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# Immediacy and Forgetting

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## First, an Anecdote

In *Récits d'Ellis Island*, by Georges Perec and Robert Bober, the first chapter is entitled "L'île des larmes" (The Island of Tears)— the nickname given to Ellis Island at the time of mass immigration. In documentary style, this chapter describes the history of this small island in New York Harbor—a veritable factory producing properly stamped American citizens—until an anecdote replaces the statistical generalities and the linear recounting of events:

> An old Russian Jew was advised to choose himself a nice American name that the civil authorities would have no trouble transcribing. He sought advice from a baggage handler, who proposed the name Rockefeller. The old Jew repeated several times *Rockefeller*, *Rockefeller*, to be sure not to forget. But several hours later, when the official asked his name, he had already forgotten, and replied in Yiddish, "*Schon vergessen*" (I have already forgotten) and it was thus that he was inscribed under the very American name of John Ferguson. (17-18)

So here we have the old Jew, who has just changed countries and continents, named with the very name for forgetting in a language that will itself also be forgotten, wiped out on the threshold of America, while setting aside a religion also forgotten by this very Christian baptism. Forgetting operates like a form of mediation that allows the passage here between old Europe and new America, between the old Jew with the abolished name and the new American with the deliciously Anglo-Saxon surname. Thus the "individual" is born of the passage from a common and foreign language to an individual and encrypted name. He only appears as the momentary (and random) support of a language which by definition surpasses him and in which he finds his identity, and through a name that is misunderstood (or understood in another language, in another form of identifying his utterings, and from a certain institutional expectation of discourse production).

But this is not all, for the text reported by Georges Perec simplifies the anecdote, or rather, in order for the story to work as an example, he has to forget another element: that the subject of speaking has always already erased the enunciation of his identity. One cannot translate *Schon vergessen* as "I've already forgotten" (as Perec does in parentheses), but

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simply as "already forgotten." The "I" has always already disappeared from the enunciation so that the misunderstanding can work (who would have understood the American bureaucrat hearing "*Ich hab schon vergessen*"?) The "I" is not an origin; it is merely a result, or the provisional meeting point for a number of mediations, of which he is neither the source nor the responsible party. This *I* is like every personal pronoun (perhaps even every deictic), varying its forms and its *renvois*, its authority and its prestige according to careful or random exchanges between speaker and listener. Thus it is because he is *already forgotten* in the utterance "schon vergessen" that the subject of the utterance can be named with the name of forgetting. This forgetting becomes, in fact, a support of memory: memory of a personal identity, even if it springs from a misunderstanding; memory of a history of social mediations represented by Ellis Island, on the edge of America (considered a Promised Land, "a free and generous land where the Old World's condemned can become the pioneers of a new world" [Perec and Bober, 9]). In this case, America's generosity begins with the ignorant gift of a name. Already in the uneasy ship bringing the Jewish immigrants toward a still-phantom America they were obliged to forget who they were, beginning with their names. Admittedly, identity does not begin with a name, but it eventually attaches to it, like a boat to the dock. *Schon vergessen*, John Ferguson: the immediate crossing of the two languages, each one into the forgetting of the other, in a forgetting where there must be a mediation: a third party, excluded, included? Not just an overlapping of languages, but a forgotten third, an immediate third, the one who transmits the story like a gift.

"This story is perhaps too good to be true, but it hardly matters, in the end, whether it is true or false. For the emigrants avid for America, changing their names could be considered as a benefit," adds Perec (18). Seen in conjunction with the statistics and the names painstakingly listed in order to authenticate its presence in the book, this anecdote does indeed seem a bit too immediately significant to be above suspicion. The immediacy of the rueful laugh it elicits invites us to doubt its degree of historicity. But this hardly matters, for it is its exemplariness that counts, not its reality. Now, an exemplary account is one that links the singularity of a passing event to the generality of a lesson that endures. Like Ellis Island itself, this anecdote then functions as a "place of memory," a way of sketching recognizable signs upon the folds of time: something that has *already* been recounted and whose singular hero has always already

been forgotten—if he existed at all. Superimposed upon the system of historicity that presupposes a critique of proofs and an editing of eyewitness accounts in order to convince (according to the scientific practices of historiography) is the system of memorialization, which relies upon the authority of relayed information and upon the immediate presence of a collective memory in order to seduce (according to the regulating usages of the tradition).

But haven't we too hastily forgotten one element in this anecdote? The expression is also—is already—that of this *schon* in "*schon vergessen*." It's as though, in this anecdote, forgetting is "always already" present, there from the start. Social or memorializing mediations thus are based on the register of the immediate—everything that quickly becomes memory and mediation. The seductive immediacy of the exemplary account that gives a sudden presence to the statistics, to the names of ships, or to the history of the island also expresses, immediately, the power of this immediacy. For it is indeed in the instantaneous signification of "*schon vergessen*" in "John Ferguson" that we see mediated the forgetting of the opacity of mediations. The passage between languages evokes a laugh—or uneasiness—but for the two interested parties, it is no longer a problem. For the overworked official, the misunderstanding goes unperceived; for the old Jew, the relief at having passed this dreaded hurdle without hindrance wins out over false names. The fact that his original name is doubly effaced by the forgotten pseudonym (Rockefeller) and the erroneous name (Ferguson), the fact that the anecdote abandons him to oblivion, indicates the definitive erasure of traces of history in favor of the power of immediacy. This is so even if mediations return right away, return *already* to clinch things, since the name *Fergus-son* reestablishes an unexpected heritage and filiation that extends into the immediate materiality of the signifier. The point is that between mediation and immediacy, memory and forgetting, it is not simply a matter of opposition or distance.

Thus there is no difference between the nature of memory and of forgetting—since the latter allows the former—any more than there is a difference between immediacy and mediation, to the extent that they repeat each other, but according to different speeds and rhythms. These differences are henceforth differences of degree more than of nature, infusing into the course of events a principle of continuity often erased by reified oppositions—but a continuity that tends to withdraw locally or to deploy itself rapidly. Is this a useless paradox? Only if one maintains

the principle of a homogeneous and linear time based on the difference between a "before" and an "after" that frame each present. But it is possible to conceive a heterogeneous temporality based on dynamic non-linear systems (whose classical mathematic figure is the "strange attractor").[1] Then every present is traversed by what borders it; this border simultaneously contains and overflows into it.

In order to fully understand the implications of such a model, one has only to think of Bergson's meditations on memory. If each instant is always equal and self-sufficient, and unceasingly replaced by another one, the question is then to know how one passes from perception of the present to memory of the past, from *now* to back *then*. In fact, we must conceive of each instant as always offering two faces, where present perception is virtualized in the memory of the present, just as a fleeting immediacy is duplicated in an immediacy that remains and grows. Thus every present is bordered here by perception (a first immediacy), and there by memory (a second immediacy), so that the past is never cut off from the present, but on the contrary is contained in it, folded within it like a protein. However, we must add a third mode of immediacy to these two, one where each present is overwhelmed by the very contemporaneousness of these two heterogeneous registers. It is in this necessary overwhelming that the third immediate power is linked to forgetting the contemporaneous more than to remembering the present. The contemporaneous is what folds together the heterogeneous times of perception and of memory, but is what one must forget if one wishes to believe in the effectiveness of a present entirely contained in each instant, and in the effects of a past entirely excluded from the present. In order for the past to appear as past, rather than as contemporaneous to present perception, one must immediately reject it and forget this immediacy.

**Then, a *Déjà Vu***

There is nothing better than a pathological form to help us understand the workings of a mechanism, and perhaps to better explain the conceptual difficulties that I have rapidly evoked. So let's take the well-known experience of *déjà vu*, where a person believes he is re-living in the present an event already lived in the past. In fact, he is seeing the actuality of the present perception at the same time that he is living the virtuality of the memory of the present, but the desire for action and the attention to what is happening (thus to present perception) generally wipes out awareness of the contemporaneous virtuality of the memory

(see Bergson, 1919). The experience of *déjà vu* does not reveal some disturbance in perception or memory, but shows their very intimate connection, provided one can lift the veil of forgetting imposed by the third form of immediacy. Whereas ordinarily one forgets this contemporaneousness of current perception and the memory of the present, *déjà vu* sets it aside and re-establishes the clear awareness of living simultaneously the actuality of a perception and the virtuality of a memory. This opposition is like that which reunites the possible and the real. Most of the time we believe that the real is a slice from the much larger field of possibilities that pre-existed it. However, there again, the possible is opened up precisely by what has been realized; it is born from the real, and not vice-versa (Bergson 1939, 115-134). What we habitually consider as the possible is in fact the real plus a movement that projects the image of it into the past, whereas this movement is exactly contemporaneous with real perception and with the constructed possibility. Thus the real is not circumscribed from a field of historically determined possibilities, but immediately borders the memory of the present—this present that is elevated to the power of the possible. In this sense, the writing of history would not consist simply of an accounting of the mediations that have taken place in the past and from which we are irrevocably severed, but would be written in the constant bifurcation between the immediacy of the passing present and the immediacy of the ever-present past. "History" at this point would designate less a science of representations and results, and more an art of situations and problems.

The immediacy of the passing present brings us back to an evident actuality that continually calls our attention to life and to action. But the immediacy of the ever-present past attaches us to a forgotten virtual, whose specific phenomenological form should be inattention. The opposite of attention is distraction; inattention (as its prefix indicates) is lodged in attention itself; it counters it with its opposite, where its virtuality is felt. The phenomenon of déjà vu makes us *realize* the immediate interlocking relationship between attention and inattention. By remaining inattentive to the passing present, during the regular time that hums along, I pay attention to the ever-present past, in the rhythmic time that measures it. When, ordinarily, I forget the contemporaneousness of perception and memory, inattention dominates and the virtual wins out. When I realize this contemporaneousness, attention wins out and the sensation of the real dominates—but the pathology of

*déjà vu* shows clearly that nothing is stranger than this feeling of a reality suddenly linked to the virtuality of memory, as though one were becoming attentive to inattention itself. No doubt one could compare this to aesthetic feelings, and support the idea that *déjà vu* is the pathological figure of enchantment.[2] If inattention prevails at the moment when perception becomes virtualized into memory, realizing these effects does not bring us any closer to life and action, but rather to contemplation and *la survie* (the simple fact of surviving an event, and the impression of living on a higher plane).[3] Let's take examples from two very different works of art in order to better understand the stakes of these rapports between mediation and immediacy, between memory and forgetting.

**Next, a Theory of the Plot**

The first example, very recent, is a "promenade" by Janet Cardiff. This artist makes videos on sites where she exhibits, recounting stories with either amorous or detective plots, but plots filled with holes and hesitations, that one can only grasp in bits and pieces. One of these was "Theory of the Plot" [Théorie du Complot], which she staged at Montreal's Musée d'Art Contemporain in October 2002.[4] You the spectator receive a video camera, loaded with the completed film. You are directed to a precise spot in the museum, from which everything begins. Once in place, you start the video, and simultaneously follow the story that unfolds and the directions for moving around the museum. Circulating in the very places where the action takes place, and seeing around you the same staircases, paintings, and columns, but with different passers-by from the people you see on the little screen, you cannot escape a feeling of strangeness in such a doubling. You are simultaneously engaged by the plot and by the spectacle of the walls and the strange people around you. In fact, this is the very reason that you notice them: walls that you would not otherwise have looked at, people you would not otherwise have noticed, like this plot that remains mysterious. There is both a dislocation of the phenomena occasioned by such a doubling, and a curious bringing together of the beings and things that surround you. Perhaps you begin to become a part of the plot in your wanderings through the museum's rooms, which interest you less by their paintings than by their effect of a stage setting, while you pass people who also look at you with curiosity, since they can't help noticing your inhabitual behavior.

The French word for plot, *complot*, comes from *pelote*, that little ball made up of tightly crossed strands, to which the prefix *cum* adds to the

notion of gathering together—but a secret gathering of individuals, a gathering that is forgotten. So that in the story that is played out before your eyes or recounted by the same voice that tells you now to go down a few steps or to go through the door on the right or to stop in the very middle of the central hall of the museum, it is indeed a matter of a *complot*, of which you only detect a few threads. A singer is chased and killed, a mysterious white-clad woman claims to remember having killed a man in a hotel room, a car is filmed at normal speed and then in slow motion in the garage of the Place des Arts, with two gangster-types at the wheel. But there is no real "theory" to the plot.

Unless we take theory in its original meaning—the *theoros* is the witness, the one who saw and who can transmit reliable information to the assembled members of the city, someone who has the authority to see what is happening. (Note: women and children cannot be *theoroi*.) By extension, when the assembly sends some of its citizens to verify the presence or absence of enemies, when it sends them for example to negotiate accords with another city, this group is referred to by the collective plural, the *theoria*. Far from being cut off from the order of simple sensations, the *theoria* form an *aisthesis*, a legitimated sensation, inspiring confidence. Thus, in the museum exercise, a masculine voice repeats "Trust me, tell me now," as though it were necessary to relaunch the female narrator's story by this affirmation of a link between narration, memory, and confidence. Thus the plot unfolds before our eyes, but we are its *theoroi*, rather than having a theory about it. This is why the itinerary makes us take corridors that are off-limits to the public, makes us stand still or sit down in front of security posts, makes us exit the museum to visit the garage where the murder seems to have taken place. The theory doesn't present itself as something external to what is being recounted; it consists immediately in what we are living.

The only "theoretical" elements that are given to us, as we carefully descend the museum staircase, are a few reflections on *déjà vu*, as though therein lay the true theory of what we were experiencing. For the present doubling between the perception of our surroundings and the memory preserved on the screen that we contemplate indeed unites them as in the experience of *déjà vu*, through the voice that recounts and guides our steps, our gestures, our stops ("walk where I walk," she says). But the actors in the video are perhaps also *déjà vu*, to the extent that they are not professionals, but are the museum staff. Janet Cardiff does not simply use the setting to elaborate her *Promenades*; she also uses the people who

work in the setting, as though the actuality of the situation gave rise to possibilities of other experiences visualized by the video screen.

Via these scenarios that double perception, the *Promenade* spatializes, deploys in space the bifurcation of time itself: "Where do we go when we remember?" asks the narrator. The *Promenade* exemplifies both the temporal borders that partition perception and the internal overflowing of time that makes our memory. Thus the beginning of the video seems to arise from a phrase already begun, scarcely murmured, which simultaneously circumscribes and goes beyond the video. Then, we are swiftly presented with a little girl who comes toward us and holds out a black-and-white photo of a man stretched out on the sidewalk, and the feet of a woman standing near him. An enlargement of this photo is held by the two fingers of the little girl, when, suddenly, we have the feeling of plunging into this photo at the moment when it turns to color and when, as the camera rises, we see a woman in white running away from the corpse, screaming. Here we have in exemplary fashion this play with the borders of perception and with memory, with the unframing or framing of memory and forgetting, of mediation and immediacy. This mediation of the video film shows the immediacy that borders us and overflows us, and which also makes holes in our memory, which is "forgetting something important."

**Finally, On the Verge of Tears**

My second example is from a long time ago. On October 14, 1657, the daughter of Philippe de Champaigne took the veil at Port-Royal under the name of Catherine de Sainte-Suzanne. For this occasion, Philippe de Champaigne painted two pictures for her: *Madeleine repentie* and *Saint Jean-Baptiste*. The paintings were gifts, not commissions. As figures of renunciation of the world, Mary Magdalene and John the Baptist frame the public life of Jesus—John the Baptist being the first to designate him as the Messiah, and Mary Magdalene the first to bear witness to his resurrection. Thus Christ is tacitly at the center of meditations on these paintings. He is their vanishing point. For these are not simply pictures to admire, but also figures upon which to meditate. In contemplating them (both attentively and inattentively), one undergoes a whole "theoretical experience."

The episode pictured by Philippe de Champaigne in *Saint Jean-Baptiste* is one of the best known of the New Testament. [5] When John is baptizing people in the Jordan, he says clearly that he is neither Elijah nor the

Messiah, but the one sent to announce the coming of the Son of God on earth:

> There stands one among you whom you do not know. It is he, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethabara, beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who is preferred before me, for he was before me.'" (John 1, 26-30)

The temporal paradox of *after* and *before* is also a reversal of values (the one who is coming after is more important than the one who precedes). This temporal paradox designates the bifurcation in time itself.

How can such a paradox be represented pictorially? Philippe de Champaigne simply inscribes it in the space of classical perspective and the traditional ordering of objects. By putting the well-lit, massive body of John the Baptist in the foreground, with an opaque forest done in earth-tones behind him, he completely blocks the vanishing point of perspective. And, relegating the small, shadowy silhouette of Christ to the side, in the distance, almost under the hand of John the Baptist, he forces the viewer to *decenter* his gaze, since it is only behind the Messiah that the space of the canvas opens up toward the river, the distant hills, and a majestic city painted in tones of blue. The values of foreground and background, of center and periphery, are thus carefully inverted, in order to represent the radical reversal of human history signaled by the coming of the Messiah.[6] A Messiah who is still on the edge of public life, in the shadow of the words that announce him, in the background of history.

The words of John the Baptist are literally written on the painting: we discern three words of the well-known phrase *Ecce agnus Dei qui tollit peccatum mundi* inscribed on a ribbon floating from a cruciform stick over John's left shoulder (a foreshadowing of the sinister events to come), while it is his right hand that designates the coming of Christ. But here there is an inversion of superior and inferior, since the first words that designate the Messiah are only partially legible, in shadow, eclipsed by the well-lit *peccatum*. It is underneath sin—under its oblique inscription—that the horizontal, straight, redemptive writing of *Ecce agnus* is placed.[7]

John's body is presented in three-quarter view, directed toward the figure of the Messiah on the edge of the painting, but his face is turned toward the viewer, at whom he gazes with a disquieting intensity. His well-lit body is a massive presence, rendered painstakingly by Philippe de Champaigne in a technique reminiscent of the luminous precision of

Flemish painters. However, John's expression is both luminous and clouded. When we look closely, we realize that he is *on the verge of tears*. He is not crying. But all the pent-up emotion over the arrival of the Messiah seems to cloud his gaze, which strikes us as strangely troubling. The tears do not hide his eyes, but make them more brilliant, more obvious. Their transparency does not block out the world, but clouds appearances. Saint John the Baptist's entire face flows into this gaze that is both brilliant and clouded, troubled and troubling. We witness here a passage between interior and exterior via *passion* as the privileged medium.

In the Christian religion, tears are repeatedly valorized: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matt. 5:4); "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh" (Luke 6: 21); "For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death" (Corinthians II, 7:10). Man's awareness of sin inevitably brings fatal despair, but if this sorrow means a lack of faith in God, the sin is doubled. Now, tears function as an abandonment to God, the ambivalent sign of a renunciation and a waiting, the proof of the weight of the world and the joy of penitence. Evagrius Pontius (346-399) affirmed in his *Ad Virginem* "Heavy is sorrow, unbearable is bitterness, but tears before God are stronger than either of these" (67). This is the propitious reversal of tears—signs of sorrow become signs of joy. More than a catharsis, than a purging of the passions, crying is a way of entering into the very essence of passion: a submission where the soul and the body surprise one another and abandon themselves to one another.

Nevertheless we must not mistake the origin of this submission. It's possible to receive happy or sad impressions of the world via the senses. But weeping over the dramas of existence, over the vagaries of love, over the affronts of destiny only leads to diversion; one turns away from the true concern of self. According to St. Augustine's *Confessions*, the literary work seems to exemplify this illusory center, like a bad mediation:

> I was forced to learn by heart the errors of some unknown Aeneus. Forgetting my own errors, to weep over the death of Dido, who killed herself for love, while miserable sinner that I was, I allowed myself dry-eyed to die in these frivolous games, far from you, o my God, who are my life. (31)

Thus Augustine's education teaches him the bad effects of emotion and the sad passion of tears, the forgetting of God and of the true life. But the inversion brought about by of this lesson is not simply one of rejecting the passionate immediacy of the body.

In the case of beneficial tears, the body understands a situation: not in the sense that it grasps it and reasons about it, but in the etymological sense of *concapio*, implying receiving. With tears, the soul becomes liquid and receives a material form whose saline transparency shines all the more because of its transitory nature. In the Middle Ages, the gift of tears was testimony of sanctity, since, according to André Vauchez's study (*La sainteté en Occident aux derniers siècles du Moyen Age*), tears are "provoked by meditation on the 'memoria' of Christ—that is, on his memory that can be felt, and they procure a fore-taste of the beatific vision that the sanctified soul will enjoy in the afterlife" (512). And it is especially the incarnation of the Messiah, God made man, that calls forth the consolation of tears. Thus there is no question of dissociating body and soul. On the contrary, tears are the favorable *mediators* that lead the body to its point of transparency, and the soul to its moment of materialization. They appear, momentarily, on the edge of the body, as though the soul were overflowing.

So John the Baptist is naturally moved to tears at the moment when he sees and designates for the first time the Son of God incarnate in the body of a man. So much so that ever since the early centuries of our era, the gift of tears is also considered as "a second baptism," as described by Piroska Nagy in his *Le don des larmes au Moyen Age* (417). But Philippe de Champaigne stops time in his painting at the precise moment when the tears are not yet flowing, but on the verge. Just as Christ is on the verge of the painting, at the threshold of his public life that will end in death and resurrection, so Saint John the Baptist is on the verge of tears. These limits are places of exchange, institutions of giving. In Pascal's interpretation of the Mount of Olives, Christ exclaims, "Must I always pay with the blood of my humanity before you give some tears?" (Pascal, 717).

Now, for Pascal (and in general, for the extended community of Port-Royal, which includes Philippe de Champaigne), what was the enduring mark of sin? In the *Pensées*, Pascal stresses the fact that man assumes he is the center of the world; he wants to dominate everything around him, whereas "Jesus Christ is the object of everything, and the center toward which everything tends" (449). By placing Saint John the Baptist front and center in his painting, Philippe de Champaigne exemplifies this human attitude, but at the same time he shows a way out of this, pointing a finger at the long-awaited one, and by bringing the edge of the painting into the center via the decentering of the tears in the eyes of St. John the

Baptist. It is in decentering his own gaze that man can direct himself toward the true center; it is in forgetting himself that he makes it possible to be present to the divine immediacy. Thus it is a matter of meditating not just on the aporia exhibited in classical perspective, but especially on the spiritual decentering made tangible in the fact of finding oneself on the verge of tears. The fact that the painting itself was a gift and an invitation to meditation for Sister Catherine de Sainte-Suzanne or in general for the religious community at Port-Royal, indicates that it participates in the economy that it represents.

**After the Fact**

Immediacy and forgetting, memory and meditation thus take particular guises according to time and place, but they nevertheless form the incessant warp and weft of our existences, the very possibility of our experiencing history. It becomes possible to travel from the Island of Tears to the verge of tears, from the edge of America to the walls of Port-Royal, to trace one's footsteps according to partially-grasped plots, always already exceeded by time, like our bed when we awaken from a disturbing dream. Excesses of memory and abuse of mediation are as harmful as systematic amnesia and overbearing immediacy. We must carefully ponder the reciprocal powers of immediacy and forgetting.

To the extent that immediacy and forgetting are the bases of memories and mediations, it is urgent to gauge their effects, for we easily fall into mis-uses of time. For example, if we confuse the intensity of the immediate with immersion in the moment, we reduce our experience of time's fragmentation to the illusory occupation of enjoying each fleeting instant, and we forget to pay attention to the movement of inattention. The chronicle of passing time is always already anachronistic (a time that comes back, that returns upon itself, folded into the instant that is not it), and anachronism is the source of historical time (which is why historians rightly have made it their goal). Thus *déjà vu* is explained or unfolded after the fact.

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## Notes

1. Strange attractors, used in chaos theory, allow one to calculate the chaotic behavior found in meteorology, or, more simply, in phenomena of thermal convection. In the case of a clock whose pendulum swings are measured, the two variables (speed, and its angle compared to vertical) determine an ellipse that is characteristic in dynamic systems of dissipation (i.e. which tend toward a state of rest where the two variables are nul). This ellipse is a "limited cycle attractor" toward which tend all trajectories issuing from any point, as though the points in the system were "attracted" toward the fixed point. But if a third dynamic variable is added (for example, an external force), the biperiodic system becomes chaotic and the trajectories obey two opposite imperatives: to group themselves according to the principles of dissipation and to distance themselves according to "sensitivity to the initial conditions" of the forces exerted. This generates "strange attractors" which, according to variables, deploy curves or fold them up, similar, from a topological view, to puff pastry leaves where the void between each sheet is never occupied by the trajectory. See *Chaos et déterminisme*, p. 120-125; 280-282.
2. Regarding attention and inattention, see Peter de Bolla's commentaries, in particular the connection he makes to aesthetic emotion: "Being in wonder is a kind of contemplation without object, a suspension in attentive inattention" (*Art Matters*, 142-143).
3. If we wanted to consult Freud on memory and forgetting, *déjà vu* and *survie*, we would turn not so much to the article on "False recognition" or even to the famous article on "Disquieting Foreignness" (in spite of the link with land of origin and "at home," whose familiarity already contains compulsive foreignness, since *heimliche* includes at its core *unheimliche*), but to a letter written to Romain Rolland for his seventieth birthday. In it, Freud recounts the strange experience he remembers having lived through on his first visit to Athens. This letter (whose both private and public nature is not without ramifications for the double import of each instant) evokes the fact that when he found himself on the Acropolis, Freud did not feel the joy that he should have, being so fond of travel, of architecture and of Antiquity. Instead, he had an impression of sudden unreality, or rather that what lay before his eyes indeed existed as it had been taught to him at school. In analyzing this unexpected feeling, Freud came to the conclusion that in his youth he would never have believed such a trip possible and that therefore he had repressed this memory and simply superimposed his past personal relationship to the Acropolis (I will never be there) on the reality of the Acropolis itself (it doesn't really exist). This movement of repression is also analyzed in his two other texts, but this one adds an important element: to actually visit Athens was to go farther than his own father had, and the desire to exceed the father coexists with its interdiction. "Filial piety," as he called it, consisted of *surviving* the father, both in living in his memory after his death, and in going further than him. Like every true piety, survival is a respectful challenge.
4. Le Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal possesses a video of the work.
5. The painting is in le Musée de Grenoble.
6. On June 4, 1667, in his lecture on Titian's "Christ carried to the Tomb," Philippe de Champaigne praised his illustrious predecessor's way of placing the face in shadow "in order to imprint even more the marks of death on this body," whereas certain members of the Academy "blamed Titian for having represented in such obscurity Christ's head and half of his body, which presumably should have been the best-lit aspect, appearing the most, since it is the main object to be considered in this painting." See *Les Conférences de l'Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture au XVIIe siècle*, 1996, p. 70 and p. 72. In his own painting, Philippe de Champaigne goes even further than Titian, since it is the living body of Christ, at the very moment he is recognized as the Son of God, that he relegates to the shadows, in the distance and to one side.

In this he follows some of his own recommendations: "nothing in the world is ever so apparent as when it is contrasted to its opposite" (*Conférences*, 136).

7. The horizontal writing of *Ecce agnus* is placed in the exact prolongation of the hand that designates Christ. The deictic (*ecce*) and the metaphor (*agnus dei*) form the equivalents of the gesture that designates and the silhouette that represents.

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