

## An Architecture of Cracks

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The buildings that people build can represent the psyche of human beings. A crack in the orthographic whole of the psyche can be a reaction to the intolerability of the condition of human society, resulting in neurosis, paranoia, wish-fulfillment, fantasy, sublimation, and a splitting of the psyche in its formation in language, science and technology, the unconscious, in the demands of society. According to Sigmund Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, a source of human suffering is “the inadequacy of our methods of regulating human relations in the family, the community, and the state” (19). The human being “becomes neurotic because they cannot tolerate the degree of privation that society imposes on them in virtue of its cultural ideal” (20). It is certain that “our present-day civilization does not inspire in us a feeling of well-being” (21), and “when the most extreme forms of suffering have to be endured, special mental protective devices come into operation” (22), fantasy, wish-fulfillment, sublimation. Thus “each one of us behaves in some respect like the paranoic, substituting a wish-fulfillment for some aspect of the world which is unbearable to him, and carrying this through into reality” (15).

The superstructure of language, rules, codes, science and technology in society forms the unconscious of the individual, according to Lacan, as the Other, but entails a necessary alienation from conscious thought. According to Freud, “From pathology we have come to know a large number of states in which the boundary line between ego and outer world become uncertain, or in which they are actually incorrectly perceived—cases in which parts of a man’s own body, even component parts of his own mind, perceptions, thoughts, feelings, appear to him alien and not belonging to himself. ... So the ego’s cognizance of itself is subject to disturbance, and the boundaries between it and the outer world are not immovable (3). According to Lacan, language is the source of *méconnaissance*, in the community of symbols into which the subject is inserted. In its participation in the Other, the ego misrecognizes its own unconscious, but it is the unconscious which constitutes the ego, the Imaginary function. The subject is excentric to the ego, to its own mechanisms of thinking, and does not know what it is. It is impossible for the subject to know itself, given the dichotomy of the Imaginary and Symbolic, conscious ego and unconscious, orthopedic body image and language. The knowledge on the part of the subject of its unconscious is replaced by the illusions of consciousness, the mirage of the *cogito*, the thinking subject. The subject decenters itself in its commitment to language; science and technology are manifestations of the mechanisms of language, symbolic structures, into which the subject inserts itself, and through which the subject loses itself. Language itself is as a machine in that it detaches itself from the subject, and objectifies the subject in its detachment. In language, in its objectification, the subject is fragmented and disconnected, but the ego of the subject retains the virtual and alienated unity given by the gestalt image of the ideal ego in the mirror stage. The subject is divided in language, and further divided by the relation between language and the object, between the Other and the other.

Fantasy, the wish-fulfillment caused by the *objet a*, the object of desire, is represented by Lacan by the algorithm  $\$ \diamond o$ , which is the desire ( $\diamond$ ) of the elided subject ( $\$$ ) for the *objet a*, the

*plus-de jouir*, what is inaccessible to desire or wish-fulfillment. Fantasy is the promise to the subject of that which is unattainable in its existence in being, and it protects the subject from that abyss within itself. The condition of the object of the fantasy, the *objet a*, is “the moment of a ‘fading’ or eclipse of the subject that is closely bound up with the *Spaltung* or splitting that it suffers from its subordination to the signifier” (*Écrits. A Selection*, p. 313). As soon as the subject enters into language, the attainment of the *objet a* is impossible. The object identification of the Imaginary ego provides the subject with the stand-in object of its desire, in the illusion of consciousness in the ego, and the Symbolic order, the unconscious, robs the subject of the stand-in object of its desire in the fragmentation of the body.

Desire is the product of the impossibility of the Imaginary in the Symbolic, the splitting of the subject between identification with the other person and identification in the Other, the cultural superstructure and the basis of the unconscious, the splitting in which the unconscious is formed, in the repression of desire as misrecognition, *méconnaissance*, which is the only recourse of the subject. The splitting occurs in the processes of language, in metaphor and metonymy, as the impossible representation of what the subject cannot know as itself; as Lacan writes in *Écrits*, “it is the concrete incidence of the signifier in the submission of need to demand which, by repressing desire into the position of the misrecognized, gives the unconscious its order” (*Écrits*, p. 709). Desire is maintained by language, as is the dehiscence of the subject, and the possibility of the unconscious, and “it is the nature of desire to be radically torn.” (*Seminar II*, p. 166).

