴⁷ The “‘inherently’ ” and “‘inescapably’ ” come from Langacker (*Foundations* 12, 1). This notion of an intrinsic connection between meaning and syntax might seem an obvious deduction, if only because Langacker makes his case so cogently, yet concisely by his brilliantly persuasive two-sentence example. However, as Langacker underscores in *Foundations*, his assertion of “the inseparability of syntax and semantics” (1) is not universally embraced. Indeed, far from it. Most theorists, Langacker tells us, take an opposing view. Even Palmer goes only so far, taking the hesitant stand that grammatical categories “often have meaning” (119). His reservations about the semantic nature of syntax rest on “two good arguments for excluding meaning from grammar” (118–119). These arguments—that syntactic meaning frequently is vague and that semantic and grammatical categories “often do not coincide”—favor the position of formal grammarians.

For these formalists, grammar or syntax exists as “an autonomous formal level of representation” (Langacker 2). Syntax, they find, is ‘pure,’ that is, free of semantic and pragmatic consequence or influence. They deduce that grammatical categories have only formal features of language, not meaning (Palmer 119). But for Langacker, grammar “is simply the structuring and symbolization of semantic content” (12). He reasons that syntax is conceptualization (i.e., an orientation) and conceptualization and meaning are one and the same. Thus, grammar is not distinct from, but rather part and parcel with (inseparable from) semantics.

⁴⁸ X and Y are interchangeable in that they both stand for or symbolize unknowns. X has no greater distinction regarding unknownness than does Y. They are equally unknowns. In this sense, we could say that they are equally vacuous, neither being more nor less empty of meaning than the other.

Probably the only difference between X and Y that a reader might bring to Langacker's two locutions is that X, which by convention is recognized as the first unknown, is the most commonly used symbol for algebraic unknowns and for unknowns in general. X is distinguished in this way, but knowledge of this would not interfere with the conception of X and Y as two algebraic symbols equally unknown in the sentences "Y equals X" and "X equals Y."

⁴⁹ Earlier in *Adverbs*, one character writes a note to another, saying " 'I'm going to the Black Elephant Masked Ball. Meet me there' " (96–7). It is more than easy to surmise that the Masked Ball is a particular kind of event at some place called the Black Elephant.

⁵⁰ Here are two more examples from Handler's novel. He " was going to invite Allison [...] but then invited Lila instead, or maybe it was the other way around" (182). The "he" of the chiasm is a young adult with only vague recollections of persons and events from high school days, which are now several years in the past. "She would think less of him once she knew there was less of him" to think of (160). A repetition in which the 'he' is a ghost who hasn't yet disclosed his dead status to the 'she.'

⁵¹ The lowercase initial letter is adopted for all the book's title words.

⁵² This review by William Triplett was published in the *Washington Post* 19 Apr. 1999. C5.

⁵³ Russell, Mary Doria. *A Thread of Grace: A Novel*. New York: Random, 2005.

⁵⁴ We might take folding in the corporeal world. The familiar activity of manually folding— prototypically fabric and paper—, which children master at a very early age, grows into one facet of operative thinking: specifically, our ability to extrapolate and imagine manipulations of an object that are, in fact, physically performable. From these mental performances, we metaphorically map onto static entities, which, in fact, are incapable of folding or bending distortions. Chiasmus can subject to folding objects and events that in the veridical world are incapable of folds. The consequences of material folding map to metaphoric folding underwritten by the formal mechanics of chiasmus.

⁵⁵ Hunter, Stephen. "What's a Father-Mother to Do?" *Washington Post* 20 Aug. 99: C5.

⁵⁶ Jaynes reminds that *cursive* and *hieratic* each mean "writing of the gods" (176).

⁵⁷ The syllabically identical surnames and the mutual middle syllable, the numbingly dull and lackluster *en*, reinforce this reading of royal indifference. Their sameness lies in a vapid factor. Perhaps Shakespeare may have also meant *en* as a pun on *in*, which lies *in* the middle between the more 'telling' surrounding syllables. Their likeness is trapped.

⁵⁸ Of equal import, *gentle* carries little sway in the scheming, power- and vengeance-seeking arenas of Shakespearian tragedy. Gentleness, there, never holds its own when up against muscle, cunning and able maneuvering, ruthlessness, perseverance, unwavering courage, and a host of other qualities with utility and aggregative value for Shakespeare's villainous sovereigns.

⁵⁹ Shakespeare employs chiasmus to indicate a pledge or seal between persons. In this play, Horatio and Marcellus make an honor-bound pledge to Hamlet in two back-to-back declarations: " 'In faith, my lord, not I.' 'Nor I, my lord, my faith.' " The promise is chiasmically consolidated between the two protagonists (I.v.153–154).

⁶⁰ As conspirators must, Shakespeare's royals are tight-lipped and collude at figuring. Not a bit of light lies between the chiasmic members, which so trippingly fall from the royal tongues. Perhaps the same is true of the heads of the speakers. And, too, the hollow ring of their chiasm increases its

contrivance quotient. Early in the play, Shakespeare leaves open the possibility of the Queen as suspect. We get a whiff of Gertrude's possible contrivance with the chiasm spoken to the courtiers. The Claudius–Gertrude chiasm consorts a tight match-up that wrings complications and deep interfolds.

⁶¹ The young woman who relates her experience is Karen Davis. See the article Jones, Tamara. *Washington Post* 14 Nov. 1999. F1.

⁶² In a thriving blog project called “Postsecret,” begun in 2004 and expanded to art shows and a book, individuals anonymously post messages about themselves. Many of the entries (none are edited) include hand drawings, altered photographs, or other pictorial images. In one, an individual hand printed in black letters, “I feel ugly because I’m half-black, half-white.” Below his or her message, the writer drew a black and white picture of three circle faces in a row. The two exterior faces wore smiles. They were essentially polar opposites in black and white tones. The unsmiling center face was the representation of the writer. It was a chiasmic rendering, with the face split, in zigzag fashion, down the vertical center (the jaggedness itself a commentary). The right side of the face had a black eye and black turn-downed mouth on the face’s white ground; the left side, a white eye and white turn-downed mouth on a black facial ground. The illustrator’s message evidences the permeation of chiasmus in the human mind. The chiasmic depiction made sense to the unhappy composer and he or she presumed it would be equally intelligible to those visiting the blog. Another fascinating aspect to this visual chiasm is that there are two essential readings to blended facial features. We can consider them discordant or accordant or something in-between. There is no single interpretation to the amalgam. The ‘I’m-ugly-because’ message with accompanying drawing appeared in Schafer, Karen. “True confessions: Nobody knows the secrets I’ve told.” *Gaithersburg Gazette. Entertainment*. 29 Dec. 2005. A-53.

⁶³ Weiss, Rich. “The Power to Divide.” *National Geographic*. July 2005. 3–27.

⁶⁴ From the poem “Walking with Russell” by the Scottish poet Don Paterson, written to his infant son: “Whatever the/difference is, it all began/the day we woke up/face to face like lovers/and his four-day-old smile/dawned on him again [...]” Quotation appeared in Thompson, Bob. “Crossing the Pond with Poetry.” *Washington Post* 11 May 2007. C1, C3.

⁶⁵ It is not surprising that relative to sin is the implication of sexual and physical entanglements that befall as the result of a mental choice.

⁶⁶ Heard on Natl. Public Radio. 30 Aug. 2006.

⁶⁷ *The Inferno* offers as palmary opus for how comedy has its roots in, what Wylie Sypher identifies as, “primitive violence.” Sypher philosophizes over how this aboriginal violence fuels the twin grimaces of comedy, mirth and suffering. I gather from him that comedy and evil are related in that with mirth, man inadvertently commits mistakes and with suffering, man advertently clutches at the mistaken (evil) and makes it his own by fingering it to its end. Chiasmus is host to iniquity and to comedy, and, in *The Inferno*, both at once.

⁶⁸ The last two quotations appear in Thrall and Hibbard, 1960 ed., pages 248 and 249.

⁶⁹ And, by application of the article in which Lakoff’s observations occur, Dante’s thieving sinners could honestly say, “I’m not myself today.”

⁷⁰ This observation was made by Paul H. Edelman, professor of mathematics at the University of Minnesota. He was responding to a Dr. Gridlock commuters’ column in the *Washington Post* about a personalized license plate “1 DIV 0.” Professor Edelman commented on whether the licence plat message qualifies a mathematically proper designation for infinity.

⁷¹ See Jerome A. Miller's *In the Throe of Wonder*. Chiasma flood this text.

⁷² Jerome Miller's *In the Throe of Wonder* is again our source. The reader might consider the quantity of negatives that appear on a single page of his text. Page 60 has at least eleven negatives (ten of the eleven are *not*; the eleventh is phrasal: "It is futile for us [...].") Miller employs the negatives in order to seize upon a definition for the phenomenon under his study.

⁷³ "Warning to Children" is reprinted in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. Ed. Arthur M. Eastman. New York: Norton, 1970. 1050.

⁷⁴ Ernst Barlach (1870–1938) was a sculpture, graphic artist, and writer. This quotation appeared in an exhibition of his work at the New Orleans Museum of Art in 2000. Personal observation.

⁷⁵ The mother is Portia Iverson. She and her husband are the founders of CANF, the Cure Autism Now Foundation. The radio interview was on the Jim Bohannon Show, heard 19 Feb. 2007. Mrs. Iverson is well versed on the subject of autism, on both the personal and medical fronts. She took her son Tito to the United States for examination by autism experts.

⁷⁶ According to the authors of *Vicious Circles and Infinity* the "ouroborus, the snake with his tail in his mouth, is the prototype of the vicious circle" (Hughes and Brecht).

⁷⁷ *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* is one, for instance.

⁷⁸ See, for example, *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*.

⁷⁹ Romano's Sphinx holds in her two hands the chains that hold mankind down in the exorability of necessity and difficulty (Battistina 12).

⁸⁰ This quotation is from Nicholas Ruwet's *Syntax and Human Experience*.

⁸¹ All the quotations appeared in a newspaper article by Paul Henrickson, "Bittersweet Cherry Blossom." *Washington Post* 1 Apr. 1999. C1, C3.

⁸² A question mark automatically causes us to raise our voices, out loud or in our heads, to a higher note. It, thus, brings a degree of lilt to any locution. Liltiness, of its own, carries a psychological weight that will contribute to the semantics of any particular locution. This might be a factor in our reception of Dinesen's chiasm, although I believe it is negligible. For me, her locution without a question mark is as affecting as with it.

CHAPTER FOUR

BETWEENITY

ANTICIPATION'S ARC

He receives hope in future benefits who
recognizes a benefit that has already taken place.
—Flavius Magnus Aurelius,
Cassiodorus, *Institutiones*

What Kenneth Burke declares of the universal symbol, that it is a “generative force” in “continual reinstatement of itself” (*Counter-Statement* 61, 60), Merleau-Ponty declares of the elementary form, that it is always itself an autfiguration. Whatever is the “original proposition” or “original ratio” the symbol owns and demonstrates, the proposition or ratio never expires or departs (Burke 60). Obviously, expiration or departure of the symbol or the form’s necessary and sufficient logic would be the death of it. Such a death would leave the symbol-making and symbol-using animal to an unimaginable expressive loss.

In order to generate beyond itself, which is its meaningful gift to us, the symbol or form must hold and be identified with a consistent, legible logic. Through its self-agreeing, “all-sufficient” logic that keeps on keeping, the symbol, which later in *Counter-Statement* Burke identifies with form, presents “as a formula for our experiences” (62, 61). In compiling summary comments on symbol in his book *Counter-Statement* (1931), Burke tosses out a delicious comment about the symbol’s dual persona. It “charms us” as a codifier and conductor of life’s “complexities,” yet, at the same time, “the symbol is also like a ‘message,’ in that once we know it we feel no call to return to it, except in our memories, [...]” (61). After that loaded word *memories*, Burke draws a qualification far from negligible. He writes, in full, “we feel no

call to return to it [the symbol], except in our memories, unless some new element of appeal is to be found there” (emphasis added). Although the message remains true to, because generated by, its symbol, the “new element” that can emerge is not of content, but rather of style. The particular message’s ramifying assumes a style, as is necessary, if it is to materialize. As soon as Burke names style, he transitions to the eternally intricate and difficult interrelation between the style of a message and the means, whether we identify it a form or symbol, that “channels” the message (60):

[A] person who does not avidly need the symbol can be led to it through the excellence of its presentation. And we should further realize that the person who does avidly need the symbol loses this need the more thoroughly the symbol is put before him. I may be startled at finding myself Faust or Hamlet, and even be profoundly influenced by this formulation, since something has been told me that I did not know before. But I cannot repeat this new and sudden illumination. Just as every religious experience becomes ritualized (artistic values taking the place of revelation) so when I return to the symbol, no matter how all-sufficient it was at the first, the test of repetition brings up a new factor, which is style” (62, emphasis original)

These observations wrapping up the penultimate paragraph of the chapter “The Poetic Process” indicate how a symbol or form is taken as understood in itself, yet how it becomes surprising, new, and enlightening when it is clothed or styled secondarily. As Burke enunciates, the consistency of the symbol or form ensures expectation through a formula that delivers routinely, very much in the way the religious ritual repeats and represents without variation. Relative to Burke, Erving Goffman speaks of the fatefulness of the “religious experience” or ceremonial “strip.” The symbol or form, in the manner of a ritual, faithfully ordains, conducts, and fates expectations. Symbols and forms are dutiful; they cannot figure for us otherwise.

The work of Goffman on ritualization as a correlate to symbolization and figuration acts a beneficial bridge to the issue of form, and, through extrapolation, a bridge to chiasticity. Goffman, super analyst of social, language, and other frames organizing experience, observes of rituals and ceremonies that their pre-set arrangements (framed strips) and their entrenched scripting (formalizing) ensure “routine and unproblematic” execution. The ritual or ceremony’s “intent is a kind of symbolization, a special kind of rounded, well-formulated representation”

(Goffman 568). A ceremony is an internally systematized (patterned), self-pledging, and autonomous domain that ratifies itself (126) and ensures that all contained within its boundaries is precisely “plotted in advance” (58). A ceremony progresses automatically, because it is, as Burke says of the symbol, standardized within itself plus sufficient onto itself. The predictability of the “rounded, well-formulated representation” devolves from—we return now to Burke—a preserving, meaningful protocol that honors expectation and, therefore, functions in the manner of the symbol. As we progress through this opening section of Chapter Four, we will want before us the interrogations and broader insights of Kenneth Burke and Erving Goffman because these have direct and indirect application to the age-old cognitive stratagem under examination here.

For Burke, form is rhetorical because it is an appeal to and conductor of human feeling. In linking emotion (feeling), rhetoric, and form, Burke works in the humanistic and rhetorical tradition of Plato, of Aristotle, and of others, such as Longinus. However, in tying psychology and form such that “one is to be defined in terms of the other” as he does in *Counter-Statement* (30–31), Burke draws the two spheres into even tighter relation than does the classical tradition. In addition to expanding the emotions Aristotle associates with form, Burke also, and with considerable interest for this project, insists that we recognize that psychology is the numerator to the body’s common denominator.

In *Counter-Statement*—which is not only Burke’s earliest critical work, but is the philosophical linchpin and methodological foundation to the entire project of Burke—, its author announces a small group of principles making up a “psychology of form.” Burke specifies in “Psychology and Form,” “The Poetic Process,” and “Lexicon Rhetoricæ” that the principles he nominates in the last of these chapters are applicable to literature, an art devoted to eliciting human emotion and a fictional, yet truth-telling wonderland rich in formal patterns for the express purpose of this elicitation. The psychology–form principles are emotion-inducing (or feeling-inducing) designs. I advocate, as I believe Burke strongly intended, an adoption of his psychology scheme beyond literature to a wider rhetorical effectuation.

Burke identifies the following as the natal forms: (1) syllogistic progression, (2) qualitative progression, (3) repetition, (4) conventional, and (5) minor or incidental. A form listed in Burke's typology possesses two essential components, which are necessary and sufficient: Firstly, a form must raise a desire, an expectation, in an audience (whether composed of one person or many) and, secondarily, it must satisfy the craving raised. We can summarize the formal agenda most broadly as that which conducts an antecedent–consequent (or antecedent–succedent) program. The five forms share this two-constituent, two-stage purpose; however, the ploys the individual form type uses to carry out the program differ.

With respect to his psychology of form, Burke relates, “how the arrows of our desires are turned in a certain direction” (*Counter-Statement* 124). Directedness is inherent in desire, for as Aristotle writes, desire is what has not yet been obtained. A form crafts desire's arrow and controls for its archery (flight) seeking an awaited end. Desire, like a bent-back, armed bow, is foresighted, a looking and longing forward. According to Burke, form's arrow courses expectedly, in that it arrives at a destination wanted and essentially fulfilled. A form ‘delivers’ or ‘brings home,’ to use phrases different from, but in the tenor of Burke, what it earlier promised, that is, what it had intimated it is likely to give back. The railroad track and the suicide by an incoming train operate as the antecedent condition in *Anna Karenina* that sets up for the novel's ending. With the bowing and flying arrow of desire propelled from one situation to an ultimate situation (a locus of satisfaction) and with ideas of division (dual portions), Burke beckons space and time into his psychology of form.

Each of the five form types serves up a psychological arc or orienting curve. Robert Pinsky's poetic line conveying how an arc marks “the shape of birth and craving” aids in understanding Burke's idea of the generation of want (birthing and yearning) that form lets fly and then pleasingly obliges by meeting the want (*Figured* 50). This meeting up or reverse-targeting is a key notion tacit within the psychology of form. Also left unstated in the psychology is that desire is a dissatisfaction that craves its own consumption (elimination). I would thus append that desire has an angulating or ouroboric aspect, which is in keeping with notions of curving. An arc holds desire, which is the want, in both senses of the term, of

fulfillment. Desire is haunted by a place of being looked toward and beyond from an existing place of being. But then too, when arrived at, the ‘beyond’ place looks rearward to the place of its origination and compulsion. These ‘places’ are psychological states the audience experiences (feels). As with chiasmus, placeness and the transition between places is a critical facet of form, although this is not, *per se*, a concern of Burke’s. He obliquely references the compulsion that puts a desirer in the throes of duality. This double condition is the very formal invitation chiasmus waits to receive, the very occasion it is has the fashion (form) sense to attend upon. In its mastery of its dual prongs, the desiring to be gratified and the gratifying of the desire, form wardrobes a self-sufficient action, which is a feat top-listed on the chiasmus resume. Likely you have begun to see form’s forward–backward mechanics and, more generally, its expressivity, inner logic, intelligibility, and self-sufficiency as having bearing on chiasmus. If you recall, these were the form–symbol traits discussed earlier in the treatise with respect to Langer, Cassirer, Merleau-Ponty, as well as Burke. This seeing is a first start that will be further encouraged over the next many pages.

Part of the puissance of chiasmus is that it exhibits both types of progressive forms, the syllogistic and the qualitative. Of the syllogistic variety, “everything falls together,” much like a mathematical equation that is rightly solved or plotted for (*Counter-Statement* 124). Of the syllogistic progression, the recipient naturally and unhesitatingly “feels the rightness of the conclusion” (124). The correctness of the syllogistic arrow is that once released, it follows on the direction the promise had set forth. From the “Lexicon,” we learn that “Syllogistic progression is the form of a perfectly conducted argument, advancing step by step” (emphasis original). This progressiveness of step leading to step cites the formal and felt directedness notable in Paul’s New Testament macro chiasm, but also inherent in every chiasm, macro and micro. The direction is a track, also a term associated with chiasmus and familiar from Chapter Three. By taking this formal direction or track, the arrow unerringly hits the formal target, the anticipated desire. The primary, most obvious, and certainly the most convenient of syllogistic ploys to deliver the bull’s eye eyed by desire is reversal. And we know from Aristotle, humans are acutely responsive to an entity that is literally re(verse)-configured.

Reversion, which “is obviously one of the keenest manifestations of syllogistic progression” (*Counter-Statement* 124), is first and foremost an embodied spatial experience. Cirlot contends “There is a primordial desire in Man to experience ‘inversion,’ that is, to find the technique whereby everything of a kind can be transmuted into its opposite” (64). Appropriately, Cirlot examines the inversion of opposites with respect to the 3-D crossroads, universally understood to be rife with positive and negative possibilities. The crossroads, as epitome of opposites brought face to face, examples and symbolizes where the individual’s life course brings her to opportunity or to crisis or, even more fraught, to some coincidence of the two.

Not only is it primordial, reversion is practical. How many times do we tell ourselves or advise others to ‘try it the other way around.’ Reverse conduction can prove solving, true, possible, or, at minimum, an easy-to-come by stratagem, because being backhanded, it is our ever ready-to-hand option. Walking, skating, or bicycling in reverse, reading words across a table or in a mirror, counting backwards, starting a book at the end and reading backwards, one page into the next—these we have probably all done at one time ‘just for the sheer fun of it.’ A favorite parlor trick is playing a keyboard ‘upside down.’ Inverting can be its own reward, as punsters, comedians, and wits and their audiences avow. Reversion need not have rhyme or reason, although it often has both and to a stringent degree. Reversion is an exceedingly complicated concept. It works two sides of many a conceptual street: malign or benign. It can provoke rivalry or collaboration, validation or invalidation, and the construction or deconstruction of order and stability. Reversion is also like to nullify or neutralize what it changes ’round. Making that point is the ‘backwards-going’ computer icon (characteristically, a ‘plump,’ curved or roundy arrow) to symbolize ‘undoing.’ The idea of reversal as cause of erasure we quite naturally intuit. Despite reversal’s plasticity and complexity, we seldom inquire into which side of the street it walks along on a given outing, because our intuition of reversion affords us a confident automaticity.

Symmetry is the unwritten operating assumption in Burke’s syllogistic reversion. We can expand his gloss of reversion by way of resolution in music, where we would not be far afield

of Burke's psychology of form as a stirring of desire followed by its satisfaction. An inborn proficiency of being *Homo musicus* is our seldom-erring talent for making out the coming on of a composition's resolve. This talent depends on the recognition of likeness and a progression that folds back upon (superposes on) itself; in other words, a detection, mainly subliminal, of symmetry taking its rewarding shape and distinctive outline 'before' us. The symmetrical composition, musical or other, unfolds and fulfills of its own elements in a certain orderly, rhythmic relation to themselves. To explicate reflexive responses generally, Merleau-Ponty relates how the "first notes of a melody require a certain kind of resolution," which may not be consciously known to the listener, but are nevertheless marked, felt, and retained by her over the course of the composition (*Perception* 78). The melody's requirement (desire) is for a kind of answering back, which is the point Burke has in mind with regard to the syllogistic form that, as he says, displays a "perfectly conducted argument" (*Counter-Statement* 124). In the observation of Merleau-Ponty, both the question (the craving required) and its answer (the craving's re-solution) count as having "equal value" (*Perception*). This equivalency underlines the bi-isomerism that generally rules the syllogistic form, but also rules a Burke form in general, that is, as that which exhibits two equally mattering, interdependent shares: desire raised and desire met. The melodic question (*A*) evokes its melodic answer (*B*) and the answer re-calls the question. An *A* and a *B*, each standing up and leaning toward or 'calling' back the other in a mode analogous to the diagonals of the crisscross, cross-comment or echo forward and back. With these remarks, we hit upon the closed loop of an *A to B:B to A* pattern.

Relative to Burke's psychology of form, Merleau-Ponty views these question-answer components as complimentary and of a fundamental psychology; as possessing a "distance" (a separation); and as invested with a greater meaning, value, or importance together than if "taken singly" (*Perception* 78–79). Whether patterning a composition that is musical or some other, the tremendous forcefulness and restriction of any self-cordoning symmetry ensures a "resolve against the odds" (McEwan, *Amsterdam* 91), meaning, a completion guided by reversion.

This resolution or completion onto self is a defining of the chiasmic composition. A turn that returns the end to its start formulates an encscrolling array or enfolding loop. Merleau-Ponty's other observations are just as applicable to the *AB:BA* pattern. A form of two matching halves that mimic one another as mirrored (reversed) partners ambijacent by virtue of their own framing and involution set out a form that plays to and, therein, compensates, con-forms, and warrants itself. In syllogistic fashion, it comes forth of and then re-solves itself through inversion, the second member arising or springing out of the formal direction of the first member and the premise/promise in-paneled therein. The two members, in the manner of Burke's syllogistic progression, co-reference forward and back and, hence, consociate and justify a self-satisfying, self-validating separate whole. The double coordination and linkage forward and backward between the members arrives by their own internal arrangement and appears unforced. That which is unforced strikes receivers as natural and self-entitled, as authentic, valid, and right. The linked members consolidate, what Derrida calls, "the continuous tissue of a syllogism" (*Names* 42). The sense of a whole, with its own logical continuity, is demanded of the syllogistic progression. The same holds for chiasmus, with its compelling in-built logic. Such inward building founds the intact, self-sufficient whole, about which the discussion of the Galatians dealt in some detail.

Burke imparts that the second progressive form is more subtle in nature and effect than the syllogistic, because its factor of anticipation is not as plain as with the syllogistic. Chiasmus performs the qualitative progressive form as easily as the syllogistic, involving as it does one quality that puts us in a certain state of mind that then prepares the way for a quality that follows semantically on the initial one and puts us in a coordinated, paired (symmetrical) state of mind. Burke first adduces the qualitative form with a T. S. Eliot excerpt that displays repetition and parallelism within a very tight lexical compass. He next adduces the form through a Malcolm Cowley excerpt that places a heavy demand on repetition. Like the Eliot, the Cowley sample occurs within a concise span (eight words), but this time with antithesis, which is a special sub-category of reversion. The characteristics of the Eliot and Cowley samples strongly back the extrapolation on my part that chiasmus exemplifies the features of

the qualitative form.

Burke explains of this form type that, although it evokes the sort of rightness the syllogistic form arranges for, the evocation occurs directly upon the event's ending. Audiences enjoy the qualitative form's appositeness, but retrospectively, directly upon its ending. The foregone aspect to the qualitative form emerges after the fact, but is no less inexorable for its slight belatedness. In fact, because one didn't completely see the conclusion coming as with the syllogistic, its fatedness perhaps may hit all the harder. Howsoever that be, in both the case of the syllogistic and in the case of the qualitative, the form effectively controls its own fate. It strikes us as fated to be, just by having been patterned to become as it has. The intrinsicity of the syllogistic and qualitative forms is unavoidable and compelling, on several levels. The first form type has a logic that goes without saying; the second type, has a logic that goes without saying, directly after it is said (finished). Even though it comes chiefly at one fell swoop, "handed to us at a stroke," as Henry James famously liked to say, the qualitative form tallies up every bit as much as does the syllogistic: that is, by and of its own inward accord.

This tends to be the effect of the very best maxims, where sound, sense, rhythm, and diction are spun and smoothed to such perfection that in retrospect anything else seems unimaginable. With all concisely ordered and integrated ("The mark of the maxim is form"), the maxim's bright afterthought rings solid and true in the head of the receiver (W. C. Moore qtd. in Epstein 221). The well-honed maxim should deliver a "ping" of recognition upon its close, where everything comes to rightful fruition and a pleasurable lucidity of form and sense (Epstein 206). These qualities that define the maxim—a literary genre indebted to parallelism and antithesis and, hence, known to keep formal company with that smooth operator chiasmus—demonstrate Burke's qualitative form. The replication and inner harmony entailed in a symmetrical figure are nursemaids to the qualitative form's (and very often the maxim's) fall into logic's stringent line. Symmetry is steeped in the inalterable and the foregone, factors implicit in the Burkean psychology of form, and, we need hardly remind, psychology and symmetry, especially bi-lateral symmetry, are inseparables. It would appear that Kenneth Burke has something like an echoic quality in mind with his qualitative form. Little surprise that the

psychological facets of this form type are not merely appreciable in the chiasmic form; they are distinguishing of it.

The third of Burke's forms has to do with repetition. Burke does not reduce this type to *repetitio*, although the figure certainly would qualify as one instance of repetitive form. Burke's stance is more inclusive and, in compliance with his at-large approach, is guided by psychological considerations. "Repetitive form is the consistent maintaining of a principle under new guises. It is a restatement of the same thing in different ways" (125). This sentence could be a definition for symmetry, the efficient cause of the *AB·BA* appliance, were we to replace "different ways" with a narrower, more exacting 'reverse way.'

Repetition accentuates and orients. Repetition suggests ideas about what is meant in a composition that is underway to the degree a principle begins to emerge. On the emergence of this incipient principle, a receiver desires authentication and looks to find that fulfillment: "he then requires that this principle be observed in the giving of further details." The repetition causes the receiver to expect the principle the repeated ideas suggest. Repetition builds on itself in a circle-like or loop-back fashion. Repetition, on its own, presumes return. For this reason alone, we recognize a connection between chiasmus and the repetitive form.

With his focus on the notion of fulfillment of desire, Burke mostly accents the "regiving" properties of repetition: how it gives, keeps going, and confirms a sameness. From sameness, repetition principles a line of consistent thinking. In this respect Burke honors in repetition what Thomas Pavel identifies, but not in the least pejoratively, as the old-fashioned "feeling of participation" receivers get from a discourse vested in repetition. Such discourse promotes the familiar, stable, and vivid. Pavel commends repetition as a form that reassures and sustains beliefs, an "archaic" mechanism that works against modernity's mania for defamiliarization (78). However, repetition is just as likely to reduce familiarity as reinforce it. Robert Graves's "Warning to Children" is an instance of just such. Repetition in the chilly poetic chambers of Mark Strand—"It is yesterday. It is still yesterday."—visits on readers disquieting ambivalence, anxiety-producing contradiction.¹ Repeating the same, as Graves and Strand evince, needn't soothe or reassure. In fact, repetition can be the formal contrivance for loss, failed progress,

stasis, mysterious doubleness, undoing or unraveling, and the inaccessible or vacant (see Woodland). Modern visual and literary arts have recruited repetition to cut the rug out from under and disturb the seemingly stable, even staid. But, repetition's has always been a double game, ratcheting likeness or ratcheting difference or, simultaneously, heightening both likeness and difference. Once again, a basic form closely aligns with the chiasmus protocol.

The conventional differs from the repetitive, minor, and two progressive forms in that its appeal has to do with arrangements audiences come to expect usually as part of a larger form. A clearly indicated introduction at the start of a work and a clearly indicated close at the end have become more than time-honored in the minds of readers, they have become great expectations an author is advised to serve. Burke seems to suggest that it isn't just the appearance of the introduction and ending that urge a form, but that each creates a rather self-assured, self-pointing atmosphere, as though saying 'Look at me, I'm an opening.' Of course, a pointed atmosphere asks to be attended and singled out. In this respect, Burke explains that the conventional is a form that "appeals as form" (126). Typically the conventional form is not relegated to a single greater venue. The introduction-closing combination appears in a variety of literary genres: nursery rhymes, odes, short stories, novels, plays, and epics. Then, too, outside *belles lettres* it is a feature of a wide assortment of social life. A simple telephone call or meeting between friends requires certain opening and closing gestures.

Burke hasn't room in *Counter-Statement*, as he does in subsequent studies, to expand on how the closing of a literary work almost invariably makes a circling-back citation to the introduction, even if that citation is exceedingly faint. Due to the inherent satisfaction and pleasure it induces, an ending that is back-to-the-beginning is what readers subliminally look to find. It is a desire that waits to be form-ed. Burke opines "Any form can become conventional, and be sought for itself" (126). Relative to chiasmus, the conventional form can be highly compact (though it need not be) and it can and often does involve just two inter-related major components. An example from a religious context, the traditional device of a processional united to its recessional (126), touches on the autonomy of the form. A tremendous amount of expectation builds into conventional forms that, while organizing a wider context, order up

desire and vend psychological gratification. The certainty they produce can be traced to the fact that each conventional formula “has about it something categorically terminal” (128). One becomes certain about and convinced over what is/was prefigured to happen.

The last of the forms is the minor or incidental type. The ‘minor’ and ‘incidental’ terminology carries no negative connotation. Rather, these forms “bristle,” to quote Burke, and stand on their own firm feet. They are self-possessed, because formally complete in themselves. Burke lists “metaphor, paradox, disclosure, reversal, contraction, expansion, bathos, apostrophe, series, chiasmus” as examples (127). Minor forms can conduct as progressive or repetitive within a larger context, but they may exert as events apart in the audience’s recollection of the larger composition. A minor form possesses “an independent curve of plot enclosed by its own beginning and end.” As “a tiny plot in itself,” the minor form contributes to the larger event by mounting its own stand-alone event (130).

Considering Burke’s emphasis on a self-sufficient internal plotting, chiasmus is a natural candidate for the minor form. The reader of “Lexicon” with an interest in chiasmus cannot help but muse over the fact that the other incidental forms listed by Burke fall under the chiasmic umbrella: disclosure, (and, therefore, by implication) closure, contraction, series, and reversal. In his brief on form, this is the second time Burke singles out reversal. The extra mention of and emphasis on reversal indicate how invaluable is this formal mode to human representation. As to chiasmus and metaphor, I quote Burke to Burke. In *A Grammar of Motives*, published fourteen years after *Counter-Statement*, Burke declares, “Metaphor is a device for seeing something in terms of something else” (503, emphasis original). Burke identifies metaphor as a trope that deals in dialectical or two-way transformations (see footnote 1, 503). If these identifications don’t raise the metaphor–chiasmus association for his reader, Burke’s follow-up comment in *Grammar* surely does. Metaphor, he declares, “brings out the thisness of a that, or the thatness of a this.” Metaphor and chiasmus have in common that they operate between two for the purpose of comparison and difference. Each device arranges for the perception of an angle of incidence between two items related one to another.

In his presentation of the psychology of form, Burke explains how the separate form

types frequently shade into one another. A single line or single arrangement may enact all five forms. I believe that chiasmus is rather rare in that it consistently pulls all five formal cords. This multiple ‘pulling’ guarantees the rhetorical force consistently perceived and felt (with nods, again, to Merleau-Ponty and Langer) with this organizing stratagem.

Anticipation is integral to form. According to Burke, anticipation and its consequent fulfillment are the coordinates by which something qualifies as form. Without these two interdependent factors, form does not come into being. By applying Burke’s gauge of desire, chiasmus evidences as a consummate form by virtue that it discharges anticipation to an inordinate degree and then procures inordinate fulfillment. It has the perfection, a key term in *Counter-Statement*, of “form and feeling.”

Burke identifies rhythm as a vital factor within all the forms. Rhythm reveals itself in that it is designing of patterns and, as such, has psychological designs on an audience. Erected on a foundation of repetition, rhythm sets up an appeal that an audience would have conducted through to a completed arrangement. Rhythm derives from “coordinates of direction.” Burke assesses the involvement of body and of psychology with respect to these orienting “coordinates” (130). The “regularity of the design establishes conditions of response in the body, and the continuance of the design becomes an ‘obedience’ to these same conditions.” Enjoyment comes in our obeying the direction and the variants the direction allows for by digressions from it. The rhythmic coordination and exceptions from its recurrence, which Burke underlines in discussing audience reception, set up what I would have us distinguish as a binary state. Reversal, as in the chiasmic pattern, can indulge a keeping to and a variation from rhythm. This dual role contributes to explaining the essential role of reversion in human reasoning and argumentation.

Chiasmus enjoys rhythmic equivalence and divergence across its span. The blueprint *AB:BA* motivates a certain “principle of logic” (131), what might be deemed a patterned or rhythmic logic. Balance and parallelism (equivalence or convergence) and reversal and antithesis (divergence) are critical operators in the logic and in the psychology of form and its rhythmic structuring.

Our response to balance within a rhythmic pattern Burke further identifies relative to somatic experience. In the formal method of the architect for whom spatial intervals and voids ‘count’ in the built composition and matter as to its prosody to the same degree as the material elements (Portoghesi 162), Burke sensitively parses and then credits the meanings that breaks (i.e., *cæsura*) in prose control for. These suspensions (a word that has deep roots in space and concepts about physical balance) provide for symmetry and asymmetry (i.e., dissimilar balance) by rhythmically segregating logically joined sub-sections. It is desirable to quote an extended portion from the “Lexicon Rhetoricæ” to obtain something of the full gist of the body–balance connection to the demarcation of prose spaces.

We do not imply that one consciously notes [...] dissimilar balances, any more than one consciously notes the complexity of muscular tensions involved in walking—but there is an undeniable complexity of muscular tensions involved in walking, so there is a multitude of dissimilar balances involved in expert prose. And we are trying to indicate that the rhythmic variations of prose are not haphazard, that their ‘planfulness’ (conscious or unconscious) arises from the fact that the differentiations are based upon logical groupings. That is, by logically relating one part of a sentence to another part of the sentence, the prose writer is led to a formal differentiation of the two related parts (or sometimes, which is *au fond* the same thing, he is led to a pronounced parallelism in the treatment of the related parts). The logical grouping of one part with another serves as the guide to the formal treatment of both (as ‘planful’ differentiation can arise only out of a sense of correspondence). (133)

With prose and poetry, “groupings” have an iconic job. They exist to accommodate themes and counter-themes on a logical basis, that is, to parcel and guide relations. What is unspecified, yet implicitly *au fond* in Burke’s discussion, are iconicity and the critical role of spatial portioning in furthering the activities of iconicity. The discussion of “logical groupings” of “a pronounced parallelism” and “correspondence” does pick out balance. However, here also we need to elaborate. The experience of asymmetry precurs in the body and it depends on our sensing and memories of symmetrical balance in space. Asymmetry derives from symmetry’s original sense making, its logic, as a starting point, if only in the ideal. Burke’s second parenthetical phrase about the “‘planful’ differentiation” and its footing in “correspondence” gestures to the symmetry-to-asymmetry derivation.

In Burke’s commentary about suspension that leads directly to the lengthy excerpt

reproduced above is buried the idea that just as a logical grouping (a differentiation) in prose depends on a cæsura, the cæsura depends on the grouping. To put this in terms more architecturally relatable to a sentence or other prose unit with sub-units markedly parallel, at the same time as alluding to the foregoing discussion of Paul's epistolary chiasmus, the laterals stand up the center (cæsura) as the center stands up the laterals. In the case of chiasmus, the center is both a prose (or poetic) cæsura (a grammatical conjunction, e.g., or a marked or unmarked pause) and an axis of spatial symmetry.

Any formal whole will divide according to one of two essential organizations; either a di-partition or a tri-partition of beginning, middle, and end (Lausberg in Wuellner 78). A tri-grouping is predisposed toward shaping the organic and developmental. A binate structure, although it can be organic and developmental in form, in its argumentation it mostly elects different shapings. Rather than growth or increase, a binary construction tends toward the constrained and reductive. Wuellner, together with Lausberg, contends that a bi-grouping has a rhetorical gift for figuring contrast or balance. It is structurally suited for joining thesis and antithesis and is especially apposite for polarity and tension. To these figuration skills, I would add that the di-partitive organization is formed to split or heal (consolidate) a difference and to outfit concordance or discordance. A bi-grouping's ability to formally outline these different concepts traces to the logic inherent in binary spatialization. We have witnessed the ability of the binary chiasmus to readily domicile and give formal comfort to arguments requiring a complimentary or a contrastive (associative or dissociative) perspective. We have seen, as well, how chiasmus takes custody of the polar and agonistic and constrains them to an edgy confrontation or a welcome partnering or conjunction.

Constraint and reduction imply compression and compression institutes a dense, "psychological space" (Portoghesi 388). Importantly, for the language- and rhetoric-steeped architect, designer, and architectural scholar Paolo Portoghesi, "channeling walls" that are inscribing, contracting, and measurable "create a rapport of reciprocal activity, a rapport that, at the level of the psychology of form, is like that between figure and ground" (388, emphasis added). With this excerpt from *The Rome of Borromoni: Architecture as Language* (1968),

Portoghesi acclaims one of the masterworks of Borromini in which the alternation between elements and groupings of elements is such that figure can turn ground and ground, figure, depending on viewpoint or station point. Borromini's or any successful architecture of transformation is made for encompassing certain themes, to sum up the contention of the Italian architectural theorist, while speaking in the parlance of Burke. The greatest among these themes and the one with the highest, most profound psychological weight is movement. By means of a "dialectic" disciplining and contracting "two contiguous parts," a structure can "aspire to a condition of dynamic equilibrium" (Portoghesi 386). Portoghesi expresses that this condition ranges along a movement spectrum; depending on the effect organized for, "the impression of a movement taking place, an imminent movement, or a completed movement" will be felt (386). The "dynamic equilibrium" resulting from "dialectic conception" is a material recordation of the interplay of stasis and dynamism, repose and tension. Portoghesi pronounces on the general outcomes of this interplay: continuity, inflection, rotation, torsion, and ambiguity, to name just a few. He comments specifically on an ornamental treatment of Borromini that is moving, in both meanings of that term, and that gives the appearance of "represent[ing] two phases of a single act." Portoghesi finds how the ornament's two-in-one program "bring[s] to mind a famous tercet of Dante's" (387). Given the program, we shouldn't be exactly startled when the tercet brought to the mind of the architectural theorist ends up being a chiasm (*L'Inferno* II:127–129).

This analogy is not hyperbole or a poetic fluke on Portoghesi's part. Quite the opposite. His study of the Borrominian language proceeds intentionally via rhetoric's figurations: personification, metaphor, antithesis and polarity, oxymoron, ellipsis, anastrophe, gradation, irony, and more. With considerable sophistication and with value to this project's interest in form and cognition, Portoghesi applies to architectural composition the lawful "mental processes" that these and other rhetorical figures systematize by their own internal structure (vii). For the like-minded Borromini and Portoghesi, architecture is language speaking to an "interlocutor" whose attention appeals to and wishes to capture, whose interest it wishes to hold, whose understanding it wishes to guide or compel. As with any language, architecture

ensues through forms: “identifiable” methods and orders, laws and logic that, in the codified aggregate, become the “expressive means” to “communicate sentiments, emotions, and judgments” (Portoghesi vii–viii).

Let us resume the topic of anticipation, which may appear a relatively simple concept, but which grows more involved with the least bit of inquiry. Anticipation cannot be separated from attention. “All perceiving relates to expectations,” writes Gombrich (*Art and Illusion* 254). More than two thousand years earlier, the sage *Ad Herennium* counsels the writer, “anticipation [...] holds the reader’s attention” (289). Anticipation and attention not only go hand in hand, they go back and forth. And both are inseparable from a context, the issue of which quickly complicates any study with a structuralist or formalist approach.

Wired to detect and interpret faces by just bits of data, humans can look at a young child’s and see how the lines of his brows or his jaw’s contour are formed in the manner of his grandfather’s feature. This is a pre-notion of the older feature in the younger. Family members envision ahead that a physical aspect reminiscent of that of an older relative’s ‘waits’ within that smaller compass, the maturity of which is years off. They prophesy, quite often correctly, that time will bring about the transformation, that is, a fuller realization of the feature that is suggestible beyond its present self. What we catch sight of in the immature, impressionable child’s face is a pattern that awaits completion.² I feel certain Burke would identify this pattern projection as an arrow of expectation.

Humans, like other mammals, are supersensitive at anticipating, for anticipation is predicting and we can’t make a move or determine on meaning without some degree of prediction. Every predator and every survivor of predation or simpler physical harms must be proficient at prediction and at waiting. We have never lost these predatory–survival capacities. A novelist writes, “the air was waiting” and her readers pay no heed to the remark, which really only looks odd to us upon reflection. Readers remain oblivious to the oddness of the expression because they identify with this type of experience: that the air ‘holds’ or the atmosphere around a person ‘contains’ a prospect, which may be physical or metaphoric (Roy 158). The prospect is

another arrow. On those occasions we suspect “something’s in the air,” we put a fair amount of trust, on top of conjecture, that that unstipulated, basically indeterminate ‘something’ will materialize or come to fruition. No matter how vague, the future something is an expectation, a desire.³ Or perhaps we shouldn’t qualify the vague, for as Goffman suggests, the indistinct is “often immensely distracting” (304). The vague, I would say, holds a trajectory, if only in theory or potential. Goffman gives support to this trajectory concept when describing how the vague stimulates suspicion and the suspicious clues us to a framework, its internal machinery, and the fabrication spun by that machining. Our confidence devolves from experience that proceeds or courses, as we like to say, ‘along the same lines.’ The lines or the patterns enjoy familiarity and so, too, is what they culminate in. This is the basis of our credence in the future something and our continuing to consign ourselves—our time, energy, thoughts, beliefs, hopes, decisions, commitments, and lives—over to arcs and curves of possibility. We are perceptually and psychologically enthralled with and awaiting the pattern and direction of things to come.

Although it may be difficult for us to adequately write down on paper or to describe to ourselves, anticipation’s arc is a natural, automatic ability. A contemporary philosopher of place and identity notices it in the very physical orientations of humankind. In *Getting Back into Place* (1993), Edward Casey declares, “The body’s arc-like gestures adumbrate in advance certain basic structures inherent” in the world. Casey elaborates.

These gestures, acting as anticipatory a priori of the body, forecast the very structures they also manage to rejoin. Lying between the body as ‘the natural subject of perception’ and the natural world it perceives is a pact already in place, a compact such that each entity shares in a common integumentation. The compact itself is delineated by various forms of arc, some of which (such as the arc of reachability) belong mainly to the body [...]. (185)

Based on an inherent somatocentricism, we necessarily call upon human orientation and other embodied understandings, for example dimension, as projective probes for interpreting (compacting with) the world. Our bodies stand our roles as world critics. From the body’s “articulatory and tensional arcs” we develop the means to orient or better determine ourselves relative to that which we come into physical and virtual contact (185).

Under the influence of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, Casey determines that the body's ongoing 'arcing' exhausts in full (covers in total) the experiential field that it dichotomizes (55). The field is never absent two groupings, to borrow Burke's term. Each field, internal to which exists an unsorted continuum, has two sectors imposed on it. The designating of a virtual 'here' group and of a virtual 'there' group accounts for everything in an otherwise coextensive field. This here–there 'splitting' is foisted upon the world ceaselessly by the living, perceiving and re-perceiving, on-the-move human body. Despite that the persistent dichotomization ratchets to sophisticated, specialized, and rarefied meanings, it originates in the body's very fundamental apprehension of space as the consequence of pedestrian perceptual and kinetic activities. Each counter-placement of the here and the there (or near and far) erects a "wall of difference," as Casey writes. The polarity and tension that fall out from the imaginary wall will vary along a scale of intensity according to local conditions. One of the predictable aspects of these dividing 'walls' is the plasticity and alterity with which we erect them. New sectors of co-occurring, yet distinguished near and far are laid down as we relocate, as we bestow attention on new fields or reconsider and construct alternate walls in a present field, and as we transit through real and imaginary events.

Casey's rich study warrants considerably more discussion here. However, the treatise only has room to consider two principles of the here–there organization and weigh in on those. The body-based system sedimented in space and place as holders of identity is inseparable from desire. The body bears desire and desire is a spatial projection: it is a *longing*, a term lexicalizing space and emotion. Logically, desire necessitates transport (another space–emotion association) from one sector to a second. An arc of reachability to join the there with the here begins in the lack of and the desire for what exists beyond one's side of an acknowledged wall of separation. Although Kenneth Burke receives no mention in Casey's texts, much in the latter overlaps with Burke's arc of desire.

But of even greater import to this project are the phenomenological bi-partition and the conjunction and correlation transpiring between the sectors that make up any here–there dyad. The dyad, estimated by Casey as one of our deepest conceptualization involvements,

encourages an invitation to chiasmus as an organizing pattern pervasive in human thinking. The inherent partition of chiasmus into adjacent, coordinating syntactic and semantic groupings (i.e., members), which are the subsidiaries essential to an inclusive whole, mimics the very way in which we divide up (cognize) the experiential field that is always before us as well as anything within that field that we must or care to attend. Chiasmus, like Casey's dyadic division, is distinctive in that it automatically "splits" what it "serves to structure" (55, emphasis original). The Casey 'chorography' of double, inter-associated sectors accommodates the coordination and implicit divisional (antecedent–consequent) activities at the core of Burke's psychology of form.

Similarly, the degree to which we attend one grouping relative to another and our decision to bestow focality interchangeably comments on the figure/ground potentiality that is inherent within the dyadic here–there, but unaccountably not explored by Casey in *Getting Back into Place*. Here–there and figure/ground are in near continuous flux in the way our experiential fields are fluid due to constant re-configuring. Our calculations of all three—figure/ground, here–there, and experiential zones—and the demarcation of walls of division are always up for parlaying, renegotiation, and recalculation. I would have us contemplate the possibility that chiasmus is an enduring mode of cognition because it is a set form that effectively reproduces the reductive, dual scope (sectoring) we perform upon the world. Dual scoping can be an equal or an unequal (dissociating) opportunity employment.

AS THE NIGHT, THE DAY

As long ago as Shakespeare the phrase "in the full bent" has meant that which was done to the utmost capacity or full extent (*Hamlet* II.ii.30). Burke's archery metaphor alludes to the same idea, the arc's two minimal stages adding up to and hitting on a finishing point. We are accustomed to images of bending, bowing, springing, and curving to refer to that which not only completes, but does so under its own steam: that is, its internal action, power, or initiative. The idea of culmination through an in-built formal mechanics, what has been called several times, formal accord, should remind of the two-ways, self-sustaining action of the *Galatians*

macro chiasm. For examples, the so-called law of return in poetry and in music and the belief that stories should evolve along a ‘curve of action’ are commonplaces (Updike 53).⁴ Curves, after all, carry prediction.

The principle behind the belief just now named and behind the law of return is that coming back around is solving, securing, and satisfying due to the notion that having been set in motion, what follows will spring naturally. The presumed elegance of a curved or rounded, smoothed entity is an aesthetic bonus on top of a rhetorical one.

In his psychological inquiry into what tickles the funny bone, Henri Bergson ties together the threads of bending back and springing forward, rhythm, tension, and suspension as they relate to the essential comedic formula. Bergson discovers that a pattern of the dual- or “by-play” lies at the heart of comedy. An initial action that is “counteracted” principles the humorous (106), everything from the silly prank to the farces of Moliere. This action-counteraction apparatus Bergson likens to “the uniform rhythm of the bending and release of a spring” (107). A more specific visual is his analogy of the Jack-in-the-box that once pushed down under a closed lid is sure to spring up once the lid is popped. Before continuing, I recommend we dwell a moment on the image, *a la* Burke, of a drawn bow with cocked arrow and the subsequent release of the arrow that hits ‘home,’ the desired target. Bergson’s bent-back coiled spring and his box-bound puppet with its compressed metal curl, like Burke’s bent-back archery bow, are images of an arc that holds tension. Once that tension is let loose, the individual spring will seek the fullness or form of its bowed course; they jump to the top of their bend (the length of their extension). According to Bergson, a “natural trend” or “natural direction” is pursued as the result of the springing action. The initial condition is “destined to complete” itself according to the pressure invested in the first place, a description that brings out the returning or circular nature of the Burkean arc. Not insignificantly, when speaking of the rhythmic pattern or tempo that builds from repetition and regulation, Bergson indicates how “certain grooves” result in certain outcomes (97). Bergson’s sounding of “certain grooves” rings with Burke’s prescribed, planful “channels.” Comedic and witty outcomes proceed, by their pre-set extension, necessarily and “as a matter of course” (134). Bergson stresses that the

humorous must be both natural and mechanical, that is, absolutely automatic. The bent spring and compressed Jack are momentarily checked (suspended, at a still center moment) before they bound up automatically, of their own in-built (contained, bounded) pressurization. They are internally-sprung in the antecedent–consequent manner that Burke describes of his arrows of formal desire. Burke on form and Bergson on humor suggest that results lie in wait; they are promises that are kept.

Form and humor and chiasmus are delivery systems with compulsory grooves. The three are known for their systematicity; and they are compulsive and compelling by their systematic gearings. Each gives ahead of schedule a premonition of what it can deliver on, the premonition being crucial to each. Furthermore, part of the pleasure of humor, form, and chiasmus is the feeling the participant enjoys in getting ahead of the ‘game’ (the pattern). This head start makes a conspirator of the receiver, investing her further in her original expectation. A receiver relishes the look ahead, which is a half-sense, of what she suspicions is shaping up before her mind’s eye. In chiasmus, humor, and form, repetition, reversal, and two-way symmetry motivate the premonition. The linear cum circular structure plots and propulses anticipation. Pressure twists pressure. Pressure returns upon itself, as we might predict, since thinking proceeds from “patterns of expectations” as Frank Smith insists (58). This is a first tenet in his and Gombrich’s philosophies of perception and psychology and of Burke and Bergson in their philosophies of reception and psychology. All four analysts, with a consuming interest in how we create realities of the everyday and imaginative kind, presume humans are superb pattern recognizers. All classify man an inveterate and insatiable pattern seeker. If we get hold of a pattern with which we have acquaintance, we are loath to release it. Patterns are in our future, because they fill our history—with satisfactions.

At the fingertips of humans is the ability to put together pairs of items normally or naturally not found in one another’s company. If controlled for by the pattern of chiasmus, the tossing fashions a composited whole. These miniature fashionings are effortlessly created and received. They are widely relished on account of their novelty and freshness. But these ‘compositions’ are universally welcomed for other reasons: they clarify or develop theretofore

unperceived comparisons and contrasts; satisfy categorical absences; fill explanatory needs; and spur new or different thinking. With all these and more to favor them, the ‘compositions’ are made limitlessly and met with everywhere.

One property of every whole, and an exceptional one at that, is its center. A whole absent some kind of center is unimaginable. In Chapter Two we engaged the idea of the diagonal cross’s center. This centrum is necessarily a com-plex. This final chapter entertains the condition of betweenity. Along the lines of X/X and chiasmus, the between offers up a mixed bag. It can be wrenching or wondrous, or (no guessing required here) something between. The betwixt-and-the-between serves many a turn.

We begin the next section with that favorite of topics, one innately loaded with desire, arrows, tension, and compulsion. That topic? Love. From there, we examine other subjects that relish or that make room for the subtleties of the in-between. We close the chapter by a return to Emily Dickinson and the question much of this work has been leaning toward: the question of chiasmus as speaking *per se*.

THE LOVE WARS

My true love hath my heart and I have his,
 By just exchange one for another given;
 I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss,
 There never was a better bargain driven.
 My true love hath my heart and I have his.

His heart in me keeps him and me in one,
 My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides;
 He loves my heart, for once it was his own,
 I cherish his, because in me it bides.
 My true love hath my heart and I have his.
 —Sir Philip Sidney

You,/Time after time, upon [...]
 the quivering scale-pans of balance.
 —Rainer Maria Rilke

The “You” addressed in the “Fifth Elegy” dazzles as one of Rainer Maria Rilke’s imaginative Angels. The recurrence and nature of this inspired being in the *Duino Elegies* do not concern us here. What is of concern is that the elegist’s angel-lover temptingly stretches “upon [her] balance.” The pans’ quiver in space symbolizes uncertainty. In the stanza from which the two-line excerpt above is taken, the elegist suggests the recliner’s “mutely elided” nature and self-containment (51). The seclusiveness and the oscillating arms of the angel-associated balance gesture toward the next stanza’s chiasm. Rilke draws on chiasmus to formalize an enigmatic transformation. From “the great initial/letter of There-ness” the balance unaccountably weighs down to a “wearisome nowhere.” The poet narrator questions the incongruous transition from mighty There-ness to a wearing, lowercase (and, therefore, presumably insignificant) nowhere. He ponders how

[...], all of a sudden
the ineffable spot where the pure too-little
incomprehensibly changes,—springs round
into that empty too-much.

The reader’s awareness of the presence of the minute, contra-rotated and rounded figure, upon a first reading, tends toward a faintness equal to the strange, several times self-contradictory occasion it recounts.⁵ The profiling of an uncertain, “ineffable” circumambience exceeds the detection of an overt circumpolarity, although, as Rilke intended, the elusive, antipodean *AB:BA* pattern has an iconic emergence in time. Rilke’s chiasm, like the elegy itself, quivers between absence and presence. It is through a nearly hidden reversing polarity and a still balance that the chiasm expresses and iconically self-honors the message of love as paradoxical, tenuous, and “mutely,” perpetually vexing: specifically, the (*pure*) (*too little*) transposed into the (*empty*) (*too-much*). The poet’s *too-much* denotes the ultimate and unassailable, kindred ideas to his word *pure*.

I don’t hazard much in pronouncing that the chiasm reflects love’s profound indefinability. The indefinable aspect vouches in the Rilkean cosmos that pure, ultimate Love, with its partner in eternal mystery Death, remains “ever-concealed, unknown.” I would propose that the crisscross figuration rarefies Rilke’s simple, but already confounding language,

thereby further subtilizing the immortal conundrum of love as sirenic absence. Chiasmus resembles metaphor here. It supports an improbable comparison capable of leaping to the imperceptible or outright unattainable or adumbrating that which precludes expression: in other words, what we most commonly extol as the ideal, divine, imperishable, and transcendent.

In his “Ninth Elegy,” Rilke insists that “above all,/the heaviness,/and the long experience of love [...] is wholly unsayable.” That love is “unsayable” is by no means news. Neither is the condition that humans cannot do otherwise than plead for words and utterances to reach out toward our most profound and mysterious experience, our most gratifying and confusing emotion. Secular love has stood a long experience in the human story and has kept poets and storytellers in business and audiences beguiled from the earliest days. Lovers and commentators on love summon chiasmus for its associating and dissociating prescriptions. The pre-divided, dual-sided, yet self-compassing figure exists to befit relations in general and to instate two persons and perspectives, questions of subjectivity and objectivity, matters of agency, and the various twists, turns, and counterturns of human interaction. Though impossible to attempt anything resembling thorough coverage of chiasmus and love, a few ideas can be explored.

Love may be a two-sided, one-sided, or zero-sided affair. When the last of these applies, the relationship, which is also perversely two-sided, can tend toward hate, love’s grammatical antonym and psychological opposite. Many adages and advisors are wont to tell how only a fine line exists between love and hate. Chiasmus stations these polar opposites in close lexical, grammatical, and semantic proximity when a friend discloses that “ ‘Sometimes I hate him and sometimes I love him. And the same goes for him. He can love or hate me. That’s how it goes.’ ” Love can propel lovers’ feelings in obverse directions. To “sometimes” hate the one you love or to find love has changed leaves one discomposed, with torn feelings internally tugging a sorrowing or angry person here and there, tossing him or her on an emotional seesaw or oscillating balance of uncertainty. From time immemorial, the human psyche has been beset by these contradictions. Having been both happy in and disillusioned by love, Catullus complained

of his personal “excruciation” over the love–hate cross barrel and the confusion the pair of “indistinguishable” opposites inflict.⁶

Due to its commitment to dual fashionings and materializings, chiasmus is love’s fondest designer. It diagrams and models in language the mingling of opposites, differences over the same, the harmony–disharmony spectrum, and the experiencing of the reverse side to each emotion for which love has a reputation.

The myth of Psyche tells the moving tale of affection, not double-jointed by hate, but rather of an asymmetric nature. Chiasmus regularly bestows its form to reckon the heartfulness of the asymmetric and desperate love relationship.

The pathetic story of the long-suffering Psyche, wife to the ambivalent Eros, relays our human vulnerabilities with respect to love. When Eros flees from her, judging her faithless for breaking a pledge that barred her from setting eyes on him, a distraught, guilt-ridden Psyche undertakes to seek her adored husband and to plead for his forgiveness. The helpless girl professes to herself that “ ‘If he has no love left for me, at least I can show him how much I love him’ ” (Hamilton 96). Unrequited, unfaithful, or undeserving love preoccupied or angered a panoply of Greek gods and goddesses. Amatory disparity (dissociation) kept heaven and earth in upheaval and provoked tears and remonstrations, retribution, treachery, ordeals, bitter feuds, a bevy of challenges and attacks, wars, and occasionally, although not always permanently, harmonious settlements. Psyche’s chiastic declaration is an immortal admission of asymmetric love, one that today entertains audiences of confess-all television programs and shows up repeatedly as themes and plot lines of soap operas and other dramatizations. Hers, like some other love stories, eventually turns out to be an “Eros loves Psyche and Psyche Eros” happily-ever-after ending (Paz, *Double Flame* 29).

Penetrating to our very core, yet perpetually mysterious and inexplicable, love beggars definition. Timeless as love’s arrows and ladders, chiasmus functions as a cognizing and expressive technique to pierce love—love inclining toward the “language of invasion”⁷—and extract some measure of it. As witness, “The measure of love is love without measure.” Aided by the self-assurance of brevity and by the vigor of compression, this dissociative chiasm

counters any premise that love may submit to measure. The maxim's tacit message holds that if love submits to measure, it isn't love. In the rarefied zone of the inestimable, love and chiasmus regularly flirt with one another. An appreciable share of their coziness traces to the figure's categorical gymnastics in the name of love. Those gymnastics even include the ability to set up an act seemingly of definition—"The measure of love is"—only to immediately pull the categorical rug out from under the defining act by the original words turned on their heads. The negating or antithetical *without* contrives an oblique, total upturn to an otherwise coordinate structure. The immeasurable ostensibly comes about by a backward shift despite that it partially hinges on a bleached, absenting term. However, the greater part of the concept of the immeasurable rests in the configuring rigors of chiasmus, including the figuring of the fantastic, the improbable, and that which exceeds measure or definition. A plus in such figuring is that irony, which proffers a reversion or twist and which can further deepen the esoteric, can be outfitted by the turnabout operations listed in the chiastic formulary.

The coordination of word pairs and the partnered (parallel) grammatical arrangement of chiasmus epitomize the each-to-each relation that is the essence of love. We quite naturally intuit the operant ways of a chiasm in relating love and its myriad facets and brilliant and injurious cuts. With this, as with any topic, chiasmus constrains but doesn't dictate interpretations. It can, for instance, rather economically model cases of simple combining. A radio voice announces, " 'Hot dogs love Pepsi. Pepsi loves hot dogs.' " Due to the commonplace menu pairing of soft drinks and fast foods, the ad's listener presumes that this particular brand of soda and the generic hot dog are 'naturals.' They not only go (are served) together, they belong together; or, at least, that is what the chiasm urges by its formal mimicry of dual belonging. The listener deduces that the two make a good (tasty and fast) drink-food match; if you consume one, you're quite naturally 'inclined' to want and, therefore, will need to purchase the other. Though it's a match that's made in consumer heaven, the listener doesn't construe that the soda and drink engage in a profound entanglement, whether physical, emotional, or spiritual; that they have sexual identities or proclivities; or that they may get married and live happily ever after.⁸ Her experience and everyday knowledge precludes

construals of this sort, whereas the chiasmic form strongly steers the first deduction. The Pepsi–Hot Dog love story requires but a relatively simple, uncomplicated story line: one-to-one connection. A chiasmic jingle ‘clinches’ the sale of menu partnering and that’s narrative enough for Pepsi-Cola Company.

A football star, when asked about “the world of romance” and his relations with women, summed up both with this: “I consider myself a cross. If you’re nice to me, I’m nice to you.”⁹ Chiasmus formally provides for love’s inherent give and take, as for instance the reciprocating and commutability of ‘niceness.’ The modern idiom contends that love that endures must be a two-way street: getting and receiving. The epigrammatic balm that “To love and be loved is to feel the sun from both sides”¹⁰ beautifully soothes ideas of love by its capture of emotional warmth held in close. Love goes right and wrong; feels sure and not; has its ups and up-side downs; is, as Robert Pinsky notes, “Also this/Also that.” Enter: chiasmus. The figure instances love’s counterturns and unexpected turns as well as its coordinate and super/subordinated power plays and struggles. Love may cross or X-out everything but love, again welcoming the formal entrance of chiasmus. The figure’s twin members in tight, circumscribed proximity can purpose love’s physical, emotional, and psychological intensity, whether rapturous or harming, lively or lacrimonious. Finally, ideal love is a balance in equilibrium. Humankind’s own tender seal of love, the kiss, is itself a chiasmic balance: “A kiss is something you cannot give without taking and cannot take without giving.”¹¹ A kiss is an utterly fair exchange, a solidly even deal, or it simply isn’t a kiss. A kiss must ring true, for as the poet writes, it is the solid thing that chimes (Doty 41). For a kiss to be genuine it must spring from a give–take perfection conformed by symmetry’s cross and rested secure within symmetry’s halo. A regular wheeler-dealer, chiasmus is like to seal deals, including romantic ones. True love is indeed a matter of X’s and O’s, crosswise changings and finalizings, of all manners and sorts.

The inchoate, loony, and fuzzy-headed whirl of love bids chiasmus. A children’s book for Valentine’s Day—sprinkled generously with hearts, flowers, doves, and message Valentine candies and packaged entirely in a color twosome (red and white) by its eminent children’s illustrator (Tomie de Paola)—taps the *AB:BA* pattern to show how romance can throw a small

boy into a dither. The pint-sized poem discombobulates the back half of a line to tilt and tie it to the front half of the next line and *vice versa* with the front half of the original line:

I climbed up the door
 And shut the stairs
 I said my shoes
 And took off my prayers.

I shut off the bed
 And climbed into the light
 And all because—
 She kissed me Goodnight.¹²

Children find this oblique poem delicious fun. If you ask why it amuses and tickles so, your pint-sized listeners will tell you, with not the least hesitation, that it is “because everything goes wrong,” “is silly,” or “because everything’s mixed-up.” And they are correct, which they are quite proud and pleased to learn when afterward told by their reader that the poem’s called “Mix-up.” In the course of asking these listeners about what happens in the poem, a questioner will look out on lots of small arms glancing first in one direction and then opposite arms glancing in the reverse direction. The arms ‘draw’ a quickly sequenced diagonal cross in the empty space in front of each gesticulator. I know this from having read the poem to elementary school classes. Upon reviewing the printed poem and its first six lines, a reader of “Mix-up” can mentally trace three slanted crosses; beginning by marking a diagonal line superimposed from *climbed* to *the stairs* and then by marking a second diagonal superimposed from *door* to *shut*. My audience members, young as they were, intuited of these read-aloud ‘crosses’ that pairs of items crisscrossed with regard to normal arrangement, as their glancing right-to-left and left-to-right arm movements specified. They saw that for the poem’s protagonist things were going in “funny” (unexpected, wrongful) directions, and this meant that the narrator of the poem was “mixed up,” “all confused,” (thrown) like the children’s arms flinging crossways in the air.

We adults would declare the little boy infatuated and in a giddy state (flighty from an innocent *fling?* fallen head over heels?), but the declaration isn’t really much of an advance on or even a difference from these grade school critics, able to detect the crosswise, wrong way

and able to pick up on the mismatch of the word units. Children happily volunteer they get the poem, though they obviously haven't been tutored in chiasmus and wouldn't have the least interest in what an inventive chiasm has been read them. From the same book celebrating Valentine's Day, they delight, too, in an acrostic 'snake' that 'loops' and 'slithers' along (up down) (down up) (up down) (down up) four columns of single words. In addition, they also effortlessly process this same acrostic's own internal chiasm about love, as well as relish two additional challenging love chiasma.

With respect to intuiting the reciprocity and crosswise nature performed by chiasmus, we discovered above that athletes are in the same league as the most prophetic poets. William Blake's "I am in you and you in me, mutual in love divine" (emphasis original) illumines how a message of impartible love miraculously figures forth from a partitive form. The incongruity of impartible from parted only emerges on analysis. We take for granted within our on-line processing of a chiasm such as Blake's that items normally separate (here: persons) are conflated. The pattern that formally parlays this crosswise miracle goes unregarded, though not the pattern's effect. We profile the resulting interchangeability and "disattend" (Goffman's helpful word) both the pattern and its portioned nature. As a result, we presume the *I* and the *you*, deictics with universal connotation, achieve a transcendent ("divine") union. Walter Scott's touching "love is heaven, and heaven is love" works in a similar fashion, though it visualizes divine, immortal love, which is a small departure from Blake's two subjects conjugated in love divine.

Archibald MacLeish indicates that the eyes must have "distance" to see love because it is "not understood/But infinite" ("Adam in the Evening" 443). For concocting the infinite, chiasmus gives a MacLeishian 'distance' through a laying out of difference done for the purpose of the encircling figure's folding of that difference into sameness. When you come to think of chiastic con-versioning, it has about it the miraculous of itself, but, also, in our willing accession to the transcendent conversions of chi-thinking. It is correct to deem these 'heady' miracles, though they ultimate in a myriad of embodied experiences of everyday 'physics' and motility: corporeal transposition and interchange, displacement, alternation, bi-lateral

symmetry, balance, confluence, amalgamation; in other words, they accord with our crisscrossing experience.

Of love unions, they may resolve into a condition of stillness or volatility or they may result in some conclusion along a range of correspondences and entanglements, when they don't end in total assimilation (two fully fused into one). On amalgamation in the physical and human realms, William Carlos Williams's poetic speaker pronounces that of two source materials "beaten lengthwise," "Now they are resting/ ... separately in unison" ("Fine Work with Pitch and Copper," emphasis added). A metalworker will "run his eyes along" the marvelous union to uncover a possible seam, a place where "they" meet. Williams's metallurgy romanticizes a rested, paradoxical state of separation within seamless union that is as benevolent as the union of sin and sinner is malevolent in *The Inferno*.

This same paradox issued, more than once, from the metaphysical devisings of John Donne, celebrant of sacred and secular crosses, and himself a consort to crossing tropes (Correll). However, the sonneteer goes one step further: "we two being one" become "one neutrall thing." Donne references how in coitus the two sexes cancel out each other through a circumfusion emulating the very manner of the tilting chi. By 'reason' of their ecstatic dual "Canonization," Donne's lovers mystically blend a sexless ("neutral") Phoenix. Out of their sexual cross (in seventeenth-century English, *tilt* was a term for 'copulate') and its consequent nixing, they "forget the He and She" and hybridize a thing more fabulous and incomparable than the mythological Phoenix.¹³ Similarly, the speaker in Rilke's "Fifth Elegy," with regard to his balance-luxuriating "Angel," deduces that the "ineffable" 'cross' "solves into zero." Rilke's zero and Donne's neutral evince the 'logical,' yet unreasoned (mysterious and extraordinary) annihilations of sublime con-formance; that is, the nugatory *ultimum punctum* accepted as an impressive entailment of the X/X intersect.¹⁴ The association of X with nothingness was relayed earlier, along with the mention of X and nothing as exhibitors of inviolability. C. S. Lewis reminds that vacancy displays different gradations (when discussing the devotional practices of secular and sacred worshippers and the value to them of attention-fixing, yet close-to-empty icons).¹⁵ Whereas both Rilke and Donne have in mind negation as due to a love-death

association, the former aligns himself to the tradition of the tragic Tristan and Isolde. The deaths of these consummate lovers cross score a requiting temporal symmetry in their perishing on the same day, “he for her and she for him.” Chiasmus, alone, epitomizes the commoriant poignancy of these paramours.

The abolition of the self, whether by carnal lovemaking, by sublime love, or by temporary infatuation, is a commonplace in and out of literature. Cupid, with the associative chiasm in his quiver, can release two arrows to hit upon a piercingly null interfold. Psychologists reduce the lovers’ obliterating intercommunion to “the temporary collapse of ego boundaries.”¹⁶ The enthrallments, entwinements, and tremors romantic love can give rise to we conventionally envision as the surpassing of natural or normal barriers and gulfs, the notion of transcendent phenomenon that Burke repeatedly indexes. But in order to impinge on, much less trespass boundaries and mount to the opposite side of chasms, boundaries, and gulfs, they must be drawn in the first place. They must be erected or there beforehand, too, for when others come alongside and can’t or won’t cross them. Chiasmus provides boundaries/gulfs for assaults as well as triumphs and defeats to follow on. Its converting blueprint also patterns another amatory commonplace: namely, the transmogrification of the material “into an infinite substance that [...] enfolds us”; but, then by the infinite vanishes and the corporeal substance returns (Paz, *Double Flame* 254). Supernal love achieves a glorified, consecrated absence that, in the vagaries of love, may prove false: a counterfeit of the true eternal. As evidence of this *material-immaterial* ‘change of heart,’ here is the poet:

Unchained from the body, unchained
From desire, I return to desire. I return
to the memory of your body. I return.
And your body burns in my memory,
my memory burns in your body. (“Aspiration”)

By a haunting, X-bracing chiasm, with its own lithesome members,¹⁷ Octavio Paz alludes to several concepts; notable among these is return. The stanza’s iterated *return* peculiarly precedes its closing figure of re-turning. Memory is our most potent, affecting mode of return and in the poem the speaker’s “dismembered memory” traces its way back to love’s corporal

“knot,” with its phosphorescent “flames” and “flares.” In his mysterious chiasm, the lovelorn speaker strives to return, via memory, to his burning desire for a paramour, now departed. In a Shakespearean mood perhaps (“consumed by that which it was nourished by”), the burning of body by consuming memory and, conversely, that memory by body traverse incinerate— \times/X out—nearly all of his remembrance. The coupling (duplicating) comes to naught (“nothing” is his word) in a searing mathematics, including that a mirror can flash, burn, and blind (Cook 62). This reckoning does correspond, however, with his reduction to perceiving only white, the most paradoxical of the colors (Marin 375–76). White, associated with blankness and alluding to hot ash (and the residue of bone?), denotes the glaring, “blinding” color of sheer emptiness. Paz’s “heartsick” *memoriter* (from the heart) has replaced one hotbed for a consequent one; that is to say, a ferment that stokes when the flames of heartfelt aspiration go blank and memory expires.

The poet deploys the cross format to mate, linguistically and semantically, two sets of opposites: presence and absence (i.e., *body* and *memory*) with self and other. The chiasm physically (on the page) complicates the sets; specifically, (*your*) (*my*) : (*my*) (*your*) implicates and intricates with (*body*) (*memory*) : (*memory*) (*body*). Just as with \times/X , each line acts the other’s co-efficient. The linguistic crosspairing sets out a chiasm and, the chiasm, an iconic mating. Slightly mocking in contrast with physical love’s extinguishment is that the dimembered (not “dismembered”) *AB:BA* figure perpetuates—ideally and (at least partially) by its unique mirror-like burning and flashing—, *in memorium*.

Complication becomes further underlined by the poet’s trumping of the idiom of sentiment burned in one’s memory and forever preserved. Incongruously (yet congruously), the overturn occurs within a demonstratively contentive, securing form. Undying love and one’s memory of this enduring love paradoxically die in the course of the poem. Paz’s associative chiasm, especially by its ramping up of the idea of beautiful similitude between the desires of body and the desires of memory within its own “turning tumbling,”¹⁸ enclaspings ‘body,’ shares in a lamentable expiration—a dying enflamed (furthered) by the inter-positioning of terms across an equivocating (faithless?) verb. The double-focus and dialectical crossfire of the di-

isocolon throws extra focus on a verb when it replicates within crossed members. Crediting the speaker with a sly eye, we grant how a double (equivocal) *burn* may implicate and singe itself.

“Immature love says: ‘I love you because I need you.’ Mature love says: ‘I need you because I love you.’ ”¹⁹ Eric Fromm inserts a qualification into what Paz extolled as the “kingdom where pronouns are intertwined,” the land where separate pulses are bridged and thereby compelled (“Sunstone”). The twentieth-century psychologist accentuates the distinction between immature love and its opposite through an instrument of opposition and difference. In employing imaginary direct speech, Fromm personifies the two types of love, who appear to front each other in ‘out-spoken’ contesting remarks. The *AB:BA* proclamation, by means of the head-to-head directionality chiasmus can arrange, subtly embodies a seeming *contest* ‘argued’ between divergent love types. Fromm stages an imagined scene of mannerly verbal con-frontation in which Mature Love wins hands down. The love of a Darby and Joan or thoughtful, deep love inclines toward a tranquil, reassuring, and companionable mutuality, which the *AB:BA* patterns and venerates in itself.

EXTREMES MEET

“I was once at a diorama in Rotunda.” This remark appears on the fourth to last page of *The Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* (215). At this late stage in the narrative, Stephen Dedalus acknowledges at one close remove, that of his unfortunate mother, to having a “queer” and “restless” mind (214). On the next page, Stephen’s father brings up “the law” as the right profession for his son. Stephen recalls his dad telling him how “ ‘I was cut out for that.’ ” Between the Dedalus parents’ separately rendered, seemingly contrary estimates of their quirky offspring, a “supple” Stephen admits to his proclivity to “wrangle,” that is, to take on others by his countering arguments.

To what do these various portraits of Stephen add up? I suggest that they square, figuratively and typographically, by means of the strange chiastic geometry that Joyce’s reader stumbles upon a mere page into the novel. William James declares that the dream world and Freud declares the child’s world organize differently than the wide-awake adult world. The

dream, chiasmus-like, is a space notable for its “dense all-roundness” (Banville 7). With a kind of “magical realism,” Joyce fictionalizes a half-dream, half-child world in the ‘young’ pages of his novel. A supple stratagem in the depiction is chiasmus. Acute and lawful, able to counter and wrangle, yet a restless oddball, chiasmus is the figure for laying out Joyce’s little Dedalus. Two small chiastic blocks worry the threshold of Stephen’s incunabulum. The adverting blocks trip up Joyce’s urchin and his reader, leaving fictional and real person confused, taken aback, and justly wary of repercussions, the very thing that the strange blocks are built from. The blocks at the novel’s entrance, constructed according to an architecture of forbidding inwardness, serve as our invitation to penetrate Joyce’s difficult, bleak interior.

A work in which chiasmus reverberates, in which mirroring and reflection (e.g., in clouds and pools) appear frequently, and in which mirroring and chiasmus co-occur,²⁰ James Joyce’s first novel relies heavily on the standard as well as the strange, incongruous mirrory effects chiasmus conducts. These effects include transposition and displacement; shifts and dynamic alternations; balance and immobility; unions, implied or partially realized, between opposites; reversals that reform and even lend an impression of rectifying or resolving; paradoxical or contradictory states, and more. The turns and reversals at the sentence level underwrite and reinforce shifts and reversals at the thematic level. That is, syntactic chiasmus informs matters of psychology, religion, politics, society, class, and human relations throughout the novel. But beyond this thematic influence, chiasticity also structures *Portrait*. This macro-organization resembles a Chinese puzzle box of reverse symmetry, with one chiastic section, within a second chiastic section, within a third.²¹ The “larger chiasmic structure in the work as a whole,” identified by Elliot Gose and others, is an elaborate architecture of bi-lateral symmetry that encompasses sub-parts in which Joyce made further use of the reflection or mirror plane. Joyce’s build up of figurative mirroring is nothing less than dazzling.

In his article prepared to designate the “many chiasmic statements” in *A Portrait of the Artist*, Gose oddly overlooks the chiasmus at the book’s inception. The oddness compounds with the knowledge that Joyce is an author famous for artful, sly narrative starts (Cohen 6). The *Portrait*’s opening that self-reflects on narrative openings, takes playful, but perverse license

with the traditional phrase for getting under way in fairy and folk tales, many a children's story book, and in recitations of such stories. In Joyce's story, a child's budding consciousness and the reader's introduction to this small protagonist commences with "Once upon a time and a very good time it was [...]" (*Portrait* 19).

Essentially looking forward (though with the barest of measurable forethought) to the *there* that conventionally follows upon "Once upon a time," Joyce's reader instead bumps into and feels the hard impact of an unanticipated, disruptive, and, in fact, retarding *and*. The replacement of the traditional, unemphatic *there*²² (in "there was a ___") by the untoward (not looked toward) sentence medial conjunction, which marks a difference of relation and implies a "double awareness"²³ where absent the *and* there would not be relational difference or doubleness, jolts and pulls the reader back. So, too, does the turnabout after the unaccustomed, totally unprepared for conjunction. The about-face comes across as a slight, but no less for that saucy, backhanded gibe to the customary and pleasurable, settle-into-your-arm chair "once upon a time," whose function is to ready and invite the reader for one kind of narrative and situate him as to a then (a "Once") and a "there." The reader's feeling himself from the get-go as oddly situated and, as the idiom has it, 'taken aback' occurs by a figure that literally resituates and insistently goes back (reverse shifts) and it takes back (i.e., replaces). The outset is an upset, enacted chiasmatically. What would or should have been a firm, reliable beginning ground is pulled out from under us.

As the foremost moment in the novel's unfolding, this little chiasmus commands the unique prominence, significance, and attention quite naturally accorded the "words which come first" (Demetrius 375). Uncertainty, misgiving—we have missed and not gotten what we were set up to expect—, and other outcomes of chiasmatic reversal and overturning rule at the book's head start. In pulling the start out from under us, Joyce essentially denies us a rightful beginning. But chiasmus more than literally paves our entry into *Portrait*; it sets the precedent (i.e., it makes the pattern) for the fictional world laid out by Joyce.²⁴ The prevalence of dichotomies, "circuitous" language, cyclical patterns and experiences, "polarized views," "opposing vectors," and the antagonism of binary values perpetually "suspended in a [tense]

balance” (Brivic 258–263) betoken the essential chiasmaticity of the Joycean world. That essentiality, which is my point but not Sheldon Brivic’s, finds further support in the latter’s accurate summation that “Stephen’s personality consists of ongoing opposition” and that “any position he takes is only a stage in a process of reversals” (Brivic 266). With the progression of an opening sentence normally having an especially forward (i.e., anticipated) thrust, but instead abruptly blocked and frustrated, and we readers consequently tricked and cheated of our formal expectation, Joyce’s syntax provides in miniature an instance justifying why his hero may be extremely hesitant about moving ahead and taking up whatever waits him in life. And if embracing art rather than life later appears an out for Joyce’s protagonist, we’ll recall, perhaps only on a subconscious level, that the novelist begins *Portrait* by turning one literary form against another and by withholding the satisfaction that would follow in course with the one form as the cost for the satisfaction realized with the other. At the narrative’s opening, where the future word artist Stephen is but an infant, even literary and linguistic forms aren’t trustworthy and contest with one another. If one form can overset, ‘back stab,’ and perversely undermine the other, surely Art is no more dependable, no less free of contradiction than is Life.

The flippancy of this commencing, oxymoronic chiasmus (it’s a starter that’s not), takes on a sarcastic edge with an overtly ominous chiasmus that follows very shortly after. One page into the novel, a timid and very little Stephen, hiding beneath a table from two of the ruling adults in his life, overhears his mother say “O, Stephen will apologize” for an unexplained, ostensibly trifling child’s transgression. In reply to this soft-hearted maternal expectation about Stephen’s behavior, his mulish aunt Dante foils with a harrowing peripetia that might have come straight out of Shakespeare’s *Lear*: “O, if not, the eagles will come and pull out his eyes.” Immediately after this cross-counter caveat about child blinding, a persistent reprise of the two radically competing scenarios run over and over in the frightened tot’s guilt-ridden mind. The reprise is no assignable, even-beginning-to-be nursery rhyme, though most surely, most insistently it’s a rhyme heard by a denizen, in hiding, from the nursery:

Pull out his eyes,
 Apologize,
 Apologize,
 Pull out his eyes.

Apologize,
 Pull out his eyes,
 Pull out his eyes,
 Apologize. (20)

This percussive, staccato jingle hits with special force and hard insistence by a recursive form that doubles back, with determination, on itself, by which I mean the first four-line *AB:BA* code finds itself converted into a second four-line *BA:AB* code.²⁵ This is no simple or whimsical “nursery of letters,”²⁶ for the reverse transcription causes a much more involved and disturbing construction cycling in Stephen’s precocious head and troubling it to no solving out, no salving conclusion.

Although the *BA:AB* follow-up to the *AB:BA* certainly hasn’t gone unnoticed, analysis has failed to explicate what ultimates from the symmetry Joyce marshals. Each of the pair of chiasmic quatrains separately ensues from the usual symmetry operation of reflection. Imagine a reflective plane placed horizontally on the physical page just after (under) the completion of the first two lines, “Pull out his eyes” followed by “Apologize.” As the consequence of this placement, two lines would appear as reverse correlates to the originals. The reflective or mirror plane would repeat the initial lineation, word for word. The composite structure would be such that the two halves exist as mutually superposable. That is, either side can be folded or bent back to match the other, the action mimicking the original notion of the term *reflection* as ‘a bending back.’ The bending back is a giving back alike—a mutuality which creates the strong impression of a coherent, accordant, harmonious whole. The explicating problem has been that the sense of wholeness and satisfying harmony of the individual quatrains has been extended and attributed to the eight-line aggregate. When the aggregate has been addressed, it has been wrongly interpreted. For example, Budick presumes it to be what is technically referred to as a “double chiasmus” (967). A double chiasmus occurs when whatever the first chiasmic sequence, a second follows in like sequential suit, that is, with identical ordinality.

The type of reflection by which we gain a double axesymmetrical design stands in contradistinction to a very exotic symmetry operation: antireflection. The relationship between Joyce's pair of quatrains is one of antireflection rather than reflection. Despite having the same lines, the quatrains composed of those lines are not reverse duplicates and, thus, not superposable. If bent back, they rival rather than match up with one another. Theirs stands a relation of incongruency and disjunction.

By means of antireflection Joyce pulls off, and to astonishing outcomes, the aberrant feat of antisymmetricality. Antisymmetry, which is the symmetry of opposites, is known to produce abstruse, jarring, alien, or weird effects with regard to nonlinguistic items (e.g., photograph negatives, reverse sides of facial casts). Notwithstanding that any mirror is "[a]t once canny and uncanny" (A. Cook 83), we would predict that an antisymmetricalizing mirror (something that can only be imagined) would have an inordinate flair for the uncanny. The prediction gains validity by observations of the perspicacious, influential visual arts theorist Norman Bryson.

Bryson waxes brilliantly on the phenomenon of antisymmetricality (although he doesn't identify it as such) in his detailed discussion of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres's *Portrait of Mme de Senonne*. Ingres depicts his portrait subject posing in front of a mirror that glimmers across and consumes almost all of the painting's background. The visual antisymmetry rife within this picture plagues the viewer attempting to "derive the mirror-image from its alleged 'original' " (Bryson, *Tradition and Desire* 166), for the two don't quite match up, although one suspects they should. But that sort of superposability would be what one is rightly entitled and naturally encouraged to expect under, what Bryson calls, "the old regime" of reflective symmetry, where "the mirror-image" acts "to confirm and to solidify the world it reflected" (166).

Under the illusory "regime" of antimirroring or antireflecting, viewers are not permitted such assurances. Rather than validation, they confront a condition of incommensurability and departure (declination or divarigation) between the original item and its so-called double. These items refract. Though Bryson doesn't, in fact, use the word *refract* to indicate what Ingres's painting effects, his discussion all but names it. The term means to 'break open' or 'break up'

and thereby intimates the difficulty or pain contingent on severing or de-parting. *Refract* also has direct associations with various kinds of deflexure: twisting, turning, bending, shifting, zigzagging, veering, swerving, curving, snaking—not by surprise, terms that show up over and over again when mirrors and chiasmus come under discussion. Coping with an eerie manifestation of antimirroring’s refraction, the Ingre’ onlooker strains to make visual sense of the experience of “their mutual displacement [i.e., that which exists between the so-called real Mme de Senonnes with her face to the viewer and the reflected image showing behind her], and to the lack which their discrepancy opens up” (*Tradition and Desire* 166–167; emphasis added). Instead of the correlating allegiances of mirror symmetry, the Ingres portrait hurls the viewer into the baffling antilogic of divergent or “disparate allegiances” (167). Visual antisymmetry, which destabilizes duplicated properties, blocks validation, and conducts “distortions of presence” and absence, leads to “bizarre, incongruous” outcomes that deeply “trouble” the onlooker (164, 167). Bryson emphasizes the acute frustrating of expectations in and the extreme disorientation that ensues from specular antisymmetry. Ingres’s salon mirror, ‘innocently fixed to’ his painting’s back wall, ruffles through and throws out our staid belongings (a.k.a., expectations).

Posters and other pictorial examples confirm Bryson’s high art citation.²⁷ Antimirroring, visual or not, leaves one feeling uneasy, misguided, defeated, at a loss or struggle for understanding. It is important to underline this disorientation, estrangement, and disturbance as well as the sense of relations anomalous, skewed, or warped (words having a genealogy in common with *refract* and the *de*-words already brought to bear), for the very reason Gose does not. In my view, Gose erroneously and quite unaccountably discovers a perfect “balance” and pleasing, exact mirror symmetry between the two chiasmic quatrains prominent in a work that drives its protagonist, from infancy to young adulthood, through a tortuous gauntlet of equivocation. It isn’t even-Steven (a balanced equipoise) for Joyce’s Stephen, who fluctuates between evasive and embracive actions. His is a tenuous passage of turns and counter-turns through life’s dangerous, fearsome zigzag where he contests against, but also evinces an inclination towards (thus, part of the tenuousness) the Scylla and Charybdis of antinomies. How

very much this passage is like our rhetorical figure characterized by a zigzagging, “oscillating transport”: that is, the inflection of chiasmus toward and away from contradictory poles that leads to both a paralysis and a hovering in the narrow space reflective of, but midmost between poles (Lacoue-Labarthe 60).

In contrast to Gose, I maintain that the shuttling, deviant twice-four lines of bewildering antisymmetry leave Stephen stymied, without the repose perfect balance and firm congruence would secure. The half self-made lines jerking the child to and fro between one fate and a contrary one give rise to feelings of forlornness, dread, and abandonment.²⁸ Conducive to the general trepidation and insecurity brought on by a devious antisymmetry, and therefore confirmatory of Stephen’s feelings, are miniscule, but nonetheless effecting formal properties of versification: the wrenched accent of “Apologize” and the heteromerous rhyme. These elicit a strained or coerced sense.²⁹ They and factors already referenced yield just what we would predict of a chiasmus that finds itself at odds (i.e., cross) with itself and, thereby, perfectly countered and ‘undone’ (i.e., perfectly deranged). Our prediction gains greater warrant if we elicit Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe’s remarks about the double-bind that is chiasmus, a vertiginous figure that leaves one tottering on the edge of “abysmal” uncertainty, and a dialectical form as subsidizing a “space of sacrifice” (70, 79). A small Stephen has every reason to cower and hide from these two blocked-off worlds, worlds apart and yet not at all.

Due to the literary exigencies of metrical lines and of page layout, the jingle that haunts Stephen in his sub-conscious or, perhaps more exactly, that he himself plays over and over to himself in his perversely arty way and that is itself a reflexive comment on the protagonist,³⁰ assumes the form of a ‘poem’ or ‘verselet’ but one that is at the very least anomalous,³¹ if not outright transgressive. This non-conformant form is solely, and quite strangely, composed of what we might identify as a pair of stanza-like refrains or refrain-like stanzas, which are exactly inverted one to the other. The assertive linear retroflection within the antisymmetric verselet unleashes a frighteningly violent message of proleptic import about the novel’s quintessential concern: the clash of what are near opposites, submission and punishment.³² Throughout Joyce’s work little happens without “two sides” at variance (*Portrait* 27), including the

permissive and restrictive attitudes that seesaw in Stephen's life. Thus the novel's protagonist is forever set up for the fears and quandaries that ensue when, by thought, word, or deed, he passes across (transgresses) the Maginot Line (i.e., inherent boundaries) between conflicting practices, prescriptions, proscriptions, and passions.

The to-and-fro and fro-and-to of the punctuated and 'poetically' differentiated lines epitomize the irresolution of the multiple binaries both at war within Steven Dedalus, "a person of immense contradictions," and ubiquitous in his disorientingly "unstable world" (Herr 343, 350). The strict *either/or* logic impressed upon Stephen at a tender age by an inordinately rivalrous cross form portends the acute cross relations of persons, wills, affiliations or allegiances (recalling Bryson's term), institutions, and ideas that will haunt the older child, adolescent, and young man. The "antireflectional chiasmus," the name I have coined for Joyce's unfun fun house mirroring, which archly, quizzically reverses reversal, though not at all to re-secure (make secure) or place things (up)right, sets the stage for the estranging, competing binary world in which a beleaguered Stephen must make his way.

In her inquiry into Joyce's text, Cheryl Herr cogently argues that verbal play, linguistic turns, and "figures of speech endlessly reconfigur[e] the relations of self and experience, subject and object" (355). Although Herr highlights that "From the first moment of *Portrait* Joyce insists that readers focus [...] on Stephen's education into figures of speech and his ability to move from one linguistic maneuver or turn to the inevitable next trope" (345), she identifies no figures. The reader's expectation—especially since Herr's is a deconstructive methodology and deconstructionists privilege, when they don't robotically idolize, chiasmus—is that within Joyce's tropological text she will single out our figure as the linguistic device that's the "crux of Joyce's epistemologically interrogative art" (338). Since she incongruously doesn't, I'll appropriate her employment of *crux*, doing so for the purpose of naming the chiasmus definitive of the novel: the oblique axis of Stephen's continual desire for clear-cut, orderly differentiation, causality, and identity crosscutting the second and equally dominant oblique axis of personhood, Stephen's constant experience of "overturning, interminably, [...] any given set of ordered terms" (356).

Despite that the word *chiasmus* ends a no-show in Herr's article, her irrefutable observations point directly to this trope's rhetorical sway within *A Portrait of the Artist*. These observations include, but are far from limited to, the following: that a "series of 'A and not-A' formulations under[lie] the Daedalus myth" at the heart of *Portrait* (355); that the mysterious, "cross-structural" labyrinth conceived by the mythical Daedalus, the "fabulous artificer," fosters Joyce's "fabulous" (fabled) representation of his protagonist's thoughts and actions as "paths turning back on themselves" (339); that the Daedalus-like Stephen, with his "recursive, tangled imagination" and "supple [i.e., retroflexive] periodic prose" (357; Joyce qtd. by Herr, 357), "eternally" makes "shift" to seek a way out of the maze of "ambivalences, ambiguities, and contradictions" characterizing his inner life and desires (359, 384); and that John Paul Riquelme's work on "prospective" and "retrospective framings," which Herr cites, correctly marks the "architectural" and "visual" components critical to the novel. These components "Joyce conjures" for the purpose of raising and ratcheting up, chiasmus-like, difference or distinction only to dismantle it (340). With its chiastic proclivity, *Portrait* anticipates the "innumerable reticulations and decussations" and the ingenious "distortions and convolutions of language" autographing Joyce's masterwork, the perversely riddling *Ulysses* (Chew and Altick 1486).³³

We began this inquiry into the portrait of a chiastic artist by referencing the magical realism (a reference to the fiction of Marquez) at the novel's opening. The apologize-eyes chiasmus has qualities associated with dreams: fragments, distortion, innuendo, and enigma rolled into a unity of sorts. The dream's 'content', however, is fully nightmarish, with a weaker Apologize the small David to a bullier, lengthier (lexically, four times taller), visually more assertive Goliath. Apologize has to make a fight of it to keep up (formally equalize) with Pull Out His Eyes. The rivalry of the words on the page iconizes the contest between punishment and its possible counterbalance in the world: apology. They, therefore, epitomize the dichotomy of wounding and healing.

In his twirligig of opposites, Joyce double fixes our eyes on "eyes" and "ize." It is enough to make us imagine, as a poet once did, that Stephen cries from his merciless "portal" for

someone to “ ‘wrap my eyes with linen fair.’ ”³⁴ The poet insists on Stephen’s cell as double bolted. I submit the blocks originate in a pair of crosses, one *per* block. The badge of the mythic Daedalus, said to mark the entrance of the Labyrinth, is of two raised axes canted symmetrically along their handles. The axe, of course, is a cutter, but it also warrants as the first object made by man. This primary artifact was made symmetrically in order that there would be “nothing accidental about the design” (Fletcher 20). Unnoticed until now is that a twee Stephen outdoes his mythic namesake by doubling the famous badge and displaying it close to the entrance of his textual Labyrinth and the reader’s threading through it.

As part of Joyce’s covert visual pranks with toddler’s blocks is that the two chiasma typographically islanded on a papery white sea evolve around a blank center. I believe that Joyce has multiple references here, but at the closure of this sub-section I have only room to mention two. The first is that the blankness at the nub-rub between the chiastic baubles instances vision rubbed out. Paradoxically, the blank center ‘looks to’ a potential future that incurs in the surrounding sectors. That future does indeed arrive in the most piercing section of the novel, the elaborated one that petrifies readers with infinity’s extent. The effect of the blank center, cinched between physical elements, is the equivalent in a written text of where the painter Mondrian conveys “a weightless universe, homogeneous and endless, beholden to no one and to nothing” (Arnheim, *Center* 104–105). Like his pint-sized, vision- and word-scaper, Joyce rubs his hands when he can make himself “a nice problem,” whatever the size and howsoever axially ornate (*Portrait* 165).

SPLITTING DIFFERENCES AND *NOT*

We presume of the chiasmus inscribed by Theseus that it resolves or at least tamps down a border dispute, thereby, staving off violence or abrogating war between opposing sides. Our presumption of a pacifying result follows from a linguistic strategem that marks a fair (conjoint) line, that is, an evenly split-down-the-middle arrangement. The dialogic inscription by the Greeks’ eminent half-God–half-man conquers through its pure divisional logic executed in league with an utterly neutral, nonaligned stance. Both of these conquests result from

equilibration across an isomorphic declaration. By the balance it performs, chiasmus can iconize neutrality through bi-lateral symmetry, an operation, as earlier noted, that is mathematically known as ‘invariance under permutation.’ Chiasmus has the policy wherewithall (the formal structure) to insure invariance. It can scaffold invariance even in conflicts and tugs of war. These last are agonistic involvements in which two sides (*A* and *B*) divide over an ideational–physical territory and in which *A* strives to change (permute) opponent *B*, with the goal of driving *B* over to *A*’s ideational position and *B* strives to accomplish the direct opposite. Invariance between agonists we call ‘stand-offs.’ The chiasmic policy, with its parallel clauses and provisions for equal treatment (rights and liabilities), can indemnify parity, stasis, stability, and accord between opposing sides, which is another way of saying that the sides refrain from acting under the pressures of hostility. Not only a mastermind of absolutism in problem solving, Theseus shows, in his column inscription, that he’s the height of fair-mindedness. Or, better said, he shows how to pick the right implement to lock in invariance and deliver on complete balance, even-handedness, nonalignment.

In converse to the role of impartial mediator placating disagreement, conflicts, and tremors, the *AB:BA* form can engineer hierarchy. Hierarchical relations suppose a reverse mechanics performed upon symmetry. With the force of its back gearings, chiasmus can reject a diminishing or an equalizing (zeroing out) of difference. Despite that difference, discrepancy, or contest is heightened, the overall feeling of incontestability that receivers have with the associating chiasmus occurs with the formula’s dissociating mechanics. Opportunely, chiasmus is made to make a difference. It draws distinctions by ramping up one constituent at the expense of its alternate. This ramping is the opposite of fair, of course, and the overall sense is of a locution dedicated to being unassailable.

It we hark back to Chapter One, we remember the discussion ending on a prophecy of a nation discharging measure for measure, the phrasing of which was designed by the strictly measured, one-for-one give-back capacity resident in the *AB:BA* formula. The chiasm itself performed a retaliatory circuit, a kind of two-sided mirror, with the plus of the mirror’s additional denotations. The desire to punish and ‘get back’ can be likened to Enmity holding up

a double-faced mirror to Enmity, wherein the reflections and re-reflections, terror and re-terror flash back and fire forth, reeking havoc and exercising reduction to no productive or good end. As far as we know, selection of the formula was absent premeditation. I believe we can adduce the same about a second 9/11 chiasm, but one far different in mood and message. The revenge chiasm at the close of Chapter One motivates and epitomizes the idea of meting out the same as one gets. The next example replaces retributive two-dimensionality with a heartrending one dimensionality.

On the six-month anniversary of the death plunges of the Twin Towers, a New York City fireman recounts his search for mortal remains. The man had spent every day of half a year in the incinerated site of Ground Zero looking to recover the body of his adult son, also one of the City's firefighters. The father had been a fireman his entire working life; the young man had been on the force a short seven months. In a television interview, the grieving parent protested that “ ‘It should be the other way around: he looking for me, not me looking for him’ ” (emphasis original).³⁵ Time's arrow had erred; it had turned the opposite way. The temporal error the fireman reports on upturns the natural order of the passing of generations. The man and his message cry over time out of joint, altogether mistaken.

The anachronic order attains expression by a disordering scheme. The scheme is built on a paleoform, the lines of which are deliberately, dynamically off-kilter. The message is crossed and engrailed by a X/X-ing–O-ing formulator. We read into the man's protest that his sorrow must be laid at time's zigzagging feet. The use of a *AB:BA* form faithfully (iconically) reckons in itself the meaning of ‘the other way around.’ Toss into the same locution a *not*, the malatoff cocktail of semantics, and then the ‘other way’ detonates a ‘wrong way around.’ Needless to say, it is in *not*'s meddling nature to volatize difference. Temporal dissociation (disharmony) within a form otherwise symmetric hinges on ideational and grammatical negation.

Negation, whose most obdurate lexical deliverer is *not*, throws a spanner in any works, a kink in any string of words. A *not* appearing in chiasmus is no exception. Negation is the stick in our mechanism's otherwise symmetrical spokes, the bender–upender that leaves one member flat out wrong—disputed, discredited, disallowed. Negation changes the whole deal. It

instigates dissociation and, in the case of a parallel structure like chiasmus, sidelines half of what had or might have been thought on or presumed. Negation, of itself, is a counterturn and puts a crimp on or wrench to whatever comes in its vicinity, including chiasmus, an operator already with a bend to it.

Critically, in the dissociating chiasmus that which is negated most decidedly isn't shown the door. Whether the *AB* or the *BA* is nullified, this member remains in order to work against itself. It remains behind to operate oppositewise itself. That is, a negated member of chiasmus labors on the semantic behalf of the other, the affirmative member. Perversely, the dissociative chiasm, in casting a black mark against itself, retains that mark of negation. How to account for this perversity, but to throw our suspicions on the ingenious crisscross at the heart of chiasmus? All chiasma work otherwise, but the dissociative type works extra otherwise and obliquely. The dissociative chiasmus, in a way of speaking, is out of joint; yet, strangely and subtlety is not, due to the fact the two contrastingly-arranged propositions partner on behalf of the one alone, the one proposition that is not undone by a negating terminology and is the polar positive to its polar negative. The retention of the negated member operates to further buttress the reverse other. It is a kind of balance that, queerly, isn't.

The dissociative chiasmus has an aversive disposition that runs the spectrum from casting doubt to a recasting that totally deposes. But wherever a given chiasm lands on this spectrum, any such will show a bias. Naturally, this is in keeping with the endemic bias (two, in fact) of the slanted cross, with its inclining toward and declining away. And, as indicated many times, the cross that spins (back) on itself brings along for formal ride concepts of circling. With negating coupled with O-ing, things are bound to go new ways and to cause us to roll alternative possibilities over in our minds. That “An important new idea [...] almost always includes a negative statement” is a common observation (Murray Gell-Man qtd. in Genz 310). We discussed how the reverting chiasmus was a ‘visual’ for the Copernican revolution. To be revolutionary, which we quite frequently equate with forward, creative thinking, paradoxically amounts to an exercise in backward, negating conceptualizing. We back track, to advance. By way of example, a car was advertised with this slogan: “It’s not about asking the question, but

about questioning the answers.”³⁶ A revolutionary, forward-engineered and ‘forward-minded’ car is not fettered by conventional notions of what a car should do and be. The advanced automobile isn’t bogged down in a doxology of seeking answers to the questions usually posed, whatever those dullards might be. Quite to the contrary, the superior auto ‘thinks’ altogether differently. By questioning the answers, it shifts to reverse. This is the take-charge car, amazing because it goes in two directions. It manages to be radical, while setting the standards.

In this same chiasm, we should not let pass unnoticed the “It’s not” opener. When we come upon the ‘It is not’ construction, especially when it appears in a phrase or clause in which two items are related, with one the predication to the other, we are primed to expect a reversal. When faced with this construction, we are set up to fill in a second half that will be a contraversion. We regularly exhibit a strong prenotation of what would satisfy the form, before the speaker finishes his chiasm or before our reading eyes arrive at the chiasmic locution’s completing words on a page.

First of all, this phenomenon of prenotation upholds Burke’s form-expectation combination. It is not unreasonable to connect this drawing ahead to how we complete the second of the two diagonals when drawing a × or X. This drawing ahead, as this last word suggests, occurs within our own mental operations, but also if someone else puts a single line slantwise on a piece of paper or a board. Seeing this diagonal, we feel compelled to give it its just mate, to counter and complete it. We feel a need to supply a similar but conversely slanted diagonal so as to make a crisscross. A solidus (diagonal) begs our eyes question ‘Where’s the other?’ — ‘Where’s the equivalent?’

The compulsion toward a second, completing diagonal is perhaps most easily visible in Pierro dell Francesca’s inspired fresco of the most famous of pre-crucifixion marches to Golgotha. The heavy, strangely wood-grained, absolutely flat-to-the-front plane upright beam athwart the fresco’s level surface from lower left corner to higher right has a smaller counter force in the lines of Christ’s cross diagonal leaning into the execution beam he shoulders.³⁷ The artist counts on the viewer to fill-in (complete) this second diagonal (only partially prompted for by the figure of Christ) as a formal response to and visually wanted equivalent to offset the

very tangible first diagonal that strikes the eyes with such vehemence. Piero della Francesca wisely presumes that, in the eyes and minds of those who will stand before his fresco, one physically assertive close-to forty-five-degree diagonal must have its crosswise equivalent. Those eyes and minds instinctively ‘draw’ (fill-in) that second diagonal as the fitting, required counterforce to match the hard materiality and visual intensity of the first. They, in fact, are the powerful ‘lifters’ that abet and relieve the condemned man. Their succor is the imaginative imposition of a force, a cross diagonal to prop up the overt diagonal that bears down on him, that is equal in faith to the hatred (the nonfaith) that seeks to crush their Savior. The viewer’s ‘intervention’ ensures a completed \times , the fitting symbolic citation to this scene of exceptional symbolism and agonism.

War, real war, is a sparring ground. In the immediate fallout, the ground will always be strewn with explanations. Many of these wear the chiasmic uniform. War’s eternal call up chiasmus quite naturally: two polarized sides that volley against one another; extreme partisanship and the divisiveness and conflict that go along with partisanship; the perpetuation of difference and disagreement; boundaries, territory, and the criticalities of place and placement; areas of positioning, engagement, and con-fusion that are focal points on which events climax; reciprocity, in the extreme; motivational imparities; retaliatory cycles and back-and-forth movements, of many types (combat’s assemblies and disassemblies, the deployments and redeployments of troops, etc.). Chiasmus, as we have seen, is redolent of annulling, death, and ideas about seeming to be or being dead-on right. It hardly needs saying that war, the ultimate in tactics and counter tactics, aggression and transgression, originates from *Gegensatz* and dead opposition, when acted on, realizes (makes real), as it determines on, dead warriors. The dual, dueling perspectives, the compulsion to overturn the positions of the other and *vice versa*, and the general intensity and agon that strict bipolarity and antithesis foster conduce to partner chiasmus and war. Antagonism, incurred on many a battle and other field, and our figure know one another full well.

Both dissociative and associative chi-thinking abounds in and about war zones, the current conflict in Iraq being no exception. If chiasma about this war were I.E.D.s (the war's shorthand for 'improvised explosive device') and the American public physically susceptible to their detonation, surely by now we would all be casualties. How many times have we heard or read about the Sunnai-on-Shia–Shia-on-Sunnai *quid pro quo*? On the fault lines and tit for tat's between Baathists and Jihadists? Jihadists and Americans? Americans and Baathists? One of the several situations that has halted progress in Baghdad and in other arenas is this chiastic 'Catch-22': that reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure can't happen without securing facilities, but securing facilities can't happen without reconstruction (the latter bringing stability).

From your average G.I. to the colonels in the field, from the administrative and military top brass to the Commander in Chief and his long-serving Secretary of Defense, the war enthusiasts and the war objectors, to the talking heads, the columnists and book writers, the bloggers, the woman on the street, and the man on the call-in radio show, all seem to enlist the incisive bevel of chiasmus to characterize opinions, interpretations, and appraisals of this 'war on terror.' This is understandable. Chi-thinking can hearten ideas about rapprochement, détente, and peace or it can steer the asymmetry and the taking of sides that compels war and keeps its reciprocities and terrors roiling.

During a brief radio interview, a young soldier recently back from a second tour in Iraq was asked to comment about how the citizens of this Middle Eastern nation felt about the America military presence. His response of a few sentences divided the feelings of a citizenry under occupation into two periods and distinguished between two kinds of military presences: present in the country at large and present in the neighborhoods. He summed up a changed situation this way: "First we were there [in country], but really not there, if you know what I mean; but, when we were there, walking through their neighborhoods, then we were there big time." His final *there* was vocally accented, but not exceptionally so. The radio show host, her panelists, two other interviewees, and the radio audience (or at least this one member) had no difficulty understanding the distinction the G.I. had drawn, unwittingly I'm sure, through the exigency of chiasmus. Despite the replication (four instances) of *there* (and these with only

understated qualification in the delivery) and the sizeable potential for confusion due to such close-quarter redundancy, nonetheless each *there* made complete sense within what John Searle would class as this “speaker’s utterance meaning.” Collocated, segregated, and flipped around chiastically, with a *but* as the hinge marking a refutative idea and a preceding *not* to mark and warn ahead a critical difference, the *there* pile up was decisive and formulated enough to drive home the speaker’s point.

The accrual of *there* can be an especially disorienting epizeuxis. We can think of when we’re told ‘Look there’ and we worry our heads with multiple right–left, quicktime swivels to espy just exactly where we are to direct our attention. At the very least, *there* is a vague deictic relative to *here*. We know here, rather intimately, but *there* is, by far, no *here*. Archibald MacLeish plumbs the vagueness of *there* in a poem in which he gangs the word up seven times in four lines. He takes full advantage of a term suggestive, on surface, of resolution, direction, even obstinacy, but that also has an indistinctness and elusiveness, especially when it is multiplied. In the poem, a reader’s directed, but unspoken question of ‘What about *there*?’ is upturned, for the answer, literally, is a routing “nothing at all.” As it turns out, ‘There is no there there.’ Fittingly, behind MacLeish’s grand negating ‘trick’ is a named “ambidextrian” with strong X identifications.³⁸ Intriguing as those identifications are, especially as they are affirmations of several postulates about X in Chapter Two, what we need to deliberate on at present is how even a small conglomeration of *there*’s can lead to perplexity, if not out-and-out incomprehension. By excessive repetition, *there* becomes a mystery as to location and direction. With these ideas in mind we are now ready to return to the soldier’s locution.

The bleeding of the locution’s reference by the accumulation of *there*’s underscores the rhetorical work performed by the chiastic blueprint. Here the work is felt almost like a repair or restoration. If it weren’t for its in-built partitioning, the formal guidance (logic) of the *AB:BA* structure, and the definitive, dissociating *not*, listeners would be hard pressed to sort out any four *there*’s in such an exceptionally contracted linguistic space. From just a glance at (*there*) (*not there*) : (*there*) (*there*), even if one doesn’t read written or understand spoken English, the *not* is a visual stand out, as negatives everlastingly are. They’re overt discriminators. That’s

their job. They excel at distancing or divorcing one thing from another, including in locutions that fall under our heading of ‘dissociative chiasmus.’ Certainly much more than the conciliatory, unitive *and* and more than the diplomatic, neutral *or, not* has a real attitude: it is most definitely the in-your-face logical operator. *Not* never leaves off a disputatious spirit. Moreover, negation has free range across all of language’s jurisdictions and man’s ideas; there are no limits whatsoever on what may be dissociated.

Linguistic negators don myriad guises. Eva Brann, in her superlative study of negation, calls them terms of “naysaying.” In the dissociative formulations of chiasmus, *not* is the predominate naysayer. Other negating terms are *no, not any, conversely, instead, never, and nothing*. With chiasmus, sometimes a simple, mild-mannered *but* or the like-mannered reformulatory adverb *rather* turn the negative (dissociative) tide, which suggests the substantial signifying part played by syntactic, non-semantic reversal in the *AB:BA* composition. Negatives operant in the dissociative chiasmus include phrases that communicate objection, for instance, *on or to the contrary, contrary to what you may think, as opposed to, adversely, as against or over against, in counter distinction, just the opposite to, quite the opposite or quite the reverse, just the other way, just the other way around, in flat opposition, and running counter to*. Obviously, this list is incomplete. Like the two-year olds we once were, we have no end of ways to say ‘No!’

With regard to that category of chiasma with an eye to the contrary, the dissociating locution need not shout its discrepancy, that is, it need not use a word that is blatantly objecting or negating. Emerson illustrates this in his droll observation, the truth of which new parents are quick to accede and older parents never forget: “Infancy conforms to nobody; all conform to it.” In an epitomizing fashion, the tiny world of Emerson’s chiasm is framed by infancy (specifically with *infancy* and its anaphoric pronoun, *it*). Chiasma and babies have attributes in common: both keep others in line and subject to their (formal) demands; both cause their attendants to run at crosses and in circles. Juxtaposed and centered within the locution are the near opposites *nobody* and *all*. Our Emerson chiasm encourages us to notice how a deft circumscription and management of subject and object and, more generally, figure and ground,

govern for and induce meaning. Notably, *conform*, the verb over which infancy and the opposites negotiate, if you will, iterates the conforming that chiasmus oversees. But here conformance goes one way only, in favor of bawling, demanding tiny nonconformists. Chiasma, like babies, are exclusive entities: imperatives permitting no exceptions to the microcosm in which they rule. The dissociative chiasm procures for the infant the very asymmetry she imposes on her circle of courtiers.

For purposes of comparison, let us contemplate a chiasm by Pascal. The mathematician, scientist, and theologian who wagered his earthly life, by betting on the possibility of a heavenly afterlife, defined humankind as “Nothing in relation to the infinite, everything in relation to nothing, a mean between nothing and everything” (Pascal qtd. in Seife 101). Pared down to its essential terms, the chiasm lays out *(nothing) (infinite) : (everything) (nothing)*, with *infinite* a synonym for *everything*. The paraphrase of Pascal’s locution is that *nothing* and *everything*, which are true opposites, meet at a medial point. In the next section we will discuss the idea of betweenity, but suffice it to say now that Pascal’s example illumines how the relative placing of contrastive or contradictory key terms within the external *AA* slot or the internal *BB* slot directs meaning in different directions. The example also brings out one of the major differences between the associative and the dissociative chiasmus. The first may encourage a virtual or veridical pulling together or consolidating mid-zone; the second triggers no such medial-space conceit.

Chiasmus can procure the slipping of boundaries, existential, moral, aesthetic, etc. We have an immense epistemological need as well as an insatiable psychological hunger for such slipping. But sometimes chiasmus will play to the need and even enunciate the hunger, but purposely not satisfy either. Illustrative is a chiasm that is the first sentence opening an article achingly entitled “Thinking of the Friend So Alive He Can’t Possibly Be Gone” (Schroeder). The friend of the self-consciously long-and-drawn-out title died at a relatively young age, his life unexpectedly cut short, in contrast to the title his life inspired. The deceased had evinced a boundless love of life and exceptional joy in his children, family, and friends. Surprising then that his death less than two years previous failed to evoke real mournfulness in the author of

“Thinking.” Immediately following the death, Robert Schroeder went on with his life, thinking off and on again about his friend Mizra. Schroeder lent occasional thought, but without a real pull of emotion—until one day. With no thought at the time of the departed Mizra, Schroeder took a long look into the eyes of his newborn. Over that protracted moment he was jolted by a terrible revelation: “My son Alex will never know my friend Mizra. But Mizra would have wanted to know him.”

Two profound separations disturb the new father’s epiphany: specifically, the chasm between life and death and the gulf between times past and present. His article’s inaugurating chiasm casts a future of endlessly missed knowing, while it raises the specter of a future perfect time of desired knowing. The raising, which comes about by the ‘if-only’ reverie with which everyone has experience, occurs in the second sentence. Here the author envisages how his friend, a besotted father to his own young son, would have felt about this newborn, if only death and time hadn’t stolen Mizra too early from all who cared for him. Prematurity bequeaths multiple heartbreaks on Mizra’s family and friends. These heartbreaks are missed opportunities, the kind we assume will take place, if only a circumstance had intervened in the individual’s life and forestalled death’s preemption. The haunting opportunities, lost for all time, accentuate and make more poignant time’s steadfastly asymmetric course.

The chiasm introduces Alex and Mizra as non-meeting equivalents, two individuals who would have relished the presence of the other in their respective lives had time been more favorable: if it had allowed a temporal-ontological overlap. This chiasm illustrates how parallel ideas conjoined along a parallel array abet the mind’s grasp of equivalence (Hodges 286). The existential and temporal nullity between persons that are equivalent (equivalent because of their projected, two-way relish of the existence of the other) and the idea of events that are lop-sided for the author: these are heightened and achieve more dolor and pathos by the factual, real-world presence of a cross-involving form. The negating between parallels is underwritten by *never* and the plaintive *would have*. Alex and Mizra are analogous to two ships that cross in the darkness and loneliness of night, never sighting, never even knowing how near they were to a happy meeting. The double miss by vessels (lives) that have kept to its (his) prearranged route

on the vast sea (of existence) is poignant for the near proximity that occurs just so very short of connection. This is the poignancy of the oh-so-close, but futile *might-have-been*, of the disallowed *if-only*, of the *forever dreamed on*, but never to be.

In their separate life vessels traveling along strictly parallel, non-converging (dissociative) routes, Mizra and Alex miss the wonderful chance of coming across and knowing one another. What we might consider the “semantic, paraphrasable, propositional content” of this relationship (Postman 49) could assume dozens of perfectly workable discursive structures. But, by its particular form, chiasmus wins additional meanings and vital nuances over, for instance, a reflexive sentence. Chiasmus possesses a meaningful edge over alternative discourse options. One facet of *meaningful* is that the chiasm tells with more emotional punch. The punch seems born out when dramatized (iconized) on the miniature boards of the chiastic stage. The unsurpassable contemporary essayist Joseph Epstein praises in writing the “formal mimesis of content” (41). This formality is exactly what Schroeder achieves in his chiasm.

Compare the reflexive sentence that starts off the previous paragraph to a substitute like the following: ‘Mizra misses the opportunity to know Alex and Alex misses the opportunity to know Mizra.’ This alternative to the reflexive co-indexes the persons, but it also keeps before us the two-sidedness and one-to-one coordination of a shared lapse and a kind of common ‘bereavement.’ Double missing is enacted in the language itself, unlike with a reflexive form. A chiasm of two negatives captures the double disconnection (loss) of reverse-oriented vectors. In our minds, this chiasm prompts two opposing orientations that we might represent with time’s arrow leading up to Mizra’s death and a second arrow beginning with Alex’s birth. Between the two is a temporal caesura, the chasm or gap marking dissociation:

—————> Mizra’s death
Alex’s birth —————>

The double negating chiasmus with its discontinuous timelines adumbrates the disparity and disjunction between infant son and deceased friend. We ‘see’ how one arrow comes in close proximity, but ends short of where the second begins. Chiasmus presides iconically over the

non-relations, the disconnection or absence, between two. In the present case, we might diagram those nonexistent relations in one of two ways:

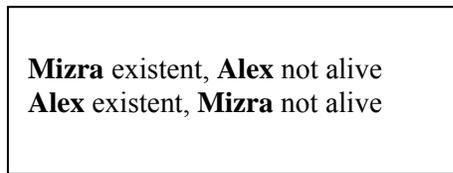


Diagram 1

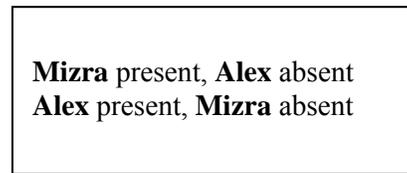


Diagram 2

Diagram 1 and Diagram 2 represent the same situation Schroeder's chiasm sets forth. The top line of each diagram stands for a time different from, in fact, at odds, from the line beneath it. Both diagrams have an inherent cross diagonal that controls for an arrangement between the twin relations of existence and temporality. The chiasmus enables us to read these relations as polarities. As the consequence of the infant and man at existential-temporal cross purposes (poles), there's zero chance of their coming together. Neither can cross the intractable chasms, timewise and beingwise, segregating them and precluding any contact between the living infant and the deceased adult. The liveness of each is heightened by a fateful and implacable cross. The liveness encourages the deep forlornness of the chiasm.

Even though there's no Theseus to perform as physical go-between, an intangible mediator exists between Mizra and Alex. A sole common ground rests within the imagination of the person who 'stands between' the baby and friend temporally divorced and ontologically severed. The author relishes the notion of holding both in his mind. In this animated, imaginative holding, a double award awaits: he will have the child his friend so wanted for him and, too, his friend, "silently, prayerfully," has bestowed a return, a new 'life.' This is a type of creative betweenity, but not one achieved chiastically. Rather, the Mizra-Alex chiasm exists to inscribe the incongruity that the article's title registers. The incongruity has to do with Time's unfortunate timing, the appreciation of which is heightened beyond what a simple reflexive sentence could afford.

The climactic quality of chiasmus, that it exhibits a robustly summarizing nature, works

on several levels for Schroeder. Probably the most important is that by stationing it at his article's absolute beginning, he gives it the preeminence it deserves as psychological climax and turning point: where he is caught up short, a person, to his shock, consternation, and shame, emotionally bankrupt. It is by connecting his life-filling, loved child and 'lively,' loved friend as perpetually disconnected and electing a figure that iconically places the two at variance, that he allows himself to give vent to his feelings and admit how "deeply" he "still" misses Mizra, an admission that becomes that first momentous baby step in "delayed mourning." This formalizing of the disparate divulges something new and desperate, namely, the need to reconcile the loss of his friend. The need seems the greater, because the stately, convertible chi-structure drives an incontrovertible bargain. Through formal interchange between two versions of a situation, the chi-structure can figure the irreversible arrangement and permanent settlement, whether it be a geo-political arrangement between border disputants or the missed arrangement between two in different life and time sectors. Chiasmus, by its tight, rigid formalizing, figures the life-death disparity and temporal lapses as insurmountable.

Mourning initiates from a parting of the ways, the very object of dissociation. It is a period when emotions are perturbed, memory is a double-edged sword, and time plagued by its density and its ineluctable back and forth between loss and past having, between the cold, dark now and the warm, bright earlier. At the least, mourning amounts to a complication; we experience the impossible coincidence of our lives as frozen in time and yet aging.³⁹ Sometimes, death's negatives lie buried. Consider this chiasmus, which at first glance strikes us as thoroughly associative. "What you are, we were. What we are, you shall be." The *(you) (we) : (we) (you)* wording from an Italian cemetery instantiates the very shifts of time.⁴⁰ The passage renders Death's equanimity, its annihilation of difference. The folding inward of a chiasm accomplishes the very erasure (of difference) that the words describe. Annihilation cuts here through the two bloodless strokes of cross diagonals. The chiasm, with the incisiveness and certainty of its form, also epitomizes the message as an unassailable one.

Although the inscription's confident prediction hardly heartens the tombstone's reader, the certitude appears to offer staid consolation, of a kind, to the 'voice' coming from the grave.

The strict ordinality of the chiasm contributes to the mood of a situation where what is due will be doled out as prescribed. The prediction's minimalism recalls that of Theseus's assertion. Both are bare-boned transversals with an axiomatic edge. Those directly addressed, the *you* visiting the cemetery, are bound to cross the line past "the edge of doom" exactly as the entombed *we* have already so crossed. There's no instead, no outside chance of some other scenario. For, in reading the inscription, one is caught within its gloom and its ill-humored mood of comeuppance. This mood is underwritten by a cross-grained locution. The still living visitor-reader, in becoming the addressee, the fated *you*, simply by the ill luck of reading the inscription is encircled by a circular stratagem, one which propels him or her to come full circle: to turn, in the end, deceased, resident writer. There's no escaping this matching-up fate: for death's commanding round gathers all eventually within its grim, glowering embrace. The inscription reader can do little more than sigh over the certitude of his Everyman destiny. Chiasmus inclines to a recapitulating or summing-up result, to which recipients find it difficult to do other than concede. In a manner of speaking, we emulate chiasmus: by which I mean, we capitulate, in turn.

Although we respond to the cemetery chiasm as associative in nature, as I believe we are intended to, it also seems that its mournful message secretes a negative in the word *were*. The past tense of the plural copula can be akin to a negative; it has something of the lament of *would have*, most especially when coupled with the concept of time. The *AB* of the message is the equivalent of 'What you are, we were, but aren't now.' I believe that the slightly negative pulse consequent of *were* potentiates the bit of vengeful sentiment detectable in this chiasm and the somewhat challenging, hard-edge feel that it has about it. With a dissociative chiasmus, one side runs a circle 'round its opposite; it gets the better of the other. The hierarchical nature of the dissociative can be a type of one-upmanship, the very feeling that lingers within this chiasm and the reason why I earlier used the term *comeuppance*. I invite the reader to weigh this dissociative-inducing reading, which doesn't negate the associative one. This example, along with the one in the next paragraph, urges us to notice how the presence of a single term and its interpretation complicates, although it doesn't eliminate a form's basic gearings, in this case,

those of chiasmus.

Just because two negatives appear in a chiasm doesn't necessarily establish a double dissociative circumstance. In Theseus's chiasm, we felt how it both brought the Ionians and the Peloponnesians together and, simultaneously and reversely, segregated them. That chiasmus can be scissile and consolidating, both at the same time, gestures to the figures' complexity. To investigate this complexity, consider a made-up chiasm and ponder its broader applications. Someone, for instance, might proclaim the following of an archeological dig or of the Vietnam Memorial, following a discovery that reveals either individual or societal affection between persons: "Not dead sediment; rather, sentiment not dead." The *sediment* and *sentiment*, by virtue of being homonymic equivalencies, further draw a likeness across the chiasmic formulation of *(not dead) (sediment) : (sentiment) (not dead)*. The second *not dead* is the negative of a positive. It refers to that which in some manner is enlivened, come to life, quickened. The fallout of this enlivening is that this *not* distinguishes the *BA* member from the *AB*. The example falls into the class of dissociative chiasma. Rarely are we tripped up by negatives that have the express purpose of realizing a positive. When negatives function in this non-negative capacity within the *AB:BA* formula, we process them as effortlessly as elsewhere. They may be illogical complexities on paper and of endless fascination to semanticists, but we almost never give them a second glance.

Chiastic dissociatives can incline to degrees that cause others or even their creators to slip. Michael Polanyi draws on the dissociating powers of the *AB:BA* figure to compose a rationally dishonest argument about reason and objectivity. Analogizing a scientific theory to a map charting difficult, unknown terrain, he indicates that if a person is to find his way via a map, he must engage in the process of reading it. He says of this engagement of map-reader to map that "I may be deluded in the process, but the map cannot be deluded [by me]" (4, emphasis original). The map "remains right or wrong in itself, impersonally." A theory (map) continues its "steadfastness" self (a presumed good) and remains independent of ("unaffected" by) anything having to do with the theory knower (the map reader). This exclusivity (map incapable of delusion), arising from theory equating to itself solely, marks a difference in the

theory–theory knower relationship. The difference reflects the unilaterality and hierarchiality the dissociative chiasmus is booked to pattern.

Polanyi requires one-sidedness to prop up his implicit claim that a scientific theory enjoys objectivity, but is devoid of subjectivity. In other words, humans can read off a theory and be deluded “in the process,” but the reverse simply cannot happen: that “the process” will not delude the theory. By this asymmetry, theory comes off much the superior, impervious and solidly indifferent to “whatever mood or desire may possess” the human. Though humans are subject to the vagaries of subjectivity, theory knows nothing of this impoverishing condition. “It has a rigid formal structure, on whose steadfastness” we “can depend” no matter “the fluctuations occurring within” our persons. From this declaration, Polanyi doesn’t develop, but rather presumes that this dependence indicates our need to put trust in the theories of science. Theory can do for blighted us what we cannot reliably do for ourselves: conceive dispassionately, rationally, objectively, and indifferently.

When he gets right down to it, Polanyi ‘informs’ that humans will always be human and, because human, subject to deception. He ‘informs,’ too, that humans can’t be “impersonal.” Commendably for theory, it can be impersonal, detached, indifferent, at least by this author’s interpretation. The map-analogy, which receives the persuasive push of chiasmus, Polanyi deploys to draw his affected *versus* “unaffected”/deluded *versus* non-deluded dichotomies. Although not incorrect, these dichotomies are empty and tautological. While we can’t disagree that maps (i.e., theories) don’t become deluded in themselves, whether by us or by any other agent, neither does the tree outside my window, the keyboard on which I type, or Polanyi’s book on my desk. Except for ourselves, what doesn’t qualify as “impersonal”? If we follow the reasoning that theory can be what we cannot, then again so can a tree, window, keyboard, book, and desk. Do these—by favor of belonging to the rational side of the dichotomy: unwaveringly, ‘rigidly’ themselves; objects impervious (not subjectable) to delusive antics; and unmoved by human opinions or biases—also deliver the objective, human-independent, sensory-free knowledge that Polanyi assumes mathematics and science are the guarantors? Though he stacks his argumentative bets high by wagering the obvious, Polanyi risks as much thereby. The whole

apparatus, which ironically can't stand up to "objective" scrutiny, topples instantly for the reader who spies the obvious chinks in what is a tautological edifice. But, if it isn't spotted, Polanyi 'gets off' with a huge claim. At the same time, Polanyi takes a considerable risk with his chiasmic verb. He uses *delude* because it works with his map analogy in the assertion that objective knowledge tends to guide us more reliably than the second type of knowledge: that which springs from the "more immediate impression."

The chiasm's grammar enacts the objectivity *versus* subjectivity distinction that its composer expands upon in a series of division-making applications. In addition to those applications of Polanyi's already noted, his dialectical approach theorizes two essential knowledge types. The first is "objective knowledge," whose model student is the "theoretical knowledge" of math and science. The second type, from "more immediate sensory experience," isn't in the same category as the first. Sensory knowledge can result in "dubious and possibly misleading appearances." Although Polanyi doesn't outright specify this other category as *subjective*, his chiasm and the fall from it, essentially do the job for him.

TWO AND TWO TOGETHER AND CONTRARIWISE

Chiasmus is a figure with many tricks up its voluminous sleeves. One especially bewitching is the double *notted* version. That is, the version in which each member contains a *not*, or some other refuting term, or some combination of the two. Even were it possible, the permutations among the refuting terms of this chiasmus type are not worth working out. Therefore, for present purposes it will be enough to use a general nomenclature to designate the genus, I call, *notting*. The nomenclature should note the negation factorial, whatever its form or cover. For purposes of nomenclature, we can designate it *not*, whether *not* is, in fact, the actual negating term.

Chiasmic *notting* accomplishes conceptions of mutual exclusivity. However, when we tell ourselves or someone else that two entities have nothing to do with one another, we nonetheless have to put them together in our mind and expression in order to separate them. To draw a difference, we must initiate a gathering or double placement such that displacement can follow

on. Chiasmus emulates, in condensed form, the complex cognition required to think on the mutually exclusive. The chiastic device, which handles aggregates and disaggregates, can cultivate two-way dissimilarity as well as two-way similarity.

On the relationship between alphabetic letter and phoneme, a specialist on medieval letters writes, “the sound is not the origin of the mark; the mark is not the direct imprint of the sound” (Kendrick 25). The *(sound) not (mark) : (mark) not (sound)* chiasm illustrates a dissociation: namely, between the letter mark and the sound notationally marked. At the same time, the dissociation cuts both ways. In the double negative relationship, each side breaks from the other. The mark and the sound have in common that there isn’t a commonality or natural bridge between them, at least not as brought out in the chiasm. Sound and mark are, thus, different (dissociated) from one another, but in that difference and the degree of it they are alike. It is a kind of splitting of association and dissociation, a halving that, in the end, rests more on the side of difference. This splitting-and-difference topic will claim greater attention a little later.

But more than dissociation, the chiasm also records the arbitrariness of mark to sound and *vice versa*. Here the switching of places between two nouns in two cross-miming members advantages the notion that either place will do. And if either can, then, as easily, neither may. It’s all rather suspicious because of the laxity of placement and relational identity. The *arbitrary* connotes that which is changeable, a vagary, without reason or explanation. The word names the unaccountable or that which comes about by sheer happenstance. The arbitrary has about it the transgressive, simply by virtue that it precludes or lacks a rationale. It is more than fascinating to consider how letters, since their very inception, have been suspect, judged even deceitful, for many reasons, but especially due to their translational-transformative faculties. These faculties, which are extraordinary and powerful, have bestowed on them a characterization of transgressiveness.

Under the entry for *converse* in *Webster’s Dictionary* we find one definition from logic: “no S is P ~ no P is S.” This postulate is more than logical; it is chiastic. And, it is an instance, pure in the way of logic, of double *notting*. Note that the tilde, a favorite designator in

mathematics and logic, actualizes a physical chiasmus: a scriggle moving upward then downward then upward in a continuous curve. The up-down-up iconizes the idea of uncertainty and alternate versions (directions). In logic, a *converse* is a converted proposition; usually due to “transposition of the subject and predicate of a proposition to form a new proposition” (*OED*) and, not coincidentally, in rhetoric, it is the equivalent of *antistrophe*. The tilde, a miniature visual chiasm, we interpret as meaning “conversely.” In Spanish the mark designates a palatalized sound requiring the tongue’s movement curvature along a similar curve, where the up position is the mouth’s palate. Pertinently, the tilde, by its double reversing in space, also designates (formally designs and symbolizes) ‘negation.’

Contrary to Dante’s chiasmus that produces a tortuous synonymy, chiasmus can disentangle the same. Frank Smith, in wishing to distinguish between *identification* and *recognition*, knew he was up against a prejudice that supposed that these two terms are interchangeable (102). He finds this prejudice in reading and in other disciplines (e.g., experimental psychology). A “tortuous” rendering into identity of two “that are not, strictly speaking, synonymous” requires the interweaving of *identification* and *recognition* to be untied. Interesting for present purposes, Smith recruits chiasmus, a device of interposing, to disentangle and, thus, distinguish the two. In claiming that an individual can recognize, but not be able to identify, or can identify, but not recognize, Smith hopes to de-synonymize the word pair. He explains that “We recognize people when we know we have seen them before, whether or not we can put a name to them. We identify people when we put a name to them, whether or not we have meet them before” (102, emphasis original). The chiasm can be abbreviated as:

(*known/seen before*) (*name or not name*) : (*name*) (*met/seen or not met/seen before*),
or, more constricted yet, (*A before*) (*B or not B*) : (*B*) (*A or not A before*)

Substituting the terms under Smith’s consideration, the chiasm could read in the following abbreviated form:

(*recognize*) (*identify or not identify*) : (*identify*) (*recognize or not recognize*)

There is much to unpack from this abbreviation, but I only wish to focus on how Smith's chiasm $(A) (B \text{ or not } B) : (B) (A \text{ or not } A)$ figure formulates that A can be understood or not understood relative to B . That is, they may or may not be associated. The same goes for B . It may or may not be understood relative to A . It is the second of these, the mere fact of dissociation, which precludes A as synonymous to B or B , to A .

The dissociative chiasmus exhibits a deconstructive personality. It contests within itself, usually in order to divert from a pre-existing idea. In this regard, the dissociative chiasm is self-confuting or self-conflicting. Its figuration involves *correctio* and *dissimile* (Erasmus, *Copia* 60,61). One side has favor over the other and the shift in position creates an undermining effect. As detailed in the Galatians macro chiasm that tied all its elements together, chiasmus gives the impression that it covers (cross ties) the entire field of possibilities. With the dissociative chiasmus there is this same sense. It puts a logical limit on reversal, which chiasmus in its Logician's hat, seems almost to prove in its retention of the negative. The reversed idea's trace remains behind, the refuted sided/member not entirely expunged. The doctrinaire member, though turned back on itself, it remains (please weigh each word) 'still in all there.' It remains behind, almost a superimposed region, if you will, for the affirmative member to rail/resist against. Though overturned, this member has the small victory of staying behind. It has not been excised, neither on the page nor probably in the mind and memory of the receiver. It has a life, reduced though it is by the affirmative, but an 'existence' nevertheless. It is displaced, but not misplaced (omitted). Something similar happens in Brunelleschi's repeated insistence in architecture's "rigorous method" for "having the formal dissonances [continue] in evidence" (Benevolo 65). The dissonance in each *not* half of a dissociative chiasmus functions as a kind of semantic support scaffolding the forefronted member. Such rigorousness follows on the conception and creation of \times/X , where one cross tie comes after the putting in place of an earlier one. The second stands athwart the original erected diagonal, in the same way the dissociating (*not*) member we 'view' as dominating a pre-existing notion.

Chiasmus possesses what Henry James called a "splendid particular economy" for pulling things around to one's preferred side or arrangement. The dissociative chiasmus not

only makes much of its bias, effecting it by two; it makes a visual (asymmetric) display of its off-kilter partiality. Ralf Norrman indicates of the non-symmetric chiasmus (what I have designated the dissociative) that the “halves [are] turned against one another” (38). But that isn’t the complete story; for, despite that the dissociative “argument cuts only one way” (130), the halves, in a certain sense, ‘work’ together to realize a unilateral relationship. One competing theme already surrenders and reconciles to its defeat relative to a second, contrary theme. The dissociative chiasmus opts for a left over a right or *vice versa*; a beginning over an end or *vice versa*; an active over a passive or *vice versa*. Nevertheless, dissociative chi-thinking brings together, associates, in order to split and take a side. This is not unusual, for we require order to determine a state of disorder, symmetry to inference asymmetry, thesis to detect antithesis. The dissociative chiasmus manipulates thought along the same lines by which we set up and sue for any cognitive difference. This manipulation is further evidence of the primitive, elementary aspect of the cognitive capacity of chiasmus.

BETWEENITY: TARGETTING INTERIORITY

So if I’m on this side o’ the fence, and
you’re on the t’other, what’s in the middle?
— William Blake

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the shadow.
— T. S. Eliot, “The Hollow Men”

In *Fathers and Sons*, Ivan Turgenev observes of his novel’s “lonely bachelor,” that “Pavel was entering upon that indefinite twilight period of regrets that are akin to hopes, and hopes that are akin to regrets, when youth is over, while old age has not yet come.” The plaintive tonality of the description significantly depends on Turgenev’s chiasm, with its rhythmic, musical measure and resonance, properties that we associate with the subject here represented, time. We speak of moving through cadences and advancing on a melody’s pattern

or its return. To the degree repetition creates a chiming or vibration, a chiasm affords, at a minimum, a sense of the temporal.

But we perceive, too, how the chiastic form bears a physical and, therefore, visual weight and how two counter members incline and rest across a middle zone. This zone, which Turgenev relates as his character's "twilight period," (middle age) is often a pensive place, for it is from a central fulcrum whereby pending or decline initiates. What the Russian novelist has in mind with an "indefinite twilight period" is a place of in-between. This between place, when chiastically conducted, is the equivalent of the X intersect.

Intersections encompass intrigue. Intersection is the come-on shouted in book and movie advertising. Its prodigality is due to the presumption that "at the intersection of [] and []" is an insatiable formula to consumers.⁴¹ These and other entertainment commodities (e.g., video games, television shows) are hyped on the promise they will immerse participants in a fascinating 'world' "at an intersection" or "at the crossroads." Where domains entangle and complicate, the presumption is that the unexpected is meet up with. This is where two take on one another in an intriguing, tense encounter. The intersection, conventionally unclear, holds marvels and terror, bliss and violence. That is why it captivates.

The vital and certainly the most wondrous situate us, if only for the most fleeting of instants, in the strangeness of the in-between. Bruner espouses that man is forever seeing the interstices (*Knowing* 60). Although one is reluctant to put a caveat to Jerome Bruner, it would be more accurate to sponsor that man is forever seeking the interstitial, which may or may not release its holdings. Prying open intervals and then figuring out if we can make heads or tails of them is a primal pursuit. Any such endeavor, whether religious or other, embarks on wonderwork, which is motivated by a want of the exceptional, incomparable, or unaccountable. Intersections or interstices are sites and potential sights of *transcendence*, a word replete with notions of spatiality, movement, and emergence.

Chiasmus dedicates to effecting this situating/sighting. It would not be a great risk to nominate betweenity as the most fascinating of chiastic affordances. To begin to undertake a march on the topic of betweenity, our first step brings us to the poetic loom of Ted Kooser. "A

Jacquard Shawl” contains a half chiasmus, one whose second half is implied and all by finished by a poetic line. Inwardness, im-plication, and intersection, themes that dominate “Shawl,” bear on chiastic construction rather stunningly. First, however, we must catch our breath after finding ourselves riveted by the following eighteen lines:

A pattern of curly acanthus leaves,
and woven into one corner
in blue block letters half an inch tall:
MADE FROM WOOL FROM SHEEP
KILLED BY DOGS. 1778.
As it is with jacquards,
the design reverses to gray on blue
when you turn it over,
and the words run backward
into the past. The rest of the story
lies somewhere between one side
and the other, woven into
the plane where the colors reverse:
the circling dogs, the terrified sheep,
the meadow stippled with blood,
and the weaver by lamplight
feeding what wool she was able to save
into the faintly bleating, barking loom.⁴²

Kooser stays clear of modernity’s tendency toward “mystification of the past” over which John Berger, for one, worries. The poet, in fact, dramatically petitions against the mystification and decries any commodification of the art and design object dating to an earlier era. His tale of the shawl’s past, its provenance, most definitely isn’t a pretty picture.

J. M. Jacquard (1752–1834) lent his name to the weaving machine he invented. The machine automated the standard loom’s pattern-making process. Of special relevance to chiasmus and its textual (discourse) shuttling and ‘twist’ of materials is that the spun fiber of the warp (the word means ‘that which is thrown across’) in these programmed shuttles followed either an ‘s’ or a ‘z’ form; the explanation being that these self-reversing (switchback) shapes mimic the anatomic reversion that holds across a pair of human hands and mimic the bimanual lateralization of humans performing sequenced, lateral–reverse lateral movements. The shuttling loom based on human hands and their complimentary side-to-side (cross) movements manufactured materials of amazing intricacy and precision. The repetition of pattern was

flawlessly executed and endlessly duplicable, as long as the machine operators (who retained in Jacquard's day the traditional title of weavers) inserted the correct series of punch cards. These punched cards channeling the shuttle's sequences programmed the fabrication and the fabulously, famously matching back-to-front–front-to-back patterns.⁴³ The interlacing in the Jacquard material physically and visually 'ties' one side of the fabric to the other. Each side is the reverse design of the other. Of even greater interest is that what is figured (accentuated) on one surface 'turns' ground on the reverse and contrariwise on the obverse surface, each the 'woodblock' of, yet concurrently the blocked 'print' of the opposing side. These materials, known for densely whorling, wreathy, sigmoidal designs, and their flip-side correspondence must have been, in their day, an extraordinarily rich and beguiling vision; a creation implicating, compelling, and amazing, along the resplendent lines of a magic carpet.

Though blindingly demystifying at one level, Kooser's construction mystifies and disturbs at many other levels. Upon finishing "Shawl," it is obvious we aren't done with what it narrates or, rather, it isn't done with us. And, in fact, this seems to me to be the poem's very point, the question of 'Where do things end?'—assuming that they ever really do. From this single question, others roll forward in the way of milled fabric spilling from a fast-running machine: 'Where do the things that go into some other thing ultimately meet?' 'Where does the blood-curdling scene stop and the newly realized thing, the shawl, begin?' 'Where, in the fabric, do the two come together and where do they separate?' 'How far back can or will "the words run" and do they always run (reverse lineate) to violence?'⁴⁴ 'Is it the killing truth that the past can never come clean (stop bleating-bleeding)?' 'How does the weaver bear, or must she, the "bleating" and the "barking"?' 'How do we, other than by ignoring complication, other than by refusing to perceive beyond a surface or two?'

These questions and more tumble out, yet if any answer is to be arrived at, it, along with "the rest of the story," must penetrate to the in-between "plane." This plane is the tricky place, the between of a pair of sur-faces. With this statement we are caused to think on the slender strand 'surrounded' and fabricated by the *en face* symmetry of the Ionian–Peloponnesian chiasm. It is precisely here, at the slimmest strand of a Maginot line, between the two sides or

sur-faces, that stasis and interchange assume paradoxical inter-placement. In the case of the shawl (or any fabric or fabrication), original substance (warmth) is stolen and reappears to warm another who pays no heed to the source, its seizure and sacrifice. The sheep are twisted and twined, reconfigured and knotted into the very deepness of the transverse fabric. Kooser compels the reader to witness the shearing (cutting) that transpires at the cross intersection. Within the richly patterned shawl, its outer surfaces cross over and change places on the opposite side. But, something happens there, in that ‘mean’ time. At this profoundly agonistic intersect—the place where intricate ‘stuff’ happens—, sacrifice and death are exchanged for and transformed over into the luxurious and lovely. The bloody, bleating violence is the affording inter-tissue caught within soft, silent, comforting beauty. But should you “run back” from the surface of the ultimate thing and think upon the mauling, corralling, and violation, hard facts, rather than soft are faced up to. Such is the interface as compared to the surface(s). The interface holds within it a different, terrifying sheepfold or sheepcote, a place of confusion. Countering the Dutch proverb “Sheer the sheep, but don’t flay them,” which counsels moderation (a Golden Mean), Kooser’s poem pulls a thread to the starkness of the arithmetic mean, $\frac{1}{2}$.

Silently strung through and loomed deep in his poem are LIFE IS FABRIC and SPACE IS FABRIC. By the first metaphor, we know that the worst event to befall anyone or anything is to have the very fabric of it sundered. We fear that things will come undone or fall apart. “A Jacquard Shawl” exposes that any fabric is always already a-parted; but, because of its intricacy and perhaps also its showy allure or beauty, we just don’t see that to be so. “Shawl” faces up (an intentional compound verb) to the knitty-gritty facts. The images of weaving, fabrication, textiles and texts, intricacy, and labyrinths align with the maiden Arachne and her stringing together of spellbinding stuffs. It is appropriate then that Arachne, who worked a shuttle to high heaven (equal to the goddess Minerva), is associated with dialectics, as in Veronese’s gorgeous canvas “Arachne or Dialectics” that has long hung in the Doge’s Palace in Venice. Ovid associates Arachne, who could twist and spin silver and gold and fabricate with the best of dialecticians, with the suffering end of penalty, harshness, and death.

Relative to our duplicating, two-sided linguistic pattern is that intersections are complicated. The beautiful and entrancing can surface from a condition of betweenity, but the difficult “somewhere between” is necessarily complex (a dual formation) and inherently involves loss. Fabricating the new requires a deduction, regularly unrecognized, of what preceded it. The new, though miraculous, cuts down; it comes at a cost. The cutting leaves traceable evidence behind in the layer formed between, which may be imaginatively “run back into” by some who come after and care or want enough to trace back in time and space an earlier matter, an earlier means. Formulating and sprigging nature anew (“curly acanthus leaves”) subtracts from an earlier Nature. Originals must be circled round, entrapped, and culled for to give the ‘material’ to fabric down line; they must be “ripped and tailored/our of their contexts,” as the poet Mark Doty observes in a poem where mirroring and reversal, loss and keeping are major themes (“Heaven” 4–6). Ironically, Kooser’s severing and culling does not exclude the seizures of the poet or his textual interlineations. A curvilinear pattern that intertwines (intermediates) and shows two reverse-related sides constructs a thing that gathers a different existence or ‘life.’ The intricate comes about only by loss. It is an outlay that would not be surfaced over and left unreflected on, but mostly is so ignored—the second violation.

Betweenity is crucial, the condition of a crux. It is the dilemma of being between Scylla and Charybdis, the interstice between two stools, the interval or extent, emotional, psychological, physical, etc., between any *this* and its opposing, contending *that*. This polarity can index for us Casey’s ontological–epistemological basis for man’s involvement in the world and his conceiving of it.

The between is inclined to snag and disinclined to let go, as witnessed in the standard phrase ‘caught between ... and ...’ that logically recruits entities of categorical separation or that positions the recruited into a polarity that issues from the construction’s divisional act. This catching and trapping figured chiastically Henry James brilliantly ‘chalk-marks’ (James’s multi-layered term) and puts on the block for reader attention in *The Wings of the Dove*. The Master’s *AB:BA* form, which debuts in the penultimate sentence of this novel’s unforgettable opening paragraph, goes as follows: “She tried to be sad, so as not to be angry; but it made her

angry that she couldn't be sad."

The gist of this highly controlled, stately sentence is that sadness and anger, by the reckoning of James's protagonist, are more than contrastive; they are antithetical and mutually exclusive, strained and at odds. Sadness is what Kate Croy had elected for; anger, what she hadn't. The put-upon young woman had elected to be sad since her personal situation had long held her in want and check and, therefore, in resignation. Kate has been in perpetual waiting, waiting upon her needing-taking family and, conversely, waiting for the time she can have her own life with the man she passionately loves and who loves her back the very same. Her functionary status, self-displacement, and putting aside of her own interests for those of her father, sister, and her sister's small, but economically beleaguered family James epitomizes in the linguistically delayed introduction of Kate in the novel's quartet of first words: "She waited, Kate Croy." Very much like Joyce's *Portrait of an Artist*, *The Wings of the Dove* gets underway oddly, haltingly, and paradoxically. James's masterpiece progresses perversely, by postponement and reversal. It is perverse and suspicious for the actor to wait on its action.

Critical consensus has it that this peculiar and rather flagrant dislocation of normal word order that causes a "pausing and lingering over" Kate's name (Holland 228) is motivated, linguistically marked, and suspensory.⁴⁵ This consensus notwithstanding, interpretations vary over the meaning of the suspension and the specific outcome of the stylistic and grammatical marking and the prosodic accentuation.⁴⁶ The interpretations directly bear on the chiasmus that follows a little more than a half dozen sentences from the spare, scinged sentence that leads off the novel and that uprights and turns things around in the tiniest, most meager of linguistic spaces. Typical of James's and his reflective prose and thematics, the chiasmus subtly, but most definitely inclines back on the opening. For James, literature "is above all an art of preparations," the last word associated with balance, weight, calculation, involvement, and suspension.

Holland determines that the beginning four words of James's book are keynotes that subtly and proleptically reference, as they instance, an action primarily of inaction. For Holland, the inaugural words of *The Wings of the Dove* reflect and insinuate the stultifying,

concealing, highly constrained properties and atmospherics of a narrative mostly of near-, arrested-, and non-events.⁴⁷ Similarly, in the view of Robert Alter, the “hesitations of syntax in the late Henry James” generate narrative echoes that I assume to be thematic to the degree they reveal, as Alter designates, a mind at work (103). Alter explains that such hesitations create a general unease according with the unspecified tension and suspension, which Holland outlines. When a reader is momentarily thrown “off stride” by an anormal, “peculiar little hesitation,” the perturbation in syntax and expectation conveys psychological perturbation; namely, uncertainty and “uneasiness” and a feeling that something not quite ordinary disturbs the air and presses on character and reader alike (Alter 103). But more importantly for Alter, the minute, mincing hesitations in James’s major phase narratives operate as one, among several rhetorical methods the writer uses to render the sense of the infinitesimally gradual procurement of knowledge by the Jamesian character. The lexical halting adds to the “general movement through accretion [in] James’s prose” of a portrayal of mind that, in approaching “an object of thought [...] intrinsically elusive,” slowly, tentatively, and painstakingly accumulates and pieces together an understanding of that pressing, but ineluctable mental object (103).⁴⁸

The Alterian premise appears to be that extrapositioning occasions extra-positing. All commentators agree that the irregular post-positioning of Kate’s name as an apposition to the pronoun substituting for her person is a symbolic commentary on that person. The grammatical unorthodoxy spells the untoward, thwarted, and misplaced; the concision, constraint, compression, and sovereignty over; the reversal, enclosure, restraint, and circularity.

Which brings us to Kate’s anger. Kate is waiting on her father, walking circles around his tight, gritty flat, catching glimpses, although not much seeing herself in a smutty mirror on the wall. Lionel Croy has ruined the family’s finances and their name. He and his elder daughter’s family have been living off Kate’s scanty allowance from her recently deceased mother. Now Croy wants Kate to sell herself out to her mother’s fabulously rich sister for his sake and wants her to forsake her dreams of marriage. Thus, the sad–anger dialectic, whose crossfire she is caught between. But also and contradictorily, Kate shuttles between the two emotions, but achieves no arrival and no repose. It is a duplex, of stasis mixed with tense alternation; the

fallout of being duplicity and deceit's victim.

The attempts of the beautiful Miss Croy at sadness have been frustrated by nascent anger and, inversely, the anger that she experiences frustratingly supplants the sadness she had been willing to settle for in the past. Although the pronounced, but restrained rhythm of the discolons and the solemnly balanced and aligned, weighty fall of the monosyllables contribute to the heavy, somber mood of Kate's mental state, the quality of her conflicted mind as well as her frustration and its intensity trace mostly to the sentence's chiasmic form and function. The formal repertory of chiasmus specializes in enacting lines of action in contention and the wretchedness and wrench of a double declination.

A patterned inversion translocating sadness and anger, chiasmus switches and reverses (*sad*) *not* (*angry*), an (*A*) *not* (*B*), to (*angry*) *not* (*sad*), a (*B*) *not* (*A*). By virtue of its formal mechanics, chiasmus sets up "a natural internal dynamic that draws the [opposing] parts closer together," explains Richard Lanham (33). Similarly Fahnestock describes how antimetabole's inward pull propels an exchange and an "indifference in ordering" that ultimately transposes antonyms or contradictories into interchangeable elements (244).⁴⁹ This interchangeability dissolves, suspends, or at least significantly diminishes the differences between the opposing elements.⁵⁰ Thus, given that *sad / not angry* is the linguistic reciprocal and about face of *angry / not sad*, seemingly little, if anything at all, distinguishes anger from sadness or sadness from anger. This indifference by chiasmus we have attended already. And, we have ascribed indifference as one chronic function of the decussation of chiasmus's antecedent structure, chi. However, the double *not*ted condition, which we saw with Theseus's column chiasm, now affords a rather different line of argument.

Although not strictly antonymic or exact opposites, sadness and anger are feelings fundamentally more dissimilar than alike. Beyond this fundamental dissimilarity, sadness and anger are proximal opposites in that they are conventionally viewed as opposable ways of orienting the self in situations or of relating the self to persons disappointing and hurtful.⁵¹ Moreover, these two feelings are personally and circumstantially contending options, to Kate's thinking, in which she might position herself so as to better brave the psychological threat the

super suave, but vile Lionel Croy poses.⁵² Either absolute anger or absolute sadness will potentially compensate as a favoring emotional strategy to confront, and a psychological stance from which to endure, the “worst” that her dangerous father may attempt. Borrowing the words of another Jamesian daughter plagued by a risqué parent wisely kept to a distance, either emotion would have a “general saving use,” would act “as sanative, as redemptive” (emphasis original).⁵³ The value of these redeeming emotions is all the greater in that, among the legion of more or less menacing, clutching, predatory personalities to be fended off in the James corpus, Lionel Croy stands out as the most aggressive and rapacious.

Beyond the fundamental, conventional, or circumstantial, privative opposition extant between sadness and anger⁵⁴ and in addition to the polarity the figure contrives by being a form of binary divisions and reversing relationships (Fahnestock 229, 235; Norrman, *Butler* 5), it is an opposition greatly heightened by James’s negatives, the “not” in the first half of the chiasmus and the contracted negative “couldn’t” in the second half. The difference that these two negatives accentuate and compel is, nonetheless, raised only to be chiastically leveled: the crossing over of the contrasting emotions to identical slots in grammatically and syntactically matched and reversed di-isocolons disorders and effectively disposes of any abiding, real, certain distinction between sadness and anger. Because raising only to dash is the very epitome of frustration, James’s twice-foiling locution with its pair of opposing negatives not only conveys, it configures frustration.⁵⁵ As a crossing and inverting device that is up to negating differences and distinctions and that provokes reciprocity and similarity, chiasmus frustrates the having of sadness that is absent anger and frustrates the having of anger that is absent sadness. More frustrating yet, chiasmus effectively reduces the two emotions commonly supposed incompatible to a composite in which each becomes, by figural in-curving and in-folding, part of the other. A conflating of anger and sadness figures an emotional state disconcertingly commixed and “totally conspicuous” as to its ambiguity.

It follows from chiastic conflation and chiastic ambiguity that Kate Croy controls neither sadness nor anger. This lack of control we extrapolate from the fact she is neither in the ‘space’ of complete sadness nor in the ‘space’ of complete anger. Being instead in a blended interstice

of sadness–anger, James’s *AB:BA* sentence conveys Kate’s inability to separate and, more importantly, to get a fixed hold on, so as to rule, these vital emotions. This blending, one large sub-category under betweenity in human thinking, occurs for us minus any such mention of it. It occurs by formal constraint alone.

The emotional inseparability wreaks extreme frustration, which the contrariwise chiasmus both relates and informs. Because absolute anger and absolute sadness have been chiastically double-crossed—that is, subverted and therefore denied—Kate wanders in, but is, at the same time, held to a vague half-way strangle between these two emotions.

Lacking the refuge of either anger *sans* sadness or sadness *sans* anger, Kate feels herself to be in harm’s way, exposed (to use a favorite Jamesian term), yet curbed by her father’s discomfiting incompatibilities and hostilities, his discomposing manipulations and obliquities. She vacillates, unsatisfactorily and uncertainly, caught in an emotional no-man’s land (an idea rich in *double-entendre*) somewhere between sadness and anger, either of which, if unmitigated (i.e., absolute, not mixed by the other) presumably would offer some psychological–emotional sanctuary from the threatening personality and entrammeling moves of Lionel Croy.⁵⁶ His daughter’s frustration we estimate doubly great because doubly—twice over and, as it happens with chiasmus, mutually—crossed. Furthermore, the disarranging and thwarting of these emotions iconizes disorder and instability, conditions that are part and parcel of Kate’s dire economic and social circumstances and factors underlying her vulnerability to filial provocation and her sense of psychic exposure and assault.⁵⁷ Unmentioned in the literature explicating the novel is how this chiasmus, while reflecting on the emotions of an adult child, comments, too, on the shiftiness of an “unconscionably” unfilial parent. Lionel Croy’s hands are all over and working the back and forth shuttle of Kate’s emotional double bind. Not so very different than Dante’s thieves, Kate is bedeviled, but through no fault of her own.

The Wings of the Dove begins with sentences notably “intimate and compressed” and exceedingly and “conspicuously restrained” (Holland 288). These qualities, claims Laurence Holland, are characteristic of the language and characterizing of Henry James’s novel as a whole. According to Holland, this late narrative is a “verbal drama” of extreme enclosure, one

in which “the prose [...] hovers ‘round and round’ its subject [...] and holds off from naming and reckoning” (290). The story’s first sentences and most especially its initial four words, “which suspend, postpone, and prolong their import and action,” signal and signify a narrative of suspended action (Holland 290). Additionally, an “endangering and enclosing” language, with a frustrated intimation of “what lies beyond its vocabularies” and a perpetual threat of exposing, that is, of giving “out” (Holland 289), what might ensue, but even more importantly what might not, enacts on a knotty verbal level that which is dramatized on the narrative level. The non-happening can be just as provoking and testing as what does happen and, with James, notoriously what isn’t present can have an intense and, here we see, an altogether affective ‘presence.’

Puns, neologisms, chiasma, other figures of diction, and tropes, including that monster one, metaphor,⁵⁸ demonstrate what Walter Redfern calls ‘twisting language.’⁵⁹ By forcing together or by exposing things customarily conceived as apart and distinct, these ingenious, upending devices ultimately remind us of “hidden depths” and unsuspected “dangers” (Redfern 170, 166). Ployful language that is forceful and shifty, that double means and double deals, that is a deviating and therefore devious instrument “grates or anguishes” and, therefore, victimizes (166).⁶⁰

What the contemporary poet T. R. Hummer opines about metaphor—that its dealings in doubleness and its “hideous slipperiness” with likeness and difference make it an “imperative,” “dangerous,” even “destructive” mechanism—strikes me as apropos of chiasmus (94, 97). Chiasmus can be a sinuous creature that bends, curves, and twists fully back on itself, simulating the Harappan Spiral Twist, the infinity sign, the vicious circle, and the ouroborus. Because of this peculiar sinuosity; because the ‘creature’ finesses subversive, thwarting, upending, and even renegeing transactions; because it conducts itself in an excessively stringent and exacting, compressive and overdetermining manner; and because it curves rigidly and wrings elegantly, and disorders neatly, chiasmus is acutely twisty.⁶¹ It’s like metaphor: slippery, covert, imposing. Given such arch twistiness and perverse tortuosity, this anguineous, “forceful” (Fahnestock 267) figure appears more than well suited to hint at the suspect and

subversive and to epitomize anguish, danger, and coercion.

Understandably then chiasmus offers a fitting device to iconize Kate's anguish, fear, and uncertainty, feelings that arise from her relation to her suspect, high-handed, and twisty (evil) parent. This young woman's existence lacks secure, supportive emotional implacement. She doesn't know 'where she is at' with respect to her fearsome father, a smooth operator with subverting and extorting talents. He conducts himself along the lines of one intimidating type, the "One with the Upper Hand," and thus who appropriates for himself a myriad of power privileges⁶² to jerk Kate about psychologically and emotionally and who makes even his absence and her waiting a "power message" and domination reminder (Clark 306–308).

What amounts to extreme emotional displacement in James's protagonist is per-formed (iconized) by means of the chiasmus from the first paragraph of *The Wings of the Dove*. That is, by virtue of this chiastic sentence, Kate Croy possesses neither pure sadness nor pure anger. Neither does she alternate from purely sad to purely angry; she is not by turns entirely one and then entirely the other. Instead hers is an uncertain, unconsoling, unsatisfactory psychological middle ground. In and by a figure of speaking, Kate's feelings are frustratingly mixed and irresolute. Anger and sadness are held in tension; likewise, Kate Croy. She is 'neither here nor there,' — the idiom commonly resorted to by persons in the middlemost midst of frustration.⁶³ James designs emotion as place displaced. Among the "compendium of figures" iconic,⁶⁴ chiasmus exhibits, as this discussion has advised, an inordinate degree of iconicity. James's amazing sad-angry sentence "bristles," as he might well write, with the iconic values that chiasmus 'understates' formally about his protagonist's emotional status and its especial poignancy, complexity, and intensity. Under the fine point pen of James, the *AB:BA* formula, can prove, as he writes early in the first paragraph of *The Wings of the Dove*, one of the "merciless signs." That the formula can be understood doesn't require, however, an exquisite mind. Our embodied ones will do just fine, thank you.

Sappho, votary of Aphrodite, bewails a state of frenzied, wild-eyed love: "I am neither living nor dead and cry/From the narrow between" (qtd. in Paz, *Double Flame* 54). Sappho,

like the fictional Kate twenty-five hundred years later, is plunked down (in the middle) and sits smack dab in the middle, the first colloquialism advising of rough treatment in arriving at the center and the second advising of the harming and hurting potentiality of the agonistic center's inside straight (rule-laid) formalities and obligations. In contrast, the torch song "How Glad I Am" soars with "My love has no beginning. My love has no end. I'm in the middle. My love has no top. My love has no bottom. I'm in the middle." The singer intones her "ecstasy." The middle can be extremely desirable and a place of inordinate desire; but, also, it can be the location of utter despair (a pair's parting) and desperation. But whichever way the middle orients, we know that desire demands an in-between, a gap (Paz, *Double Flame* 59). The chasm between the desirer and the desired may be what Marcel Duchamp nominated the "ultra-thin," but howsoever thin or narrow the defile might be, it must take up or 'consume' some extent. Desire clamors for an allowance, an intervening space for exercising a chance of becoming.

A severe limit to language is the "incapacity of words to come together at an instant (tout a' coup), at a single state of sensuous immediacy" (Krieger 10). Language is necessarily 'spaced out' in time and, especially in literate societies, in space. Yet chiasmus acts the simulacra of the in-between. It suggests a kind of interlineation that physically isn't. It is something like Niels Bohr's coined phrase "the quantum leap," the phenomenon of which finds the orbit switching of electrons, a physical transition from one orbit to another, happens as a kind of betweenness that isn't (see Fletcher 12). Chiasmus performs as tableaux of intertwinement through the suggestion of coincidence in space and time. For instance, the intercommunion of Christ and man, both having to die (become null) to the other, regularly commissions chiasmus to depict this mystery too wonderful for words. Neither lexically nor semantically does chiasmus intromit what is between or attempt to elect some name for the object or event of betweenity. In many ways intromission and nominating, assuming these as possibilities, might leach the mystery from mystery. Rather, chiasmus self patterns the difficult, consternating, or exhilarating in-between by juxtaposition and reverse shifting and by the assumption that intermediation rests between two positions, that is, two locations that are

posited (known). Chiasmus, in a ‘negative capability’ mode that Keats would doubtless endorse, allows for the experience of “uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason.” Chiasmus reaches for its own pattern formally suggestive of mysteries and uncertainties. The center is site for in-com-parables, the in-mostness of two contrasting pairs.

The between is the place or occurrence of transition. In the U.S. Navy’s Change of Command ceremonies, chiasmus facilitates the formal transfer. These ceremonies center on the moment when command passes from one officer to her replacement. At the center’s hinge chiasmus presides over the transfer. On the fore side of this moment, the current commanding officer traditionally addresses those in attendance, next directs her remarks to the incoming commander, and then reads before everyone assembled her transfer or retiring orders; and, symmetrically, on the aft side, the new commanding officer reads his transfer orders, directs his remarks to the outgoing officer, and then addresses the general audience. Precisely between these isomeric, book-ended observations rests the chiastic episode, in which the command is officially transferred. In *Naval Ceremonies, Customs, and Traditions*, the authors highlight when the ceremony “reaches its simplest and most impressive part.”⁶⁵ It is conducted under the lexical baton of chiasmus. The present and the in-coming commanders stand at center stage and shake right hands in a prolonged pose. The latter states “I relieve you, Sir.” The retiring officer replies, “Sir, I am relieved.” At the Change of Command I attended, the officiator of the ceremony held a Bible underneath the commanders’ crossed hands. Directly following the succinct statement and its equally succinct reply, the two senior officers returned one another’s salute and then shook hands a second time, symmetries further consolidating the exchange of command just facilitated by a *AB:BA* formation.

Even if a person had never witnessed this particular military ceremony or knew nothing about Navy protocol, she would understand not only that a substitution had been effected between commanders, but also she would know when that exchange transpired. This in-between episode, with words mirroring one another, insures a seamless transfer of power, one in which there is no lapse in command or control. This seamlessness is not just a nicety of

form; it “ensures that at all times responsibility is clearly placed” and that all contingencies would be met by continuity of command (41).

To conclude this sub-section on betweenity, I would like us to turn to a mechanism for ordering up a special type of centrality. The apparatus, called the ‘*mazzocchio*,’ was used by Paolo Uccello to explain perspective construction and theory (Benevolo 89). The fifteenth-century painter was enthralled with central perspective, a rigorous operation of geometrical ordering and distribution into 3-dimensional space. The operation commands a sequenced progression into spatial depth by arrangement around a central axis. The progression extends from an exactly calculated vantage point to the front of a two-dimensional picture to an infinitesimal point ‘back’ into the farthest reaches of the canvas’s imaginary third space. The influence of perspective on representation and human thinking cannot be overestimated, although Benevolo hazards that it “placed painting [in the early Renaissance] in a privileged position, as the depository of the universal instrument for the shaping of visual forms” (84, 86).

Like chiasmus, central perspective manages “identification and synthesis” (83). Too, it is an expedient of consonance and continuity, a subordinating scheme that ties together neighboring placements on either side of a central axis, and is a mode of convergence. It enables attention to be cast on salient points along its accumulation of space planes, most especially the center point of the framed picture. It is not only “reductive,” as Benevolo and Levi-Strauss specify (92), its guidance of “formal coherence” is exceptionally contracting and inner associating, even to a vanishing or zero point. And, finally, like chiasmus, perspective considers and conjures the angles, it has a mathematical and artificial flair, and it favors proportion (relations and balances) over actual measurement (83). Resemblance obtains between chiasmus and the central perspective, as well as the symmetries they render.

Why this should matter, beyond the issue of centrality and optical and intellectual concentration is that the *mazzocchio* and chiasmus are inter-citational. The former is a visual chiasm, multiply lettered and numbered. Amazingly, but fittingly for its duties, the two-dimensional *mazzocchio* appears to gear and whirr around in a full 3-D sphere. The apparatus records the world as constructed through formal perspective and chiasmus captures the world in

a manner that orders along related lines, with focus on an axis that, theoretically, can go on forever. If any doubts linger over the power and formal, logical, and geometric dynamics of the chiasmatic virtual center, we should remember Uccello's chiasmic whirligig for central perspective.

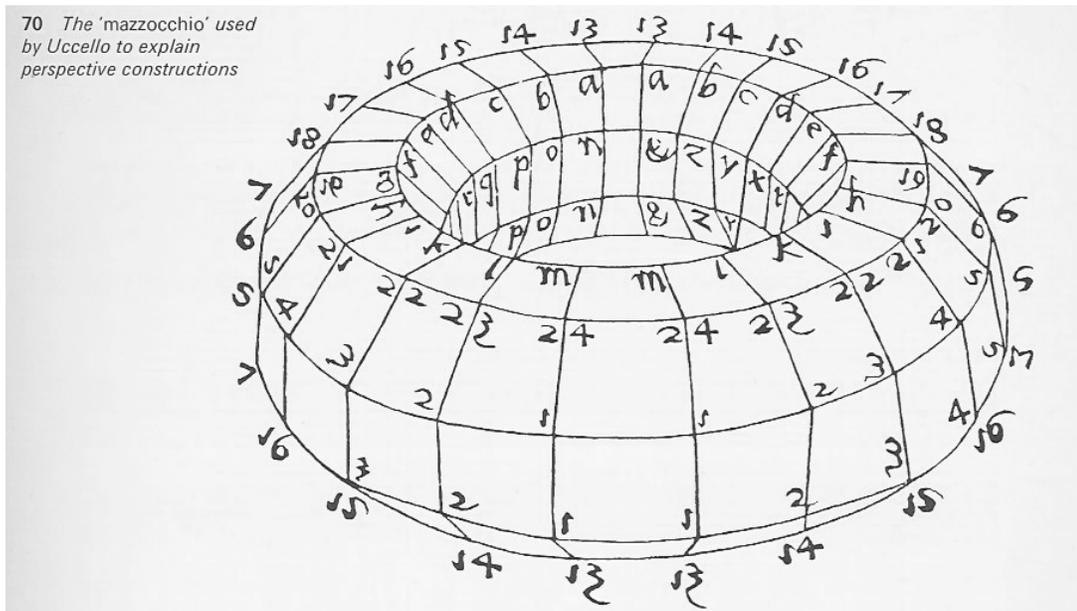


Figure 11. Uccello, *Mazzocchio*, a device for perspective.

EMILY AND JOHN BEFORE THE VENN DIAGRAM

I died for Beauty - but was scarce
Adjusted in the Tomb
When One who died for Truth, was lain
In an adjoining Room -

He questioned softly "Why I failed"?
"For Beauty", I replied -
"And I - for Truth - Themselves are One -
We Brethren, are", He said -

And so, as Kinsmen, met a Night -
We talked between the Rooms -
Until the Moss had reached our lips -
And covered up - Our names—
—Emily Dickinson, "No. 449"

In the annals of literature, the chiasm from “Ode to a Grecian Urn” has continued to merit front portico status within the pantheon of famous literary lines. Many unacquainted with the “Ode” itself, nonetheless, have heard or seen the chiastic line quoted and been captivated and confused as to its gist, though perhaps going along with an author’s or speaker’s pretense that they also ‘get it.’ And, then, countless readers of the poem have been intrigued and flummoxed by its ending, reading the *(Beauty) (Truth) : (Truth) (Beauty)* sequence repeatedly to themselves or playing it over and over in their minds in the private hope of getting a handle on its obscurities. Add to these knowers and readers of John Keats’s chiasmus the reams of scholars spilling streams of ink, from pen and printers, to decipher what exactly is meant. One thing we know for sure: we have a lyricist of staggeringly beautiful verses dying prematurely, but bequeathing to posterity an enigmatic line of immortal fascination.

After decades of musings over the *BT:TB* arrangement and intense investigations conducted by experts on Keats and his lyrics I won’t pretend that I can offer anything to the scholarly literature on the “Ode” that hasn’t already been considered. Instead, I subject Keats’s brainteaser to a few taps from a spacio-visual angle, with the plan to gain on the premise of chiastic complexity, intricacy, and density. Perhaps the resonations from this tapping will sound meanings latent within the Sphinx-like “Ode.”

Keats structured an eternal puzzle palace with “Beauty is Truth; Truth, Beauty.” A poetic compatriot of Keats’s may have one clue to let us step over the palace’s threshold. Shelley begins with the standard presumption that the ideal is that which transcends “chance, death, and mutability.” When exempted from these mortal scourges, man, looking back to and then claiming his magnificent, unfettered (i.e., nonmaterial) state, soars to “The loftiest star of unascended heaven,/Pinnacled dim in the intense inane” (*Prometheus Unbound* III.iv). By “Pinnacled dim,” Shelley means the most obscure point as it lies at the furthest remove of empty space. No longer the captive of mutability, uncertainty, and death, regenerate man leaves behind these ignominious “clogs” that weigh on earthly existence. Ceasing to be a “wretched” creature, mankind shines forth and soars beyond the refulgence of the stars or any

of their heavenly claims, reaching a pure ideal. Significantly, man is restored to residence “in the intense inane.” Shelley’s fabulous collocations yoking the antinomic—the intense with the diffuse, the fervent with the negated—utter the strange (surpassing logic), magniloquent illogic reputedly the idiolect of the idealized. Widely presumed is that to approach the throne of the *ignotum*, we must step gingerly and bow to its own antithetical terms.

This is the point made by Archibald MacLeish in his “Adam in the Evening.” The poet maintains that beauty and love have hauntingly eluded man from the beginning and will continue to evade into our Adamic “Evening.” The speaker cries, “Beauty cannot be shown/But only at remove:/What’s beautiful is known/By opposites, as love.//Counter, the mind can see.” Ideals can only come to mean through countering or opposing. “Counter” or contrast a This to a That, Beauty to Love or Beauty to Truth—here is the path to the exalted incongruity. It is the path intuitively selected and empirically, poetically pursued by Shelley. MacLeish’s message is that the incomparable, to the degree it submits to be known, demands comparison. MacLeish’s is a Saussurian metaphysic: We discover (or recover in Shelley’s case) the profound only through the difference “distance” provisions.

MacLeish’s epigraphic lines hold several twists, included a deeply buried *double-entendre*, “remove.” Ideals insist upon their removal, their self-sufficient perfection. An ideal is an elitist, the very wondrous thing, flawlessly and inveterately, itself. The ideal must be a realm apart; hence, fully circumscribed and arrested. How then to mesh these contradictory qualities? It would seem to require an ambidextrian to solve for these. And that is exactly why chiasmus shows up at these abstruse junctures. Chiasmus holds two and crosses them in comparison, while it simultaneously circumscribes them within their own remove. Like the ideal, chiasmus exudes a message of absolute intactness and of being a construct unsusceptible to discomposure or incursion. It has been said, for instance, “what is beautiful appears blessed in itself” (Eduard Morike). This inwardness and internal accordance are hallmarks of chiasmus.

William Ivins, with his special interest in the connection between art and geometry, emphasizes how the Greek vases of antiquity, which exhibit “mechanically regular, quasi-

geometrical curves,” were adorned with highly stylized linear figures in “even, unbroken contours” (29–34). In the foregoing and the upcoming statement, Ivins could be describing Keats’s storied urn. Greek art is distinguished by its self-sufficiency: “In general each separate body, each separate object, was seen as a thing in itself in a private space of its own” (33). The precise geometric regulation of shape and the complete spatial removal (*temenos*) render a “hard, insensitive,” mostly emotionless art. Taking command of and standing off on its own self-defined, self-sequestered space is the prerogative of Grecian sculpture, architecture, and the decorative arts.

In his *AB:BA* equation, Keats presumes that one space, belonging to Beauty, and a second space, belonging to Truth, come together and fuse into a single existential whole through the reciprocating ploys of that equation. This same cross ‘movement’ transpires within the Emily Dickinson poem with which this treatise commenced. Her chiasm can be outlined as (*Love*) (*is all*) : (*Is all*) (*love*). The concision suits Dickinson, whose language is so ultra spare it seems as though dissection has been performed on it. Miraculously and, for us, wonderfully, her compositions manage to more than survive. Both Keats and Dickinson depend on their readers to see their respective intercrosses. In Dickinson’s case, she cross joins *Love* to *love*, making for an absolutely tight overlap of lexical and categorical spaces. She arranges for love, through and through, by the fusing by chiasmus of two into one.

In the epigraph to this sub-section, Dickinson’s poem No. 449, she describes how Beauty and Truth, each entombed in an “adjoining Room” ‘reach’ across to one another in the “Night” (Eternal Death). Dickinson, who surely knew Keats’s famous “Ode,” has her Beauty-Truth duo unite. Their confluence is marked, as it is occasioned by an absence; namely, the covering up of their “names” inscribed on the tombstones overhead. Dickinson gestures to the very disappearance of the “between” that Kooser brought to our attention. Disappearance is effected by Keats, as well, for Beauty and Truth, across a tiny, present and an absent copula, surrender—by the logical equation holding across them—their existence each for the sake, the ideal, of the other. They transpose and yet, nothing and everything changes in the perfect, one-on-one exchange. Controlling this otherwise unaccountable transposing is the mechanism of

bi-lateral symmetry, whereby a complete reversal of one side across the axis of symmetry brings no difference.

The difference in Dickinson's "Love is all" is that Love and itself, in a second, duplicate version, conflate. Dickinson's is a win-win, reinforcing situation; Keats's, a win-and-lose : lose-and-win precisional tradeoff. But both chiasma, by Emily and John, depend on readers imagining what amounts to two equal-sized, equal-shaped Venn diagrams in total convergence. I maintain that we have been drawing and transposing these circles in our heads, many of them promulgated by *AB:BA* designs, for millennia before Venn 'invented' them. Keats and Dickinson's poems are proofs positive of the mind's eye configuring spaces onto one another. That these spatial forms are beautifully, perfectly circular in shape seems inevitable. Chiasmus, in its autonomy and unity, its security and solidity, has conducted and smoothed over that consolidation of duplicate or near-duplicate spaces time and time again. By its economy and crossing, properties that are a must have for the architect, it is an intensifier. It is a strict task master that holds and builds a "conspicuous totality" in place. Beneath its interior walls, two strong tie-bars lie wordlessly, but familiarly and fixedly posed. They are the crux that matters.

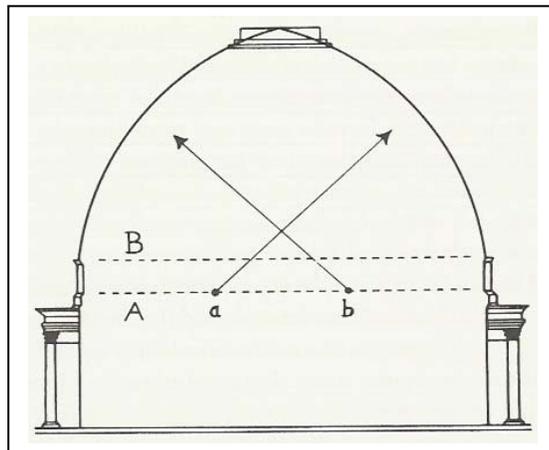


Figure 12. Arnheim, Outline of St. Peter's Dome, after Michelangelo.

¹ In Strand's "The Untelling," the atmospherics grow more discomfiting and fright-laden with each reprise of one scene turned upon a second scene. Over the long poem's course, Strand tightens the relationship between scenes of the viewed and viewer, such that the poem ends, circle- or rather chiasmus-like, back to where it started. The word *across*, with some variants, is replete in the poem.

² Arundhati Roy's novel reminds of this resemblance phenomenon: see 137, 162, 229, and 283.

³ Or perhaps we shouldn't say *even*, because "the vague," as Goffman suggests, is "often immensely distracting" (304). The vague, I would say, holds a trajectory, if only in theory (potentially). Goffman gives support to this trajectory when describing how the vague stimulates suspicion and the suspicious clues us to a framework, its internal machinery, and the fabrication spun by that machining. The framing-fabrication possibility is support and recognition of a Burkean form.

⁴ While summarizing the plot of the Trojan War, which is the starting issue of the *Iliad*, Updike makes passing mention of the metaphoric understanding of narrative as proceeding along an arc.

⁵ I think it is relatively easy to account for the delayed sensing of the chiasmus. The antithesis of the *too-little* and *too-much* dominate in sound and lexis such that the reader doesn't at first detect that *too-little* matches with *empty* and *pure* with *too-much*. The discovery of the matching pulls the reader back, contributing itself to the great sense of complication and even confusion.

The recounting is both vital (sudden and rebounding) and indistinct. It is indistinct by virtue of contraries (e.g., blankness and muchness) reverse slanted.

⁶ "I hate and I love: why I do so you may well ask. I do not know, but I feel it happen and am in agony." In the Latin, Catullus uses the term *excrucior* ('am excruciated'). Qtd. in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*.

⁷ From Robert Pinsky's "Shiva and Parvati Hiding in the Rain." Consult page 51 of his *The Figured Wheel*.

⁸ It must be submitted, however, that the adoption and replication of love possibly might encourage that the two are 'going steady' or 'engaged' or have or may exchange engagement rings. In a manner of speaking, steadiness (consistency), engagement, and ring structure might lurk in the background for the listener, possibly at the subliminal level. We are acquainted with the subliminal messaging rampant in advertising.

⁹ A cornerback for the Baltimore Ravens Chris McAlish made this comment during the course of an interview. *Baltimore Magazine* Dec. 2001. 104.

¹⁰ This quotation, attributed to David Viscott, appeared in a *Wisteria* catalogue, Spring 2006. 19.

¹¹ Attributed to "Anonymous" in "Simply Creative Weddings." *Better Homes and Gardens*. Summer 2004. 39.

¹² Anonymous. *Good Morning to You, Valentine: Poems for Valentine's Day*. Selected Lee Bennett Hopkins. Illust. Tomie de Paola. Honesdale, PN: 1993. 30.

¹³ For an example of this sexual usage, in John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (I, iii, 41) *tilt* functions as double-entendre.

The fabled bird contained both sexes. The phrase, "forget the He and She" comes from Donne's "The Undertaking."

¹⁴ Nothings, however, aren't created equal. Our poets' annulments (with their different sex and death connotations) situate 180 degrees to the side of another heartfelt, quite ordinary refrain having to do with cancellation: the abject cry 'my life [or love, dream, or hope] has come to nothing.'

¹⁵ Love of various kinds gains encouragement through a changeless icon that draws and fixes the attention in order to compel a worshipper to search past the icon's vacancy. A child's stuffed animal or doll is just such an icon. The child's imagination bestows a world of meanings that exceed what the toy materializes in itself. According to Lewis, the "emptier ikon" succeeds as the "better ikon" since it can direct and concentrate the thoughts of the worshipper, yet remains porous enough to move the individual beyond the confines of the material world (17-18).

¹⁶ The remarks are those of Dr. M. Scott Peck quoted in Chapman, Gary. *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate*. Chicago: Northfield, 1995. 34-35.

According to Peck, when each of a pair of "human beings" expends the psychological energy involved in ridding oneself of his /her ego barriers so as to allow another to 'cross' into ego territory, the chances for "sexual pairing and bonding" increase. Even by this aseptic reading of love as enacted genetics, hearts melting or emotions mingling can't be dismissed as metaphoric frou-frou.

¹⁷ Paz's chiasm quite possibly adumbrates the turns and oscillations of sex and, thus, further exacerbates the frustration of the insisted-upon non-return of return.

¹⁸ The two adjectives derive from Walt Whitman's "The Dalliance of the Eagles." In the Whitman poem, love is analogized to the in-air interplay between two magnificent creatures. The eagles first skirt one another and then "rush" into a "clinging interlocking" that creates "a living, fierce, gyrating wheel." After the amorous "tumbling turning clustering loops" they poise, then slant away, "their separate diverse flight,/She hers, he his, pursuing." Paz's "Aspiration" and his work generally brought Whitman's poem to mind.

¹⁹ Cited in Paris, Wendy and Andrew Chester. *Words for the Wedding*. NY: Perigee Books. 2001. 149.

²⁰ Gose makes these points. As an example of co-occurrence, the critic cites the following: "The water of the rivulet was dark with endless drift and mirrored the high-drifting clouds. The clouds were drifting above him silently and silently the seatangle was drifting below him" (Joyce qtd. in Gose 260).

Gose, in Endnote 2, states that Joycean chiasmus isn't always a perfect symmetry. He notes with respect to the excerpt above that "If Joyce had been after full reverse symmetry here, the second clause would read 'silently below him was drifting the seatangle.'"

What Gose doesn't comment upon that I believe is worth mention is Joyce's interesting conjoined word "seatangle." Tangle not only describes the water, but the state of mind of Stephen, who is caught up and entangled with thoughts that leave him at an impasse. Here, as elsewhere in the novel, the ability of chiasmus to represent stasis brings out feelings or conditions in which things are deadlocked.

²¹ The Chinese puzzle box is my metaphor to describe Gose's breakdown of the involved chiasmic arrangement to Joyce's novel. Our critic explains that "Of the five parts into which Joyce divided *A Portrait*, the third or central one is composed of three sections. Of these, the middle section functions as the novel's center, a point of structural chiasmus and thematic crossover." At this critical midpoint, there is a further chiasmic composition, which goes as follows: merciful God: redeeming Christ: physical punishment in hell : break : spiritual punishment in hell : redeeming Christ: merciful God (261).

²² The *OED* indicates that when the demonstrative *there* precedes "*is, was, etc.*" it has an "unemphatic use."

²³ Robert Longacre in his chapter about sentence combining underlines what is implicit in the coordinating function of *and*: namely, that it strongly accentuates a difference in relationship (239). In a discussion on *The Ambassadors*, Mary Cross reminds us that parallel structure in language makes us mindful of doubleness (51).

²⁴ Because it introduces Stephen, this opening twist disordering that which is exceptionally entrenched may hint of Joyce's own deep uncertainties about his protagonist, uncertainties that foisted upon the novelist "many shifts and turns" in working "through [...] just how heroic" to make his hero (Booth 330–331).

²⁵ I am using *jingle* not in the usual sense, but rather the one employed by Emerson in discussing poems by Poe and Tennyson. Emerson referred to verses of "short lines, percussive rhymes, and unevolved rhythm," which begin to plague the ear and grow "disagreeable" (Holman and Harmon 268). These elements and the disagreeableness are all there in Joyce's jingle. Joyce also incorporates another grating element, the monotony of "unevolved" end rhyme.

²⁶ James employs this phrase in *The Ambassadors* (303) to indicate something fanciful.

²⁷ Viewing the examples offered in Hargittai and Hargittai's *Symmetry*, the overt absencing, negating, or subtractive nature of antireflection can indeed vex and strain, if not outright disorient or throw off balance. Strangely enough, sometimes antisymmetry, which is ostensibly a dramatic change and restructuring, ends up feeling anything but. For an instance of this consult the Hargittais' book (119) for the Perestroika poster and the accompanying explanatory paragraph. The word *perestroika* is Russian for 'restructuring.'

²⁸ The zigzagging lines displace and disorient. Spatial displacement, where one place begins to seem interchangeable with another place, leads to "a sense of forlornness" according to Arnheim in *The Dynamics of Architectural Form* (22). Forlornness throws a person back on himself and his own resources. He has "to master whatever [...] control he can from within himself" (80). Because the forlorn individual "is [totally] on his own," he feels abandoned.

²⁹ Wrenched accent is the displacement of a given word's normal syllabic accent to a different syllable (Cuddon 752; Holman and Harmon 532). The accent of "apologize" is on the second syllable, but Joyce's so-called poem shifts the accent to the fourth, where it can rhyme with "eyes."

The Holman and Harmon *Handbook* defines heteromorous (or mosaic) rhyme as occurring when "one word is forced into a rhyme with two or more words" (326, emphasis added). With Joyce, as said, we have the final syllable of the single word *Apologize* rhyming with *eyes*. The second syllable of *Apologize* is a close rhyme to *Pull*.

That this forcing may have been intentional on Joyce's part finds support in the fact that *Pull* isn't the verb we would expect of the action of an eagle. The word *gouge*, which in *Roget's* sends one to an entry on blinding and blindness, is probably what we most would have predicted. Other alternatives could have been *claw out*, *pluck out*, or *tear out*. The word *Pull* has the oddity of seeming a more human-like rather than eagle-like way of going about wresting out eyeballs. A suggestion of human violence may have been Joyce's primary intention, nonetheless a secondary effect would still be the close rhyming of *Pull* and the second syllable of *Apologize* and the strain evident within heteromorous rhyme.

³⁰ That he designs and styles the verselet and that reminiscent of the literary artist he "helps to intensify the tension" of what is already there in life (Burke, *Symbolic Action* 82), Stephen is very much acting in the manner of the artist. He appears to be living out the topos of the Romantic poet, bent on his own undoing. If this seems to go too far, at the least Stephen's artful "playing in his head" early in the

novel establishes his penchant for and motivating of contradictions and then responding to these as fearsomely powerful.

³¹ What we are calling a poem displays no involving, evolving experience or drama, no persons and no agents (Joyce eliminates from the lines a boy who will be the apologizer and an eagle, or that which the eagle symbolizes as an external inflictor, which will do the punishing), no supporting logic, no explanation or elaboration, no qualification, no development of idea. It is the sheer accrual of two items whose repetition and order must make for the experience and meaning of the “poem.” If a poem, Joyce’s is bare bones.

³² Apology (submission) will bring forgiveness in contrast to punishment, which generally assumes an unforgiven or unforgivable state.

³³ An oft-quoted chiasm from *Ulysses* is “A very short space of time through very short times of space.”

³⁴ This line is from Dorothy Parker’s three stanza poem “Portrait of an Artist.” See *The Portable Dorothy Parker*. Ed. Marion Meade. New York: Penguin, 2006. 95.

³⁵ This television interview aired on the six-month anniversary of 9/11 (11 Mar. 2002, WBAL, Channel 11, Baltimore, Maryland, the 5:00 News Hour). What added to the poignancy of the story was that the son was only one month short of celebrating his first wedding anniversary. The man’s strong punctuation of the words underlined was unmistakable.

³⁶ A 2002 Suzuki automobile commercial heard on the radio 1 Apr. 2002.

³⁷ The fresco is reproduced in black and white in *Benevolo*. It is his text’s Figure 81. As would be expected of the subject matter and the artist, the cross diagonals carry great symbolic significance. The lines of the beam and the multiple counteracting ones from Christ’s body together enact a virtual diagonal cross. The composition’s crisscross, which importantly the viewer-believer completes—essentially supplying the *patibulum*, the smaller crossbeam to the upright—by his seeing and, thus, acknowledging of the Son of God’s unassuming power, tells the story ahead, of death and triumph.

The sharpness of the crossing ‘actions’ on Christ’s part are iterated in nature: the mountain (which ‘continues’ Christ’s diagonal upward, towards the symbolic heavens) and in the hyperbolically jagged clouds. However, these function as the prompts the text mentions. The filling-in activity still largely depends on the viewer’s supplying of a diagonal to counteract the dominant cross line the viewer confronts on the frescoed wall.

³⁸ The “vast wings” that cancel any “there” are an “ambidextrian.” MacLeish’s nullifying auriform that hovers over and transfixes the seeker after “there” is a terminator-death icon that sweeps across all times. It is an X that folds up the possibility of *there* in his enclosing, negating wings. The poem is “The End of the World” and the stanza (the second of two and the revelation to the first) is as follows:

And there, there overhead, there, there, hung ...
There in the starless dark the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the canceled skies,
There in the sudden blackness the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing—nothing at all.

The poem appears on page 89 of MacLeish’s *Collect Poems*. See Bibliography.

³⁹ This notion of doubleness—stopped, yet advancing time—appeared in an article about a child’s abduction and the nightmare it brought her grieving parents. *Washington Post*: 24 Nov. 2006: C1, C5.

⁴⁰ Russell, Mary Doria. *A Thread of Grace: A Novel*. New York: Random, 2005, n.p.

⁴¹ Coincident with the release of a new novel, potential buyers are enticed with this promotion: “At the intersection of secrets and seductions, love and lies, crime and justice is John Lescroart’s THE SUSPECT.” Apparently a work chock-full of secrets, seductions, love, lies, and legal goings-on aren’t enough to deliver this Grisham-surpassing, “riveting,” “face-paced,” “explosive” mystery thriller. No, it’s by the “intersection” of these items that those who happen on the advertisement will be unable to resist Lescroart’s latest gift to readers. With *intersection* you get the heads-up that this isn’t any read, this is that book-world desiderata, the TERRIFIC READ. The promotion for Lescroart’s hardback release appeared in *Washington Post* “Book World.” 21 Jan. 2007: 6.

⁴² *Delights and Shadows: Poems by Ted Kooser*. Port Townsend: Cooper Canyon Press, 2004. 61.

⁴³ “Warp.” Wikipedia. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warp-%28weaving%29>>. 12 Jan. 2007.

⁴⁴ Kooser’s “blue block letters” is a mere one letter short of ‘blue black.’ In such a carefully crafted poem focusing on violence and killing, and where *blue* recurs in mention with reversal, this can’t be coincidence.

⁴⁵ Pronouns lack specific meaning; they require antecedents to give them meaning. Like a pronoun, Kate Croy waits on her antecedent, Lionel Croy. The ordinary succession of noun (personal or otherwise) followed by its pronoun is reversed here. The pronominal form *she* lacks, what Vernon Lee calls, “concrete particularity” (437). *She* is a term that designates not a specific person. It is an empty form, a placeholder that must be ‘filled’ based on a given context. *She* does not specify a concrete person as does a personal noun, but rather a role—a linguistic slot—that a particular person assumes for a given situation. In *Getting Back into Space*, Edward Casey says pronouns are shifting terms. The inherent shiftiness of the highlighted pronoun may indicate a characteristic of Kate’s father (antecedent); but it may just as well adumbrate the shiftiness Kate displays over time, her abilities at stratagems, fictions, deception.

However in support of Katherine Komar’s analysis, one might offer that pronouns typically are substituted for information already given, information that can be taken for granted. Kate’s father and sister do, in fact, take their relative as a “given,” someone who will provide for them and whose personal needs need not be considered.

Also like a pronoun, Kate waits on what has not yet materialized: her absent father. Even when Croy arrives he falls into that category of persons James designates a “presence without type” (James qtd. by Pound 96). Another interpretation is that James, the novelist of silence and absence and the event not happened or only just missed, has elected in the very first words of his novel to put the placeholder before the place, the absent before the material. Subtle prolepsis indeed!

The reader undergoes on a linguistic level the uncertainty that Kate Croy feels on an emotional level. A pronoun typically takes us back to a person, event, or thing already named. But in the opening of *The Wings of the Dove*, we have no backward reference. We are clueless. At the novel’s beginning we are left to lurch ahead missing a reliable, sure sense of direction.

⁴⁶ Heretofore apparently overlooked is the way in which the halting, holding back quality of the very accentuated prosody of “She waited, Kate Croy, [...]” dramatizes (i.e., dramatically sounds) postponement.

⁴⁷ Harry Levin in *The Power of Blackness* claims that “It is the business of fiction to explore what might have been, what may be, and what is not” (5). This description seems apposite with respect to James’s predilection for margins, blanks, absences, gaps, and silences and with his composing of plots and themes having to do with what Deborah Esch identifies as the “question of unrealized possibilities—of what one might have done, who one might have become ...” (587). In *The Wings of the Dove* the attachment between and the engagement of Kate and Densher are transformed by them into non-events. These become non-events by concealment, by non-disclosure. The event of the novel is the threat of this special attachment being exposed to Milly, the person who would be most stunned and harmed by it.

⁴⁸ In discussing examples from *The Wings of the Dove*, Alter concentrates on the mind of Kate Croy. In considering the hesitations in James as a means to render “the movements of the mind,” Alter presumably only has protagonists in mind. He does not mention the role of the narrator, but Alter’s comments could easily apply to this “character” in James. As many have commented, in late James differentiation between character and narrator is very often difficult, if not impossible to establish. Judith Jacobson, for one, remarks “there is often an interweaving of narrative description and the representation of consciousness that is hard to unravel” (65). Nonetheless, “shift[s] from narrator to character” can be discerned because James signals these alterations of consciousness, even though they are at time “almost imperceptible” (65, 66). In her dissertation on metaphor in *The Wings of the Dove*, Jacobson contends that the thought processes of the narrator, which initiate the novel, continue through to the second half of the second sentence (beginning with “the irritation that had brought her”). By Jacobson’s signal analysis “She waited, Kate Croy, [...]” is strictly the narrator’s consciousness.

However, Alter’s comments seem not the less appropriate for the words and syntactic suspension being attributable to James’s narrator. After all, as Scholes and Kellogg wonderfully concluded, “In a Jamesian novel all the language is annihilated to Jamesian thoughts in a Jamesian shade.” Virginia Woolf, when reading *The Golden Bowl* for a 1905 review, concluded that for the American novelist his characters “must be as subtle as Henry James himself” (*Essays of Woolf* 384).

⁴⁹ Fahnestock draws a distinction between true antonyms and contradictories (88). The latter are not absolute opposites or antonyms, but are either basically opposable or can be made temporarily opposable by a figural context; i.e., by occupying antithetical slots in figures such as antimetabole and chiasmus.

⁵⁰ In the chiasmus “What’s mine is yours and what’s yours is mine,” a yours-only and mine-only arrangement between two people has been eliminated. Strict possessional rights are no longer a consideration; possession of the one-person-only sort has been, in essence, dissolved. Figuratively speaking, mutual possession has been effected.

More than mutuality may be at stake with the chiasmus “your money is mine and mine is yours.” This advice, which Henry G. Brinton prescribes to every engaged couple he counsels in his church, is an absolutely crucial basis, says the pastor, for “marital harmony,” for “equality” between partners, and for insuring a lasting “union.” These qualities and the idea of “joining” two independent lives into a single merged life are aptly figured by an associative chiasmus. Since money “goes to the center of the union brides and grooms create on their wedding day,” the “sharing [of] their assets” leads to a “greater unity as husband and wife.” The “sharing” and use of “joint accounts” establish a “good merger” that will give both spouses an “equal weight” and equal value in the relationship. Couples who do not adopt the your-money-is-mine-and-mine-is-yours approach develop inequalities in their marriage and consequently risk inter-personal, if not marital, division. In “Let No Money Tear Asunder,” Brinton makes use of much of the ideational repertoire of the associative chiasmus. *Washington Post*, 21 June 1998, C3.

The mutuality of personal relationship that chiasmus can foster occurs memorably in a famous Cole Porter song from the musical “High Society”: “I give to you and you give to me—true love, true love.” This lyric falls under the category of what Fahnestock nominates a “relaxed” chiasmus. A stricter, but clunky, dead-to-the-ear chiasmus might run “I give true love to you and you give true love to me.” Chiasmus isn’t always the smoothest of operators.

⁵¹ Because of their status of proximal opposition, sadness and anger are not really candidates for what Fahnestock calls “nounce” antonyms (87, 108, 127), i.e., antonyms made on the spot by their oppositional placement in antimetabole and in chiasmus. We possess certain “expectancies” (Fahnestock’s term) that sadness and anger are naturally opposable (what I call “conventional” in the next paragraph). However, as this discussion will describe, James heightens the existing opposability by his adept use of negatives.

⁵² Soon enough after his arrival on the scene, Croy demonstrates his own brand of “personal intimate tyrannies at close hand” (Pound 257). However, by Kate’s subsequent behavior, we assume he is also adept at plying personal tyranny from afar.

⁵³ The character is Julia Bride, in the short story by the same name (*Henry James, Complete Stories 1898–1910*. 665). Kate and Julia have more in common beyond the social difficulties and economic ramifications for them of a parent who engages in illicit activities of which better society disapproves. Julia’s ambition, like Kate’s, is to attain “a future financially assured” (674). She conspires with a former admirer to carry off two lucrative marriages; one for herself in exchange for one for her conspirator. These marriages will follow only after the pair has each lied on the other’s behalf. As with Kate, a big lie to someone for whom she greatly cares will serve Julia. Her lie will ensure the realization of her own last name, which will subsequently ensure a lifetime of riches for herself.

⁵⁴ Fahnestock helpfully differentiates unmediated from mediated oppositions (154), which is her terminology for opposites that are naturally occurring or culturally sanctioned as distinguished from opposites made by antithetical placement within the occasion of an antithetical figure, such as chiasmus or antimetabole. The “fundamental” and “conventional” oppositions identified here fall into the unmediated category of oppositions; “circumstantial, private opposition,” into the mediated category.

⁵⁵ Negatives naturally give a sense of “hesitation,” claims Ian Watt (273). Watt presumes that negatives relate to frustration in that they emphasize “expectation” of that which isn’t yet (273).

⁵⁶ The “wavering” world is spoken of by Gussy Bradham in J’s *The Ivory Tower*.

⁵⁷ Fahnestock speaks about the reversal of “grammatical roles and conceptual relation[s]” between the “mirror image clauses” of chiasmus (224).

⁵⁸ The first century BC manual *Rhetorica ad Herennium* identifies “ten Figures of Diction” (including metaphor) constituting a “class” of rhetorical devices that “departs from” or in some way extends, transfers, or twists “language [...] from the ordinary meaning of the words” (333). Fahnestock explains that despite their ubiquity and ordinariness, the figures have traditionally been seen as devices departing from so-called normal or literal language. She speculates “Quintilian may be the source of this idea when he claims [...] that figures represent ‘a rational change in meaning or language from ordinary and simple form’ ” (24). After Fahnestock’s text systematically outlines the many problems that inhere with defining figurative language as a phenomenon separate “from an unfigured domain of usage” (40), it suggests defining the verbal “figures as epitomes of argument” and reasoning (40, 42). As earlier indicated, Fahnestock contends that the figures embody “argumentative strategies” (46), that is, they are “precise” embodiments or forms of argument (48). This contention has inspired and stood up much of this treatise.

⁵⁹ As the idiomatic expressions ‘to twist (a)round one’s little figure’ and ‘to twist one’s arm’ indicate, the word *twist* connotes manipulation by physical violence or contortion. Mental anguish and pain is, for example, movingly conveyed in Saint Augustine’s recollection of how God had long “left me to twist and turn in the dark” (*Confessions* 69). Because to twist is to wring, extreme emotional disturbance or pain can be indicated by hand wringing or by a small act of physical twisting. This is the case in a novel

by John Banville, who, as it happens, demonstrates Jamesian proclivities and drops the name of the Master, drops designations of locales (Lancaster Gate and Bayswater) from *The Wings of the Dove*, and drops names of Jamesian characters from this novel and from his lesser known *The Other House*: “Mrs. Beaver sat with a terrible, fixed smile, twisting and twisting a napkin in her hands as if she were wringing the neck of some small, white, boneless animal” (*The Untouchable* 91).

Twist is associated with desperation as in the case of Mrs. Beaver. But it is also associated with fractious and anormal behavior (Redfern 167, 166). To say someone is twisted is to assert that he is not mentally right. That twisting is dangerous, even deadly, we need only consider the familiar conjunctions ‘fatal twist,’ ‘ultimate twist,’ and ‘final twist.’ For example, when speaking of the Medieval and Renaissance figure of Fortune, David Kunzle describes her turning her wheel in an “ultimate and final twist” (41). Fortune’s twist puts the fatal screws to life.

Fortune, in fact, is herself a kind of visual chiasmus. With her turning wheel, she is, like chiasmus, an overturning or overtopping figure. Samuel Butler, an arch chiasticist, goes even further with the goddess of Fortune. Norrman explains that “If there exists a pair ‘men and goddess’ out of which one influences the other, ambilateralism makes Butler willing to consider either one of the pair a candidate for the subject-role [...]” The novelist then vacillates between which of the pair is in charge, asking, “Who made whom? Did men make Fortuna a goddess? Or did she make them, so that they could make her? Or did they make her, so that she could make them make her?—and so on in infinitude regression” (Butler 213). An “ambivalent vacillation” results from these back and forth propositions. Such vacillation is an recurring affordance of chiasmus.

⁶⁰ The linguist Dwight Bolinger, like many another, easily falls into using a vocabulary in which he speaks of “stretching meanings” with metaphor (144). This is not a far cry from perceiving figurative language as tortured. Bolinger refers to “double-barreled metaphor that brings down” two meanings at once—that is with one locution (143). Quinn, like Redfern discusses not just the turning, but the twisting (20), the deviating (20, 97), and “violating” qualities of the figures and how they can jar and even “double wrench” (97) by their “illicit” turns. Quinn points out, for example, that the Latin equivalent of catachresis is *abusio* (55). In Quinn’s view, each figure of speech can be characterized as a “deviant” “we ennoble with the status of figure” (97).

⁶¹ Chiasmus, of one variety, takes back (to a greater or lesser degree) in its second proposition what it has proposed in its first. In doing so, it is a discounting or disclaiming device. This dissociative variety undercuts itself. Ultimately, too, so does Kate; her selfishness proves self-defeating.

Fahnestock refers to the “compression” of antimetabole (279). Antimetabole and chiasmus are highly “restrictive” (351). She references “antimetabolic manipulation” (236), the “forceful” nature of the figure (267), and its “formal constraint” (279).

Antimetabolic “tightness” (274) and the figure’s “tight form” (229) receive mention in Fahnestock. She also considers antimetabole and chiasmus to be “compressed” and constraining mechanisms (226, 228, 229, 232, 251).

Norrman reminds that “Chiasmus is all about *order*, in the sense of sequential order, i.e. what comes first and what comes after [...]” (2).

⁶² Those in higher inter-personal ‘places’ “have more and different interactional rights, including the right to evaluate others, ask personal questions, give advice, point out flaws, have their opinions count, be late, have something more important to do, ... and so on.” Croy, in his interview of Kate in the first scene, uses all of these power tactics outlined by Candice Clark (306). Clark emphasizes the work of Barry Schwartz, who demonstrated “that monopolizing others’ time by making them wait reflects and reinforces power differences” (Schwartz qtd. in Clark 307–308).

⁶³ This idiom also indicates things don’t matter. In her confrontation with her father, which follows shortly in the novel, Kate admits that she has given up trying to know where Lionel Croy is at.

Emotionally and psychologically exposed and in harm's way, she cannot rest assured. Casey in *Getting Back into Place* describes how indeterminacy of place, what he calls an atopic state, is psychologically anguishing (66). Kate and Densher, in the opinion of Millicent Bell, are both cases of "social displacement" (*Meaning in Henry James* 98).

⁶⁴ Fahnestock explicates a select group of the "compendium" in her examination of figures. Her work, which has broken important new ground in the field of figured iconicity (i.e., the iconicity of discourse figures), has been invaluable to this present study.

⁶⁵ This work, by William P. Mack and Royal W. Connell, is the fifth edition (1980). It is published by the United States Naval Academy. The ceremony I attended, which had all the flourishes, was for a personal friend who was being relieved of command. The ceremony was held on Academy grounds in August of 2001.

CONCLUSION

Chaos is merely order waiting to be deciphered.
 Jose Saramago, *The Double*

You can like the life you're livin'.
 You can live the life you like.
 Fred Ebb, lyrics from "Nowadays"¹

A popular American home products company promotes its line of glassware for the domestic bar. Despite that its catalogue entry is telescoped to hardly any length, the seller, in effect, brags that its glassware is designed to work one of two tier configurations or, helpfully, both at the same time, that is, in a shared space: the 'highball stacks into double old-fashioned, and vice versa.' The manufacturer-seller offers the consumer two glass types designed to be dual purpose: "tiered for sturdy stacking" and good for "maximum storage flexibility." The glasses will go either which way the owner decides: for instance, the highball above and the double old-fashioned below or the double old-fashioned above and the highball below. The barware is called 'Staxx.'² 'On Par' could have been a name alternative in that the glasses are almost perfectly identical in their silhouette and, with respect to their design configurations, the old-fashioned glass and the highball each have the same ridge (to permit vertical stacking) at the same distance from their respective tops. Their shapes, except for height, are the very same, thus ensuring mutual alignment and interoperability properties essential to safe stacking (balanced, stable). The glassware is desirable not only in its pleasing design and clean lines, but the individual glasses keep close and firm on one another. Patently, they are terrific space savers. Efficiency, space economy, and spare, straight-up design make these top sellers.

The reason for commencing the Conclusion with this barware is not because of the 'xx,' although, admittedly, the accentuated application of the favorite letter of chiasmus has an

automatic appeal, at least to this writer. Rather the reason rests in formal design, generally, and the *AB:BA* design and its products, specifically. The glasses are tangible entities that, within a concise, controlled space, manage to be both physically sturdy and maximally flexible. Sturdiness, what we can translate as reliability, and flexibility relate to chi-thinking. The Staxx glasses are notable in their capacity to minimize and all but eliminate the spatial distance between themselves. Equally important is that the formal design relationship between the two glasses is such that they become, in effect, ‘interlocked’ with one another. This interlocking is the equivalent of chiasmic inter-involvement and intimacy. In a formal sense, each glass summons another and is summoned, in turn. The glasses orient (stack) one to one and are designed as interchangeable. This interchangeability means that if you have a set of each glass type you can stack and restack them to an almost endless number of new combinations. To my seeing, these many qualities comprise the take-away spatio-physical properties of chiasmus.

We easily grasp—even without handling them or having a discussion about them with their originators—how these glasses ‘work,’ that is, what they may arrange for on the basis of their particular design. We don’t in the least resist the prodigious part that form has in their function. Such an unproblematic attitude and an accompanying willingness to give form its meaningful do, have in the last decades, found warning signs, when not outright barricades within the literary arts. This is especially the case in the rarefied, anti-formalism atmospheres of literary criticism and theory.

One of this study’s objectives has been to encourage form’s fair share in meaning and in thought. By examining a single form, the study aims to contribute to the growing contemporary corpus on form–meaning pairings, a lively part of which has been conducted under the scholarly auspices of Jeanne Fahnestock and Mark Turner. A major side benefit to the recognition of the form–meaning association is that in acknowledging a form its affordances and effects, we better discern how a given rhetor shapes his argument and the control he has over it. Literary critics, even some of the most widely read today, gloss over the *AB:BA* form, apparently oblivious or, at least, apathetic to its effecting talents. In explicating an excerpt from T. S. Eliot, the esteemed Murray Kreiger, for a single instance, talks completely around, never

touching on the vital contribution of chiasmus to Eliot's creation not just of stasis, but also stasis with dynamic alternation (see Krieger's *Ekphrasis* 265). This explication omission is particularly bewildering for a number of reasons, a few of which the notes delineate.³ In overlooking chiasmus, Krieger neglects the thinking the *AB:BA* formula shapes and has responsibility for. Neglecting chiasmus means that how its pattern bundles words and ideas and steers meaning aren't factored into the larger analysis. And oversights of this sort have an obverse consequence; namely, conferring on other structures, linguistic or rhetorical, or on other literary or textual factors more credit than is rightfully owed or entirely due them. This strikes me as a double lapse that can well leave for a slack analysis or one at looser ends than should be.

Chiasmus can serve as a valuable port of entry to the art or the philosophy of a creator and to his professional life story. For instance, individuals who relish the perpetual back and forth between sets of antinomies or whose themes are pursued by an inveterate counter-seeing can become intoxicants of the chiasmic figure.⁴ Chiasmus often turns out to be the illustrative figure woven in their dense carpets, as with Kenneth's Burke and his "perspective by incongruity" credo. Jacques Derrida spurs on his lexical and ratiocinative vivacity and playful involution via chiasmus. The device also perpetuates his *both/and* complications. With his fascination with dialogic structures and the inter-association of literary and graphic sign to the signified, the works of Louis Marin are likewise sprinkled with and, at times, tortured by chiasma. Despite the famed digressiveness of Montaigne's *Essays*—Emerson decreed it was the least written book he knew—, the work is suffused with "exquisiteness."⁵ This observation by Joseph Epstein strikes readers as spot on, although he leaves them longing for specifics. Chiasmus, I believe, offers one avenue to account for the faultless quality (the exquisiteness) that clings to Montaigne, a self-confessed admirer of that which he nominated as stamped in "the Ancient mold."

I have no way to know if the designer or brander of Staxx intended it, but the doubling of x has a value beyond the obvious phonological replication. The xx indexes (as I think it is meant to) that here is a product twice as good as the ordinary type and so a single x won't do.

With glasses physically related one to another, the exactly replicated letter also hints that the glass types are pairings that offer unison. ‘Twice as Good’ and ‘Two in One’: these could be the slogans to sell chiasmus, if it required selling. Clearly, it doesn’t. But, the how and the why it works is another story, not so transparent. The mechanics of chiasmus, like those of Staxx, rest in its spatial architecture and the configurations (propositions) that architecture designs for and, thus, constrains and makes possible.

In architecture and the visual arts, “everything is arranged for the sake of spatial development.” So eulogized Adolf Hildebrand in his 1893 treatise (241). The architectural and visual art composition configures a spatial whole ‘built’ on and subsuming an integumentation of spatial relations. The viewer of the composition gains her representational bearings via space; that is, by making out the “spatial values” that corporate before, but also yield to her space-reading eyes. Hildebrand, a sculptor with a fingertip facility for spatial depth and its depiction in paintings and in shallow *bas-relief*, accentuates how spatial determination depends on the reciprocal work between parts and wholes (240). The part–whole space relations ordered within an outlined region bring forth what the appearance articulates. The painting, sculpture, or building, each a “self-contained spatial unity,” plots meaning on the coordinates of units and ratios that are conjunctive and cohesive, contrastive and distinct. Especially influential in the composition’s conveyance of meaning are the spatial values derived from “more or less rich intersections or nodal points” (241). Langer would have us acknowledge that these integrated or nodal ‘instants’ of space peer two ways—separating, yet nevertheless bringing together and associating, when not likening.

Hildebrand offers a Virgil to wending the spatial causeways of chiasmus. He directs that to the degree a form powers a “clear spatial impression” (which does not mean that the content itself is simple), it conducts meaning (242). Our ability to cognize likeness and difference, the building blocks of meaning, inaugurates in space and through space delimitation (wholes and their parts). The spatial image is an idea, which once more recalls Langer. Chiasmus not only accommodates spatial values, it nurtures them. In this way, as a repository and cultivator of space, chiasmus is a depository of ideas. Physical alongsidedness, of its own, configures the

spatial relation and value, and, thereby, the idea of belongingness that Goffman accents. Alongside–belonging is one vital space value–idea coupling, a single form–meaning pair among a throng that chiasmus systemizes and brings reason to.

The *AB:BA* capacitor organizes a vast array of conceptual situations, each of which can be traced back to space and each of which performs a spatial idea, as Hildebrand would designate. Henry James, who relished comparing the novelist’s art to that of the architect’s, famously bemoaned, “really, universally relations stop nowhere.” Sounding in this remark an echo of William, the younger brother then pays tribute to the geometer who puts a halt to these relations by circumscribing a controlling and fixing form. Henry’s geometer is the literary artist. But, in truth, it doesn’t take an artist to apply a break. Each one of us faces up to the terrifying limitlessness with our marvelous knack for geometry and topology. That is, each of us possesses humanity’s superfine ability and natural agility for demarcating and breaking apart, aligning and realigning, contouring and conforming space. The result is relations in and about space that, among all relations, are essential because *ab initio*, as Henry James’ elder brother deduced.

Chiasmus pledges as a cognitive helpmate, reliable and significant in laying down a contracted district within space’s continuum, a district that arrives precisely, smartly, and obligingly pre-partitioned and, so, part ways defining. The contraction gained from framing or circumscribing plus partitionment plus precisely geared internal movements provide an essential apparatus for bracketing and organizing reasoning, language, representation, argumentation, categorization, valuation, endeavor, and social behavior (Goffman *passim*).⁶ Chiasmus is an architectural plan in small, but a Borromoni in the wealth and variety of the edifices it erects.

Cognitive science’s canon of embodiment as the baseline of human cognition was the jumping off point for this project. Our elemental grip upon the world rests in the body’s commonplace experiences in and its retention of our evolving placements and relative whereabouts in space and about our and other entities’ physical habitudes, orientations, routes, and motions in space. These activities, along with all of our perceptual offices, are collated in

a huge corporeal dossier that keeps track of, so we needn't much worry our brimful minds over, our interpretations as well as our manipulations of spatial relations and spatial patterns. These relations and patterns inform cognition. All of man's "mental realities," says William James, have their roots in "primitive bodily feelings" that discriminate space (187).

If body is father to the thought, as cognitive studies have shown, then space is mother. Architecture, the art of confining, defining, and realizing space, is called the mother of all the arts. With its expertise and sophistication with space and exceptionally nuanced space and form lexicon, architecture can enlighten us, the children of fleshed space, about spatial form. We actualize form through space and body, and form is how meaning achieves dictation. This study has concentrated on this dictation as it relates to one specific form and it has drawn on architecture and, also, the visual arts to assay form. These fields 'outside' the study of cognition exhort us to discern chiasmus in both its analytic and synthetic modalities, that is, as an unstinting and incessant director of parts relative to wholes and *vice versa*. I have drawn from these areas throughout to get a different perspective on, and perhaps more fine-grained assessment of the spatiality and, especially, the visual properties operant in chiasmus.

How in the end do we characterize chiasmus? Well, Rococo, it is not. This device sacrifices filigree and dispels shadows. It can render turmoil and the exotic, as we have witnessed; but in itself, it prefers to be staid and steady, mechanistic and minimalist. With its spare geometry and fierce symmetry, it regularly presents the very look and operant feel of a geometric proof or algebraic equation. Indeed, it would be found immaculate, if it had its formal wish. As with pure mathematics, calculating proportions and relations, equalities or the lack there of are its strong suit.

In the last few decades, chiasmus has become something of a favorite child. Post-modernism launched the debate that has evolved into the non-debate that all subjects and objects are inherently fraught with duplicity. Chiasmus has been adopted in this cause, one for which it is well fitted. Perhaps even, in its constrained, quirky, rubbing personality, chiasmus resembles the worst possible composite caricature of the post modernists. Admittedly, such a canted and chimerical figure makes a natural choice for double-dealing applications and the

arcane, in general. By its mixed nature—half leveler and half tripper-upper, half straight arrow and half bent—chiasmus is more than game for complication, paradox, and contradiction. Its category, identity, and causality disruption/dissolution puts on a defamiliarizing, as well as double, face. Chiasmus is much the slippery customer, able to be perfectly resolute about the absolutely confusing. However, it is just as much a mistake to take chiasmus as strictly the arch-figure of the obscure and always the doxology slayer as it is to ignore, over simplify, or castigate it as empty, fallacious, or futile. Introverted though it certainly is, chiasmus will remain “an open site,” as Foucault claims about any episteme with a concern for “the order of things.” This equivocation, as much as equilibration, equanimity, and self-possession, is in the nature of its ancestor form, the diagonal cross. As the crisscross is double-minded, so, too, we should acknowledge its discursive stamp.

Double minding is chiasmus’s greatest gift. Perpetually, it divvies up the world into binary states and insists on this binarism, even when willing one side’s overriding of the other. We appear programmed to conceive the world and ourselves in a side-by-side duality: Man “is a centaur, a tangle of flesh and mind, divine inspiration and dust” and “To have days on earth is to know joy [woven] with sorrow” (Levi 19; Borges, *Selected Poems* 167). Our bread is leavened by duals. Bisociation is in our nature and genetics, and bisociatively is how we go about thinking. Doubling also enables us to reform, reconstruct, re-visualize, review, reorder, recast, reframe. Organizing anew can aid in recognizing and rearticulating. By and large, rhetorical figures are schemes of connection and disconnection, what has been named here association and dissociation. Chiasmus resembles metaphor in performing both.

Chiasmus and metaphor have kept humans company a very long time. They have cognitive permanence for they are inexhaustible and they are doublers. They perpetuate across human thought because they manage two-handedly: they work from things that are alike, and yet, they indulge and mingle with notions of ‘on the other hand.’ Metaphor and chiasmus follow up a likeness with a new slant. We are always ready for a new turn, but find comfort in what came before. We are greedy conceptualists. We cannot do without the old and the new.

All of us stock chiasmus in our cognitive cupboard, just as we do metaphor. It is a stable for it is always considerate in the way of twos.

In short, chiasmus is a lesson in itself. It reminds us that we comprehend far more than we can say. And it shows, as Horace said, how “Much is in little.”

¹ This jaunty line is from the contemporary musical production *Chicago*.

² Staxx barware was featured in a 2004 Crate and Barrel catalog, “Best Buys.”

³ Krieger advances his arguments on the subject of ekphrasis with nearly every page having a chiasm (or two) and, even more bizarrely, his book is haunted by the paradoxical ouroboros and the cycling irresolution it emblemizes. See Bibliography.

It may surprise readers that even the percipience of a Kenneth Burke can look altogether beyond chiasmus and its effectuations.

⁴ Some other intoxicants are Ralph W. Emerson, Henry James, Friedrich Nietzsche, Samuel Butler, M. Merleau-Ponty, and John Berger.

⁵ In *Life Sentences* (24), Epstein quotes Emerson, but, unfortunately without bibliographic citation. The “exquisiteness” remark is also from *Life Sentences* (19).

⁶ Hildebrand and Goffman may seem odd fellows, but each analyst’s theory on framing begins in and accounts for the body. The two are recommended sources to inquiries into embodiment and spatial arrays. We, who are students in cognitive studies, may wish to give further consultation to William James and Maurice Merleau-Ponty with regard to fleshed space.



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