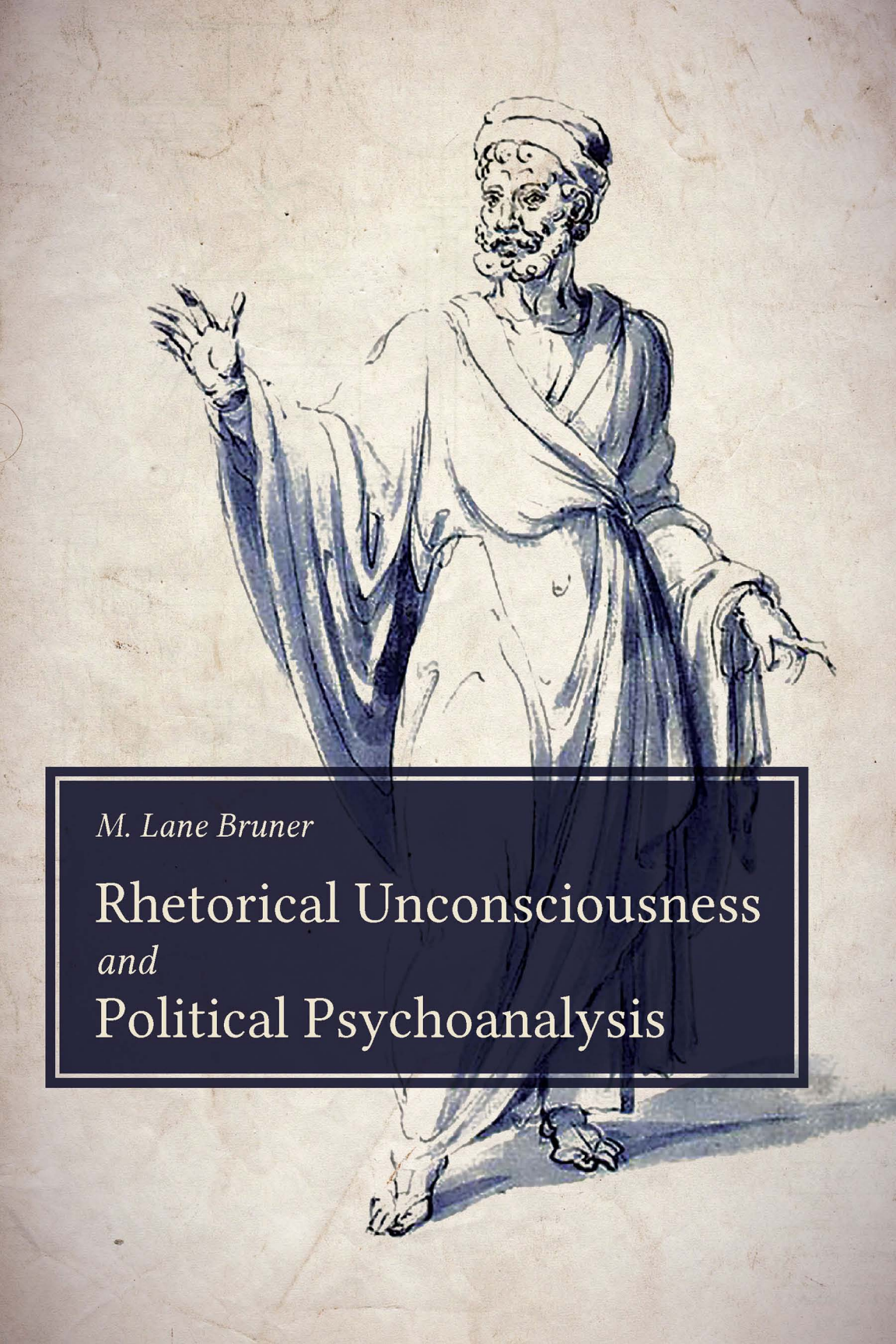

M. Lane Bruner

Rhetorical Unconsciousness *and* Political Psychoanalysis

Rhetorical Unconsciousness and Political Psychoanalysis

Studies in Rhetoric/Communication
Thomas W. Benson, Series Editor

Rhetorical Unconsciousness and Political Psychoanalysis

M. LANE BRUNER

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Front cover illustration: Costume of the allegorical figure Rhetoric, 1585,
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For Barbara Warnick

In us there are two principles: an unconscious dark principle, and a conscious principle. The process of self-cultivation . . . consists in . . . raising that unconscious being to consciousness, raising the innate darkness in us into the light, in a word, achieving clarity.

F. W. J. Schelling, quoted in S. J. McGrath, *The Dark Ground of Spirit*

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Series Editor's Preface

In *Rhetorical Unconsciousness and Political Psychoanalysis*, M. Lane Bruner offers a systematic exploration of the varieties of unconscious persuasion that are inevitably related to the best and worst of conscious, intentional persuasion. Rhetorical unconsciousness, Professor Bruner shows, is built into our shared, individual psychologies and into the fabrics of social relations that have come to be taken for granted as the structure of everyday human experience. Such unconscious persuasion operates through ignorance (the unsayable), unconscious symbolic processes (the unspoken), or productive repression (the unspeakable). That which is unconscious is not merely out there in another realm, though it may appear hidden from our view; rather, it finds its way into our conscious and intentional rhetoric in ways not fully understood. Bruner illuminates the structures of our irrationality and offers the hope of intervening in our own pathological confusions to redeem our intentional rhetorical prospects.

Thomas W. Benson

An Introduction to Rhetorical Unconsciousness

The term *rhetoric*, no doubt, is broadly misunderstood. Most are ignorant of the term, as classically conceived in ancient Greece and Rome, and those aware of the term tend to associate it with self-interested spin if not cynical deception: *mere* rhetoric. While a partially correct assumption, since many do deploy the arts of persuasion intentionally for unenlightened ends, this is an incomplete and improper understanding of the rhetorical. In fact *whatever* persuades us is rhetorical, and rhetoric, as historically conceived across the ages, is the art, for better and worse, of intentional persuasion. Persuasion obviously can be manipulative, leading to derealization and unwise policy, but persuasion can also contribute to realization and wise policy.

The term *rhetoric*, if known at all, is rarely associated with wisdom. It is not an overstatement to say "if known at all," since ancient Greek and Roman conceptions of rhetoric have still not penetrated deeply into many parts of the globe, being primarily reascendant in the United States and Europe.[1] While this situation is changing under the influence of contemporary globalization, and the intentional rhetorical arts are increasingly studied and practiced in other parts of the world, if in a less widespread and systematic manner, there is still widespread illiteracy across broad swaths of the globe, and political conditions that stifle critical thought and hamper access to intellectual and physical resources. Because of these and other factors, the classically conceived arts of intentional persuasion, let alone the forms of unconscious persuasion discussed in the following pages, are simply out of mind, unsayable, for most of the world's population.

For people around the world familiar with the term, not only in neoliberal societies (e.g., those supporting free trade, minimal government interference in business, the maximization of market logics)[2] but also in other types of more obviously repressive regimes (e.g., those ruled by physical terror rather than economic cruelty), observing the widespread and ever-present fact of manipulative, self-interested, and decidedly unvirtuous persuasion, where people work to bend situations to their will, no matter the quality of that will, rhetoric has earned

a well-deserved reputation as empty and misleading speech or speech cynically adapted to achieve unenlightened, merely factional or self-interested ends. *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language,* for example, first defines rhetoric as "the undue use of exaggeration or display; bombast," followed by "the art or science of . . . specialized literary uses of language in prose or verse, including figures of speech," and only then, in third place, as "the effective use of language."[3] The definition offered for *rhetorical* is even less promising, limiting the meanings to three: language concerned with "mere style or effect," a tendency toward "bombast," and "having the nature of rhetoric," which we can infer means bombastic speech stylistically dressed up for a falsely impressive dramatic effect.[4]

This dominant association of rhetoric with manipulation and bombastic style is unfortunate for several reasons. The most problematic consequence, in a larger setting where the term is unknown, is that it erases the broader connections between rhetoric and the *arts* of persuasion. A purely dismissive view obscures a plain yet inescapable fact: persuasion in all its varied forms is an ever-present aspect of human sociality, whether ethical or not, whether bombastic or noble, whether unconscious or conscious. Whether one is a realist or an idealist or anyone in between, one thing is certain: anyone choosing to engage actively in their taken-for-granted worlds would do well to master the intentional rhetorical arts, if for no other reason than self-protection. This may do little to impact the influence of the forms of unconscious persuasion explored in this book, but rhetoric is not simply something that others do "falsely." Intentional persuasion is something we engage in all the time, ignorantly or not, unconsciously or not, artfully or not, ethically or not.

Part of the art of intentional persuasion, for example, is understanding the fundamentals of argumentation, learning to recognize fallacious arguments, to assess the quality and relevance of evidence, and to distinguish sound from unsound reasoning. Without this understanding, individuals and groups are susceptible to demagogic manipulation and cannot see and appreciate the brilliance of virtuous eloquence or recognize or do anything about a decline into derealization. It is for lack of this kind of rhetorical knowledge that persuasive arguments are often the most fully fallacious (i.e., filled with bad reasoning, poor evidence, and so on), while well-structured and well-supported arguments are often rejected for any number of reasons, conscious and unconscious.

As opposed to today's English dictionaries, and opposed as well to common opinion, the arts of rhetoric, as theorized and practiced over the course of more than two thousand years, have been consistently conceived as not only intentional but also meta-self-conscious. The arts of rhetoric, that is, are a means of gaining perspective on a situation in order to speak and act more artfully, reflectively. The merely self-conscious tend to see the world through their own

taken-for-granted lenses, failing to gain a wider perspective on the situation, while meta-self-conscious rhetors can step back from their given positions to assess the persuasive terrain at a distance. We can speak, therefore, of primary repression, or our entrance into language, as a first "aesthetic" break into self-consciousness. This enables mere self-consciousness, which paradoxically is largely unconscious. We then experience a second "aesthetic" break with the emergence of the intentionally rhetorical, which requires stepping at least partially outside of our own position to survey everyone else's position and adapt accordingly. My claim is that we can also experience a third "aesthetic" break when we step outside of common sense altogether to survey rhetorical unconsciousness and its symptoms, a break that creates the subjective conditions for a truer form of agency more fully divorced from the automatic aspects of the subjective.[5] There are, then, three aesthetic breaks—the acquisition of language and "mere self-consciousness"; the acquisition of rhetorical perspective and "meta-self-consciousness"; and an awareness of subjectivity's unconscious dimensions and "critical meta-self-consciousness"—and these constitute a progressive range of subjective realization.

Regarding the stages of consciousness, I offer the labels nonconscious, bare sentience, conscious, self-conscious, meta-self-conscious, and critical meta-self-conscious to reflect the following trajectory: without life, self-moving but unaware, aware but unaware of being aware, being aware of being aware, stepping outside of one's subject position to gain perspective on given forms of self-awareness, and stepping outside *all of that* to understand better the unconscious persuasive forces that create the conditions of possibility for subjectivity in the first place.

In the intentionalist rhetorical tradition, we find ourselves located at the penultimate level of subjective realization (i.e., meta-self-consciousness). As a productive form of self-alienation and a politically consequential skill, intentional rhetorical artistry requires that one adapt words and actions appropriately considering the merely self-conscious perspectives of others and, in so doing, perfect one's best rhetorical approach, given one's goals. The history of intentional rhetorical practice has proven time and again that stepping outside of one's given subject position—and thus becoming meta-self-conscious—provides a powerful perspective through which others can be persuaded consistently.

The term *subject position* refers to one's imagined and actual position within a matrix of politically consequential and unconscious symbolic codes. Within this matrix of codes, the most important of which is the language enjoined at birth, we are incessantly labeled by others as having certain qualities and interests, just as we incessantly label the assumed qualities and interests of others. Subject positions, having Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary content, are the very stuff of the political, constituting the materiality of subjectivity. If one has grasped the

fundamentals of the intentional rhetorical arts and thus gained the ability to be self-alienated productively, then this allows one to influence others methodically, with a purpose, for good or evil and everything in between.

This metaperspective on language, this productive self-alienation that constitutes the second aesthetic break, leads immediately, however, to serious theoretical, practical, and ethical problems. What does it mean when only a small subset of a population has this meta-perspective while the clear majority are, relatively speaking, merely self-conscious, or so impossibly focused on their own subject positions that they fail to gain relative perspective, acting predominantly unconsciously? Are not the merely self-conscious rather much like puppets, or automata, in the hands of the relatively meta-self-reflective? If the deployment of rhetorical theory is truly an art, then what constitutes a masterpiece? Is it intentional mass manipulation, as with a master puppeteer, or speech that leads to greater human happiness and wisdom? Are both masterpieces? Can the two types be mixed? Where do we draw the line between harmful manipulation, or clever speech in the service of unwise action, and true eloquence, or reasoned speech in the service of wise action? It is precisely such questions that triggered the earliest debates among rhetorical theorists and practitioners in ancient Greece and Rome, once the fundamental insight on productive self-alienation had taken root.[6]

In point of historical fact, rhetoric as productive self-alienation, conceived as the arts of intentional persuasion, remained a key part of education throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, especially for those going into legal or religious professions, where advanced rhetorical skills, from substance to style, were important for social advancement.[7] That does not mean, however, that everyone agreed as to the ends and uses of this dangerous power of meta-self-reflection. Rhetoricians in the ancient Greek world were generally divided into philosophers, sophists, and those who taught from or wrote handbooks on the basic rules of persuasion, and there was little agreement among them on the proper ends of persuasion. While the three types overlapped as political circumstances shifted, some tended to focus more on results, others on ideal results, and still others on the politics of style. Each, though, was concerned with persuasion as an intentional art. I seek to problematize this intentionalist focus, as do all critical rhetorical theorists.[8]

To add to our difficulties in advance, given the widespread ignorance that exists about the actual rhetorical tradition, our inability across the ages to reach a consensus on the proper goals of rhetoric, and the variable gulf between the relatively meta-self-conscious and the relatively merely self-conscious, there are now *critical* rhetoricians, such as myself and many others, who have moved through the basics of semiotics and psychoanalysis to think of persuasion in a different way altogether. Instead of reducing rhetoric to an intentional art, the

rhetorical is thought to be more broadly equivalent to the discursive construction of the embodied subject saturated with consciousness and unconsciousness, which, in combination, work to structure and transform the political.[9] Politically effective rhetorical theory and practice, from a critical rhetorical point of view, must attend not only to the history of intentional meta-self-conscious persuasion, which no doubt is a step forward in self-consciousness, but also to rhetorical unconsciousness and its varieties and effects, since this is a form of persuasion that is decidedly not intentional, though underexplored and vaguely understood.

In the long history of rhetorical theory and practice, the unconscious and repressed aspects of persuasion have received only rare, if focused, attention, and most of that attention has been over the last quarter century. Important work on the relevance of the post-structural psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan to rhetorical studies, which I indirectly build upon, has been accomplished by several critical rhetoric scholars, including Barbara Biesecker, Christian Lundberg, and Joshua Gunn.[10] Those outside of the critical rhetorical tradition, however, have instead largely remained focused on their given worlds of common sense, or what here is conceived as a largely unconscious self-consciousness (i.e., *mere* self-consciousness), and for perfectly understandable reasons. Instead of questioning the common sense of their cultures, and thus risking becoming immediately ineffective, if not thought mad, those who taught, theorized, and/or practiced the rhetorical arts across the ages have stayed completely within their given common sense worlds and fallen into two general categories within their handbook, sophistic, and philosophical divisions: (1) realists, or those who focus on the nuts and bolts of pragmatic persuasion, victory in purpose, leaving ethical considerations to the conscience of practitioners given the complexities of context and so on; and (2) idealists, or those who insist that true eloquence is only possible through virtuous character and superior knowledge, including of the persuasive arts. The rhetorical realists have tended to focus on "how to now" and the rhetorical idealists on "to what ends." These are both crucial aspects of intentional persuasion with direct political implications, so the debate, while irresolvable, is incessantly productive. It is ultimately irresolvable, however, because there is no final correlation between the ideal and the real, precisely because of the various aspects of rhetorical unconsciousness we shall explore. As Gustav Emil Mueller notes in his introduction to Hegel's *Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* "Man philosophizes because he is in trouble. And he is always in trouble. He is always longing for self-integration and harmony, in the light of which ideals he feels their lack in his finite situation . . . [and] it is a self-created trouble, a necessary process in which the achievement and the good of yesterday become a fixation to be overcome, an enemy of the good today. This is an essential and perennial situation, which no pragmatism can remove or do away with."[11] The

ideal and the real are always at odds, and the incessant dialectical tension between them leads to very different symptoms worth closely studying.

The greatest issue that puts these two partially divergent realists and idealists, and in turn the technicians, the sophists, and the philosophers, into the same general camp, is that, for all of them, rhetoric is conceived as the consequential art of *intentional* persuasion. Minimally it is a learnable and practical approach to persuading others. Maximally it is the virtuous and wisely deployed art of the same. Due to this conceptual convergence, rhetorical theorists and practitioners, outside of critical rhetoricians, have paid insufficient attention to the unconscious aspects of subjectivity: the actualities of history and nature that elude us (i.e., the unsayable); the unconscious symbolic codes that create the conditions of imaginary possibility for intentional persuasion (i.e., the unspoken); and the things that cannot be said that maintain certain imaginaries (i.e., the unspeakable). Together the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable constitute the unconscious exoskeleton and organizing absences of self-consciousness.

Intentional rhetoric across the ages, as a learned skill, has therefore been ethically and morally ambiguous and built as well upon unrecognized natural and symbolic factors. Even leaving rhetorical unconsciousness momentarily aside, we are already playing with dynamite when teaching the arts of intentional persuasion. After all, one could be teaching the art to a Martin Luther King Jr. or an Adolf Hitler. Yet few who are truly familiar with the rich history of intentional rhetoric could dare to deny it is often the very summit of human art: eloquent and successful persuasion toward the good, the true, the beautiful, and the just. Intentional rhetoric can and often does lead to realization, despite otherwise unconscious persuasive influences, but that is no reason not to become as fully aware as possible of the powers of unconscious persuasion.

Once clearing up the problem with the term *rhetoric*, as historically conceived by theorists and practitioners outside of the critical tradition, we then immediately have other directions to go, since our object of study is rhetorical unconsciousness. If it is true that both realists and idealists remain within the given frameworks of common sense, then they have told only half of the story of persuasion from the perspective offered here. The other half of the story deals with the universal forms of unconsciousness that structure, frame, and enable the contents of self-consciousness and intentional rhetoric. Theories, analyses, critiques, and practical interventions into rhetorical unconsciousness, therefore, are different in spirit and kind from theories, analyses, critiques, and practical interventions offered by those who remain committed to a relatively unqualified belief in intentional, self-conscious persuasion. While intentional persuasion is obviously important, since we all must persuade in our common sense worlds, an overfocus on either intentionally altruistic or cynically self-interested persuasion

necessarily underfocuses, or focuses not at all, on rhetorical unconsciousness. It is only by grasping the broader contours of rhetorical self-consciousness and rhetorical unconsciousness that we can more fully locate and more artfully act upon a richer range of available means of persuasion in each situation.

The general invisibility of rhetorical unconsciousness notwithstanding, the evidence regarding its effects, when more fully displayed, strongly suggests that the negative discursive fields informing our subjectivities are at least as influential as the arts of intentional persuasion. The latter (i.e., self-conscious and intentional subjectivity) in fact depends upon the former (i.e., the unknown of the Real, the unconscious of the Symbolic, and the repressed of the Imaginary).[12] Regarding our rhetorical unconsciousness, however, the very same evidence also suggests that it is possible to become more conscious of this unconsciousness, that this unconsciousness reveals itself in different ways in different times and places, and that there are relatively healthy and unhealthy forms of productive repression.

While premature, as my theoretical apparatus will not be fully in place until partway through chapter 3 and what I mean by healthy forms of productive repression will only be fully described in chapter 5, at this point it is proper to say that there is no subjectivity without repression, but this certainly does not mean that all repression is similar in its material effects. A clear distinction, therefore, eventually must be made between productive *repression* that leads to derealization and *productive* repression that leads to realization. This is because, while all repression is "productive," in the sense that it produces symptoms, not all symptoms are equal. Negatively valenced repression leads to symptoms of derealization, through what I will soon describe as expanding fields of the unspeakable, while positively valenced repression is informed self-discipline to achieve a chosen capacity. What often drives chosen capacities, however, are themselves often the consequence of negative repression and thus the incessant need for political psychoanalysis: what, in sum, is being repressed collectively, what are its symptoms, and what is the ratio between oppression, whether conscious or unconscious, and enlightened agency.

As political psychoanalysts we study "aesthetic" symptoms and make diagnoses of various forms of repression, where symptoms are artifacts of material culture, which can manifest themselves through everything from legal structures to works of art, from military discipline to philosophic freedom. These symptoms are inverted mirrors, and/or mise en abymes, of variously repressed discursive fields.[13] Because of its symptomology, rhetorical unconsciousness requires political psychoanalysis, through retrospection, as a unique logic of political intervention, which I shall explore in detail but for now can be summarized as follows. First, dominant aesthetic forms of material culture and human association are

identified as symptoms of specific manifestations of rhetorical unconsciousness. Second, relevant negative discursive fields are mapped following clear analytic procedures, and this mapping occurs at the levels of the unknown Real, the unconscious Symbolic, and the productively repressed self-conscious Imaginary. Third, strategies and tactics are developed to reveal the repressed and ameliorate pathological symptoms. Fourth, the process is endlessly repeated, since all temporally bound solutions contain their own negative discursive fields.

The goal of this critical procedure, where we trace the relationship between hegemonic aesthetic forms and their attendant negative discursive fields in order to intervene as physicians of the political, can be viewed usefully as a three-part movement: (1) progressing from a critical analysis of (self-conscious and intentional) cultural common sense to an "alienated" critical meta-perspective; (2) analyzing from this critical meta-perspective the contours and effects of rhetorical unconsciousness and derealization in specific discursive environments via their symptoms, specifically as they relate to fields of the unsayable, unspoken, and unspeakable; and (3) then returning, through an analysis of both intentional and unconscious forms of persuasion, to intervene intentionally in the processes of, and for the purposes of, realization.[14]

There is the obvious critique: whose realization? In abortion controversies a "rights of the unborn" advocate might want a "rights of the mother" advocate to "see the light," and vice versa. This, however, illustrates precisely the "normal" inability to gain critical meta-self-consciousness, which, as political psychoanalysts, we should not expect anyway in normal situations. The merely self-conscious person is incapable of gaining sufficient perspective on their position, and even the relatively meta-self-conscious person would, if persuaded in their rightness, take the perspectives of everyone in the situation and adapt them to their own merely self-conscious purpose. The critically meta-self-conscious person, however, focuses instead on what is being ignored or repressed by all relevant individuals or groups in order to determine the degree of realization in the situation (i.e., that relative ideal of the prevalence of the best arguments of all, with historical facts as support, value hierarchies clearly laid out and welcomingly questioned, and so on).[15] Since fully realized conditions never exist and rhetorical unconsciousness goes amazingly far, we should expect that pathological symptoms will endlessly emerge.

What might be done to illuminate that which is unsayable, unspoken, or unspeakable? What might be done, in other words, to become more conscious of our rhetorical unconsciousness? This is the political psychoanalyst's concern. In this sense political psychoanalysis is content neutral, save for a preference for identifying historical and scientific truths that are somehow repressed, particularly when that repression leads to political pathologies and derealization.

Self-Alienation and Critical Meta-Self-Consciousness

Both realist and idealist perspectives on rhetoric, focusing as they do on common sense intentionality, largely bypass the persuasive power of the rhetorical unconscious. Therefore we have an ethical, secular duty, given the influence of these unconscious forces on our individual and collective forms of subjectivity, which directly inform the political, to identify symptoms, reveal the repressed, provide practical criteria for distinguishing unhealthy from healthy forms of sublimation, and productively investigate and respond to their very real powers.

We humans have only begun, primarily over the last two hundred years, to gain critical meta-perspectives on how language and other symbolic codes, such as money and technologies, relate to reality experienced subjectively. It was only in 1813 that Friedrich Schelling first declared the problem of critical meta-self-consciousness philosophically: "The man who cannot separate himself from himself, who cannot break loose of everything that happens to him and actively oppose it—such a man has no past, or more likely he never emerges from it, but lives in it continually."[16] This type of self-reflection for Schelling is not merely gaining a perspective within one's given realm of common sense (i.e., meta-self-reflection); instead it is becoming as fully alienated as possible from common sense to enter a new ethical and political terrain altogether (i.e., critical meta-self-reflection). We are, that is, as a species only now learning how to be more fully beside ourselves, to escape more fully from our "automaton" status in mere and even meta-self-consciousness, while most "normal" people commonsensically continue to think of themselves and others as centered subjects, fully self-governed by their intentional will.

The term *centered subject* refers to the assumption that an individual has an essence that persists across time and circumstance, including such notions as soul, spirit, or personality.[17] The assumption that someone is irremediably a particular essence across time and circumstance, unprovable as that may be, is easily but problematically transferred to largely imaginary groups such as races and nations, which are then wrongly assumed to have certain ineluctable characteristics, regardless of circumstance. This sort of essentialism is the foundation of racism and jingoism among the merely self-conscious, tending toward the pathological. In the field of linguistics, it has been proven that all individual identities—achieved via the Symbolic—are a function of difference and, therefore, can have no timeless essence, save for the essence of difference: this is because one's identity manifests itself in different ways according to one's shifting circumstances. We shall revisit this argument in detail as it relates to the structurally unconscious dimension of our entrance into language, or primary repression, which encourages this automatism and essentialism.

Claims about the mutual interdependence of rhetorical unconsciousness and self-consciousness radically complicate the centered-subject assumptions of philosophical modernity and rationalism. Critical philosophers and critical rhetorical theorists have long been aware of the danger of such assumptions—that humans are largely rational and reasonable creatures—given that myriad forces prove otherwise. Though often conflated, the rational and the reasonable are not interchangeable terms. The rational indicates the sort of deductive thinking that occurs in math and science, using sound syllogistic reasoning where conclusions are entailed, while the reasonable is related to enthymematic persuasion, using incomplete syllogisms, whose missing parts are supplied by audiences, and where conclusions are probable, since they deal with value-laden decisions taken in an ultimately undecidable terrain. As opposed to the certainties of math and science, the probabilities of reason are partially the result of equally valid competing values, where policies are built upon dominant values that necessarily involve partial accounts of the past and projections into the future that can never be certain. The rational deals with epistemic knowledge (*epistēmē*), while the reasonable deals with practical wisdom related to law and politics (*phronēsis*).[18] No doubt at times people can be both rational and reasonable, but even then we remain mired in repressed conditions. Therefore, and for excellent reasons, we should pursue investigations into rhetorical unconsciousness, to be even more rational and reasonable, acknowledging that these unknown, unconscious, and repressed aspects of subjectivity will be with us always.

Critical theorists, as understandably opposed to the general population, know of the veritable assault on the notion of the centered subject, at least since the writings of the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, who flourished in the late eighteenth century. Kant famously argued for the unbridgeable separation of the subjective from the objective in his *Critique of Pure Reason.* Some disciplines, however, have remained unimpressed, such as economics and its theories based on rational choice (i.e., where people are assumed to weigh the costs and benefits of their purchases fully self-consciously) and political science and its theories based on realist models (i.e., where people are assumed to enact policies rationally in the best interests of their nation). Theories of rhetorical unconsciousness, conversely, build upon and problematize this subject/object dichotomy, problematizing in turn rational choice and realist perspectives.[19]

We see a marked problematization of the presumably rational subject as well with Kant's contemporaries. Early German Romantics, such as Friedrich von Hardenberg (a.k.a. Novalis), were deeply interested in our tropological relationship with materiality or the ways in which we experience life aesthetically. Novalis claimed that "the poet is the inventor of *symptoms* a priori. Since words belong to symptoms, language is a poetic invention—and all revelations and *phenomena,* as symptomatic systems—are poetic in origin."[20] Our subjective

relationship with materiality was viewed not only as thoroughly tropological but also as profoundly spiritual (i.e., all revelations and phenomena as poetic, symptomatic systems). Schiller, also writing in the late eighteenth century, described our entrance into language as a form of productive self-alienation making it possible to become closer to God. His work nicely characterizes the first aesthetic break. In a series of "letters" assembled under the title *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,* Schiller focused on the acquisition of language and the consequent revelation of a prior unconsciousness, where primary repression makes mere self-consciousness possible. His early articulation of this first aesthetic break goes as follows: "So long as man in his first physical condition accepts the world of sense merely passively, merely perceives, he is still completely identified with it, and just because he himself is simply world, there is no world yet for him. Not until he sets it outside himself or contemplates it, in his *aesthetic* status, does his personality become distinct from it, and a world appears to him because he has ceased to identify himself with it."[21] In a clear characterization of productive primary repression via our entrance into language, Schiller speaks of the initial form of self-alienation enabled by the acquisition of language, which creates the conditions of possibility for (mere) self-consciousness. Here we can imagine humans before language, where, being fully identified with immediate perception, there is yet no contemplation.[22] Then, through the fact of entering language, and thereby gaining the ability to contemplate the otherwise impressive world of sense, according to Schiller, humankind finds itself in an *aesthetic* status, or an alienated/enlightened relationship with materiality. Our entrance into language constitutes primary repression, therefore, in at least two senses: the actual splitting of the subject, or the foundational alienation of self-consciousness made possible by language, *and* the fact that the arbitrary aspects of the codes into which we are thrown must be repressed as codes to function normally.

Other important intellectual figures, following the line of thinking initiated by Kant, began to explore the implications of this insight into the productive alienation of self-consciousness. Yes, it is universally and rationally the case that one must enter a language to be productively alienated from what would otherwise not be contemplated, so contemplation and self-consciousness require the acquisition of at least some set of mutually understood symbolic codes that are productively repressed (i.e., they are taken for granted and unquestioned, as money is for value). However, surely the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness is not enough, they suggested, if we are to develop our aesthetic potential maximally.

German philosophers writing around the same time as Schiller, such as Hegel and Schelling, saw a deeply theological relationship in our aesthetic status, with consciousness, culminating in self-conscious human subjectivity, being the most advanced answer yet known to an otherwise unconscious materiality that for

some unfathomable reason desires to know itself.[23] Thus the development from nonconsciousness to bare sentience, from consciousness to self-consciousness, and from meta-self-consciousness to critical meta-self-consciousness—Hegel had his own notion of the latter as "comprehensive consciousness"—would constitute an ascendency toward Being's unfathomable drive to recognize itself.

Such a theosophy, where nature seeks to know itself through the mirror of self-consciousness, suggests that we individual humans, as the mises en abyme of Being, must not only become aware of the world through language, thus gaining the ability to reflect, but must also evolve to become aware of that awareness and its qualities or to reflect upon our ability to reflect. For Schelling "the absolute being [God] is unconscious and incomplete, in a state of empty universality or being-in-itself, and creates his other, his negation, the world, for the sake of returning to himself through it; that is, God needs the world in order to become self-conscious and fully actual, being-in-and-for-itself, and the history of the world is nothing other than the history of God's becoming conscious."[24] This theosophy of self-consciousness entails that we become increasingly conscious of our unconsciousness. "The progressive self-formation and development of self-consciousness involves man's exclusion of the dark and unconscious within himself, which he opposes to himself—though not for the purpose of leaving it in this exclusion and darkness, but to progressively elevate this excluded and dark to clarity and to transfigure it in the direction of his own consciousness."[25]

Hegel too attempted to understand how the apparent logic of nature and the "spirit" of historical consciousness, at least for humans, tends toward ever greater self-awareness, which in turn entails greater suffering and greater enlightenment. As matter moves from nonconsciousness to unconsciousness, from consciousness to self-consciousness, from meta-self-consciousness to critical meta-self-consciousness, and so on, we become closer to what is actual while experiencing ever greater suffering, since the particular must be mortally separated from the immortal universal for the historical development of our aesthetic status to take place (i.e., the increasing self-awareness of matter requires ever increasing productive self-alienation in the ultimately mysterious and mystified setting of the unsayable).

A century later, in the waning years of the nineteenth century, Friedrich Nietzsche again emphasized the fundamentally tropological nature of language and our aesthetic relationship with materiality in his essay "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense." There he zeroed in as well on the primary repression of our entrance into language and formal, structural unconsciousness but characterized as well how the first aesthetic break is not enough: "We still do not know where the desire for truth originates; for until now we have heard only of the obligation which society, in order to exist, imposes: to be truthful, i.e., to use the customary metaphors, or in moral terms, the obligation to lie according to

an established convention, to lie collectively in a style that is mandatory for everyone. Now, of course, man forgets that this is his situation; so he lies in the designated manner unconsciously and according to centuries-old habit—and precisely by this unconsciousness, by this forgetting, he arrives at his sense of truth."[26] While we might debate Nietzsche's use of the word *lie,* since there is a limited but potent agency made possible by the "lie," or in the automatic aspects of subjectivity, he clearly mocks those who are merely self-conscious, who take themselves far too seriously given unrecognized unconscious influences.

Nietzsche was not alone in his call for a more complex understanding of our aesthetic status. Across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, other influential thinkers, such as Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, Ferdinand de Saussure, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Judith Butler, Julia Kristeva, Giorgio Agamben, Jacques Ranciére, Ernesto Laclau, Slavoj Žižek, and Alenka Zupančič, further explored the ways in which the subject is unconsciously decentered or how Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary forces impact subjectivity. Because of such thought, there is now a rich theoretical vocabulary for thinking about in what specific ways the unconscious is structured like a language, to what extent, and with what effects, and what this means for our subjective relationship with the actual.

Following in the footsteps of this intellectual trajectory of productive self-alienation, I seek to synthesize various perspectives on rhetorical unconsciousness, providing "cartographies" that encompass its synchronic (i.e., relational in time) and diachronic (i.e., relational across time) dimensions. I utilize these "ontical" maps to support a critical meta-perspective on language, exemplified through analyses of symptoms of artificial personhood in the European transition from feudalism to capitalism, when machine technologies and market logics trans-intentionally and structurally dismantled the feudal order. Merely exemplary of the range of ways in which unconscious persuasion intertwines with conscious persuasion, the historically situated analysis of artificial personhood as aesthetic symptom, which assumed various forms as monetary and technological relations shifted between 1500 and 1900, points to new ways of conceptualizing both the rhetorical and the political, as well as to what agency looks like from a critical meta-self-conscious perspective.

A focus on rhetorical unconsciousness and its aesthetic symptoms is obviously quite different from traditional, intentionalist rhetorical conceptions (i.e., the meta-self-conscious ability to step back from one's subject position within culturally given forms of common sense, then to analyze and adapt to other subject positions for intentionally persuasive purposes). In fact critical meta-self-consciousness, which political psychoanalysis requires, is logically opposed, as a critical praxis, to precisely such forms of what is perceived as relatively unconscious common sense speech. It is not that common sense persuasion is

unimportant, but it is important *as a symptom.* As Mueller notes, what passes for cultural common sense at any given moment is, as it was for Hegel, nothing less than "the dead, reactionary echo of a past time."[27]

If the various thinkers in these critical philosophical and rhetorical traditions from Kant to the present are even remotely correct, then this growing ability to be more fully beside ourselves, via the first and second aesthetic breaks, is a necessary precondition for dealing responsibly with the negative consequences of rhetorical unconsciousness in general and specific types of rhetorical unconsciousness in particular, which requires a third aesthetic break. I will go even further, asserting there can be no true arts of resistance to the repressed and often oppressive dimensions of individual and collective subjectivity, no true(r) agency, without this ability to be productively alienated from one's given cultural common sense, though this is only the starting point for a new, psychoanalytically informed politics of realization.

Having now preliminarily addressed my foundational claims (i.e., that rhetorical realists and idealists have overlooked unconscious persuasion and that the notion of productive self-alienation has only developed in a serious way over the last two centuries), what are some of the broader implication of these new starting points for investigations into rhetorical unconsciousness and a psychoanalytically informed politics? What do more contemporary thinkers say about this relationship?

Those I would place in the camp of theorists of rhetorical unconsciousness in contemporary critical philosophy and critical rhetoric maintain that all human subjectivity entails formal, universal dimensions of rhetorical unconsciousness that cannot be fully overcome. The Symbolic itself, for example, is shot through with irremediable absence. Whether we like it or not, all of us live in common sense worlds that are not critically meta-self-reflective, so one must remain "realistic," recognizing that pathological symptoms of the repressed are always to be expected. Paradoxically enough, it is this "reality" that leads to aesthetic symptoms in material culture, where truth is spoken, as we shall see, through ventriloquists' dummies, architectural design, forms of theater, wages, and so on. Theoretically complicating things to the point of impossibility, we can only struggle to understand language and the effects of language using language (the infamous hermeneutic circle, or the so-called prison house of language), and all language/subjectivity necessarily involves unconscious dimensions. We can never, that is, experience complete realization subjectively, even as we are completely realized as living objects.

As David B. Allison notes in his introduction to *Speech and Phenomena,* which contains Derrida's articulation of his theory of signs through a critique of Edmund Husserl's phenomenological theory of the same, "certain foundational concepts of metaphysics will never be entirely eliminated. . . . There is no simple

'overcoming' of metaphysics," since any sense of "closure" within what Derrida calls "a metaphysics of presence" necessarily would include unquestioned assumptions, thus once again constituting rhetorical unconsciousness.[28] Decisions must always be taken in an ultimately "undecidable" terrain, especially as we move from science to politics, where an assumed certainty in what are actually undecidable situations necessarily requires repression: for in choosing we do not choose other alternatives. Furthermore, according to Derrida, within the use of language, no matter what we do or think, there is always some remainder, supplement, or "stain" that cannot be done away with. We always say less and more than we mean to say. In my later discussion of secular theology and its relation to political psychoanalysis, we will return to a similar notion: the Lacanian notion of the "obscene supplement" of the violence of the law, or what is sometimes referred to as the obscene aspect of the Law of the Father (i.e., the hegemonic subjective law of cultural propriety), an obscenity that is directly related to pathological aesthetic symptoms.

Admitting to such ineradicable, formal aspects of rhetorical unconsciousness should not be taken, however, as admitting that concrete instances of rhetorical unconsciousness are beyond critique or that constellations of productive repression do not vary in their effects. It is true, as we shall see, that our entrance into language contains structural gaps and silences, or formal and universal aspects of rhetorical unconsciousness, but this does not mean we cannot reflect upon those gaps and silences.[29] The identification of aesthetic symptoms helps us to peek behind the curtain of common sense to see what runs the show.

Another point of agreement among contemporary critical philosophers, critical rhetoricians, and critical theorists of the unconscious, as should be clear by now, is the said phenomenon of primary repression, or the foundational repression that occurs upon the human subject's entrance into language.[30] Primary repression, or what theorists from Schiller and Jacques Ranciére to Paul Eisenstein and Todd McGowan have referred to as the aesthetic break, or what I am calling the first aesthetic break, is when and where the formal and universal dimensions of rhetorical unconsciousness first emerge after the acquisition of language.[31] This simultaneously inaugurates our entrance into self-consciousness and variously repressed types of unconsciousness. It is crucial that we later take time to explore this formal, universal, primary repression, made conscious only when we become self-reflexively aware of the limits of common sense, for such a perspective suggests deductively that there are no such things as asymptomatic identities or discourses in the realm of rhetoric.

Most of those thinking about the power of unconscious forms of persuasion also agree that it is in the secondary and tertiary forms of productive repression, which are universally built upon primary repression, where different material-cultural symptoms are displayed, some clearly more positively productive than

others. Despite their different political and ethical valences, however, all identities and identifications, all senses of things, self, and others, are coconstructed by universal, formal repressions *and* variously productive/repressive content-specific discourses into which individuals are thrown. The self, in these ways, is a function of the Other, or the larger subjective order. Giovanni Stanghellini puts this same point otherwise: "the self is not purely personal . . . [for] the feeling of one's own self and the sense of 'reality' of an experience are products of intersubjectivity . . . between subject and subject."[32] The self, in other words, is given its building blocks by the culture, the Other, into which one is thrown at birth.

Primary repression, therefore, is inevitable. It is a structural response to our entrance into language. Once we understand this structural situation, however, there is an immediate call for political psychoanalysis. Investigations into rhetorical unconsciousness, or into the normally hidden realms of negative discursive fields, must first account for the universal and formal repressions of human subjectivity. Only then can we more closely understand the secondary and tertiary forms of productive repression that are built upon primary repression.

Before moving on to discuss the productive nature of discursive repression at the secondary and tertiary levels, here is one final angle from which to consider the formal, unconscious dimensions of our entrance into language, or how everyone who enters a language enters a certain consciousness and a certain unconsciousness simultaneously: argumentation theory. The universal, formal characteristics of rhetorical unconsciousness exemplify what Stephen Toulmin identifies as the "field invariable," or structurally universal, aspects of arguments. All arguments, whether formal or informal, have claims, evidence, reasoning, and other features, often implied or enthymematic. As opposed to the field-invariable aspects of primary repression, the negative discursive fields that constitute secondary and tertiary forms of repression are, once again borrowing Toulmin's terminology, "field dependent," varying in content from instance to instance.[33] Just as field-invariable aspects of arguments are universal and formal, while field-dependent aspects are particular and situated, so also is this true with rhetorical unconsciousness: there are both formal dimensions, which are universally present and unavoidable, and particular dimensions, which have very different political consequences and are at least partially avoidable. Those on the lookout for the negative discursive fields of the unspoken, and especially the unspeakable, are more likely to find and engage them, returning us to the realm of intentional rhetoric, only this time in a meta-intentional form.

Not only is rhetorical unconsciousness composed of universal forms and specific contents, but those specific contents also relate to three layers of materiality: the materiality of nature and history, the materiality of the symbolic, and the materiality of culture, fantasy, ideology, and imagination (Table 1). The

materiality of nature initially remains fully outside of the Symbolic, yet when it "intrudes" upon discursive regimes it reveals fields of the (previously) unspoken and unsayable. This is the more "orthodox" reading of Lacan's notion of the Real. Fields of the unspoken are a universal byproduct of symbolic codes that structure subjectivity and create the conditions of possibility for culture, functioning as a type of dark matter. These codes are roughly equivalent to Lacan's notion of the Symbolic. Fields of the unspeakable also have material effects, due to what people are not allowed to say, and they function as black holes, directly impacting and organizing human relations. These relations are roughly equivalent to Lacan's notion of the Imaginary. Together these three negative discursive fields (i.e., the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable) constitute the contours and substance of any given instance of rhetorical unconsciousness.

TABLE 1: *Productive Repression and the Three Modes of Rhetorical Unconsciousness*

The materiality of nature	Entrance into being	Fields of the unsayable—the unknown of history and nature
The materiality of the Symbolic	Entrance into language (primary repression)	Fields of the unspoken—the unconscious persuasive influence of Symbolic systems (dark matter)
The materiality of the Imaginary	Entrance into culture (secondary and tertiary repression)	Fields of the unspeakable—that which cannot be said (black holes)

As secondary and tertiary forms of productive repression build upon the primary repression of the unspoken, different discursive foci, structurally alienated from other discursive foci, require variously productive limits to speech with different material effects. Those limits are usually only revealed by transgressions, or concrete situations that challenge and problematize taken for granted and often physically enforced assumptions, or by rhizomatic transformations that accomplish the same task.

We are persuaded via the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable in ways that exceed conscious intention. Persuaded unknowingly by nature and history, automatically by languages and other Symbolic forces, and repressively by cultures and subcultures, we experience our worlds really, symbolically, and imaginatively on an unconscious foundation. Personal and collective identities, which guide understanding and motivate action, reflect these profoundly political unconscious influences: different rhetorical unconsciousness, different subjectivities; different aesthetic forms/symptoms, different politics.

Rhetorical unconsciousness, therefore, is involved in all intentional human experience, this text included. At points in the future, readers may review it and see how time and place helped to structure my own arguments unwittingly. Rhetorical unconsciousness is unavoidable in every historical moment because of structural limitations on our imaginative powers, bound by the Real and Symbolic environments that make them possible. Though we intentionally persuade one another all the time, and so much is obvious, what is not so obvious is that intentionality and common sense involve a complementary and complex unconsciousness, and we are only beginning to understand its effects.

The Unsayable, the Unspoken, the Unspeakable, and Political Psychoanalysis

Rhetorical unconsciousness is composed of three intertwined and ever-shifting negative discursive fields: fields of the unsayable (i.e., the unknown), fields of the unspoken (i.e., the unconsciousness proper of symbolic codes), and fields of the unspeakable (i.e., what is productively repressed for the sake of human capacities). These fields motivate us unawares, and while they are negative, or beyond immediate consciousness, they are coproductive of subjectivity, along with intentionality. These unknown, automatic, and repressed discursive constellations, differing across time and circumstance, produce material symptoms as the return of the repressed.

The unsayable, or the actual truth of nature and history, is external to and intrudes upon our subjectivity. The unspoken consists of the automatic dimensions of symbolic codes that create the conditions of possibility for imaginative subjectivity. The unspeakable consists of punishable speech within the Imaginary, which has Symbolic and Real dimensions. These negative discursive fields are variously repressed for the sake of our delimited agency. Rhetorical unconsciousness, put otherwise, is part of our existential burden, as self-conscious beings, in the face of the actual (i.e., the unsayable), the arbitrary yet materially consequential power of unconscious and automatic Symbolic forces (i.e., the unspoken), and the forced-choice rules concerning acceptable speech and action in different cultural settings (i.e., the unspeakable).

Different constellations of negative discursive fields lead to different political symptoms, characterizing political-aesthetic regimes as relatively healthy or pathological. Healthy regimes are characterized by comedy and realization, while unhealthy regimes are characterized by tragedy and derealization. That is, not all constellations of rhetorical unconsciousness are equal; though there is no fully escaping negative discursive fields, some forms of discursive repression are more pathological than others. It is a matter of degree, or the relative distance between what we think is going on and what is truly going on, and what we think others are thinking and what they are actually thinking. The greater the distance

between what is imagined and the actual, the greater the derealization; the lesser the distance, the greater the realization.

We have a good sense of the unsayable when thinking of the infinite actualities of nature and their ultimately unknown causes or of the infinite specificity of history compared to our limited ability to capture that history. It is the unknown, the forgotten, and the unexpected emergence of historical and natural forces that always catch us off guard. It is where the limits of the subjectively imaginable and the truth of actuality are met from moment to moment, and where we slip necessarily and incessantly, as both subjects and objects, between knowledge and ignorance, presence and absence. The unsayable, in sum, is a type of *structural ignorance,* and it is unconscious in the sense that things have gone on, and are going on, that are not known but are nevertheless true.

As we have seen, in critical philosophy, particularly over the last two centuries, and in critical rhetoric, particularly over the last half century, a good deal of theorizing has been done about this incessant intermingling of actual conditions, symbolic codes, and imaginary fantasies and the complex relationship between the subjective and the objective. Such theorizing is, at its best, historically realistic, assuming that the actualities of nature and history, however much they escape us, are nevertheless truths. Without the truths of nature and history, there could be no realization, no mappable distance between the ever-shifting shores of realization and derealization.

Rhetorical unconsciousness, being productively repressive, returns *actually* as a symptom in material culture. Configured differently across time and space, the repressed returns in a range of symptoms requiring political psychoanalysis. Many symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness, as we shall see, are relatively pathological, contributing to derealization and political sickness, while others support realization and political health. It is not, therefore, simply how rhetorical unconsciousness manifests itself in the three negative discursive fields, but how those manifestations relate to our conscious awareness and the status of the political.

If fields of the unsayable relate to aspects of nature and history outside of conscious awareness, though the actualities of nature and history create the conditions of possibility for that awareness, fields of the unspoken relate to symbolic codes. Language, the primary symbolic code, and secondary codes derived from technological and monetary relations exemplify the types of transindividual and transintentional forms of symbolic/material circulation that shape human relations in both constraining and empowering ways. Money's complex semiotic status and unconscious world-shaping ability, for example, have been conceptualized in radically different ways by Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Friedrich Hayek, and Theodor Adorno. Each theorist, whether wittingly or not, dealt with the unconscious impact of market logics on capitalist societies: Smith and Hayek

focused on the enabling side of such logics, whereas Marx and Adorno focused on the constraining side.[34] Since all identities simultaneously enable and constrain, this is a both/and situation; therefore both perspectives combined best characterize the unconscious power of capitalism. The distribution of technologies, from gunpowder to silk looms to cell phones, also shapes human relations beyond conscious intention.[35]

Fields of the unspoken, consisting of constellations of symbolic codes, undergird what passes for normal subjective conditions. When culturally specific forms of unconscious common sense prevail in relative peace, the structuring power of these Symbolic forces goes unnoticed, like the water a fish swims through. "Normal" individuals struggle as they can to survive, with little time for the luxury of reflection on the unconscious dimensions of their subjective condition. Nevertheless, whether a luxury or not, so long as Symbolic forces remain unconscious and unspoken, we are speaking of the *automatic* aspects of subjectivity, or mere self-consciousness, which is akin to artificial personhood, which in turn hampers a truer form of agency or an agency more fully emancipated from the automaton-like nature of the Symbolic.

Then, in addition to the unsayable/unknown and the unspoken/unconscious, we have the productively repressed dimension of the Imaginary, or fields of the unspeakable. Here aspects of discourse are repressed, intentionally or not, for variously "productive" benefits. Said otherwise, culture requires productive repression, and the political, for better or worse, is the material manifestation of that process. These unspeakable fields, these things that cannot be said, can be clarified conceptually through Žižek's characterization of "unknown knowns," provided in his quick study of the "poetics" of former U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld.[36] Rumsfeld, in defending his policies regarding U.S. military action in Iraq, suggested that the long-term failure of those policies was because, while there were "known knowns" (i.e., what we knew for sure) and "known unknowns" (i.e., what we knew we did not know), there were simply too many "unknown unknowns" (i.e., things we simply could not anticipate). What Rumsfeld failed to mention, Žižek suggests, is the fourth logical term in the sequence: the "unknown knowns," or unacknowledged knowledge. An event related to Gen. Colin Powell's 2003 speech to the United Nations, in defense of the proposed U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, provides us with an example of an "unknown known." Those in charge of setting the stage for Powell's speech decided it best to cover a tapestry copy of a famous painting by Pablo Picasso, *Guernica,* so that the image of aggressive fascist war would not be visually associated with Powell as he spoke.[37] One year earlier, the U.S. attorney general, John Ashcroft, provided another example of the "unknown known" when he threw a cover over the statue *Spirit of Justice,* as her naked, cast-aluminum breast might have otherwise appeared in the frame during a televised briefing. While the intentional motivations

were different in these two cases, as mere illustrations of something that happens all the time, both nicely exemplify the unspeakable.

All three of the negative discursive fields comprising rhetorical unconsciousness reflect the "unknown known" in different ways. As for the unsayable, we have no idea how nature results in beings such as ourselves, lest we limit ourselves to chemical and biological descriptions or venture into metaphysical realms; therefore the abyss of our subjective being in the face of the infinite, along with the actual fragility and tenuous architecture of that subjectivity, is repressed to provide opportunities for mortal happiness. We know that we do not know, but we choose to avoid that fact. The Symbolic, in a different register from the unsayable, is also repressed, but in the sense that there are codes we must think *through*. In this sense we are artificial persons, not unlike automatons, or puppets, animated by external forces that cannot be fully overcome. These codes are arbitrary, but their arbitrary nature cannot be questioned without threatening our very subjectivity. The Imaginary, finally, is repressed in a range of ways for the sake of specific functions within culture, producing various material-cultural symptoms, from symphonies to armies.

If the unsayable is unknown until it confronts us, and the unspoken, as structurally enabling, is repressed and unconscious, then the unspeakable, while composed of repressed discourse, is variously self-conscious. It ranges from taken-for-granted disciplinary assumptions, say in branches of medicine, physics, or linguistics, to statements and behaviors related to tact and appropriateness. One learns a series of occupations and joins a series of groups and comes to know them, from fry cook to the National Rifle Association, and there are rules for these occupations and groups that draw upon a range of symbolic codes, situating subjects within a matrix of other codes, behind which lurks the unsayable influence of nature and history.

Manifestations of rhetorical unconsciousness are also something we acquire over time, through a sequence broadly recognized among contemporary psychoanalysts and critical rhetoricians. Intentional self-consciousness first requires that we enter a language. Once immersed in the primary symbolic code of a language, which provides the condition of possibility for secondary symbolic codes, and once we are formally unconscious in our self-consciousness, we then "choose" tertiary cultural roles that promote an additional series of repressed rhetorical contents. These variously unconscious contents, directly involved in the self-conscious discourses in which we are embedded, incessantly emerge in step with the automatic, common sense worlds we are compelled to negotiate.

It is the merely self-conscious, even in their intentionality and agency, who most resemble automatons, or artificial persons, since they speak unaware through the voice of the Other (i.e., the subjective world into which they were born). This is precisely why manifestations of artificial personhood in material

culture are excellent sites for analyzing the symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness, for in ways we are all inescapably artificial persons.

We are also, of course, very real persons, both in nature and history. We have an unsurpassed agency among all known forms of life because of our access to the word, limited as our agency may be, and so, at least regarding our potential, we are capable of being more than automatons.[38] The real powers of intentional subjectivity, even if based on a certain automatism, provide room for meaningful invention and impactful choice, for good and for ill. Rhetorical unconsciousness is most appropriately viewed, therefore, as a bivalenced form of productive repression; that is, to become self-conscious one must assume a series of taken-for-granted constraints that simultaneously provide relative capacities, and the constraints are broadly repressed for the sake of the capacity. There are historical and natural conditions, rules for language, family and gender, imagined historical contexts, monetary systems, technologies, and collective disciplines that have Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary dimensions, all simultaneously constraining and enabling in a kaleidoscopic matrix.

Rhetorical unconsciousness is complex for one final, perhaps ultimate, reason: it also has metaphysical and "theological" implications. The theology of rhetorical unconsciousness is a secular theology, or a "sacred" attitude toward the repressed and the suffering under the weight of the pathological, or under the consequences of the illusions of the highly derealizing and derealized. Salvation is only to be found in realization. As we have seen, various theologians and philosophers observe that the history of life on Earth appears to be one of ever-increasing self-consciousness. Increasing self-consciousness, as it has ever been, is an increasing awareness of something previously unknown or unrecognized, whether that prior unawareness was related to nature and history, symbolic codes, or their imaginative use. It is arguably the case, given what we see in the archaeological record, that the natural trajectory of matter itself, of our physical universe of atomic and subatomic particles, whatever they are, appears to move in an ever-upward direction from nonconsciousness. Why?

What are the metaphysical implications of the reflective nature of subjectivity? Clearly meta-self-consciousness is a mise en abyme, a consciousness of consciousness or ability to *reflect* on self-consciousness.[39] So too are material aesthetic forms mises en abyme, or inverted mirrors of rhetorical unconsciousness. André Gide is thought to have coined the literary term *mise en abyme* in 1893, referring to a work within a work, a play within a play, or an image within an image that somehow reflects the larger semiotic frame. It is a "mirror in the text," or a reflection upon a reflection. From the position of secular theology, such is the nature of subjectivity, or the human relation to whatever in fact is. Language itself is a mirror, and an alienating reflection, but what might it mean to have an alienating reflection of that alienating reflection? We see such "mirrors

of mirrors" concretely in human history, I maintain, in various forms of artificial personhood, from puppets to corporations, which in turn reflect the automaton-like aspects of subjectivity we productively repress. How, theologically speaking, is self-consciousness evolving?

These, then, in broad outline, are the themes this book is designed to explore. It is an attempt to be even more meta-self-conscious, to have truer agency, and to enjoy greater realization by describing theories of, and providing representative examples of, rhetorical unconsciousness. Through historical analyses of artificial personhood, I explore how symptoms range from the pathological to the healthy. We will see how the different symptoms are reflective of historically situated negative discursive fields, which, being different in different times and locales, speak directly to the construction of the political.

By walking through the universal forms and specific contents of rhetorical unconsciousness, I first hope to show how we are persuaded in ways that have gone largely unrecognized and underappreciated, save for among critical philosophers and critical rhetoricians, and this often through a glass darkly. This is to reveal our rhetorical *unconsciousness*. It is *rhetorical* unconsciousness because productive repression, enabled by language and other symbolic codes, is centrally persuasive in its effects, incessantly manifesting symptoms. Therefore my more specific focus is on how repressed discursive fields result in aesthetic symptoms, or forms of human association and expression that provide an inverted reflection of what is repressed. These are not the sorts of symptoms one can be fully cured from. Our key question, therefore, becomes how these aesthetic symptoms vary from situation to situation, leading either to realization or derealization, and what is to be done.

Lacan, who has strongly influenced the field of rhetorical studies in recent decades and whose poetics I freely adapt, spoke in a parallel manner about what I am calling rhetorical unconsciousness: "The unconscious is constituted by the effects of speech on the subject, it is the dimension in which the subject is determined in the development of the effects of speech; consequently, the unconscious is structured like a language."[40] This rhetorical unconsciousness, I would add, creates subjective and material symptoms reflecting repressed discursive fields. In fact it is not only our entrance into speech but also the automatic influence of secondary Symbolic systems that unwittingly shape our subjective experience of the objective. Even within chosen disciplines, there are obviously things that can and cannot be said "constructively," so our unconsciousness is shaped like a language there as well, with even more specificity. There are, then, at least three ways in which the unconscious is structured like a language: (1) in the way that our entrance into any language, which is always punctured with absence and difference, directly produces the subject; (2) in the way symbolic codes, such as money, structurally and unconsciously create the secondary conditions

of possibility for subjectivity; and (3) in the way different discursive formations, professions, collective identity fantasies, language games, and so on automatically come with a series of meaningful and meaningless statements based on their purpose for being.

Those deploying the term *rhetorical unconsciousness* precisely, therefore, should take care to place equal emphasis on both words and their mutual implication: we are persuaded through transindividual symbolic codes that are largely unconscious yet productively repressive, and these unconscious symbolic forces are profoundly political/material in their persuasive consequences. A contemporary art of the rhetorical, therefore, must be built not only upon conceptions of how we intentionally and consciously persuade one another, as important as that is, but also on the unconscious ways we are persuaded to believe certain ideas, assume certain roles, forget certain things, and perform certain actions. Only then can we can look more fully and realistically at different types of negative discursive fields and their relationship to subjectivity and politics and consider how we might intervene, as political psychoanalysts, for the sake of more positively productive types of repression.

To more richly explain and defend these introductory claims and definitions, I shall, over the next two chapters, outline in far greater detail the universal and particular dimensions of rhetorical unconsciousness, followed by chapters providing examples of variously negative discursive fields producing different symptoms. The political, as a term, shall be deployed idiosyncratically to mean the materiality of subjectivity, reasoning that what people believe motivates their actions, no matter how unconscious those beliefs and motives may be, and the existing political state is a function of those actions, which become part of the material. Therefore, to understand more accurately the political, one cannot limit oneself to elections, voting behavior, campaigning, policy planning and negotiations, key speeches, principal government divisions, and other mechanisms of intentional governance and government; rather one must expand their focus to include the unconscious forces that motivate the (individual and collective) aesthetic state as a whole.[41]

Ultimately, as is clear, my argument rests on the notion of political psychoanalysis, which is a coined term that in fact is quite simple. There are basically two unconscious forces that shape subjectivity, in addition to the unsayable: the "dark matter" of the unspoken and the "black holes" of the unspeakable. Language, working in nature and history as it does tropologically, necessarily is a blend of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real, and in political society we experience this blend along a continuum between realization and derealization. Pathological symptoms in material culture emerge in situations where fields of the unspeakable have expanded, in tandem with shifting symbolic conditions, and derealization takes place as fictions blur more fully with actualities. Conversely,

in situations where fields of the unspeakable shrink, realization occurs, and the distance between what one thinks is going on and what is actually going on is minimized, if never fully overcome. Different political arrangements, or different aesthetic forms, display the symptomologies of different constellations of productive repression, as some imaginaries are highly derealized while others are not. Such a notion of political psychoanalysis—where people are understood to sometimes display pathological subjective symptoms reflecting highly repressed discursive fields—is based on the belief that there is an actual human history with partially human causes and consequences and an equally firm belief in the vast fields of negative discourse that make human history possible.

As an historical realist—not in the literary sense but in the sense of saying there is a truth in history—using post-structuralist tools, when speaking of realization I mean when the tropological imaginary (i.e., the necessarily poetic and gap-filled way in which we interpret our worlds) gets closer to the historically actual. Conversely, when speaking of derealization I mean when the distance between the historically actual and the imagined expands. Political psychoanalysis, based upon such realist sensibilities, is the analysis of aspects of material culture and human association that are symptomatic of rhetorical unconsciousness or reflective of negative discursive fields. Once identified, one must assess whether those symptoms are contributing to derealization or realization. If the former situation is the case, then one works to find ways to intervene artfully in the service of greater realization. If the latter is the case, then one seeks to ensure that the institutional-procedural mechanisms stay in place that maximize free speech, embrace meritocracy, encourage comedy, and help citizens to become and remain critically meta-self-conscious.

In sum this introduction to rhetoric in general and rhetorical unconsciousness in particular provides the scaffolding for more closely examining the structure and consequences of negative persuasive forces that limit and shape our self-consciousness. Simultaneously it sets the stage for a critical examination of the politics of such forces. All identities, individual and collective, are political inasmuch as they interact with other identities in relational patterns with material consequences. A person with an identity is a subject, and every subject has two aspects: being subject to someone else by control and dependence (constraint) and being tied to an identity consciously and purposefully (capacity). Every subject is a moment to moment expression of this constraint/capacity dynamic at some materially consequential intersection in the great web of roles that constitutes social life; and in that social life are the various unconscious persuasive forces we shall now explore.

CHAPTER 1

Conscious and Unconscious Rhetoric

Rhetoric, according to traditions both ancient and modern, is the art of intentional persuasion. If one is smart, then one seeks to be meta-self-conscious of one's scene, in light of their purpose, and then adapt their speech accordingly to get what they want, sometimes with style and perhaps even with virtue. Traditionally speaking, then, rhetoric has always been conceptualized as the meta-self-conscious and fully intentional art of persuasion. To understand better the rhetorical unconscious, and an even more complex notion of *critical* meta-self-consciousness, it is useful first to understand intentional rhetorical consciousness, or noncritical meta-self-consciousness.

Aristotle, theorizing rhetorical practice in ancient Greece, provides the most widely read and paradigmatic example of intentional, artful persuasion. The art of rhetoric, he maintained, is nothing less than the ability to step back from one's natural social position in order to locate "all of the available means of persuasion" in a given situation, which includes the deployment of basic audience psychology.[1] Not only must one assess the prejudices and predispositions of those one wishes to persuade, but one should also consequently not speak the same way to different audiences, such as the young and the old, the jealous and the contrite, the powerful and the weak, the wise and the foolish, and so on, for each type of audience presumes different things, and these presumptions require artful navigation on the part of the intentional rhetor.

The relative and understandable self-absorption of most individuals—the relatively merely self-conscious—in their subject positions can be used to great advantage by the reflective rhetor—the relatively meta-self-conscious—if properly played upon. While the passionate speaker of unvarnished historical truth (e.g., regarding a local form of oppression, such as blacks experienced under white segregation in the United States or in apartheid South Africa) can sometimes persuade individuals and crowds who share a key sentiment, they normally speak to the oppressed themselves, who recognize their condition in the discourse, thus building identification and political potential rather than changing

minds. This is quite different from persuading one's enemies, or those who come from radically different subject positions (e.g., white racists), for persuasion in this situation requires far subtler skills where truth must be carefully "varnished."[2]

Normally individuals who are deeply unconscious in their mere self-consciousness, such as racists or terrorists, self-absorbed in their subject positions, are incapable of noncynical meta-self-consciousness; that is, they have not yet learned to "be beside themselves" and take their position relatively (e.g., a white racist in the United States or South Africa cannot overcome "knowing what blacks are like"). There is nothing "funny" going on, since all the answers are quite clear. Intentional and artful rhetors, when finding themselves surrounded by such people, must adapt to the *unconscious* self-consciousness of those they hope to persuade. In such situations one persuades not simply by stating one's case, especially when there are multiple, powerful, competing interests and values involved, but by stating one's case in light of what others believe, bringing them gently yet strategically to one's position after building identification and common ground wherever it is to be found and delicately maneuvering speech in light of the presumptions of everyone concerned. Artful rhetoric, therefore, as it has been taught for well over two millennia, is this very meta-self-conscious and intentional adaptation of one's speech to persuade different audiences to achieve established aims in different common sense worlds, where others tend to be less meta-self-conscious than oneself.

No doubt it is also true that some individuals are just naturally better listeners and reasoners than others, but when studying rhetoric, or the materiality of subjectivity through language and its effects, one must fully learn and consistently turn to the central requirement when addressing anyone: to be *artfully* persuasive, one must step outside of themselves to the point where they gain perspective on the situation, understanding the subject positions of others sufficiently to adapt speech strategically to achieve given aims. Those who do not have these skills are less conscious of the settings into which they are incessantly placed. Their mere self-consciousness tends to derealization, since the limits of thought and belief go untested. Mere self-consciousness constitutes unconsciousness at the Symbolic level and an unrecognized repression at the Imaginary level, where individuals and groups do not question their superiority over other individuals and groups, they no longer question the taken-for-granted assumptions of their preferred discursive community, and they have found a perverse type of enjoyment in their closed-mindedness, at least to the extent where they simply will not, or for some reason cannot, more fully grasp the presumptions in the situation and their rationales. Thus we call this relative lack of meta-self-consciousness, this relative inability to be beside oneself, as Symbolic and Imaginary unconsciousness, mere self-consciousness, as opposed to the relatively meta-self-conscious rhetor, who does have this ability.[3]

The rhetorical arts, so conceived, have exemplified "being beside oneself" for millennia, long before Schiller spoke of language as productively alienating us from nature and in so doing making us "aesthetic creatures."[4] In point of fact, we see four evolutionary levels of consciousness and three accompanying senses of being beside oneself already at work in human history. First we as animals, as Schiller noted, initially had our nonalienated and fully identified relationship with nature before the acquisition of the word, when humans had still not achieved their "aesthetic" status (i.e., they remained unselfconscious, not having undergone the first aesthetic break). Second there was the emergence of self-consciousness (i.e., the initial "aesthetic" status) through the acquisition of language, where we as humans, perhaps as the very pinnacle of Being's desire to know itself, were productively alienated in order to "know" and "contemplate" the world.[5] This level, which triggers mere self-consciousness, also has its own unconsciousness, via primary repression, where people take their language and culture as the true language and culture.

Then we have the third level, or meta-self-consciousness, exemplified by the rhetorical arts. Now not only are we aware, but we also are aware of the building blocks of awareness (e.g., maxims, truisms, taken-for-granted assumptions), and so we step back from our own building blocks to analyze those of others, and in so doing gain perspective on those who now appear as merely self-conscious, blind to the very building blocks of which they are composed, realizing less. Then we have, in light of rhetorical unconsciousness, a third aesthetic break, which leads us to be on vigilant lookout for processes of derealization, as they are symptomatic of an unhealthy political repression that returns pathologically.

So we have four evolutionary moments in human consciousness: from unconsciousness to self-consciousness, and from meta-self-consciousness to critical meta-self-consciousness. This evolutionary process involves three accompanying senses of being beside oneself: (1) the being beside oneself of mere self-consciousness, where, as Schiller observed, the world can be "seen" for the first time at a productively alienated distance provided for by our entrance into language; (2) the being beside oneself by a productive alienation from one's subject position within a given common sense world, where the merely self-conscious now appear to be almost as blind as the animals are to written language; and (3) the being beside oneself of political psychoanalysis, or therapeutic analyses of expanding fields of repressed discourses and their pathological symptoms in material culture, which transcends the merely meta-self-conscious. At the level of political psychoanalysis, we transcend the common sense world to focus on the subjective effects of unconscious Symbolic forces. From this meta-perspective of critical meta-self-consciousness, the political psychoanalyst seeks to recover the repressed, via its material symptoms, in order to make it more positively productive, particularly in conditions of derealization.

In speaking of the merely self-conscious, the meta-self-conscious, and the critically meta-self-conscious, we are speaking of a variable range of self-alienations, not a static set of subjective types. Different individuals, displaying different degrees of understanding and empathy, display tendencies either toward or away from mere self-consciousness. Also, even if we are relatively merely self-conscious, it is still the case that we persuade one another intentionally and self-consciously all the time, and so much is obvious. Thousands of treatises exist on the subject, helping eager young students, budding talk-show hosts, spin doctors, brand managers, speechwriters, salespeople, lawyers, politicians, and a host of competitive others to learn the intentional arts of persuasion. Who, after all, does not want to win friends and influence people?[6] Yes, it is true that some novice rhetors, in fortunate circumstances, display a natural persuasive talent, and they can indeed be spontaneously persuasive; however *professional* rhetors, or those who create, handle, and manage public speech, understand persuasion as an art whose rules must be learned, even if to be creatively bent, since across the millennia untold others, both talented and not, have carefully studied theories of, and practiced the theorized arts of, persuasion. Only the latter group, though, could draw upon both natural talent—passion, confidence, charm, wit, a pleasing voice—and the wide variety of theoretical and, thus, meta-self-conscious technical approaches to intentional persuasion. History shows again and again that talent and good fortune can get one far, but usually not nearly so far as talent coupled with a depth of theoretical knowledge about, and extensive experience with, common sense persuasion.

Given that rhetoric is generally conceptualized as an intentional art, how have rhetorical theorists, historically speaking, conceptualized this art, outside of the critical rhetorical tradition? Is speech artful, in the most hardboiled sense, if it accomplishes its goal, no matter the goal? Or is speech more artful if stylistically beautiful as well, moving people's feelings or otherwise impressing them, perhaps toward noble deeds in the service of a common good? Or is speech even more artful if also rational and reasonable: not only persuasive and inspiringly beautiful but based as well on sound argumentation and ethical audience adaptation in virtuous pursuit of some ideal? Only in light of the answers to these and associated questions, and only when we more fully understand the three main historical perspectives on the intentional rhetorical arts, can we most closely characterize, by contrast, how all of this relates to rhetorical unconsciousness, our penumbra of ignorance, and critical meta-self-consciousness.

The Intentionalist Rhetorical Traditions

Well over two thousand years of theorizing about rhetoric and its powers has taken place over the following question: what constitutes the *art* of rhetoric as an intentional and meta-self-conscious process? In answering this question, theorists

and practitioners have broadly fallen into three overlapping traditions: the technical or handbook tradition, the sophistic tradition, and the philosophical tradition.[7]

The first group of technical theorists focuses on the nuts and bolts of pragmatic persuasion, where artful speech is speech that achieves its goals.[8] Larger ideological, contextual, and ethical issues go unaddressed or are bracketed out—in fields of the unspeakable—given the purpose at hand. The second group of theorists, in the sophistic tradition, focuses more directly on the qualities of language and the politics of style, where artful speech displays stylistic mastery and brings honor and power to speakers and their causes, which sometimes are tied to sound political leadership and the healthy state. The third group of theorists, situated in the philosophical tradition, focuses on the dangers of unethical persuasion in all its guises and, conversely, on the criteria for true eloquence. Artful speech in the philosophical tradition is considered to be that which persuades, through the virtuous person, to the beautiful, the right, the good, and the true.

All three traditions, blending over the course of history as political conditions permitted or promoted, were intertwined in rhetorical studies in the United States throughout much of the twentieth century, with the greatest emphasis arguably on the handbook tradition. After the 1960s, with a scattering of earlier exceptions such as Kenneth Burke, but especially from the 1980s forward, rhetorical theory began to develop in earnest. Social movements, such as the civil rights movement and the anti–Vietnam War movement, brought "prejudices" to the fore, which led not only to social movement studies but also the issue of ideology and true belief. Soon thereafter the growing influence of continental philosophy, from Marx to Freud to Saussure, led to a veritable explosion of theory in rhetorical studies. This theoretical explosion was reflected especially in the scholarship appearing in major rhetoric journals such as the *Quarterly Journal of Speech, Rhetoric Society Quarterly, Rhetoric and Public Affairs,* and *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. Nevertheless even with this explosion of theory, investigations into unintentional persuasion have been rare and relatively recent.

What is crucial to recognize is that each of the three historically dominant traditions—the handbook, sophistic, and philosophical—is based on the obvious fact that all of us must intentionally work to persuade others in our common sense worlds. What could be more obvious and important? Those unable to persuade others are at a terrible disadvantage in life. There are very good reasons why the history of rhetorical theory is a history of intentional persuasion. Because these traditions continue to reflect rhetorical studies writ large, it is worth taking the time to describe them in some detail.

First the technical/handbook tradition. Within the technical/handbook tradition, the basics of persuasion, ethical or not, are well known: (1) one must know the persuasive goal one wants to achieve; (2) one must then identify those who

must be persuaded; (3) one must then work to understand the situation and the psychology of those to be persuaded; and (4) finally one must adapt their message accordingly.[9] These are the basics of meta-self-consciousness, or the second aesthetic break. Also, in addition to these four steps, one must know how to invent, arrange, stylize, memorize, and deliver one's discourse with effect.

Intentionally persuading different individuals and groups to do what one wants in their given common sense worlds is no easy task, but there are certainly learnable approaches to that task. One must, for example, have the requisite knowledge to make reasonably informed decisions on matters at hand, and one must also have the ability to grasp the subtleties of situations and the likely possible consequences of different words and actions. One must also appreciate the importance of timing and appropriateness, knowing when and what to say under ever-shifting circumstances. To be artful, and to maximize one's chances of being timely and appropriate in word and deed, according to the handbooks, is to master first the technical aspects of oratory. To be artful as an intentional persuader, it is almost never enough merely to state your case, no matter how reasonable. In fact as a rhetorical strategy, this is often the height of foolishness. Instead, to get people to think and do as you wish, you must possess the requisite knowledge *and* deploy the proper technical skills in ever-changing circumstances. One carefully studies and adopts to the opposition. What matters most, though, is winning the argument, thereby strengthening or changing people's beliefs and attitudes according to one's wishes. It can be done, if one knows the ropes.

The sophistic tradition, historically speaking, focuses on the mastery of style coupled with various philosophies and pedagogies for practical political leadership, depending upon historical settings and their conditions of possibility. In the ancient republics and democracies, for example, where speech was relatively free for male citizens, the better-known sophists focused on training political leaders and other public speakers in matters of style and substance. Under more repressive and totalitarian forms of government, however, the more well-known sophists perforce emphasized style, which itself could be used as a subtle form of political criticism. Representative of the former type of sophistry and its necessary political circumstances, during the turbulent times surrounding Athenian democracy in ancient Greece, was the famous teacher Isocrates—a rival to Plato's school and not to be confused with the more famous Socrates—who ran a rhetoric school pragmatically designed to produce virtuous and wise leaders for the city. Isocrates's encomium to rhetoric is worth quoting at length for the nobility it claims for the artful, intentional rhetorical enterprise:

> [For] we are in no respect superior to other living creatures; no, we are inferior to many in swiftness and in strength and in other resources; but, because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other

> and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish. For this it is which has laid down laws concerning things just and unjust, and things honorable and base; and if it were not for these ordinances we should not be able to live with one another. It is by this also that we confute the bad and extol the good. Through this we educate the ignorant and appraise the wise; for the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding, and discourse which is true and lawful and just is the outward image of a good and faithful soul.[10]

This indeed is praiseworthy writing in eloquent defense of the empowering and capacity-generating aspects of intentional, common sense persuasion.

Isocrates was not alone among sophists in seeing their role as physicians of the state. As W. K. C. Guthrie observes, when considering the early Greek sophists, sophistry was certainly not all about style. Quite the contrary, it was about political *therapy.* "To diagnose the particular situation and prescribe the best course of action for a [person] or a state under given conditions, as a doctor does for [their] patient, is, as Protagoras saw it, the task of the Sophist. To ensure that that course is followed is the concern of the rhetorician."[11] In this striking formulation, the sophists look for political diseases and cures, whereas rhetoricians are those who use their intentional technical art to persuade people to take their necessary if unpleasant medicine. Clearly, therefore, some of those labeled *mere* sophists by some in the philosophical tradition, to which we next turn, were concerned with the relationship between intentional persuasion and the healthy political state.[12]

This is certainly not to say that all those associated with the sophistic tradition are associated with virtuous state leadership or the promotion of public reason. Other rhetoric teachers across the centuries who were labeled sophists, especially in less auspicious political circumstances, such as those we live in today, were often rightfully accused of teaching people to make the weaker case appear to be the stronger and otherwise teaching flowery yet empty speech. Plato, the vanguard of the philosophical rhetorical tradition, in his influential dialogue *Gorgias,* staged as a dialogue between Socrates and the famous sophist Gorgias, mocks the latter's claim to teach virtue as well as persuasion, insisting instead that only a strict adherence to philosophical truth promotes virtue and eloquence.[13] In his youth Plato had been witness to Socrates's trial, with its subsequent sentence of death, and in a democracy he was witness to unreason's persistent victory over reason, where the prejudices of the community overwhelmed their willingness to test the limits of their knowledge. Plato was witness to a

democratic society where truth could not be told, and the limits of pretended knowledge could not be tested without punishment. This was exemplified by Socrates's enemies, who were unwilling to have the limits of their pretended authority exposed. The democracy was based on the pretense of truth, a symptomatic mirror of the unknown known, and Socrates's death was one of its symptoms. No wonder Plato was centrally concerned about the arts of intentional persuasion and the power of language to shape subjectivity.[14]

In his much later dialogue *Phaedrus,* however, the elder Plato, increasingly wizened over the years, softens and clarifies his position, identifying different manifestations of rhetoric with different political consequences: poorly reasoned and artless speech that is nevertheless effective (e.g., the speech of "natural" demagogues); far more dangerous forms of intentionally deceptive and highly stylized speech in the sense of the handbooks and the teachings of unethical rhetoric teachers (e.g., the speech of demagogues managed by professional persuaders); and true eloquence (e.g., speech that stops demagogues and saves the individual and the state). Eloquence is persuasion based on the incessant recognition of the actual limits of knowledge and, within those limits, support of the ideal, and where concern for the Other is as great as for the self.[15] Unethical speech, from the philosophical perspective, is related to factional speakers and their self-interested foci, while ethical speech is related to the interests of the common good.

Given the historical reception of this mixed sophistic legacy, especially under the lasting influence of Plato on the presumed rift between philosophy, which supposedly deals with truth, and rhetoric, which supposedly deals with mere opinion and deceptive reasoning, today the term *sophistry* is defined in dictionaries as "a subtle, tricky, superficially plausible but generally fallacious method of reasoning."[16] Poor Isocrates! Those who have carefully studied the history of rhetoric and its various intentionalist traditions know that such a definition is patently unfair, if nevertheless dominant, erasing completely the notion of sophistry as rhetorical intervention on behalf of the healthy state or the training of virtuous political leaders, through the development of ethical meta-self-consciousness. Such a definition also brings us back to our earlier discussion of the general misperception on the part of the majority, and their dictionaries, regarding rhetoric.

Suffice it to say that many who claimed or were given the title of sophist were anything but teachers of intentional mass deception.[17] It is a general truism, certainly, that in periods of political decline, when opportunities for forthright public speech are repressed, as when oligarchic power overwhelms meritocratic reason, public discourse often is reduced perforce to style—often without substance, exemplifying the discursive distortions of expanding black holes of unspeakable fields. Even in such unfavorable political circumstances, however,

when repressed discursive fields are expanding and processes of derealization are in the ascendancy, style, when properly deployed, can itself be substantial and artfully persuasive.[18] This is why tropes and figures—and other matters related to form and form's impact on content—lead inevitably back to aesthetics, not in terms of beauty alone but as subtle aspects of political form in general, which leads directly to Rancière's notion of the political as the distribution of the sensible, where those who determine what makes sense "police" the political.[19] In sum it has been members of the sophistic tradition who have most closely studied the stylistic power of language itself and its various political uses, especially as they relate to the pragmatics and vicissitudes of political health.

Finally there is artful rhetoric as conceived by the philosophers, most famously Plato, where artful speech is eloquent speech that edifies the soul and instantiates the ideal. In this influential tradition, where rhetoric as tricky reasoning is negatively compared to true philosophical reasoning, the stylistic tricks and ethical ambiguity of the sophistic and handbook traditions are viewed as dangerous pathologies that place the ideal life and the ideal state at risk. People are easy to persuade, and productively repressed states that approximate the ideal are difficult to maintain. The key tasks, which the philosophers maintain the other two traditions fail to grasp adequately, are to determine first what is beautiful, true, good, and just and *then* persuade the people accordingly, even if this means controlling the sorts of stories, music, and such the people are allowed to hear.[20]

Not only Plato, with his "utopian" republic, but also practical statesmen of the stature of Rome's Cicero claimed that rhetoric is an intentional art requiring extensive knowledge in just about everything.[21] The truly eloquent person, who persuasively conveys practical wisdom through intentionally designed speech, needs to be learned, not only in the handbook and sophistic traditions but also in mathematics, law giving, history, economics, comparative politics, warfare, the natural prejudices and interests of different types of individuals, and so on. Then, even with all that knowledge, they must artfully deploy it on a moment's notice, in ever-changing circumstances, in the service of what is best thought to be right, just, beautiful, and good for the state or individual, given the recognized limits of knowledge.

Those in the philosophical rhetorical tradition, therefore, are fond of creating rules for true eloquence, which, while sometimes overlapping with the best ideals of the sophistic tradition, also tend to be counterfactual ideals.[22] Despite the unfortunate reality that persuaders are only sometimes virtuous, often merely self-conscious, and rarely noncynically meta-self-conscious, such intentional ideals should, according to those in the philosophical tradition, at least guide the persuasive attempts of those seeking true eloquence. The ideals provide critical tools by which to judge and expose those who persuade without virtue, either

through ignorance or artful cynicism. If there are distortions in communication, then they should be corrected, just as Freud worked for the cure of symptoms. It is only through a philosophical rhetoric, or a rhetoric based on truth instead of manipulated opinion, that humankind can improve their personal and political states.

In light of these three meta-self-conscious rhetorical traditions, we can conclude that speech can be intentionally artful in at least three different senses: (1) as an intentionally deployed technical skill for inventing, arranging, stylizing, memorizing, and delivering persuasive public discourse (i.e., knowing how persuasion works and getting the job done in the common sense world); (2) as stylistically beautiful speech, masterfully deploying tropes and figures, rhythmically and tonally lovely, mixed at times with a pragmatic political teleology; and (3) as virtuous, and therefore eloquent, speech successfully designed, given the contours of the situation and the psychology of the audience, for the sake of what is assumed to be true, good, just, and beautiful.

The history of rhetorical theorizing has been dominated by these three approaches to meta-self-conscious and intentional rhetoric or the intentional deployment of arts of persuasion within what is culturally taken for granted or within the hegemonic Symbolic/Imaginary matrix relating to the actual. However it is in this realm of the culturally taken for granted that we locate the Symbolic and Imaginary aspects of rhetorical unconsciousness. None of the three dominant rhetorical traditions recognize or acknowledge the rhetorical unconsciousness of culturally given forms of imaginative common sense or the unconscious symbolic forces that coproduce them; therefore, as theories and practices, all three traditions, all in the intentionalist vein, are incapable of locating, analyzing, and intervening in negative discursive fields as a retroactive and endless procedure in support of realization and the healthier state, given their general disregard for the formal and specific subjective consequences of our entrance into language and common sense culture.[23]

To be clear, I use the term *common sense* to refer to our thrownness, in the sense of Heidegger's notion of *geworfenheit*.[24] When that thrownness is taken for the true, rather than as a guilt-inducing repressed forced choice demanding sublimation, we are speaking of a foundational aspect of rhetorical unconsciousness. The more someone is a true believer in the local cultural context, the more they are rhetorically unconscious. This is part of the universal and formal dimension of rhetorical unconsciousness, from which the particular contents of individual subjectivities are produced, usually merely self-consciously. While traditional rhetoric is meta-self-reflexive, it is not *critically* meta-self-reflexive, or capable of gaining a perspective on that perspective (note, once again, the mise en abyme).

To state things plainly, almost all of the history of Western rhetorical theory and practice has dealt with the artful deployment of meta-self-conscious

intention within an unquestioned world of common sense. One could press things further, however, in a more positive direction and say that the intentionalist rhetorical traditions are the earliest and perhaps only art of theoretically induced and politically motivated meta-self-consciousness, inasmuch as *artful* persuasion requires the capacity to transcend, at least in some ways, one's own subjective position.[25]

Rhetorical theory and practice is difficult enough at the common sense level, where people every day must persuade one another within the hegemonic Symbolic and Imaginary matrix. Even when unwittingly trapped in the unconscious realm of culturally given common sense, or the unquestioned and unquestionable orders of one's given Symbolic and Imaginary environment, artful rhetors still have quite a challenge. They must, if we are to trust as we should our ancient and modern authorities and combine all three subtraditions, be virtuous and in possession of the given situation's ideal. They must understand the art of rhetoric as a praxis, be capable of deploying the widest possible range of stylistic techniques, and be able ever to transcend their own position to enact wise strategy. Finally, and perhaps most miraculously, they must possess and deploy all of this knowledge when timing is everything, in full realization of the fact that nothing in the realm of rhetoric can be certain, given that our subjective worlds are composed of equally valid but often contradictory ethical values tossed about in discursive networks whose contours and consequences we can hardly imagine and given that all political decisions are made in the mottled light of imagined futures and pasts.[26]

Now we dare add to that burden borne by the artful rhetor, insisting there are equally persuasive fields of what is unknown, unsaid, and unspeakable including the unrecognized influence of distributed objects and processes from machines to financial exchanges that control us as much if not more than we control them. There is, in other words, something of the automaton in all of us, something uncanny yet fully present all about us that remains hidden. Those who claim to possess true eloquence, and who claim to grasp the available means of persuasion in a given situation, will need to understand these processes well, which begins with a brief investigation into knowledge and the types of knowledge considered rhetorical in the past and present.

Rhetorical unconsciousness has a specific relationship to knowledge, and so a brief digression into epistemology will be useful before turning to rhetorical unconsciousness proper. To accomplish this task, I introduce Aristotle's theory of knowledge as expressed in his *Ethics* and then review how contemporary argumentation theory can make the sort of knowledge we are after in rhetorical unconsciousness more specific, suggesting as it does that there is a penumbra of ignorance that surrounds all knowledge, and this penumbra points directly to our main object of study.

Rhetoric and Knowledge

Now, having a clearer sense of what artful rhetoric looks like within the three intentionalist traditions and how persuasion has been theorized across the ages, it is imperative, before comparing these traditions with the theories, methods, and aims of the critical analysis of rhetorical unconsciousness, to consider the type of knowledge produced by intentional rhetoric, since, I am claiming, this knowledge has universal and specific unconscious dimensions. As we have already seen in theories of subjectivity from Plato to Nietzsche to Freud, culturally given common sense, successfully absorbed by individuals and groups, is simultaneously the fundamental mode of unconsciousness. This primary repression that makes common sense reality possible is a difficult concept to grasp.

The direct effect of primary repression is that what in fact is partially arbitrary and structurally formed in ways that exceed self-consciousness is taken for the real world. This is true even for meta-self-consciousness. No matter how much perspective we obtain on a situation, it changes right before us, remaining impossibly at a distance, necessarily experienced both actually and tropologically. Yes, of course, there is an actual world out there, but even stepping back to get a perspective cannot fully get us to that world, since we can only experience it self-consciously through language. From such a critical meta-perspective, the handbook tradition, while perfectly feasible and appropriate as a series of workable persuasive rules in the realm of common sense, becomes little more than a tool kit for producing variously phantasmatic ways of unconsciously manipulating that unconsciousness. Yes, of course, there is self-reflection in intentional rhetoric, inasmuch as the rhetor must gain a perspective outside of themselves, but there is little possibility for critical meta-self-consciousness, because the entire process of persuasive calculation remains fully within the unconscious, hegemonic Symbolic and Imaginary matrix.

Philosophical idealists and rationalists, while laudable in their goals of producing the healthy state and searching for universal human and natural truths, historically have made inadequate distinctions between types of knowledge, leading to considerable confusion about rhetorical knowledge, which deals with the inevitably probable. Exemplifying the potential mischief of these inadequate distinctions between types of knowledge, if one reads René Descartes' early-seventeenth-century *Rules for the Direction of the Mind,* then one gets phrases such as the following: "whenever two men come to opposite decisions about the same matter one of them at least must certainly be in the wrong, and apparently there is not even one of them who knows."[27] For those unfamiliar with Descartes's broader work, which in fact is attendant to all known forms of knowledge, such a phrase flies in the face of all issues involving values and perspectives, inferring that all probable knowledge is useless or not worth pursuing. Rule 8 explicitly

states as much: "If in the matters to be examined we come to a step in the series of which our understanding is not sufficiently well able to have an intuitive cognition [i.e., what we know we know], we must stop short there. We must make no attempt to examine what follows; thus we shall spare ourselves superfluous labor."[28] While perhaps perfectly sound for an era recognized by the flowering of scientific reasoning, such thinking led to serious changes in university pedagogy, which other philosophers, such as Giambattista Vico, thought to be to the detriment of the humanities, minimizing the real-world importance of informal reasoning and probable knowledge.[29]

It was Aristotle, in his *Ethics,* who divided knowledge up into a typology that maintains its conceptual integrity today. Through his epistemology we can pinpoint precisely how intentional rhetorical knowledge is different from other sorts of knowledge and why statements by Descartes, Peter Ramus, and influential others who sought to prioritize epistemic knowledge over other types managed to eclipse, to the detriment of the best epistemological view, other equally valid and important types of knowledge. How, after all, do we come to know the common sense world through intentional political persuasion as opposed to, say, through science or art, and why does making such distinctions matter? What is the realm of rhetoric in the vast range of different forms of knowledge, in the intentionalist tradition? What type of knowledge does rhetoric produce?

Aristotle discusses, and in clear terms, how human knowledge is composed of five different types, with each type admitting to different degrees or kinds of certainty.[30] There is sensory knowledge, which includes the ability to use universal categories of meaning (*nous*); artistic or technical knowledge (*technē*); scientific knowledge (*epistēmē*); prudence or practical wisdom (*phronēsis*); and metaphysical knowledge (*sophia*). Among these forms of knowledge, he claims, metaphysical knowledge, *sophia,* is "the most finished form," since it deals with "beings far more divine in nature than man," such as the larger cosmos.[31] There is also, according to Aristotle, the most presumed certainty with metaphysical knowledge, because it is a combination of intuition and science that transcends the merely probable and the political, and its realm includes philosophy and religion. Artistic knowledge, *technē,* comes from the practice of a craft, from weaving or painting to wine making or shipbuilding. The degree of certainty here is related to the concrete knowledge and practical skills required for the consistent creation of a quality human product.

Sensory knowledge, *nous,* according to Aristotle, comes from sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. These senses enable yet limit our experience of the objective world. *Nous* is also that "state of mind that apprehends first principles."[32] Scientific knowledge, *epistēmē,* which relates to mathematics and the laws of nature, is the most certain, just behind *sophia,* and for that reason, as Plato

believed, it too has a sacred basis. None of these forms of knowledge, however, are the home of rhetoric, or the type of knowledge produced through intentional public persuasion.

The epistemic home of rhetoric, for Aristotle, is in political, legal, and ethical knowledge, or *phronēsis,* which exists not in the realm of the certain but of the probable.[33] There is, in other words, a penumbra of ignorance that problematizes judgments where politics and ethics reign, and a reflexive appreciation for the scope of that ignorance is part of practical wisdom. One might think of Socrates here and his way of asking questions until the limits of pretended certainty in the realm of the probable were revealed. This practical wisdom, Aristotle believed, is essential for the well-being of society. The intentional rhetorical arts, Aristotle concluded, are the "handmaidens" of prudence, a discursive skill set required to speak and act effectively in ever-shifting circumstances, to decide in uncertainty, and to weigh probability carefully.[34]

Rhetoric, as a tool to promote the knowledge of the practically wise or prudent, has clearly distinguishable field-invariable and field-dependent features. On the one hand, rhetoric transcends fields. While technical and scientific knowledge focus on particular fields and subfields, for example sculpture and pharmacology, practical wisdom necessarily transcends fields; that is, one must gain a perspective on all fields and subject positions relevant to a situation and then adapt one's message accordingly. When one is an expert in one's specific field and remains focused on that field, such transcendence is, professionally speaking, unnecessary, if not a detriment, since one is surrounded by similar experts who speak the same language and are similarly productively repressed and specific tasks and goals are pregiven and generally unquestioned. On the other hand, rhetoric constitutes a field of its own: the arts of persuasion, where there is a field-specific jargon, as with other specific fields of knowledge. That field-specific jargon can then be used to build the most persuasive arguments possible across fields.

Rhetoric, therefore, has both field-invariable and field-dependent aspects, unlike many other areas of knowledge where seeking to gain a metaperspective is unhelpful, unrewarded, or deemed unnecessary. A watchmaker or football player are not paid to consider the nature of time or the gendered aspects of football but are paid instead to build and fix watches and win games through superior force and skill. Rhetoricians focus on discursive forces that, while merely probable, have certain physical effects, grappling with what today we would call "making decisions in an ultimately undecidable terrain."[35] This phrase is often used by Derrida, and the theoretical and practical consequences of it are studied closely by Laclau and Critchley, among others. Put simply, the phrase suggests that we are always paradoxically, moment to moment, in situations where we must act without full knowledge, and that all human choice-making requires

a certain leap of faith. This returns us to the theological aspects of rhetorical unconsciousness.

With the fine arts and sciences, productively limited in their own epistemological frameworks, persons can be relatively certain of their results if following a specific manner of artistic production or conducting a well-formed experiment. This, however, is not the case with practical wisdom, where presumed certainty is often a pathological symptom. Political, legal, and ethical decisions are never certain, only probable at best, since they deal with different but often equally valid values and variously imagined futures and pasts. Unlike the sciences, where there are right and wrong answers to most questions of fact, and unlike the fine arts, where talents and skills must be developed and honed toward ever more prefect productions, where rhetoric is concerned we have situations in which individuals and groups can disagree and all be correct, at least from their point of view. Furthermore when moving to policy under such circumstances, different people interpret the past and present differently, given their different subject positions, thus understanding the problems and the blame for those problems differently. Unlike in the sciences and fine arts, therefore, in rhetoric we have the situation where individuals and groups disagree and all are only approximately correct/incorrect.[36]

Contemporary argumentation theory, which informs rhetorical theory and practice today, helps to isolate certain features of the penumbra of ignorance that hang over intentional rhetoric's relationship with the political and to understand better how decisions made where competing values are concerned can never be certain. In introductory college courses in argumentation theory, students are taught that there are three types of claims, each of which are increasingly complex: fact claims, value claims, and policy claims. To have a reasonable argument, though few enjoy that status, people must first agree on the facts. To agree on the facts, two criteria must be met. First everyone engaged in the dispute must agree on a definition of the artifact under investigation, otherwise they will be talking about different things and talk past one another. Second they must agree when the thing they are talking about slides into something else. In other words, what are the limits of our definitions? How can we be sure we are speaking about precisely the same issue or object? For the most part, when dealing with epistemic knowledge, we are dealing with what are taken to be empirically or logically derived facts; therefore if we can agree on our definitions, then we can proceed with our investigations toward something close to certainty.

Things get considerably more problematic, however, with value claims, for here we say whether the thing we have agreed to discuss is good or bad, just or unjust, ugly or beautiful, right or wrong. It turns out that the criteria people bring to bear on such claims differ substantially, given their differing values, depending upon personal experience and the things they have been told by others.

Toulmin's notion of argument fields is once again useful here, illustrating how values determine the position one takes in a controversy in the realm of common sense.[37] Let us take a simple example of argument fields, how they entail values, and how differing values lead to different conclusions that are both logically correct (contra Descartes's *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*). Two of us are looking at a coffee mug, and we agree it is a coffee mug, and we also agree on the difference between, say, a mug and a cup or a flask. I value my coffee staying hot for a long time, as I enjoy it slowly; therefore I say the mug is good because it keeps my coffee hot for a long time. You, however, value a clean environment more than how hot someone's coffee stays over time; therefore you say the mug is bad because it is made of nonbiodegradable products. Though we are both looking at the same thing, and though we disagree, we are both correct, given our frames of reference. The mug indeed is good because it keeps coffee warm for a long time, yet it is also bad because it harms the environment. This is one of many reasons why, unlike the relative certainties of math and the natural sciences, the realm of rhetoric inevitably deals with the probable: multiple people can radically disagree and all be correct, and often there can be no reconciliation—as there could easily be in this case—between them.[38]

Next we come to policy claims, which are the most complex and even further from certainty, revealing the full breadth of the penumbra of ignorance. If we seek to be as reasonable as possible, drawing on our meta-self-conscious deployment of rhetoric, not only must we agree on definitions and their limits, and not only must we work to recognize each other's values and the subsequent criteria for judgment, but we must now also agree on what the problem is, who or what is to blame for it, and the costs and benefits of solutions that ideally will address the problem and its source. Here things become exponentially complex, since any final agreement must necessarily prioritize some values and definitions over others, agreeing, no matter how unintentionally, to "forget" those elements that had to be repressed in order for the consensus to be reached.

This is all basic, classical epistemological and argumentation theory, displaying the unique aspects of rhetorical forms of knowledge. It suggests where the limits of presumed knowledge in the realm of the rhetorical are located, as well as what is outside of those limits, which often has a mappable content.

One way to relate to the suppression or forgetfulness of any form of identification, of any decision made in an ultimately undecidable terrain but in this case related to larger political formations, is to review a debate among rhetoric scholars over the range and effect of this forgetfulness. Celeste Michelle Condit unwittingly triggered the debate by writing an essay in 1994 that sought to show how political "hegemony" in totalitarian societies works differently from "concordance" in societies with thick "public spheres" or in societies with lots of independent actors competing under the rule of law not directly tied to the state.[39]

The constitution of political society, and how issues are resolved, is a result of different political motors in different political economies.

The concept of "the public" is quite complex. Feminists, for example, are of course rightfully concerned that the public is often defined as what takes place outside the home, leaving such issues as domestic abuse or spousal rape private affairs. Classical republicans, from another perspective, tend to think of the public sphere as that set of groups in society concerned about the common good, not the self-interested good of states and corporations; therefore a thick public sphere might include numerous political parties, the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts, the Red Cross, religious organizations, Greenpeace, the American Medical Association, the National Rifle Association, and so on. Neoliberal capitalists, however, from yet another perspective, tend to see the private as the business community and the public as the state, erasing the entire notions of the feminist and classical republican models. Natural competition among the radically self-interested, they argue, unintentionally leads to the common good. Different models of the public/private distinction, therefore, *structurally* erase other distinctions in other models, once again showing how rhetorical unconsciousness functions at the Symbolic level.[40]

Condit's basic argument was that in more totalitarian societies, such as fascist Italy, collective identity construction and the production of the political state work more along the lines of hegemony, precisely in the sense expressed by Antonio Gramsci, a Marxist opponent of fascism, where a dominant coalition agrees to submit to certain constraints to obtain certain benefits, always at the expense of less powerful interests outside of the hegemony.[41] In societies such as the United States, Condit claimed, because of their thick public spheres, everything depends instead upon the specific issue. Different exigencies/events attract certain groups because they involve a subset of issues related to those groups and their interests. Any political situation comprises a constellation of relevant subject-positions with specific real and imagined interests, and through dialogue and compromise, having come together because of their shared interest in the exigency/event, they reach the best possible agreement: concordance.

There is, however, and as we would expect, an "excess" or "supplement" that accompanies that concordance, according to Condit. Even with concordance, which is more issue specific than statewide political hegemony, some voices still have more clout than others, the power of money can still have a negative impact, and some voices can still simply be left out altogether (i.e., the supplement, the remainder, the repressed, the part that has no part).

Believing that Condit's essay implied the highly dubious neoliberal premise that the great marketplace of ideas would hammer everything out in a far fairer manner than with other possible approaches to producing political hegemony, Dana Cloud, a committed rhetorical materialist and Marxist, replied in print that

Condit's argument was far too cozy for the powerful, paying scant attention to repressed voices while tacitly supporting capitalist oppression.[42] The point for us is that, in any of these versions, there is *always* a logical "outside" to any "inside," there is *always* a logical set of repressed discourses accompanying any "promoted" discourse, and, in political practice, no collective group of particulars can ever stand, logically, for the universal. This is why the study of rhetorical unconsciousness is in large measure the analysis of these logical sets of unconscious and repressed discourses and their material consequences.

Argumentation theorists understand that getting everyone to agree on definitions, to step back to listen to other people's experiences, values, and criteria, and to then work together in a spirit of sufficient goodwill to reach agreements that will marginalize the fewest possible constituencies constitutes ideal argumentative conditions, and actual argumentation rarely approximates the ideal. This fact raises the ancient distinction between rhetoric and dialectic, with the former working across discursive fields in situations that rarely includes goodwill, and the latter working within fields in situations that often do include goodwill. In Plato's Socratic dialectic, for example, interlocutors share similar questions and are usually willing to engage in the give-and-take of question and answer to reach the best possible answers, in full recognition of what remains unresolved and why. We can imagine people working on nuclear power plant engineering, happy to sit down with other experts to design the best possible nuclear power plant. For them, engaging in an isolated rational process as they are, larger arguments about nuclear power can, for the most part, be set aside in pursuit of the goal. In the actual human world, most people are perforce dialecticians, working in some rational enterprise where the larger issues related to the realm of rhetoric go unremarked.

Because of the unrecognized distance between ideal argumentative conditions and actual conditions, rhetorical unconsciousness, as Hegel saw, goes *amazingly far:* "I have seen opponents who did not care to make the simple reflection," he noted, "that their ideas and objections contain categories which are presuppositions and themselves require criticism before they are used. Unconsciousness of this point goes amazingly far."[43] This is a perfect statement regarding the inability to move from mere self-consciousness to meta-self-consciousness to critical meta-self-consciousness.

On the positive side, the idealism in argumentation theory provides a relatively simple way of thinking about artful argumentation when seeking to persuade intentionally: it is persuasion based on our meta-self-reflexive use of reason, as well as our ability to identify and critique the limits of that reason. If we do not agree on definitions, if we do not come to understand where everyone is coming from, and if we do not have at least some agreement on the nature of our problems and who or what is to blame for them, then we can hardly engage

in productive intentional argumentation. Instead, as they say, we will be having arguments instead of making arguments, as the penumbra of ignorance and processes of derealization expand and we see the stubborn refusal to question the unquestionable. This is the negative side: all identities, all agreements, all forms of consensus, hegemony, and "rights of force" marginalize, and necessarily so. This marginalization is part of the penumbra of ignorance that surrounds practical wisdom structurally, and so it is part of the rhetorical unconscious.

The Penumbra of Ignorance

So while intentional rhetoric can be meta-self-consciously artful in a variety of ways, there is a penumbra of ignorance that attends all political decisions, and it is not limited only to the complexities created by conflicting definitions, values, and policies. Equally problematic, any political, legal, or ethical decisions must also deal with the reconstruction of past facts and the projection of future facts, the former of which are usually difficult to ascertain closely and the latter of which are often impossible to ascertain. Nietzsche and Foucault once again prove useful here, since both have developed theories of the politics of history that isolate features of memory that transcend conscious intention, where aspects of history become unspeakable.

The basic upshot of both Nietzsche's and Foucault's theories of history, which help us to specify, as does argumentation theory, the epistemological features of merely self-conscious and meta-self-conscious rhetoric and their limits, is that our subjective relationship to history is also rhetorical and largely unconscious. Nietzsche, in his small but influential treatise *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life,* outlines three ways of characterizing history that have intentional and conscious, yet repressed and unconscious, dimensions. History, for Nietzsche, can take on monumental, antiquarian, or critical forms, each of which is accompanied by what it structurally ignores. Monumental history is a "vision of the past [that] *rules* over the other ways of looking at the past."[44] Here, "the past is in danger of being somewhat distorted . . . and so brought closer to a fiction."[45] In other words derealization occurs as the "correct" interpretation of history, while patently false or purposefully distorted, is enforced.[46] In the history of the victors, who seek to impose their version of the past and future, "very great portions of the past are forgotten and despised."[47] It is easy, therefore, to see how certain aspects of material history are repressed. Antiquarian history "belongs to the preserving and revering soul" who catalogs everything large and small deemed worthy of remembering.[48] The negative flipside here is that, even if one carefully and objectively attempts to list the events of the past, the characterization will inevitably leave out the vast majority of historical facts deemed relatively unremarkable. In following their procedures, according to Nietzsche, antiquarians act more to preserve than to generate human greatness. Even a

photograph or film cannot capture the three-dimensional past in all its specificity, including the unconscious and conscious factors at work under the visual surface. Here, in antiquarian history, unlike in monumental history, repression is less by motivated fantasy, calculation, or malice than by aesthetic or ideological prejudice.

Finally critical historians are characterized by Nietzsche as those who critique and sometimes rise up to destroy the first two forms, as well as the institutional regimes they support, for their perceived injustices caused by the specific erasures they promote. Structured as a negative language, these erasures, or movements toward derealization, often relate to the subject so erased: "only he who is oppressed by some present misery and wants to throw off the burden at all costs has a need for critical, that is judging and condemning, history."[49] So characterized, critical historians engage in a retrospective reaction to real or perceived grievances; therefore even in this form of history, we find political agendas that focus on some set of absences and repressions deemed more egregious than others, particularly those related to one's person.[50] As Nietzsche wryly notes, "It takes a great deal of strength to be able to live and to forget how far living and being unjust are one," but sometimes "the same life which needs forgetfulness demands the temporary destruction of this forgetfulness."[51] Put positively, this temporary destruction of forgetfulness, inevitably in support of a new and different forgetfulness, is the ultimate product of the absence-revealing work of critical historians. The monumental individual forgets on purpose; the antiquarian individual forgets "innocently" in search of their impossible objectivity; and the critical individual "assaults" forgetting, through remembering whatever was deemed worthy of being forgotten. All three types of history are symptoms, or reflections of negative discursive fields, but they are very different types in relation to realization.

The penumbra of ignorance, therefore, is not only around taken-for-granted subject positions (merely self-conscious individuals), and not only around unexplored premises regarding definitions, values, and policies, but also around any approach to history that has an accompanying negative aspect with different political consequences. Maintaining that each approach to history can be misused, Nietzsche favors, as do I, the critical approach, given that monumental approaches "tend toward the fictional" and antiquarian approaches tend "to persist in the traditional and venerable," thus taking attention away from present realities.[52] At least the critical approach to history seeks to reveal that which has been repressed by the former two types, and in that sense it can be revelatory, tending toward realization.

Here is how Nietzsche's approach to the three types of historical memory plays out in practice, from the perspective of rhetorical unconsciousness and the penumbra of ignorance. The "national leader" must repress historical factionalism

or seedy aspects of the state's past to secure an imagined wholesome togetherness. Furthermore, as they say, history is written by the victors, thus creating a field of the unspeakable around "national" public memory.[53] So here the unconscious is also structured like a language, and this is because of a specific set of historical contents that are off limits though actually true. The antiquarian approach to history tends toward bureaucracy and "as if" behavior, since certain truths must be ignored to keep the bureaucracy running "as it should." It goes nowhere, save to catalog more and more, and lends itself to innumerable minor human cruelties, such as Kafkaesque warehouses with thousands of people doing the same sort of tedious work.

We might refer to members of the first group, the monumentalists, as either naive true believers or cynically meta-self-conscious rhetors who distort history to their own advantage, intentionally, while the unconscious side consists of all the historical facts that must be repressed in order to maintain the materially consequential illusion of wholesome togetherness.[54] The second group, though more innocent and usually well-intended, believes that some things are not worth remembering or cataloging while others are. Whether highbrow or lowbrow, there are unspoken prejudices that go with all collecting and scholarly remembering. The members of the third group, the critics, assuming the mantle of the repressed in need of emancipation, also claim, as does the tyrant, to represent "the real people," but in doing so they too must repress certain aspects of material history that would undermine their claim. The critical approach to history at its best, though, manages to identify and bring to the forefront of self-consciousness that which has been repressed that is true, and so it tends toward meritocratic republicanism and endless factionalism, as all statements do not say everything else and there are never-ending opportunities to point out inconsistencies in what people say or the various issues their perspective necessarily erases or minimizes.

Just as Nietzsche claims there are different ways of relating to history and therefore the present and that each way of relating contains its own form of imposed, innocent, or critical forgetfulness, Foucault also speaks of repressive and emancipatory attitudes toward history.[55] Foucault's focus on the limits of subjectivity, and the productive qualities of transgression, forms the heart of his politics of critical ("effective") history, which, I believe, can be usefully compared to Walter Benjamin's notion of our "messianic" relationship to actual history, as justly expressed by John D. Caputo and Gianni Vattimo: "[It is] a 'weak' Messianic power, of a Messiah turned toward the past, the dead and the forgotten, where we ourselves occupy the messianic position, as the ones whom the dead [are] waiting for to redeem their unjust suffering."[56] Foucault turned this weak messianic position into a scholarly praxis for much of his career, revealing through his scholarship forgotten and repressed dimensions of the past that

formed, framed, and either empowered or constrained different individuals. By providing concrete examples of historical repression and its productive consequences, he took a step in the direction of politicizing and concretizing both Nietzsche and Benjamin.[57] Foucault not only announced the penumbra of ignorance attending the rhetorical and its profound importance, as did Nietzsche and Benjamin, but he also provided clear historical examples of the same.

In his essay "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault, in a boiled-down version of Nietzsche's tripartite model, distinguishes between what he calls "Platonic" and "effective" history. Platonic history, like Nietzsche's monumental form of history, supports what Foucault calls "the endlessly repeated play of dominations" that constitute "normal" human society.[58] While Platonic history seeks to define reality and discipline identity, presenting history as knowledge, effective history parodies what is viewed as so-called reality, seeks to create new identities disassociated from the ones offered by those in positions of power, and supports the sorts of sacrifices that are necessary in order to overthrow the old historical order, or Hegel's "dead, reactionary echo of a past time." Here the meta-self-conscious individual takes a large step forward into greater self-consciousness, recognizing that the given subjective reality is so called. Such a position resonates with the thought of Herbert Marcuse regarding the productive alienations of art: "Art's separation from the process of material production has enabled it to demystify the reality reproduced in this process. Art challenges the monopoly of the established reality to determine what is 'real' and it does so by creating a fictitious world which is nevertheless 'more real than reality itself.'"[59] Determining what passes for common sense, what passes for the real, and what is appropriately said and not said, in other words, is a never-ending struggle between those who would, for a wide range of reasons, discipline identity, and those eager to reveal when the disciplining has gone too far given the capacities it purportedly provides. History has its intentional uses, to be sure (i.e., to support or transform power), but not all histories are equally repressed, and so practitioners of political psychanalysis must find methods for identifying and critiquing the penumbra of ignorance that surrounds our subjective experience and our use of history.

While I will soon provide a two-dimensional "map" of the objectivity of our subjectivity, thus isolating the functions and locations of rhetorical unconsciousness, we should briefly review the features we have discussed so far. In discussing the various limits on conscious, intentional rhetoric, or the penumbra of ignorance that surrounds and helps organize the subjective, we know that rhetorical knowledge is ultimately only probable, dealing as it does with competing value systems, complex constellations of epistemic and aesthetic fields, politicized histories, and equally politicized futures. Normal individuals are *in* these fields more than they are *of* them and, for pragmatic reasons, gain few rewards for critiquing

the constitutive limits of their subjectivities. This means that normal discursive communities are filled with forgotten, misunderstood, and repressed things, such as certain historical facts. We saw this in Nietzsche and Foucault's conception of politicized history. Normal self-conscious and intentional communities are a mixture of Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary subject positions that necessarily have an unconscious structured by the languages they do not speak, are not allowed to speak, or speak from perspectives that, by their very nature, are blind or unsympathetic to other perspectives. Such are the limits of merely self-conscious rhetoric, and those are the limits that constitute the borders of rhetorical unconsciousness. There is, in sum, a structural penumbra of ignorance that surrounds the intentional subject that must be repressed, and that repressed "supplement" is the ultimate object of our study.

So where does this leave us? As we have seen, the intentionalist rhetorical traditions—the technical handbook tradition, the sophistic tradition, and the philosophical tradition—provide us with a comprehensive range of ways for thinking about rhetoric as a meta-self-conscious and intentional art. Yet none of these traditions, in their approach to rhetoric, focus on the persuasive forces outside of intentionality. Comparatively speaking, there is far too little focus on the transintentional forces that create the conditions of possibility for intentionality and contribute to its aesthetic symptoms.[60] In fact the idea that hegemonic cultural forms might be symptomatic of repressed discourses is hardly even discussed, save among critical theorists and critical rhetoricians.

This new focus on rhetorical unconsciousness, we have also seen, did not really begin to be clarified until about two centuries ago, and it occurred not in rhetorical studies but in critical philosophy. The intentionalist rhetorical traditions have remained, for obvious reasons, dominant even to this day, though those traditions began to be problematized in useful ways starting in the 1960s and 1970s and, increasingly, after 1980 in the guise of critical rhetoric, under the slow-arriving influence of continental philosophy. Nevertheless, and regardless of this progress, there remains a pressing need for even greater clarification when it comes to the nature and influence of rhetorical unconsciousness given how quickly, history shows, humans devolve into violent and unreasonable beings when derealization reaches a tipping point.

More positively, over the millennia we humans appear to have become, if imperceptibly slowly, increasingly self-conscious about these outside persuasive forces; therefore it makes sense that the arts of rhetoric would only become more precise. We are certainly talking not about discarding the ancient, venerable, and proven tradition of the arts of persuading the relatively merely self-conscious, but instead about taking a closer look at "normal" rhetoric's epistemological dimensions. Such a closer look reveals the limits of this intentionality and creates the conditions of possibility for going beyond them.

Characterizing the Rhetorical Unconscious

Logically, therefore, in contradistinction to the intentionalist rhetorical traditions, we can make the following initial, analytical distinctions about rhetorical unconsciousness. From a materialist historical perspective, not in the vulgar Marxist sense but in the sense of assuming that there are the truths of nature and history beyond how they are imagined, the rhetorical unconscious, in the most general sense, is the sum total of all things that have happened and been thought or said and the true causes and being of those things that the individual subject cannot, does not, or will not think of.[61] As the sum total of everything that has actually happened and why, it is the unknown, or what the situated subject cannot possibly know for structural reasons. Everything that happens is true, at least in the sense that, objectively speaking, some things did and did not happen at different moments in what we experience as time. This unknowability, this unsayable, is structurally unavoidable, since we are embodied creatures with limited senses and technologies that allow us to see only an infinitesimally small amount of the infinite and unknown complexity of things.

Stopping at this highest level of abstraction is unhelpful when wanting to study more closely our conscious relationship to rhetorical unconsciousness. While in an important sense it is the realm of the unknowable, or, from an individual's view, ignorance, the unknowable is at least somewhat knowable via words, which are in constant interaction with the unsayable.[62] Nietzsche was correct in "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense" to praise the poetic economy of words, confronted as we are with this nauseatingly vast sea of our ignorance and insignificance in the grand scheme of things. Nietzsche turns the tables on human truth, having achieved the third aesthetic break, and focuses on our "obligation to lie according to an established convention."[63] This is a direct reference to the type of unconsciousness that accompanies our entrance into language: the vehicle that grants us access to self-consciousness requires us "to lie in a designated manner," to at least in part be an automaton, an artificial person. The "sincerity" of voice is always through an Other's code. Nietzsche, however, is far from lamenting this situation; instead he praises humankind as "a mighty architectural genius who succeeds in building an infinitely complicated conceptual cathedral on foundations that move like running water."[64] Only in a given and personalized tropological economy, which happily moves away from infinite particularity and expresses the world through metaphor (e.g., Nietzsche's example of how the word *leaf* stands economically for the untold number of leaves and their different types), can a human being "as an artistically creative subject . . . live with some calm, security and consistency."[65] Our "fictions" are productive, but they usually must overlook the specificities of actualities in pursuit of their purpose. This is a fundamental, and universal, aspect of rhetorical unconsciousness.

Still, even here we are working at levels of high generality. Surely the fictions of rocket telemetry are quite different in kind and effect from the fictions of national identity or gender. In the former case, where we are dealing with epistemic knowledge, no matter what we "really know" about Being, we can understand its surface properties well enough to send a spaceship deep into space, as currently understood, and have it safely land on an asteroid. There is a symptomatic precision here that makes scientific fiction very different in kind from the fictions related to ethics and politics. Reducing rhetorical unconsciousness to everything we do not know that is happening that is true is like limiting our conception of ideology to an unquestioned worldview (e.g., Nietzsche's "lying according to an established convention"). While such thinking helps us to conceptualize the move from mere self-consciousness to meta-self-consciousness, it does not get us very far as critics of historically situated symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness.

To help us along our way, there are several useful analogies we can make between conceptions of ideology and conceptions of rhetorical unconsciousness. The broadest way of defining ideology, as with the primary repression of rhetorical unconsciousness, is as someone's worldview, but that hardly touches upon the complexity of what happens within that worldview and why. One step deeper into the analogous conceptual relationship between ideology and rhetorical unconsciousness comes from the French philosopher Louis Althusser, who, like Nietzsche, had a strong influence on Foucault. As Terry Eagleton notes, "Althusser holds that all thought is conducted within the terms of an unconscious 'problematic' which silently underpins it. A problematic, rather like Michel Foucault's 'episteme,' is a particular organization of categories which at any given historical moment constitutes *the limits of what we are able to utter and conceive*. A problematic is not in itself 'ideological' . . . [for] an ideological problematic turns around certain eloquent *silences and elisions;* and it is so constructed that the questions which are posable within it already presupposes certain kinds of answers."[66] So Althusser raises two new issues related to ideology, which are fully transposable onto rhetorical unconsciousness: (1) how the specific "disciplinary formations" we are involved in unconsciously limit our subjectivity, and how this is structurally normal (i.e., nonideological, symbolically factual); and (2) how *inside* those disciplinary formations there are "silences and elisions" that are mirrored in their symptoms. In terms of my own poetics, the structural, Symbolic aspects relate to fields of the unspoken (i.e., the constitutive limits of what we are able to utter and conceive), while the content-specific, Imaginary aspects relate to fields of the unspeakable (i.e., silences and elisions that presuppose certain answers and delimit "proper" perspective).

Adding to the conceptual complexity of ideology, the term was also thought to reflect *false* consciousness, not simply "ignorant" mere self-consciousness, and

this was evidenced by examples of dominant ideas reflecting dominant economic interests and how often people work against their actual interests because of those dominant ideas. This is precisely how rhetorical unconsciousness was characterized in *The Communist Manifesto:* "Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views, and conceptions, in one word, man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his relations and in his social life? What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes its character in proportion as material production is changed."[67] In *The German Ideology,* Marx and Engels gave this concept of the relationship between the objective and the subjective its most concise form: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: i.e., the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, consequently also controls the means of mental production. . . . The ruling ideas are nothing more that the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the *dominant material relations grasped as ideas*."[68] Here we see how Marx and his sometimes coauthor, Friedrich Engels, are concerned with the ways in which structural changes in the economy unconsciously structure subjectivity: ruling ideas are not one's own but are constructed by the structure of economic relations.

Even this increasingly specific set of analogies between ideology and rhetorical unconsciousness still has its weaknesses, however. The problem was characterized by Althusser's later contributions to theories of ideology, well beyond the notions of worldview and false consciousness driven by ruling material relations. For Althusser there is also the question of being a cultural dupe; that is, if it is true that our common sense beliefs are in a strong sense not our own but somehow function, automaton-like, in support of the very relations that often exploit us, does that not mean we are little more than puppets on a string? If so, then who or what pulls the strings? The answer is important, for if we assume there is a who that pulls the strings, then this suggests that they are a highly coordinated group somehow outside of ideology, smarter than the rest of us and intentionally manipulative in a coordinated deployment of cynical meta-self-consciousness. While sometimes no doubt true at the microdiscursive level with spin doctors, brand managers, marketers, and so on, what if the ultimate cause of our unconscious relationship with economic realities is structural, impacting everyone no matter their subject position in the system? What does this say about agency? What if no one knows, and we are all puppets?

Althusser famously referred to ideology as "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence."[69] Influenced by Lacan, he explored how we are alienated from, yet somehow beholden to, hegemonic material relations, including economic relations, and how this alienates us within the

Imaginary order. "Different ideologies," according to Althusser, "are but different representations of our social and imaginary 'reality,' not a representation of the Real itself."[70] Ideology, however, also is not simply in the mind; it has "a material existence," becoming materially consequential through the necessary symptomatic performances required of our cultures, given both what is structurally unconscious and productively repressed.[71]

There is, therefore, a mutually reinforcing quality to material and subjective relations that largely goes unnoticed. Individuals are always-already subjects, enmeshed in a set of Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary orders that exceed yet make possible our individual will. The wage laborer as characterized in *The Communist Manifesto,* falling prey to this unnoticed quality, is ultimately a dupe who, for example, patriotically joins an army to defend a system of human relations that exploits him or her, as with blacks from the United States fighting in World War II only to return home to face racial segregation. Althusser, however, improves on this dupe's problematic by noting that all of us are structurally unconscious, both imaginatively and symbolically, and this structural unconsciousness has a direct material effect. The converse is also true: material effects, including those produced through human agency, have a direct effect on structural unconsciousness.

To bring us back to rhetorical unconsciousness and how different ways of conceptualizing ideology are helpful analogies for conceptualizing that unconsciousness, we have now moved through the following dimensions: (1) all we do not know that is true; (2) a symbolic system that influences us transintentionally, as with a worldview; (3) a poetic economy that is productively alienated from Being; (4) a system of imaginary ideas that unconsciously benefit exploiters; (5) a system of imaginary ideas and material-cultural symptoms that unconsciously reflect the system of dominant social relations; (6) an unconscious symbolic structure that in practice requires silences and elisions; and (7) a productive subjective force that interacts dialogically with unconscious forces. In moving through this sequence, we move closer and closer to rhetorical unconsciousness, which consists of a constellation of actual situations (Real, Symbolic, Imaginary) composed of relationships between actuality and the Symbolic and the Imaginary ways in which we relate to that actuality.[72]

We must still retain, as we move deeper into these constellations, how rhetorical unconsciousness reflects the ultimately *irremediable* but unequal distance between an actual situation (really, symbolically, and imaginatively) and an imagined situation (really, symbolically, and imaginatively). Rather than simply saying we are unconscious of everything we do not know, we would say we are necessarily and structurally unconscious of natural and historical truths. This is not a critique so much as a statement of fact. Paradoxically this irremediable situation is due to our entrance into language, which "aestheticizes" us, placing

us outside of nature while we remain fully inside it and allowing for subjectivity. Through the fortunate fall of our entrance into language, which enables and strengthens self-consciousness, we cannot help but experience the specificity of history and nature tropologically. This, though, is decidedly not to say that all tropological interpretations of nature and history are equally false. Again the question is how what is structurally and imaginatively repressed returns as symptom and with what political consequences, for by understanding this process we gain a higher degree of agency and realization.

In summarizing our comparison of conscious and unconscious rhetoric, we have seen that those in the dominant intentionalist tradition have focused on practical, "real world" argument, taking for granted the culturally taken for granted, while those in the critical theoretical tradition have helped us, especially over the last two centuries, to build a conceptual understanding of rhetorical unconsciousness and the penumbra of ignorance that is thoroughly present in all intentional actions on at least three levels: the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable. As those in the intentionalist tradition could easily and rightly point out, if you want to persuade the majority of humankind, then you must first learn the nuts and bolts of persuasion, including the important ability to transcend your own naive subject position in order to adapt to the psychology of any given audience. Second, you must learn the ins and outs of invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and memory, focusing as well on the nature of language and its impact on subjectivity in various situations from moment to moment. Third, to be reasonable in your decision making, you must formulate and defend counterfactual ideals that help you to determine and judge practice, otherwise even your best efforts at persuasion may do more harm than good. Fourth, you must understand how informal reasoning and public argumentation work, otherwise you risk drowning in a sea of fallacious thought; being overcome by successful, spellbinding speakers who intentionally use fallacies to twist people's minds; or using fallacies unwittingly yourself. Like the blind Buddhas who each hold a different part of an elephant, with one holding an ear and saying the creature is like a leaf, another holding a leg and insisting instead it is like a tree, and another holding the tusk and saying, no, you are all wrong, it is like a spear, enlightenment occurs when everyone involved realizes in a moment of true insight that the elephant is undoubtedly all these things and more. Just so, truly artful intentional and meta-self-conscious rhetoricians must be the master of all these dimensions. I do not disagree.

We also reviewed how Aristotle suggested that those with practical wisdom, or prudence, must recognize the deep epistemological problems at the heart of political, legal, and ethical judgments. Individuals or groups can disagree about a given proposition and all be correct, as they come from different subject positions and have different values and different criteria for judging good from bad,

righteousness from evil, and reason from unreason. They also, like all of us living in a constant present, can only contextualize their "correctness" within semi-imagined pasts and futures, all the while living in very real situations. This suggests the necessity of both being beside oneself and being willing to explore the problematic limitations of what passes for ordinary common sense. The most fundamental question is how to locate more precisely and explore these problematic regions of speech and consciousness.

I maintain, and I am not the first, that there is indeed another, heretofore inadequately addressed, dimension to artful rhetoric, and it deals precisely with the penumbra of ignorance and the productive limits it creates, suggesting how negative discursive fields simultaneously constrain and enable. In addition to what we learned about intentional persuasion from the technical, sophistic, and philosophical traditions, we can learn as much if not more about why people are persuaded as they are by studying rhetoric's unconscious dimensions, the dimensions where language in use incessantly meets its limits. These limits exist materially, logically, and aesthetically, which means that rhetorical unconsciousness has material, formal/logical, and aesthetic dimensions. In these dimensions, strange as it may sound, dominant beliefs are necessarily accompanied by an identifiable type of unconsciousness, at least in the sense characterized by thinkers as diverse as Schiller, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Althusser, Foucault, Marcuse, and Ranciére. The attendant question is how we break from that unconsciousness to achieve a more reasonable form of critical meta-self-consciousness. How, in sum, do we more broadly achieve the third aesthetic break, how do we investigate productive repression, and what are we able to do, once making that break and engaging in such investigations, to improve our political health?

From this perspective, developed in what follows, it is assumed that all political communities and their dominant aesthetic expressions, from feudalism to capitalism, from stock markets to theatrical plays, from commodities to puppets, are built upon specific and identifiable universal and particular forms of productive repression and that the unconscious world of culture-specific common sense represses these forms, leading to symptoms in material culture that are sometimes pathological. We experience primary repression due to our entrance into language (i.e., we gain self-consciousness and self-unconsciousness simultaneously), and then secondary repressions occur when we find ourselves more fully enmeshed in our given cultures (e.g., monetary relations and the incest prohibition but in general the given cultural law, or "Law of the Father"). Once we are in the Symbolic, however, and after we have acquired a seeming sense of self (what Lacan calls "the Imaginary," which is supported by "the mirror stage," involving fantasy, desire, and ideology), there are more particular and mappable repressions related to what can and cannot be said in different circumstances, as

I have discussed, where fields of structurally, forcibly, and innocently repressed speech are located.[73]

It is also assumed in what follows, now that I have theoretically outlined meta-self-conscious rhetoric and rhetorical unconsciousness, that all identity forms around a series of absences, gaps, or lacks and is constrained as well by the structural limits of symbolic codes, which, while *forming* the identity, are both present and not present. Gaps, as organizing absences in discourses, work analogically like black holes in astrophysics, where matter is discourse that is attracted to, revolves around, and bends toward the gap. The gaps, then, paradoxically enough, gather and organize discourse, even though they are constituted by the unspeakable, or what must not be said to maintain the function of the given discursive constellation around the black hole. The black holes themselves consist of fields of the unspeakable, or the negative reflection of the organized discourse, and the closer one gets to the presumed center of power, the more speech becomes distorted. The larger the black hole, or the larger the field of the unspeakable, the greater the discursive/symptomatic distortion. Under conditions of derealization, black holes expand, pathologically distorting discourse and praxis. The limits to the subjectively possible, then, to complete the analogy, would be those forces that keep the outer elements, least attracted to the gap, from floating away, something perhaps like the inscrutable phenomenon of dark matter. Dark matter, that is, consists of the Symbolic and structural, transintentional forces that unconsciously enable the Imaginary, and the symbolic codes themselves involve substantive gaps.

Finally the inevitability of rhetorical unconsciousness does not erase the possibilities for agency, or the capacity-generating side of subjectivity, which is always present and possible, even if it involves its own variously capacitating silences and limits, as Althusser observed. Beyond these limits, and between subjects and/as objects, there are gaps and absences only revealed when somehow transgressed or otherwise placed in relief, or revealed in the other direction when discourses become increasingly distorted as we near the organizing absences that sustain them. Rhetorical unconsciousness could not be made more evident than in the "transgression" of the actual into the realm of the fantastic, where only the clash of the objective and subjective reveals the depths of derealization.

All of this is to say that we are broadly ignorant of the material world out there, and there are structural/Symbolic influences of which we are broadly unconscious, especially through our relationship with language, the economy, and technologies. Out of these unconscious influences, we manage, as best we can, to build partly real and partly imaginary worlds for ourselves. It is to structurally mapping these unconscious influences that I now turn.

CHAPTER 2

The Ontical Structure of Rhetorical Unconsciousness

Notions of unknown "spiritual" forces have existed since time immemorial, though our conceptions of those forces have continually changed. The ancient Greeks associated madness with possession, divine inspiration, and obsessive love, assuming that the gods could take any shape and could enter a person and cause them to act against their will.[1] In Athens in the last third of the fifth century B.C., disbelief in the supernatural was made an indictable offense, and even Plato's Socrates, most famously in his apology before being sentenced to death for corrupting the youth and making light of the gods, spoke of the "demon" that would come to speak to him: what today we would call his conscience.[2]

In Europe, after the long period ruled by the church and its secular lords, several important historical events challenged the age of magical spirits. The slow rise of literacy, following the appearance of historically unprecedented print technologies; the Protestant revolution, where Catholic magic was held in suspicion; and the rise of a mechanistic worldview, where humans were increasingly viewed as machines and the mind was thought to be destined to die with the body, all increasingly challenged the "metaphysical" notions of an eternal soul and spirit and the powers of magic.[3]

It was only in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that individuals such as Freud declared the presence of a fully secular unconscious within an irremediably split subject, theorizing that the unconscious is formed through our entrance into language and the subsequent repression of painful affects, ideas, and experiences, especially those related to sexuality.[4] Today, mainly through the influence of structural linguistics and critical psychoanalytic theory, subjectivity is viewed as a structural/symbolic and "free"/imaginative sublimation of the irremediable lack that is self-consciousness, forever destined to repress productively the essential nothingness of the lonely signifier, as is each person. The worlds we build for ourselves and, in fact, extract our joy from are built upon a foundation of productive repression.

It is a long and shifting history from spirit to mind to automaton mind. Across the ages and across the world in preliterate societies, the unconscious as a concept tied to the "spiritual" or "the soul" has manifested itself in such wide-ranging phenomena as magic, shamanism, possession, exorcism, and spiritualism. Rituals in preliterate cultures often brought together entire communities to perform dances and rites when someone was experiencing a spiritual crisis, and extensive historical evidence shows these rituals were effective in curing many a malady of the soul, such as supposed possession by another's voice or will.

It is fair, I think, upon embarking on a short discussion of the early history of unconscious spiritual forces, to open our minds to ideas of the soul or spirit of a person or collective, even perhaps to the magic of gods and demons. Otherwise the situation is bleak and the question of agency remains open. Plato, in his *Laws,* bleakly stressed that we must "live in accordance with [our] nature, being puppets chiefly, and having in [us] only a small portion of reality." In a parable he suggests that we are puppets directed by fear and confidence: "We may imagine that each of us living creatures is a puppet made by gods, possibly as a plaything, or possibly with some more serious purpose. That, indeed, is more than we can tell, but one thing is certain. These [emotional] interior states [of fear or confidence] are, so to say, the cords, or strings, by which we are worked . . . and therein lies the division of virtue from vice."[5] But we are not merely puppets. Plato suggests that, even if we do speak with another's voice, there is something "religious" in our way of being.[6]

There is an interesting history of developments in Protestant theology, for example, that leads to a unique perspective on religious being. In its most critical variant, death of God theology deals with what is taken to be our ever-increasing responsibility for our actions, in the absence of a watching master. Death of God theology, succinctly characterized by Charles E. Winquist, holds that the "language of the death of God is God-language. The thinking of the end of metaphysics is a metaphysical thinking."[7] This relatively contemporary, critical Protestant attack on metaphysics is the culmination of a long process, primarily over the last five hundred years, where the emergence of capitalism has been accompanied by the elimination of magic from the world.[8] Max Weber, the famous social economist, showed how Calvinism and the notion of predestination, for example, where there is nothing one can do to save one's soul, since one's eternal fate has been predetermined by God, had "one consequence for the life of a generation [that] surrendered to its magnificent consistency. That was a feeling of [the] unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual." This great inner loneliness was the "logical conclusion" of that "great historic process in the development of [Judeo-Christian] religions, the elimination of magic from the world, which had begun with the old Hebrew prophets and, in conjunction with

Hellenistic scientific thought, had repudiated all magical means to salvation as superstition and sin."[9]

As a result of these theological developments, parts of the Protestant world created a hegemonic Imaginary that was simultaneously in "a fundamental antagonism to sensuous culture of all kinds," with no more outlets for pent-up guilt, such as that provided by Catholic confession, and no imaginative way to be rid of a nagging, policing self-doubt of possible unworthiness. As a form of productive repression, this led many to believe that, "to retain [one's lost] self-confidence, intense worldly activity [was] recommended as the most suitable means. That and that alone disperses religious doubts and gives the certainty of grace."[10] It was the perfect secular theology for capitalism: isolate individuals and fill them with self-doubt, which could be remedied only by intense worldly activity coupled with active self-control.[11]

This shift from communal, stable, and semimagical notions of the self to individual, unstable, and nonmagical notions occurred under the structural influence of the literalization of the world through print literacy and the simultaneous spread of deductive science. In the spirit of this new realism, Marx and Engels wrote that humans, under capitalist relations in the nineteenth century, had become nothing more than commodities, things to be bought and sold: "In proportion as the bourgeoisie, i.e., capital, is developed, in the same proportion is the proletariat, the modern working class, developed—a class of laborers, who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital . . . and [who are therefore] a commodity."[12] No more magic, save for the magic of the commodity.

Through most of the twentieth century up to today, under the sway of structural linguistics and philosophical psychology, whatever was left of that lonely individual and their intentionality, without recourse to magic and reduced to a commodity, was attacked yet again, given the structuralist view that any sense of self can be nothing but a symptom or cipher inserted into a system of differences. Any attempt to overcome the irremediable absence of the lone signifier was doomed, structurally, to failure. In an age increasingly dominated by rational sciences and technologies and ever more fully immersed in market logics, it has been satisfactorily proven to many that, technically speaking, subjectivity, or our sense of self and others, is thoroughly ruled by language, and we are thoroughly unconscious of its rule.

Yet it was not so long ago that what is called the unconscious today was called spirit or soul, something transcendent and eternal, an ideal form, something that could influence and be influenced by gods and demons. During the difficult transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, the idea of a transcendent spirit remained the same, but terminology changed, retaining the metaphysics of the prior period, calling spiritual forces "animal spirits," which could be sick

for any number of historical or natural reasons. Then, given simultaneous advances in anatomy and medicine, the old, "scandalous" metaphysics dropped altogether, as advanced thinkers such as Descartes declared that the human was, in truth, more like a machine.

Rather than dismiss these earlier, often nonscientific approaches to unconsciousness, we should work to understand them, if not appreciate them, since they provided the conceptual foundations for contemporary approaches. While the *unconscious* as a term did not emerge until the early Enlightenment period, it was clearly implied by Paracelsus in the mid-sixteenth century in his *Von der Krankenheiten* (*On Illnesses*), and Francis Bacon inferred the same in the early seventeenth century in his *Novum Organum*. Bacon's thoughts tellingly focus on the power of language, and they are exemplary of the best of early notions of unconscious rhetorical forces. In sections 39–44, Bacon discusses what he calls the "Idols of the Tribe," the "Idols of the Cave," the "Idols of the Marketplace," and the "Idols of the Theater."[13] The Idols of the Tribe, or what Bacon calls "specters," are "the false mirrors" of all culture-bound human understanding, which lead locally situated groups to believe they are the "measure of the universe."[14] The blind jingoism that comes with Idols of the Tribe resonates with the more contemporary philosophical observation that each individual is at birth thrown into a language and culture that are forced choices. Normally these forced choices are simply, and necessarily, repressed, and one's given cultural common sense are mistakenly—yet properly within the forced choice—acknowledged as the truth. Bacon articulated this point centuries before Heidegger and others.

Bacon's next idols, the Idols of the Cave, are those which lead individuals, rather than groups, to experience the world through a unique set of prejudices, or what today we would call local subcultures, and the materially consequential language games or discursive formations they employ. Bacon then identifies the Idols of the Marketplace as "words" that "plainly force and overrule the understanding," which today we might translate as stereotypes. Idols of the Theater, finally, refer to Bacon's notion that "all the received [religious dogmas] are but so many stage plays, representing worlds of their own creation after an unreal and scenic fashion."[15] Well, what, then, are the specifics about these forces that overrule understanding and force the performance? Unfortunately Bacon says no more, and then there is a long historical silence on such subjects, save among theologians and mystics.

As the Renaissance transitioned into the Enlightenment across Europe, at the very time that science and market logics began squeezing out the last bits of magic in the world, in perhaps the last gasp of the medieval spirit, the term *unconscious* was used by Schelling to suggest that materiality itself, or whatever actually is, seeks to know itself, with its goal being the creation of ever more complex conscious creatures with greater mirror capacity. It is as if nature, as Being or

as God, has a purpose all its own, and the human being is at the pinnacle of that process here on Earth, even if condemned to the cross of suffering mortality. This is already a very secular theology, suggesting that human beings, as a species, though perhaps not as individual eternal souls, are the very eyes of God, at least while living. We, as humans, for Schelling, are the self-conscious side of an otherwise unconscious Being that desires our consciousness so that it may reflect on itself as a mise en abyme, not simply Bacon's "false mirrors."[16] Others, such as Descartes, had already characterized what an unconscious spirit might be, as a machine, as the tide shifted from the religious to the secular, though the unconscious was not systematically explored as nonmagical or nonmetaphysical until after Schelling.

It is important to remember that prior to this time, not but two centuries ago, notions such as the soul, animal spirits, or spiritual forces were usually and normally deployed, instead of today's practice of speaking of a person's mind and its health or sickness. There was no doubt in the souls/minds of our distant ancestors, specifically those who studied the spiritual, that powerful magical forces worked in ways beyond our own ability to know. Medicine men, or individuals in charge of communal rituals related to certain spiritual maladies, created cures where contemporary science continues to fail.[17] Most of this history has been forgotten or deemed nothing more than superstition or the power of suggestion, since, in more modern times, with the increasing dominance of the scientific and secular spirit, notions of the unconscious have changed dramatically. This change was perhaps most clearly displayed in the Enlightenment by the theories and clinical practices of Julien Offray de La Mettrie, whose mid-eighteenth-century treatises *Man a Machine* and *Man a Plant* were serious attacks on the existence of the immortal soul, moving such spiritual talk to the less metaphysical realm of the mind in the machine.

Advances in anatomical and neurological studies by such eminent Renaissance men as Leonardo da Vinci and Descartes also led to conclusions suggesting mechanical explanations for our bodily functions, including thought and subjectivity. The spirit, for La Mettrie, was clearly the direct byproduct of an animal machine that worked so long as the body worked, just as animals and plants are similarly machines. The spirit (i.e., mind) dies with the body/machine. Any other explanation goes plainly against empirical evidence and reason. Also, if a person is indeed a machine, then perhaps we can produce one ourselves. In his introduction to *Man a Machine,* Justin Leiber claims that it was at this exact time in history that "we [were] beginning to think of ourselves as biological thinking machines. We [were] also trying to make artificial thinking machines."[18] Perhaps our unconsciousness is difficult to know because, through its functioning, we might be little more than "lucky" automatons, the most perfectly made of the

animal machines, or the most perfect of artificial persons: self-moving machines, serving as the suffering eyes of God, until we break down.

History, therefore, provides us with several different ways of conceptualizing the various unconscious forces that work upon us. Yet no matter how the unconscious has been conceived, whether as soul or spirit, possessed or not, as the idols we worship through languages that blind us, as the dark ground of Being that wishes to know itself through the development of ever more conscious creatures, or as the automaton qualities of animal machines, we must always keep in mind that this unconsciousness and its repressed qualities, no matter the form, and no matter how automatic, are, as always, productive of material culture.

We should always be on the lookout, therefore, for links among the unconscious, repression, something alienating yet somehow productive, something symptomatic, or something supplemental, as Schelling, Schiller, Freud, and Lacan described in their various ways. Alienation from nature through the learning of a language, what is called castration by Lacan or what I have called the first aesthetic break, is part and parcel of self-consciousness, human meaning-making, and the consequent production of material culture.[19] If we were not foundationally alienated, then we would have no "aesthetic" status with the actual, à la Schiller. Conversely because we have an aesthetic relationship with the actual, with which we are fully intertwined, we are foundationally alienated in different ways in different times and places. Elaborating on bourgeois productive alienation (i.e., the lonely individual with no recourse to magic or expiation of guilt condemned to competitive self-fashioning) some seventy years after Freud, Foucault importantly reemphasized that the term *repression*, without careful qualification, is "inadequate for capturing the *productive* aspect of [discursive] power."[20]

The contemporary view offered here, which works to be mindful of the range of ways in which rhetorical unconsciousness has been conceptualized and which accepts its reliance on those prior conceptions, suggests that rhetorical unconsciousness is most precisely conceptualized as *the productive mechanism of discursive repression constitutive of subjectivity and, hence, political power,* with the political conceptualized as what Ranciére calls the power to distribute and police the sensible or the power to gain interpretive dominance over what passes for common sense.[21] I accept as a premise that in some ways subjectivity revolves around absence or lack, or constellations of overlapping absences and lacks, and that it is contained by the dark matter of broader Symbolic and Real conditions. We can only subjectively experience the actual through our entrance into language, and we can only characterize the actual in retrospect through language, and so we are all productively alienated from the unconsciousness of matter while still being matter. This general productive alienation is then followed by

other more specific and freely chosen forms. We build our intentional subjectivity simultaneously, therefore, with a structural and imaginary unconsciousness.

In line with such thinking, it is important to show the precise ways in which the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable are, ultimately, negative discursive fields that maintain and continually modify, through both their success and their failure, what passes for self-conscious, intentional common sense. In turn common sense is built upon these three layers of rhetorical unconsciousness, which can be mapped, through their symptoms, as repressed languages.

Rhetorical unconsciousness is analyzed, in its universal and particular manifestations, as in any medical procedure, through its symptoms. The analogy between medical and collective psychoanalytic symptoms only goes so far, however. In the medical field, healthy people display no symptoms, save those of health. When symptoms of illness emerge and their cause is identified, action is taken to remove those symptoms and return the body to health. In political psychoanalysis, conversely, we are dealing with Real-Symbolic-Imaginary situations that are *always* symptoms, since the symptoms of material culture organize enjoyment while depending upon some forms of discursive repression. Instead of getting rid of the symptoms, political psychoanalysis, as characterized here, traces the contours of negative discursive fields to identify their functions and to determine when and why those functions turn pathological.

As Freud maintained, and his life's work sought to prove, we can trace the contours of the unconscious, which otherwise functions invisibly, because it "leaves symptoms in its train."[22] Symptoms of the unconscious, he stressed, are detectable both in individuals and groups. Regarding individuals, Freud offered his proposition in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that the foundational unconscious symptom is our sense of having an essential, unified self, since when it "appears to us as something autonomous and unitary, marked off distinctly from everything else," it is "deceptive" and "serves as a kind of façade."[23] Strange as it sounds, and doubling down on Schiller's conception of being beside nature through the acquisition of language, Žižek characterizes the situation most precisely, from the perspective of critical meta-self-consciousness, when insisting that "[mere] self-consciousness itself is radically unconscious."[24] That is, normal self-consciousness is unconscious in precisely the sense forwarded by Bacon in his discussion of the Idols.

So the first symptom of our unconsciousness, paradoxically enough, is our sense of normal individual self-consciousness, which, according to Freud, is a metaphysically comforting mask that goes unrecognized as a mask, since, when all is said and done, the masks *are* the self. This is not to deny the very real things that happen to people when assuming these necessary masks but to claim that self-consciousness, at least naturally, is a necessary and materially consequential pose, à la Nietzsche, delimited by the given Symbolic and Imaginary means at

one's disposal, which must be respected for all local intents and purposes, even though that self-consciousness is accompanied by a range of negative discursive fields. Then, however, the repressed inevitably returns. The same mask-not-recognized-as-mask that pleasantly diverts attention away from the repressed and repressive shadow side of subjectivity is also productive through that effort and its constant transgression/problematization.

Regarding groups, Freud concludes that whatever passes for civilization within a given discursive regime is also made possible only through some form of productive repression, or what he refers to as sublimation: a mature type of defense mechanism—against the traumas of subjectivity—where socially unacceptable instinctual impulses are transformed into socially acceptable behaviors within a given discursive regime. The term *discursive regime,* which is not used by Freud, is crucially complex. When we think of productive repression, we must understand that it occurs on multiple levels simultaneously, not only in time but across time, and that at any given moment our embodied subjectivity constitutes a singular truth. As Foucault consistently points out in his work, individuals live moment to moment at an ever-changing intersection in a matrix of field-invariable (i.e., formal and universal) and field-dependent (i.e., contingent and particular) discourses. We simultaneously live as "subjects" within states that have statewide applicable laws, with their own obscene supplements, and yet within each officially recognized political state there are hegemonic and counterhegemonic subcultures, professions, and other subgroups with their own, more local discursive rules, and their own, sometimes obscene supplements. Different discursive regimes, in different geographic areas, are hegemonic, serving to structure and largely determine the counterhegemonic.

This means that, when considering rhetorical unconsciousness, the political appears to be a clash between these universal and particular forces, where a discursive regime is in part the hegemonic forces and in part the counterhegemonic forces, incessantly struggling against one another to form the whole.[25] You have the state, political parties, professional associations, interest groups, corporations, and so on, and each are clashing solar systems in a great discursive galaxy, with their own dark matter and black holes. All of this combined, including everyone's subjectivity, enmeshed in these overlapping, productively repressed discourses, constitutes the discursive regime at any given moment of time, which always displays symptoms of the return of the repressed.

Within any discursive regime, there will different forms of sublimation, given what is repressed and the avenues for expression. Sublimation, according to Freud, was a way of productively managing repression or creatively dealing with denial, but he also thought it to be an ability possessed by only a select number of "narcissistic" persons; therefore "the weak point of this method [of sublimation in dealing with the traumas of subjectivity] is that it is not applicable

generally: it is accessible only to a few people."[26] Contra Freud, it is my contention that sublimation of the subjective trauma of our entrance into language, belief, and action (i.e., how the alienating trauma of becoming a normal subject through immersion in language and culture leads to the creatively repressive powers of subjectivity) is an inevitable and universal human process. Everyone necessarily sublimates, but in very different ways due to very different discursive and material conditions. Unconscious aspects of sublimation, in other words, are *formally* equal but *substantially* unequal. This is why the repressed returns in a range of symptoms requiring political psychoanalysis.

As Freud observed in *Civilization and Its Discontents* and elsewhere, to live together under anything like the rule of law, all socially acceptable individuals must repress and transmogrify their sexual and aggressive instincts. In contemporary psychoanalytic theory of the Lacanian stripe, our natural instincts are transformed into drives upon our entrance into language, as we impossibly attempt to retrieve the lost fullness we experienced before that entrance, before acquiring our aesthetic status. Our drives are then transformed into desires in day-to-day existence, pursuing objects we believe will make us whole. The price for this instinctual double repression (i.e., from instinct to drive to desire) is paid in various types of sublimation, which reflect types of rhetorical unconsciousness with different political consequences. For Freud, then, the common sense of political communities, as well as of individuals, can be usefully conceived as a productive facade that masks and variously sublimates our instincts and drives, and the different ways in which those facades are developed and maintained lead to different types of unconscious symptoms, which in turn lead to different types of political communities.

Unfortunately, despite Freud's intriguing pronouncements about the broader political consequences of sublimated repression, his problematic claim regarding the failure to sublimate properly on the part of the majority, and his equally intriguing pronouncements about the constraining and enabling dimensions of repression, the majority of his life's work aimed at understanding and, if possible, curing the souls of individuals.[27] This focus on the individual is no doubt what led him to claim that the unconscious is primarily revealed through the analysis of dreams, jokes, slips of the tongue, forgotten names, and other symptomatic "proofs or signs" of what is "*active and unconscious* at the same time."[28] Ultimately interested in what he believed was failed repression and sublimation on the part of maladjusted individuals suffering mostly from repressed sexually related childhood traumas, his conception of the psychoanalytic cure largely consisted in the analyst's helping the analysand to become conscious of those repressed traumatic experiences they had sublimated in unhealthy ways.

My own focus, though building in part upon a revision of Freud's notion of personal unconsciousness and its symptoms upon the soul, is on unconscious

rhetorical processes and their symptoms at the collective, sociopolitical level. I focus primarily on the level of the Symbolic, or the level of rhetorical unconsciousness where transindividual semiotic codes structure subjectivity unconsciously via secondary forms of productive repression. Instead, therefore, of focusing on the "proofs and signs" of what is "active and unconscious at the same time" in individuals, my goal is to focus on the proofs and signs of collective unconsciousness and their relation to consequent processes of realization and derealization. The most crucial question politically is what symptoms do these negative discursive fields differently produce? What constitutes a pathological symptom? In tracing these fields and locating these symptoms, it is hoped we can develop a politically applicable psychoanalytical approach to the types of unconsciousness that result from our collective existence as rhetorical beings.

When considering subjectivity as the result of variously creative forms of productive repression, my approach to rhetorical unconsciousness and political psychoanalysis, as should be obvious, is built from a wide range of theoretical and critical sources I turn to my purposes. As Lacan points out, Freud had his own highly influential and poetically productive account of the unconscious, focusing as he did on repressed sexuality, but one can find "hundreds of additional varieties" of theories of the unconscious.[29] My own conception is admittedly one of these varieties, with an ultimate focus on a philosophy of artful political action based upon critical meta-self-consciousness. Whereas the theoretical center of Freud's unconscious resides in individual pathologies resulting from repressed desire, particularly for one or another parent or sibling (i.e., the much discussed and sometimes reviled Oedipus complex), my own focus is on collective pathologies not necessarily tied to repressed sexuality.[30] There are other differences as well, but my main focus will be on Symbolic, unconscious discursive repression and its constitutive role in producing the aesthetic symptomology of the political subject. Here repression is conceived as variably productive, yet the productive is variously repressed.

Here, at the level of the Symbolic, what is repressed resides outside of self-consciousness yet is still active; therefore the repressed returns in material practices with political consequences. Forms of material culture mirror rhetorical unconsciousness. This relationship between an active repressed byproduct of normal consciousness, or productive repression, and our larger political environments deserves careful study, and this complex of claims forms the logical basis for the following propositions about black holes of the Imaginary and dark matter of the Symbolic.

Black Holes and Dark Matter: Absences and Structures

There are four final tasks to accomplish theoretically, and then we can turn to historical examples of productive repression, realization and derealization, and

the procedures and ethics of political psychoanalysis. First, I will explore the utility of the metaphors "black holes" and "dark matter" for characterizing absences at the centers of discourse and the forces that maintain the order of the subjective structure, respectively. Second, a two-dimensional map will be used to describe the nine structural dimensions of the object/subject relation. It is an ontical cartography made three dimensional by time and circumstance, where concrete sets of negative discursive fields accompany subjectivity and different types of black holes and dark matter prevail. This requires the creative appropriation of Lacan's registers of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary.[31] Third, we shall look more closely at primary, secondary, and tertiary forms of productive repression in light of our fourth and last theme: negative discursive fields and the role of political psychoanalysis.

My ultimate focus will be on the Symbolic aspects of rhetorical unconsciousness (i.e., the unspoken), though I shall perforce discuss all three of the negative discursive fields (i.e., the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable). These three fields have a liminal yet porous relationship, since symptoms appear as negative discursive fields clash, as they always do. The unsayable is revealed in part when it clashes with the unspoken; the unspoken is revealed in part when it clashes with the unspeakable; the unspeakable is revealed in part when it clashes with the actual; and so on. That said, any revelation of the repressed created by a clash in any field resonates across all fields. But first, before diving too deeply into such details, let us turn to the black holes and dark matter that keep our subjective universes in order, so that the status of the order itself will make more sense.

What, precisely, does it mean to propose an organizing absence, as a black hole, at the center of discursive formations and subjectivity? The answer is only well-known to a small number of philosophers, sociolinguists, critical rhetoricians, theologians, and critical theorists. It has become common knowledge among them that Derrida's conference paper "Structure, Sign and Play in the Human Sciences" was a pivotal document in the movement from structuralism to post-structuralism and, hence, the future direction of subjectivity/identity studies.[32] It was in this paper that Derrida provocatively claimed that what centers a structure is an absence, or gap, that paradoxically is both inside and outside of the structure.

Derrida's argument was a reaction to structuralism, which in turn was an outgrowth of structural linguistics. Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist, had finally resolved the open riddle of Plato's *Cratylus*—a dialogue featuring a discussion of the nature of the soul, as well as a discussion, ultimately unresolved, about finding the proper definitions for letters—by showing that letters and words have no meaning whatsoever in themselves, save for their placement in relation to other letters and words.[33] Plato was attempting to identify the precise meaning content of each letter, since then different words for things could contain the correct

letters. Saussure explained the impossibility of this quest, since all identities within symbolic codes, and all the individual and collective forms of identification that emerge from those codes, are founded upon relational systems of differences whose individual elements are somehow empty. The letter *b,* for example, has no meaning in and of itself, save for in its relative position to other letters (e.g., *be* versus *by*). Relative identities created through symbolic codes do not, therefore, at least in this sense, have essences, just as their individual elements do not.

Such claims about identity's being a function of situated difference within symbolic codes, which are well defended, have profound implications for rhetorical unconsciousness, because, if true, then all identities formed through symbolic codes are somehow empty and somehow not, just as the letter *b* is something and yet is somehow nothing without the other letters of the alphabet. This would be true for all languages and symbolic codes, and it immediately raises a series of crucial questions about what this emptiness is like, for it is not completely empty. It is true that our selves are empty when completely isolated, in the sense of our thrownness and in the sense that who we are or can be depends upon the differences in which we find ourselves embedded from moment to moment. Metaphysically speaking, we might therefore speak of the emptiness of subjectivity, or consciousness, or the soul, or the cogito, which somehow nevertheless transcends the fullness of materiality. But surely our identities are not fully empty, since it is obviously the case that different forms of symbolically enabled subjectivity impact actuality in different ways, that intentional actions can transform the Real/Symbolic/Imaginary matrix, and surely we can say, when all is said and done, that a person or collective had certain characteristics and that they acted effectively, actually, in such and such a manner.

Today, then, in light of such post-structural thinking, identity is considered a function of difference, where the self is built incessantly from and through the Other (i.e., the Symbolic and Imaginary orders into which one is thrown and the subsequent actual relationships between people, largely unconscious). What, then, is the impact of symbolic codes on subjectivity, given this peculiar emptiness, which is obviously not fully empty, and what are its implications for rhetorical unconsciousness?

Saussure, as would be expected from a linguist, focused almost exclusively on identities created by relationships among the synchronic elements of language. Synchronic analyses of language deal with the structure of language, focusing on letters, phonemes, morphemes, and grammatical rules for word order, or with language as a system of relational rules for signs. Semiotics is the study of signs. Linguists have looked at languages to study their etymologies, or the historical development and transformations of symbolic codes, but this is quite different from thinking about structural unconsciousness or the effects of Symbolic structures on subjectivity. Regarding the latter, for example, analyzing the

sociopolitical impact of communication technologies diachronically, as in the work of Foucault and Walter Ong, is much closer to our focus here. Nevertheless, despite the differences between linguistics proper and subjectivity studies, what Saussure had to say about signs has much to tell us about the role of black holes in rhetorical unconsciousness.

A sign, for Saussure, is a combination of a signifier, or the word/sound in a system of linguistic differences, and a signified, which is the idea or concept referred to by the signifier. We know that different languages have different signifiers for different things, ideas, emotions, and so on, but are the things, ideas, and emotions signified somehow controlled or limited by the web of signifiers? What if one language has twenty words for waterways while another has only three. Does this mean that really there are twenty types of waterways in one discursive regime and only three in the other? In what sense yes and in what sense no? How might this relate to the emptiness of individual signifiers and rhetorical unconsciousness? Such questions would be left to others, given Saussure's primary focus on the synchronic dimensions of language.

Quickly, however, researchers and practitioners from ethnography to psychoanalysis started to apply Saussure's insights into linguistic signs to the relationships among language, subjectivity/identity, and human communities. His work was taken up in anthropology by those who came to call themselves structuralists. Structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, building upon Saussure's insight that all identities within symbolic codes are a function of difference, sought to prove that cultures also function like a language, where every individual subject position only has identity in relation to other elements, and that all of the elements revolve around some center or key element or elements that structure the structure.[34] In order for structural anthropologists to find the element or elements that structure the structure, they had to locate the concrete logic of the cultural structure. Lévi-Strauss, in working to accomplish this task, described how the communities he studied had "little or no explicit knowledge of *the kinship system* which regulates certain of their dealings with one another. That system is 'unconscious' until it is brought into consciousness by the [structural] anthropologist."[35] This focus on what structures the structure as unconscious concrete logics is why Derrida, at a conference with those familiar with Saussure and structuralism, was correct when saying, on October 21, 1966, that "even today the notion of a structure lacking any center represents the unthinkable itself." He continued, in attempting to clarify his own conceptualization of the empty center of identities and discourses: "Nevertheless, the center also closes off the play which it opens up and makes possible. As center, it is the point at which the substitution of contents, elements, or terms is no longer possible. . . . Thus it has always been thought that the center, which is by definition unique, constituted that very thing within a structure which, while governing the structure, escapes

structurality. This is why classical thought concerning structure could say that the center is, paradoxically, within the structure and outside it."[36] Citing classical thought, Derrida's statement suggests that rhetorical unconsciousness has two fundamental dimensions that are interrelated. First there is an absent center within the structure that somehow structures the structure, which gathers discourse around itself, and this is what I call a black hole. Second this absent center also exists outside of the subject/discourse, which is somehow a *reflection* of that internally organizing absence, or what I call dark matter. We can think of the structural gaps within Symbolic systems themselves, which cannot be overcome, à la Bruce Fink, as a Symbolic form of dark matter, since the symptoms produced by those gaps unconsciously structure imaginaries, though there is also the dark matter of nature and history to which we are ignorant, which also works negatively to structure the conditions of possibility for subjectivity. Derrida claimed that the presumed center of Symbolic structures was *something* of an absence (i.e., "that very thing *within* a structure which, while *governing* the structure, *escapes* structurality). It is black hole where "the substitution of contents, elements, or terms is no longer possible," because to cross the threshold into the unspeakable is to challenge the fabric of subjectivity itself.

On the one hand, save for its actuality/materiality, there is no center to the subject, who instead is forever enmeshed in a system of Symbolic and Imaginary differences. On the other hand, this paradoxically absent center, this subject, is obviously not completely absent, as each individual person is not only a material being but also a being "inside" an ever-shifting discourse with material effects, somehow mirroring the systemic/Symbolic differences entailed by that discourse. There is, then, a reciprocal relationship between the systems of differences in which we are enmeshed and something absent inside and outside of us that makes us possible.

Long before Derrida made his daring claim that the center of subjective structures was an organizing absence, Saussurean thinking had made its way into psychoanalysis, led by Lacan, whose major procedure was to update Freud through Saussure. In so doing he made the claim that systems of Symbolic differences, structurally, have crucially important unconscious aspects, where the unconscious is structured like a language revolving around a lack, or void, or organizing absence. Different politically minded psychoanalytic thinkers, such as Laclau and Žižek, for example, regularly claim that identities are built around highly abstract concepts into which a wide range of content can be poured.

Before turning to how debates among these politically minded thinkers can assist us in building a three-dimensional construct of rhetorical unconsciousness, it is important to summarize how the theoretical developments from Saussure to Derrida led to the conception of black holes constituted by fields of the unspeakable (i.e., the organizing absences at the center of subjects and their

discourses) and dark matter constituted by fields of the unspoken (i.e., the unconscious Symbolic edifice that structures the inside and outside of the structure, of which we are ignorant) and unsayable. Political psychoanalysis depends upon the distinction between black holes and dark matter, as they are different motive forces for discursive repression.

While Lacanians refer to the absence at the center of a discourse as a lack, I suggest it is much more, rhetorically speaking. It is not only a black hole as lack or emptiness; instead, to use Derrida's phrase, it is an absent center that "closes off the play which it opens up and makes possible." Just as a black hole at the center of a galaxy attracts and transforms light and matter until they reach the so-called event horizon, so too do discourses and cultural practices bend, or swerve, as they get closer and closer to the fields of the unspeakable that structure subjectivity. As expressed by Jonathan Lear, "I call this type of mental functioning *swerve* because it exercises a kind of gravitational pull on the entire field of conscious mental functioning, bending it into idiosyncratic shapes. By way of analogy, we detect the presence of black holes by the way light swerves toward them. We detect this type of unconscious process by the ways our conscious reasoning, our bodily expressions, our acts and our dreams swerve toward them."[37] A black hole, then, is a useful metaphor for the organizing absences that center subjectivity, invisible yet all-powerful to the discourse/subjects so organized. Dark matter is a useful metaphor for the symbolic codes and natural forces that create the conditions of possibility for subjectivity. Fields of the unspoken ensure that symbolic codes remain productively repressed and in functioning order, while fields of the unspeakable ensure that various discursive regimes, made possible by productively repressed symbolic codes, do not fall apart. In practice, of course, these forces work in tandem to produce and maintain rhetorical unconsciousness, which is productive of symptoms in material culture.

This post-structuralist logic, where the presumed center is somehow a constitutive absence with structuring external effects and vice versa (i.e., there is a never-ending constitutive exchange between unconscious Symbolic structuring forces and the organizing absences of productive repression), has now found its way into contemporary political theory. We can apply this collective political logic to individuals through Lacan's concept of the *objet petit a,* or that partial object that we impossibly invest with our missing oceanic fullness, the one we experienced before our entrance into language. Whereas drive is the sublimation of instinct into the Symbolic, the *objet petit a* becomes what we desire and are driven to desire, our source of real or potential joy. However, according to Lacan, as one gets closer to the desired object, to the black hole, one discovers that the desired object is not "it," not the partial object that was impossibly invested with the ability to restore the primordial loss resulting from primary re-

pression. One first wants a car, then a nice midsize car, then a luxury car, then an even more expensive luxury sports car, but none of them, ultimately, are "it."

When looked at from the perspective of critical meta-self-consciousness, any situation will be composed of a variety of such objects of desire that anchor people's beliefs and justify their actions. Concretely we can see empty signifiers at work in political campaign sloganeering, with phrases such as "Hope and Change" or "Make America Great Again." Anyone with a concrete grievance, within the realm of common sense, can pour the widest range of desires into such abstractions. These grievances poured into organizing absent centers can be mapped, revealing that those centers are only absent in a certain sense, for in another sense they are structured like a language and filled with desire. That is, while the empty signifier has no meaning in and of itself (i.e., as an organizing absence), what is associated with that signifier has actual content (i.e., the imagined and actual grievances of those seeking hope, change, or the chance to be greater).

We can see many of these principles regarding absent centers and dark matter in the work of critical political theorists. Laclau, using a very different poetics from myself, shows through concrete historical instances how black holes and dark matter function in collective identity construction and how this relates to rhetorical unconsciousness.[38] All hegemonic collective identities, according to Laclau, are founded upon political hegemonies, in Gramsci's sense, as constellations of particular forces and interests that come together to represent the universal, "everyone's interests," or "the true people."[39] This attempt of the collective factional to represent the actual universal, however, is something it is logically unable to achieve, being in fact a subset, albeit the dominant subset, of the universal, or the entire population in this case. The black hole, or the organizing absence at the center of this discourse, is the notion of us as a people. Because hegemonic forces are not equal to the people, since the people also include those who do not benefit from, are not welcome within, or are burdened by the hegemony, the fullness of the identity is logically impossible. The united people do not, in fact, exist, save as internally divided, even though the notion of "us" is the idea or empty signifier around which the discourse of collective identification and its material practices circulate. To sustain the illusion of this imaginary fullness, the hegemonic powers, whether wittingly or not, must repress the counter-hegemonic and less powerful subset of the people and their real and imagined grievances, as their very existence falsifies the necessary fantasy for legitimizing state power. In other words the oppositional or antagonized subset must be repressed in some way to retain the illusion of equal and universal representation and collective unity. This also involves fields of the unspeakable with a mappable content and a consequent if implicit command not to question too closely the organizing absence at the center of the identity, which is, after all, impossible.

As a result of the logical inability of hegemonic forces to represent the universal, all hegemonies, according to Laclau, trigger antagonistic fields or constellations of grievances against those in power. An instructive example of the structural and largely unconscious nature of this process of collective identity construction, in this case national identity construction, was apparent during German reunification. In the years leading up to this world-historical event in 1990, the history and memory of National Socialism had to be addressed, even though the issue was almost completely repressed legally and imaginatively,[40] because it was a true history and the very reason for Germany's division into East and West. But let us pause briefly to remember why the nation was divided, and why National Socialism was a pathological symptom par excellence of grotesque discursive repression, with its obscene supplements, particularly visible in the behavior of citizens at public spectacles, when placed in light of the treatment of the Jews. If the claimant to the universal—in this case the so-called master Aryan race—must be false, and if there is a constitutive outside to every inside, then how is this outside manifest in the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable? Rhetorical unconsciousness, after all, works in all these ways at once, and changes in any one field will reverberate in others.

Actually, symbolically and imaginatively, the Jews in Nazi Germany and its sphere of influence were what Giorgio Agamben and Daniel Heller-Roazen would call the part that has no part: fully outside of the hegemonic subjective system, as a scapegoat of the system, and yet fully inside the system (e.g., the actual Jews, living in their homes and businesses, then the death camps, escape routes, hiding places).[41] The Jews were at once imaginarily the constitutive outside—a form of dark matter—that gave meaning to the fundamental fantasy of German racial and spiritual superiority as well as the black hole into which all of the actual and imagined disappointments of those wanting to be sure of their superiority were thrown. The situation had its unspoken dimension because there are unconscious Symbolic forces at work, such as past and present economic relations. The Jews, under Catholicism, were brought in to communities to handle debt relations, as usury was a sin for those imagining themselves and acting as Catholics. This, though, was a necessary sin for emergent market societies, since they required increasingly sophisticated debt instruments. Arguably one of the earliest of such societies was the papacy itself, being a transglobal concern in need of banking expertise. Yet the actual plight of the suffering Jews was unspeakable, and the average German citizen after the war claimed that no one knew. All the while the most horrific obscene supplement of the Law of the Father was leading to genocide, including the brutal enslaving, gassing, and incinerating of millions of innocent men, women, and children. Primo Levi recalls a concentration camp guard grabbing an icicle out of a desperately thirsty Jew's hand. "Why?" he asked the guard, who responded, "There is no why here."[42] Those who are the obscene

supplement can ask no questions. The field of the unspeakable overtook all, and the historical conditions created by mere self-consciousness, coupled with the metaphysically comforting need for the Nazis to have their capitalism without the Catholic symptom of capitalism, plus the need for actual comfort after centuries of hideous wars, mostly lost, led to political disaster.[43] The seeds for that disaster were sown in ignorance, according to Walter Lippmann, in part through a "want of statesmanship" at the end of World War I, when the victorious states imposed crippling debts on Germany.[44] This in turn destabilized the Weimar Republic, contributing to the sort of lower-middle-class and middle-class anger that sometimes erupts into reactionary populism. Then, after defeat in World War II, National Socialism, and the actual, living participants and enthusiastic supporters of Hitler, similarly had to be erased, imaginarily of course, since millions of Nazi sympathizers and active supporters simply returned home.

By the 1980s, still deeply involved in fields of the unspeakable and unable to address the actual legacy of National Socialism, particularly because of its stain on then-current collective fantasies about "good" Europeans, the issue of actual German responsibility for Nazism could only be resolved in a derealized fashion. Those in Eastern Germany pointed out that they, on the side of the Soviet Union, had, as a matter of historical fact, helped to defeat Hitler, and at great human cost, as the mass graves around St. Petersburg attest, and so the fascists had clearly blended in with the exploitative capitalist class in West Germany. Conversely, those in West Germany pointed out that they, on the side of freedom and democracy, surely could not be blamed, especially when looking over the guarded and barb-wired border to the East, where one could see political repression hard at work. Through this imaginary mechanism, symptomatic of the unspeakable truth of the millions of living Nazi sympathizers and the horrors of their deeds, responsibility for German National Socialism and its possible lingering influences were completely repressed.

The event horizon of the black hole, or the closing in on the organizing absence of the empty signifier *Germany,* was only revealed when Bundestag president Phillip Jenninger gave a plea for unification by calling on the German people to accept their responsibility for the horrors inflicted by the Nazis. Unfortunately for Jenninger, he had just stepped on the third rail of the unspeakable, for there was, fictionally and yet politically consequentially, no "we" to be addressed, and he was promptly dismissed from his position within days for his "praise of Hitler" (i.e., the symptom of the repressed returned, as we would expect, in an inverted form).[45]

There is a rhetorical unconsciousness clearly at work here, symbolically and imaginatively, because the hegemonic forces in what was then East Germany and West Germany, to maintain the necessary illusion that the people were one—oddly enough when they were two—had to ignore or otherwise repress the most

serious lingering antagonisms: the very large number of actually living Nazis in the divided Germany, the actual historical influence of Nazi thinking on Germany, and full recognition of the pathological horrors that Nazi Germany produced. To say there were no remaining Nazis in East and West Germany in the late 1980s was absurd, and a sure sign of derealization, since then U.S. president Ronald Reagan, a middle-aged man during World War II, was only in his late seventies during the reunification process.[46] The actual existence of those remaining Nazi sympathizers, especially those in their seventies and older, was nevertheless repressed, since everyone imaginatively pointed their fingers at everyone else.

Looking at the ever-shifting map of Europe over the centuries, what exactly constitutes the geographical limits of Germany or any nation? This does not mean, of course, that the ways states are imagined have no material consequence. Quite the opposite. The empty signifier alone, as a black hole, organizes a discursive regime, and discursive regimes have material effects. It is simply to say that the nation is itself, like a flag, an empty signifier, a black hole, a complex of grand abstractions.

The various discourses circulating around black holes, or the variously productive forms of sublimation, from military activities to art, are partly phantasmatic and affective, if thoroughly political and materially consequential. There is, for example, a certain fanaticism sublimated in advanced capitalist cities with professional sports teams, where fans lose themselves in affective glee, screaming, crying, jumping for joy, though basically enjoying a commodity, one that is almost the exact copy of the teams in dozens of other cities, with the players shifting randomly from team to team, based on their presumed and then actualized market value. "But this is *our* team!" This relatively healthy form of productive repression, if not taken to extremes, shows the generally pacifying quality of the commodity.[47] Overly affective investment in a commodity is also revealed in the presumed difference between branded products and "no label" products: both are generally the same in quality, but one's enthusiasm is for the brand, which is trusted or known to be the best and thus worth the additional price.[48] The greater the affective and discursive investment in one's nation, one's favorite team, one's favorite purse, or one's favorite anything, the greater the expectations of affective and discursive return.

Explaining how one invests in abstractions politically, Laclau provides a poststructuralist interpretation of political change, showing how populist movements, considered in their full range, from peaceful and progressive social movements to reactionary bloody revolutions, occur when those aggrieved against the powers that be, no matter the breadth of their specific grievances, unite under some empty signifier, some abstract phrase or person. This investment in abstraction is inevitably a metonymic relation, where a part stands for the whole. Variously aggrieved, and imagining themselves together against a common enemy under

that empty signifier, otherwise isolated individuals and groups find themselves working together, under the same terminological umbrella, to form a collective counterhegemonic force. If sufficiently developed, such forces can challenge hegemonic powers, who themselves are united under some other terminological umbrella. Fields of the unspeakable, which in part reflect the content poured into the black hole, help to control the shape of the constellations of discourse contained otherwise by the dark matter of the unsayable and the unspoken.

Dark matter, or the unknown Real and the unconscious Symbolic, is only revealed when some new material event, be it natural or imaginative, compels changes in the unspeakable. Such unpredictable events challenge and transform hegemonic forces by revealing, whether by necessity, choice, or ignorance, what has been productively repressed and why. Black hole: national unity and the way discourse bends to achieve that phantasmatic ideal, through a signifier that organizes a collective identity but is in some sense empty. Dark matter: actual historical and natural phenomena and the larger symbolic codes in which they are transintentionally embedded. When the unsayable and unspoken aspects of dark matter are mixed with the unspeakable aspects of black holes, we have the complete map of rhetorical unconsciousness. This unconsciousness is accompanied by productive repression, which results in material-cultural symptoms, some of which are pathological.

Laclau's perspective complements Derrida's in that the absent center of what structures the structure (e.g., the Jew in Nazi Germany) is both inside and outside the structure, somehow empty and somehow not, since actual symptoms are materially consequential in ways that reflect the repressed (e.g., Jews being exterminated, Jews as lenders for profit, Jews as "vermin"). The imagined center (e.g., being a true and loyal member of the master race) is a politically consequential fiction complemented by forms of repression, as I have attempted to outline, both physical and psychical. In the German case, the actual violence against the scapegoat Jews impacted not only public memory but also the materiality of state transformation. The imaginative fantasy of complete unity, however, is logically impossible to achieve, save as a binding legal fiction, and the recovery of a primordially lost fullness cannot be provided. The idea of "my nation," therefore, is, in this specific sense, empty. Nevertheless we can just as assuredly say that the center is not simply a lack or an absence, for it is structured like a language (i.e., the abstractions around which a traceable series of discursive and affective investments can be traced), and it is not nothing, because it also involves a mappable set of unspeakable things that are materially consequential. The black hole is not fully empty, because it is an idea around which otherwise dissociated forces unite, and it would not be particularly difficult to ask people why they identified with that empty signifier, providing it with concrete Imaginary content.

National identity, of course, is certainly not the only site where we see repressed discursive fields motivating material practices, and it is certainly not the only sort of black hole that works to construct our sense of self and other. The immediately preceding discussion was merely meant to exemplify how philosophical developments from semiotics to post-structuralism relate to political theory and rhetorical unconsciousness and how the notions of black holes and dark matter are useful metaphors for these fields.[49]

Rhetorical unconsciousness manifests itself in many ways at multiple levels that are mutually interactive, and so Laclau only gets us so far. In practice our subjective worlds are full of black holes and dark matter(s), all overlapping and interpenetrating each other, some with more "gravitational" force than others in different circumstances. Not only are we national subjects, but we are also gendered subjects, class subjects, and professional subjects and subject as well to a range of other unconscious symbolic codes, such as money and technology, with their own structuring logics. Empty signifiers and so on, as black holes, do, though, point to two broad types of rhetorical unconsciousness that drive political language: "that must not be said!" but remains implicit (i.e., fields of the unspeakable), and "I am intentionally that!" but not really (i.e., fields of the unspoken).

Ontical Cartography

To characterize more specifically the conceptual architecture[50] of rhetorical unconsciousness, in addition to recognizing the penumbra of ignorance, the unconscious dimensions of organizing absent centers, and the external Symbolic repressions and unknown truths that correspond to them, what immediately follows is a summary and corrective to an important debate in the journal *Critical Inquiry* between Žižek and Laclau in 2006, over Lacan's notion of "the Real" and the relationship of "the Real" to subjectivity, which resulted in a partial map of rhetorical unconsciousness.[51] Our goal is to locate, in structural terms, the specific locations and precise manifestations of rhetorical unconsciousness; that is, by moving beyond a strict Lacanian understanding of Lacan's registers of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary, our goal is to locate precisely where and how the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable function structurally.

The debate between Žižek and Laclau, while at times unfortunately juvenile, with name-calling and so on, was nevertheless important theoretically for at least two reasons, with direct implications for richer conceptions of rhetorical unconsciousness. First, in certain strands of philosophy, as we have seen, there has been the logical notion that subject and object, what we take for reality and what is actual, are radically and impossibly separated (e.g., Plato, Kant, Nietzsche). Because of our poetic/tropological relationship with the world and our limited personal experiences, we can only see the actual through a glass darkly. When we add Saussurean semiotics to the mix, where the focus is even more on language

at the expense of the material, what precisely do post-structuralists mean by "the Real"? What are the ontologies of these warring political post-structuralists? What is subjective Being? Therefore, second, once clarified, the debate between Laclau and Žižek touches on rhetorical unconsciousness and its relation to materiality, which is sometimes a tricky topic for post-structuralists. As Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle note in their introduction to their anthology *Critical Theory since 1965,* "Like de Saussure, Derrida pays no attention to the referent [actual objects in the world]. . . . There is no referent; neither is there an origin or center," as all subjectivity is free-floating difference within language.[52]

Given Saussure's structural linguistics, where all signifiers have meaning only in relation to other signifiers, and given the radical separation between words and things, how can we talk about *actual reality,* as if we could know? Our relationship to the world is tropological, and we are thrown into the Symbolic, which is unconscious, then thrown as well into cultural codes that entail their own series of productive repressions, and then we have our limited experiences and limited discursive options, so what vanity to say one thing is this and another is that. Meaning is always slipping away both vertically and horizontally; check your dictionary or the meaning of words across time. Heidegger and Derrida took this stricture so seriously that both sometimes wrote "under erasure," drawing lines through words, especially the word *is,* to reflect their understanding of our relationship to materiality through the limits of language.[53] Such a position, however, can easily become nominalist to the point of absurdity if taken to extremes (i.e., saying that we have no philosophical foundation within language for saying anything is anything with certainty), as if it does not matter if I see a vehicle coming down the road right at you and yell "Look out!" Objects exists, whether signified or not, and we cannot deny the agency of the material just because our language only provides an imperfect and interactive relation. Therefore we need a richer ontological understanding of the relationships among the actual/Real, the unconscious Symbolic, and the productively repressed Imaginary, since they are all mutually interactive elements of subjectivity.

To be clear, I do not attribute a nominalist position to Derrida, though he has been slightly misquoted, out of context, as saying "There is nothing outside of the text," or to Foucault, who once unfortunately stated, "There is no getting outside of ideology."[54] Both statements, if taken out of the larger context of Derrida's and Foucault's work, seem thoroughly nominalist and antimaterialist, as if it is fruitless to seek distinctions between accurate and inaccurate reports of historical fact, which would completely undermine the possibility for realization, or the distinction between historical truth and imaginative fiction, no matter how intertwined they may be. Derrida and Foucault, in light of the entirety of their work, were deeply concerned about the relationship between language and material, even spiritual, human beings. Nevertheless, given these hints of nominalism,

what do we mean by "the Real," after moving through structural linguistics and post-structuralist thought? How might an answer provide us with a structural map of rhetorical unconsciousness and its materiality?

After emerging on the other side of the debate between Žižek and Laclau, what we discover is that both of their explications of Lacan's Real are incomplete, leaving us with only a partial map of rhetorical unconsciousness, with Laclau reducing the Real, as is often suggested by Lacan, to that which is fully outside of discourse.[55] Žižek's review of Laclau's book *On Populist Reason* included the claim that capitalism was an example par excellence of the Real, with Žižek asserting that "the Real is the inexorable abstract spectral logic of capital that determines what goes on in social reality."[56] Laclau responded with derision, taking the orthodox line of the Lacanian Real that capitalist relations function foremost at the level of the Symbolic (i.e., they are unconscious structuring logics for imaginaries) and claiming in turn that "the Real is . . . something that *only* exists and shows itself through its disruptive effects within the Symbolic."[57] Žižek responded, in an effort to teach Laclau an apparent lesson, by laying out a "matrix" of Lacan's three registers (i.e., the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary), which, while extraordinarily helpful, also remains logically incomplete. It would take many pages to rearticulate Žižek's position on Lacan's Real, but ultimately he makes the important move of saying there is the real Real, the symbolic Real, and the imaginary Real, and this provides the basis upon which to form a two-dimensional matrix with other elements such as the imaginary Imaginary, the symbolic Imaginary, and so on.[58] The matrix of Lacan's three registers—the Real, the Symbolic and the Imaginary—is laid out in Žižek's response to Laclau, "*Schlagend aber Nicht Treffend!*" but its categories are not mutually exclusive and sometimes vague or repetitive.

In response to the logical problems in Žižek's groundbreaking characterization, after clarifying his categories, we can assert with confidence that there are at least nine structural dimensions to the subject/object relation, when taking a neo-Lacanian approach to the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary (see Table 2). Placing this cartography within a diachronic setting will put us in the best possible position to turn from theory to history and praxis, knowing precisely what productively repressed discursive fields are and how they function and what political psychoanalysis looks like, given our complete conceptual architecture.

Keep in mind, however, as we engage in our structural investigation into rhetorical unconsciousness, that this two-dimensional matrix is visually deceiving, since we are talking about a three-dimensional and material phenomenon, where transformations in any one area trigger a series of relational transformations in all the others, both in and across time. Fields of the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable are at different locations in this matrix, but they manifest themselves simultaneously, as we saw in the case of Germany, and the specific

TABLE 2

1. real Real	Nature, actuality, historical facts: that which exists outside of the Imaginary and Symbolic	2. real Symbolic	The productive formal capacities of the Symbolic, truth in retrospect	3. real Imaginary	The productive prohibition against contact with organizing absences
4. symbolic Real	The unconscious, disciplinary effects of symbolic codes in the actual	5. symbolic Symbolic	Formal, unconscious, signifying structures, such as language, technology, money	6. symbolic Imaginary	Motifs; archetypes, maxims, and the usable elements of cultural common sense
7. imaginary Real	Artful human inventions made actual	8. imaginary Symbolic	The contingent and variously artful use of given codes	9. imaginary Imaginary	Unrealized fantasy, dreaming

TABLE 3: *Aspects of the Real*

1. real Real	Nature, actuality, historical facts; that which exists outside of the Imaginary and Symbolic	2. real Symbolic	The productive formal capacities of the Symbolic, truth in retrospect	3. real Imaginary	The productive prohibition against contact with organizing absences
4. symbolic Real	The unconscious, disciplinary effects of symbolic codes in the actual				
7. imaginary Real	Artful human inventions made actual				

content of various iterations of rhetorical unconsciousness leads to very different forms of productive repression and material-cultural symptoms.

There are nine structural aspects of the subject/object relation that are mutually interactive *actually.* The first three relate to Lacan's register of the Real as "outside," or the orthodox sense of Lacan, where the "real" is the primary term. If we translate, in as concise a manner as possible, the real Real (cell 1) as nature, the actual that is "out there," or the actual history that was "out there"; the real Symbolic (cell 2) as the enabling limits of thought's possibilities, or what can be made of the "out there"; and the real Imaginary (cell 3) as the primary location of fields of the unspeakable, or what is "out there" that we cannot or will not acknowledge, then, contra Laclau and the orthodox position, rhetorical unconsciousness exists not only at the level of the real Real, or the completely unknown of the unsayable, save through its disruptive effects on subjectivity, but also at the level of two other reals whose effects move freely among the Symbolic and the Imaginary. Next we have the symbolic Real (cell 4) and the imaginary Real (cell 7). The symbolic Real comprises the unconscious influences of symbolic codes, and the imaginary Real is composed of imaginary things made actual. This means there are five dimensions to the Real: natural and historical actuality that impinges on the subjective; the actual, capacity-generating side of the Symbolic; actual prohibitions against speech; the actual, unconscious, disciplining power of the Symbolic, or the Symbolic as constraint; and the actuality of the Imaginary, or when what is imagined becomes actual (Table 3).

Our limited material agency resides in the imaginary Real (cell 7), the imaginary Symbolic (cell 8), and the real Symbolic (cell 2). As noted, the imaginary Real is where what is imagined is made real, which is driven by the imaginary Symbolic, which constitutes the intentional use of the Symbolic, or agency proper, which in turn is made actual via effective truth claims, whatever they are imagined to be, in retrospect (Table 4).

TABLE 4: *Aspects of Agency*

	2. real Symbolic The productive formal capacities of the Symbolic, truth in retrospect	
7. imaginary Real Artful human inventions made actual	8. imaginary Symbolic The contingent and variously artful use of given codes	

The real Real and the imaginary Imaginary (cell 9), the latter of which is composed of thoughts without direct material effect, constitute opposite poles along transversal lines, with both being "mediated" by the symbolic Symbolic (cell 5), which is the primary site of structural rhetorical unconsciousness, through its effects in the symbolic Real. The symbolic Symbolic, in other words, is a code proper, a cipher, a system of related signs, sans agency. The symbolic Imaginary (cell 6), akin to the symbolic Symbolic, consists of the various "tools" or "moves" made possible by the symbolic Symbolic, again sans agency (Table 5).

TABLE 5: *Non-Agentic Aspects (Codes and Unrealized Imagination)*

	5. symbolic Symbolic Formal, unconscious, signifying structures, such as language, technology, money	6. symbolic Imaginary Motifs; archetypes, maxims, and the usable elements of cultural common sense
		9. imaginary Imaginary unrealized fantasy, dreaming

Recognizing this terminology is opaque, given the complex mix of the same three words, let us move through the various cells once again in a bit more detail, first as map and then, in the next section, as territory. Once rhetorical unconsciousness is understood as a process, this will allow us to move directly to examples of political psychoanalysis in practice, with sufficient conceptual clarity.

To investigate more richly the various aspects of our map, with a focus on the forms and locations of rhetorical unconsciousness, I first focus on the cells that begin with the word *real*: the real Real, the real Symbolic, and the real Imaginary. These three fields of the principally real relate to rhetorical unconsciousness as follows: the real Real is the field of the *unsayable* because it is unknown, a type of "dumb" dark matter; it is Laclau's orthodox Lacanian notion of the Real as being fully outside of the Symbolic/Imaginary complex. These are the truths of nature and history that elude subjectivity. It is truth itself that goes completely unrealized, until it bumps up against the real Symbolic, or truth in retrospect. The real Symbolic relates in part to fields of the *unspoken,* since this realm constitutes the "positive" side of the productive repression of the Symbolic. The real Imaginary relates to fields of the *unspeakable* that organize productive repression at the tertiary level of forced choices provided by the Symbolic. These forces are always interacting, since, for example, truth in retrospect is always influenced

by the unspeakable, and the unspoken is brought to consciousness when it fails in light of emergent materiality.

We next have the three primarily "symbolic" cells: the symbolic Real, the symbolic Symbolic, and the symbolic Imaginary. How do these cells relate to rhetorical unconsciousness? First and foremost, it is imperative to understand the *unconsciousness* of symbolic codes themselves, which are transindividual and transintentional and involved in our thrownness. This means there are unconscious aspects involved in the symbolic Imaginary as well, which provides resources for agency, being composed of the meaningful elements of a culture's specific common sense. The strongest *material* unconscious influence of the Symbolic occurs, however, in the symbolic Real, for this is where symbolic codes, including linguistic, financial, and technological relations, structure agency unconsciously with material effects. If the real Symbolic, as truth in retrospect, is positively influenced by the Symbolic, then the symbolic Real is the negative influence codes unconsciously impose, which is the other part of the unspoken.

Finally, to complete our map, we have the unconscious dimensions of the primarily "imaginary," which also have Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary aspects. The imaginary Real is when we actualize our inventions, as with art and technology, or when we imagine anything that becomes actual, such as a fictional superhero turning into a corporate brand and its associated products. Here we can see a looping back from the imaginary Real toward the real Real. Something new occurs in the real Real, as a result of the imaginary Real, that current Symbolic and Imaginary orders are not equipped to deal with and where common sense suddenly appears, à la Hegel, as a "dead, reactionary echo" of the past. We are, as it were, caught off guard by the new actuality, coming in part from the Imaginary.

The imaginary Symbolic constitutes our senses of consciousness, will, and centered self-hood. Here in the realm of agency proper, after having gained a sense of self through primary repression and having learned and absorbed the appropriate codes (i.e., secondary repression as we enter the Symbolic regarding gender, race, and so on), we build our tertiary, agentic consciousness upon the unconscious edifice that is the limits of the Symbolic in the face of the unsayable. Here, where we function most fully as intentional agents, we tend to remain almost fully unconscious of our thrownness, of the structuring effects of arts and technologies, and of the unspoken and unspeakable limits of our ability to create and know, and thus we are productive.

Rhetorical unconsciousness, therefore, is primarily located in the real Real as the unsayable, the real Symbolic and the symbolic Real as the two sides of the unspoken (i.e., the enabling and constraining sides, respectively), and the real Imaginary as the unspeakable (Table 6).

TABLE 6: *Forms and Locations of Rhetorical Unconsciousness*

1. real Real	Unsayable, as unknown truth	2. real Symbolic	Unspoken, capacity-generating side of the Symbolic	3. real Imaginary	Unspeakable limits of meaning production
4. symbolic Real	Unspoken, constraint-generating side of the Symbolic				

So to return to our principal theme of political psychoanalysis, if the political is associated with the ever-changing subjective and the subjective is negatively composed of our structural ignorance, universally productive repressed sets of symbolic codes, and the intentional and/or unintentional use of those codes over time, with their own productive repressions that occur within the Imaginary, then it is not enough to have a synchronic map of rhetorical unconsciousness. We need a diachronic one as well. It is not enough to locate forms of rhetorical unconsciousness structurally; we must also work to understand how those forms play out across time and with what consequences.

Productive Repression

To appreciate better the diachronic development of rhetorical unconsciousness, we must clarify three different levels of productive repression: primary repression, secondary repression, and tertiary repression. Over time subjectivity is productively repressed in three ways, corresponding to the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary.

First, as we know, there is no self-consciousness, no being beside oneself, and no aesthetic status without language. The acquisition of a linguistic code simultaneously creates primary repression and structural unconsciousness. This is our entrance into the Symbolic, which, à la Schiller, is productively alienating: alienating because now we are somehow not only the actual in itself but also a reflection of the actual at the same time for itself and a type of reflection without which nothing would be realized.

Primary repression, or the revelation of the liminality of Being and being, is our permanent separation from the oceanic self we experience as infants, a universal form of productive alienation all normalized human beings go through because of our fortunate fall, as the critical theologians say, into language and therefore our uniquely ideal relationship with Being.[59] Initially, diachronically speaking, the common sense subject goes, universally and formally, through primary repression. We enter language first, which provides sufficient alienation for the necessary production of a self from the available Symbolic materials. We can imagine the very young infant, yet without a sense of self or language, suckling on the mother's breast or otherwise being lovingly and reassuringly held and cared for. In this conscious yet pre-self-conscious condition, there is no inside or outside, no me and them, only actual inexpressible needs and needs somehow pleasurably fulfilled. This is that oceanic Real before the letter, which every human subject, according to Lacan and Fink, misses terribly as a nonalienated relation between actuality and individual being, before the fortunate fall. Anika Lemaire, in her important work clarifying Lacan's theory of the unconscious, refers to this moment where we become aesthetic beings as "primal" repression.[60] Productive repression begins, Lacan repeatedly stresses, with "the

appearance of language [that] is simultaneous with primal repression, which constitutes the unconscious."[61]

The primary repression that comes with the acquisition of a language has a universal, structural, shadow side that limits as much as it capacitates, with absences as significant as presences. Moving into her discussion of subjectivity proper, Lemaire insists that "the most important part of the personality is the underside of the mask, the repressed."[62] Citing A. de Waelhens, she reminds us that "one of the specific characteristics of language is that it evokes a thing, a reality, by means of a substitute which this thing is not, evoking, in other words, its presence against a ground of absence."[63] So another key dimension of primary repression is the uncanny aspect of language that introduces the negative into the world. As expressed by Kenneth Burke, when defining the human being, "language and the negative 'invented'" the human.[64]

There are two key concepts that help to explain the effects of primary repression, with the second built upon the first. The first, as noted earlier, is Lacan's notion of our entrance into language as a type of castration, and the second is how this castration necessarily creates a split subject.[65] The fundamental claim behind these two concepts is nicely expressed by Lemaire: "Mediated by language, the [human] subject is irremediably divided, because [she or he is] at once excluded from the signifying chain and 'represented' in it."[66] Schelling also stressed that "there is no consciousness without something that is at the same time excluded and contracted,"[67] and in subjectivity we are excluded as isolated units yet are fully included physically and caught in language. Putting this another way, Fink maintains that "we are alienated insofar as we are spoken by a language that functions, in certain respects, like a machine, computer, or recoding/assembly device with a life of its own."[68] We are, in sum, alienated in very specific ways through our entrance into language. But how, precisely, are we excluded from the signifying chain that enables our subjectivity?

The response to this question is involved and complex, because key concepts relevant to the question, such as castration, have involved and complex histories, yet their development has everything to do with more precise conceptions of rhetorical unconsciousness. So let us begin with the evolving notion of castration, reviewing how it has moved away from gender essentialism in Freud toward the trauma of entering language in Lacan and Žižek. Lorenzo Chiesa, using this term *castration* in the latter sense, maintains that "symbolic castration . . . is the precondition of the subject's active entry into the symbolic order."[69] As is well known among psychoanalysts, in Freud's theorizing about unconsciousness, castration refers in part to the young male child's trauma when witnessing the absence of the penis in the female and then fearing actual castration. This fear, coupled with the young girl's recognition that she does not have the penis, is accompanied for young boys and girls by oedipal restrictions regarding their

relationship to parents and siblings, around which their consequent desires must form. The "no" of the Law of the Father opens the space for the "yes," for desire and painful *jouissance,* to revolve and build around the "no."[70]

With Lacan, however, as with Chiesa, we move from a supposed fear of actual physical castration to a notion of castration as our entrance into a given symbolic order, which is a forced choice that cuts us off from our oceanic selves and has direct implications for our subsequent drives and desires. Instead of focusing on physical castration, that is, Lacan uses the term more abstractly to signify "an original and chronic state of self-insufficiency," an ability to become aesthetic and self-conscious that comes with a disability, and that self-insufficiency is related to "the symbolic function inherent in human beings."[71] "The subject," according to Lacan, "finds himself caught up in an order of symbols . . . which distances him from his immediately lived truth," thus inaugurating both consciousness and unconsciousness.[72]

As Žižek's thought has developed, he has moved increasingly away from what he has come to call "the false poetry of castration" toward a focus on the impact of signifying chains on subjectivity. It is this latter meaning of the term *castration* that is taken in political psychoanalysis.[73] Žižek notes how the Freudian notion of castration is justly deserving of severe critique, because it is based on gender essentialism and contains its own unnecessarily repressive tendencies. Once the infant has entered language and is becoming an increasingly conscious subject, a key *secondary* form of productive repression—gender identity—is produced around the incest prohibition, associated with the fictional ancient Greek Oedipus, who unwittingly kills his father and makes love to his mother. Each child, according to Freud's notion of the Oedipus complex, must redirect their natural initial desire for the mother (e.g., the satisfactions provided by her in the oceanic stage), along with the girl's consequent desire for the father.[74] The incest prohibition, according to Freud, structures a whole consequent series of events related to gender and sexuality, based on the belief that young boys and girls recognize the difference in genitalia, which in turn leads to such things as the fear of castration and "penis envy." Such poetics, Lacan showed, become far more explanatory when taken as metaphors. If taken literally, they are damaging to progress in the realms of rhetorical unconsciousness in general and gender politics in particular.

The notions of castration, phallus, and lack, in their relationship with anything remotely oedipal in the Freudian sense (e.g., the fear of losing the phallus and the role of the phallus in "filling the lack" in women) and oedipal approaches used for political psychoanalysis are openly mocked by Deleuze and Guattari in their *Anti-Oedipus.* After repeatedly laughing at the "mommy-daddy-me" triangle imposed upon all things filtered through oedipal reasoning, and showing how Freudian psychoanalysis is itself a repressive apparatus, they assert that such

reasoning has absolutely nothing to do with the unconscious: "Yes," they readily admit, "Oedipus is indeed the displaced represented, the displacing agency of the signifier—but none of that constitutes an unconscious material, nor does any of it concern the productions of the unconscious."[75] While Lacan, Žižek, and others tend to focus on the lack, absences, or gaps in subjectivity, thus focusing on its repressed features, Deleuze and Guattari rightly emphasize the productive side of rhetorical unconsciousness, which they describe with poetics such as "bodies without organs" and "desiring machines."[76] They are no doubt correct in emphasizing that repression is productive and that capitalism is schizophrenically so.

What, then, is the split subject that emerges from the first aesthetic break, and how does it relate to primary repression? Prior to entering language, the infant experiences an oceanic self where there is no symbolically enabled alienation between subject and object. At some point, however, usually about the same time the infant learns its first words, it sees and recognizes itself in a mirror, experiencing both a sense of joy and a nascent sense of a centered self: there is me. It has been repeatedly noted by contemporary psychoanalytic theorists that this first recognition of the Imaginary self is a double misrecognition, since the child sees but a reflection of itself, and furthermore, as with all mirrors, the image is an inverted distortion.[77] As a metaphor this is a powerful way of saying that the subject, upon entering language, experiences subjectivity as an inverted and reversed image, a symptom, and thus experiences split subjectivity.

Psychoanalysts, following in the footsteps of Freud, have gone into great detail in explaining the emergence and development of this split subject and the various stages through which the human subject goes before they are successfully absorbed into language and culture, becoming capable of existing with relative ease within the necessary and repressed aspects of what passes for normal self-consciousness. It is useful to review some of their arguments, since the primary repression that accompanies our entrance into language entails a divided subjectivity with political ramifications at secondary and tertiary levels of productive repression.

There are several important ways of conceptualizing the divided subject that emerges from primary repression. Freud divided the subject, or our sense of self, into the id, superego, and ego or our natural urges, our ideal moralities, and the personality we work to construct and maintain in the balance of the id and superego.[78] One could also say that each individual person is divided into the real (i.e., the reality that exists outside of language and real experience as a material body), the ideal (i.e., the subjective sense of meaning, based on symbolic codes/words/ideas), and the rhetorical unconscious proper (i.e., that which is unspoken or unspeakable in order to manage/repress the irremediable distance between the real and the ideal while maintaining production). Regardless of how one

characterizes the split nature of the subject, it is not only alienated from Being but also alienated within itself.

Let us conclude this discussion of primary repression and its relationship to rhetorical unconsciousness with two summary arguments. First, upon entering language we are simultaneously made aware of and alienated from brute materiality or the material real (i.e., whatever it is that is out there outside of language and conscious sense of self). This is what Schiller, once again, referred to as our aesthetic relationship with the objective in his "On the Aesthetic Education of Man." As subjects made possible through the Symbolic, we necessarily have a poetic relationship with the real Real, in the sense of the ultimately unknown object. Second, in addition to the foundational alienation of our thrownness, which also enables self-consciousness, we are alienated in two other formal, universal ways through our entrance into language: (1) the symbolic codes we learn as individual and collective subjects exist outside of us, in its other users who have preceded and will follow us; therefore (2), "I," logically, am always a negotiated "they." As Fink notes succinctly, "the self is an other,"[79] confirming Freud's suspicion that the fundamental unconscious symptom is the assumption of having a self that is purely one's own. This is precisely why our entrance into consciousness via language is also an entrance into an unconsciousness whose primary symptom is the notion of an autonomous and self-determining self. This autonomy, or agency, is only true in the sense that the individual can choose, given circumstance and skill, from among the available language games made possible by unconscious (computer-like) codes. But this is to jump ahead to tertiary forms of productive repression.

What of secondary forms of productive repression, which diachronically succeed the primary form? If primary repression, as the first aesthetic break, inaugurates both self-consciousness and self-unconsciousness, both agency and the automaton, secondary forms of repression are transintentional and ubiquitous cultural codes that unconsciously structure the conditions of possibility for the Imaginary. Secondary forms of repression take on two general forms: transintentional symbolic forces, such as money and technology, and hegemonic aspects of one's thrownness, including gender, race, class, national identity, and so on. Transintentional forms of symbolic repression, such as technologies, have effects that are structurally automatic, while the hegemonic aspects, such as race or gender, which are also partly structural and automatic, include a dose of Imaginary elements. With these two types of secondary repression, we begin to see how a more intricate scaffolding of rhetorical unconsciousness is built upon the foundational system of differences provided by language. In secondary repression the trauma of subjectivity is productively repressed over time via the absorption of the automaton of the Symbolic in both senses. Properly repressing the forced-choice nature of these secondary forms, building upon primary repression,

is crucial in order to communicate effectively in one's given and negotiated discursive regime.

The first type of secondary symbolic codes includes monetary relations and technology, which, like languages, construct material relations and subjectivity in fully unconscious ways. It is a secondary form of productive repression at the Symbolic level because it is transindividual and structural, not in the same way as language, which creates primary self-alienation, but in ways that lead to artificial personhood (i.e., the subject as automaton). This would include the various ways in which people are turned into things and things into people (i.e., reification) underneath their conscious intentionality, where individuals are variously free to pursue self-actualization by choosing specific productively repressive discourses for the capacities they generate (i.e., the tertiary level of productive repression).

Thus we finally arrive at the tertiary level of productive repression, where we also come to fields of the unspeakable, which, while enabled by the unspoken aspects of symbolic codes, are productively repressive at a more individual and specific level. It is at the tertiary level of productive repression where we manage our relationship with the unsayable and the unspoken, and it is also where we negotiate with the Other. While fields of the unspoken are transindividual in their effects, impacting entire discursive communities, fields of the unspeakable, which are largely related to organizational, small group, interpersonal, and intrapersonal communications, are built upon the unspoken, or primary and secondary forms of productive repression. Here we find various forms of collective and individual subjectivity, based on imagined senses of self and other. These imagined sensibilities are in constant circulation, are constantly subject to material and symbolic shifts, and always require certain compromises: there is always an artful balance between knowing what should and should not be said, no matter how tacit, which requires an appreciation for the benefits derived from protecting fields of the unspeakable.

Fields of the unspeakable are composed of constellations of tertiary productive repression, where our intentional lives function. Even given the impossibility of the Symbolic relation with actuality after primary repression, as the aesthetic is always alienated from the truth of nature or history, we nevertheless have different types of agency at the level of tertiary repression: the agency of mere self-consciousness, meta-self-consciousness, and critical meta-self-consciousness. Which codes and capacities within the (repressed) forced choices of the discursive economy will we invest in, perhaps realizing we will not, cannot, and sometimes may not know other investments? The plumber walks past the chemist, the boss walks by the janitor, each somehow finding their place in the largely unconscious order of subjectivity. Nevertheless within any of these games there are

incessant quasi-agentic moves to be made, constrained by the invisible boundaries of the unsayable and the unspoken, resulting in different political symptoms.

Diachronically speaking, therefore, our rhetorical unconsciousness develops in three phases. We experience primary productive repression when we enter language, secondary productive repression when we enter culture, and tertiary productive repression when we make our quasi-agentic moves within culture. The ultimately irremediable gaps of subjectivity, around which rhetorical unconsciousness forms, are now threefold: between imaginary characterizations themselves, between those imaginative characterizations and symbolic reality, and between those imaginative characterizations and what is actually going on substantively in nature and history.[80] Žižek provides a nice example of the clash among Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary realities in his analysis of Charlie Chaplin's masterpiece *City Lights*. In that film Chaplin, as the Tramp, is in love with a blind flower girl, who is blind only because of her poverty. All the blind girl knows is that one day a kind man, coming out of what sounded like a very nice car, with a gloved hand, gave her the money for her operation. Years later, having regained her sight, she waits for her Prince Charming to return. The fact of the (fictional) matter is that the Tramp, having stolen money for her operation, comically was chased by the police during a traffic jam. This caused him to go in and out of the backseats of cars that were shoulder to shoulder in traffic, finally emerging from the last car just in time to give the blind girl the money before his capture. Wearing his old gloves, he had simply slammed the door of an expensive car, handed her the money, then was arrested out of range of the girl. At the end of the movie, the blind girl, who now can see, realizes that her Prince Charming is the Tramp, imprisoned for years for his act. The fantasy meets the subjectively actual. What will happen?

While our relation to the symbolic/unspoken is automatic, as were the reasonable inferences of the blind girl within the secondary codes in which she was enmeshed, coming from a pregiven set of available roles and concepts, the symbolic simultaneously provides choices at the level of the Imaginary. Within the available structuring codes, individuals can choose, obviously to varying degrees, the productive forms of repression they will assume or are allowed to assume in order to take on or undergo roles within games.[81] Even though the choices here are also forced to a large degree and driven by deeply unconscious unsayable and unspoken forces, at least at this level there is the potential for agency and realization, as when the formerly blind girl "sees," literally, how actuality differs from fantasy. We hope, of course, she will be happy with the truth, since the Tramp paid a great price for her welfare, and we get the sense, through her eyes, that she realizes as much. Still, and I think properly so, we cannot know for sure, given that the film ends without resolution.

Just as the Symbolic itself is productively alienating but unconsciously so, the more specific disciplinary forms of tertiary repression that individuals assume through various roles, both imposed and chosen, are productive in more specific and diverse ways. The Symbolic provides the building blocks for activities, and the Imaginary is built from those blocks, producing a dizzying array of symptoms. While individuals are given their space by the Symbolic, how they use the space is a matter of relative freedom. As individuals join the world, limited or enabled as they are by their given or managed subject position, they choose, to the best of their abilities, their friends, neighbors, professions, political groups, or any number of relationships involving codes, quickly learning what is and is not rewardable behavior, what is proper and improper to say.

In summarizing our review of productive repression, or the diachronic aspects of rhetorical unconsciousness, we should remember that each of us is incessantly at an intersection of these unconscious fields (i.e., the unspoken, the unsayable, and the unspeakable), each with our own forms of productive repression (i.e., primary, secondary, and tertiary).

We are now close to a full picture of rhetorical unconsciousness in outline. Identity, via language, as structural linguists inform us, is a function of difference, making all identities, deductively, relative to their position within an ever-shifting system of differences. However, this paradoxically means that individual subjects, as with individual elements in a code, are somehow empty, for no matter how real the individual is, in the realm of the Symbolic they are a function of difference. All repression, though, is productive (e.g., the acquisition of a symbolic code simultaneously creates consciousness and unconsciousness; the choice of a profession requires conceptual discipline in exchange for a capacity within the symbolic order), but this does not mean that all productions, repressions, and their symptoms are equal, and to understand this we must move through the third aesthetic break to engage in political psychoanalysis.

The Third Aesthetic Break and Political Psychoanalysis

As I have stressed throughout, the inevitableness of the unconsciousness of primary repression, and the transintentional and material effects of symbolic codes, does not mean that all forms of the political are equally repressed or that all forms of subjectivity are somehow pathological. All languages and cultures naturally repress formally, but the imaginative-political content built upon that formal repression is not equally phantasmic. In secondary and tertiary forms of productive repression, we can map negative discursive fields, which are always changing shape for everyone in their different subject positions, and the repressed returns in the form of symptoms, some healthy and some not. As we shall see, one way we can make such distinctions between more or less repressed subjectivities, more or less healthy symptoms, is by focusing on the normally

hidden shadow side of what passes for locally imposed common sense, which manifests itself in the different material-cultural symptoms resulting from that imposition.[82] It is time, therefore, to briefly review the productively repressive aspects of the rhetorical unconscious and the agentic possibilities of the third aesthetic break and political psychoanalysis.

As intentional and self-conscious humans, given all that has been said, we should admit to at least five universal forms, or materially consequential aspects, of persuasion that transcend intentionality, working to compose and limit our rhetorical self-consciousness. First, metaphysically speaking, we assume human form through a natural logic we cannot fully comprehend, and so there is a universal unconscious dimension to our very emergence (and disappearance) as individual beings. Second, and more concretely related to our everyday lives, we are also, broadly as a species, unaware of the ways in which our entrance into language entails self-consciousness *and* unconsciousness. Third, as a direct consequence of our entrance into language, we secondarily find ourselves thrown into historically situated cultures that are transintentional, confronted with taboos, and provided with a limited range of roles with their unique capacities and constraints, yet most individuals remain largely unconscious of this fact, no doubt as a matter of practical survival. Fourth, once we are firmly established within our languages and cultures, there are other transintentional forces at work with unconscious subjective consequences, such as money and technology. Fifth, we build upon the four prior forms to establish our limited agency among fields of the unspeakable.

To recognize and enumerate these negative persuasive forces in no way disparages or minimizes the constitutive importance of the practical, truth-producing, justice-imagining, and often beautiful economies of our intentional and conscious use of language. Everything human is a function of what is being productively repressed and why. Our merely self-conscious use of rhetoric, which I equate with the intentional use of language within our given hegemonic Symbolic and Imaginary matrixes, without knowledge of the arts of rhetoric, sometimes serves us quite well, providing human beings with a unique form of freedom otherwise unknown in the known universe. Recognition of rhetorical unconsciousness in no way minimizes the very real power of intentional speech based upon subjects acting as they must—for all intents and purposes—within their common sense worlds.

Political psychoanalysis as well has its own intentional ethic, or a return to what is persuasive in the world of common sense, but only after moving through the third aesthetic break. It is not, therefore, a teleological, content-specific ethic of intentional political intervention, as if the goal was to achieve some hoped-for utopian state; rather it is a never-ending intentional procedure based on the inevitable fact that individual and collective identities are productively repressed

and repressive, and it is designed as a critical praxis to reveal endlessly the repressed and its consequences as a matter of sacred principle.

Without the deployment of intentional speech across the ages, there would be neither money nor technology, neither roles to achieve nor ones to transgress, and no politically consequential conceptions of justice, goodness, virtue, beauty, and truth. The political, however, from the perspective of rhetorical unconsciousness, is also the result of the ultimate impossibility of any utopian conceptions, given the inevitable and formal unconscious aspects of primary and secondary repression.[83] Put another way, there is an irremediable yet productive tension between the universal and particular. As previously discussed, any government at any given moment in time must claim to represent the universal, or all of the people, but this is structurally impossible. Even oppositional groups cannot possibly represent the universal. Within the world of hegemonic discursive regimes and their counterhegemonic opposition, in a contest that never ends, it is always the particular *impossibly* claiming to be the universal, even as fantasies of the universal can only be expressed particularly, in certain contexts, for certain purposes. The same holds true for all idealism, since, in light of the ideal, the real almost always disappoints. There will always be a supplement, a remainder, a symptom; what does the symptom tell us, and what should we intentionally do in light of what we are told by that symptom?

There are sometimes terrible symptoms as a result of our being subjects as well as objects, but there are also possibilities for transcendence, truth, justice, and even love. Money and technology often complement and improve upon our experience of reality. Medical discoveries, such as opiates, aspirin, and penicillin, have dramatically reduced human suffering and extended life. Architecture, engineering, and other conceptual fields produce wondrous things by mixing the material world with ideas. We do quite well in our self-conscious and intentional use of language, and common sense tells us this is so every day. All of this is true, and so much is obvious: we are, as human beings, our languages and their products, and our languages and their products often serve us exceptionally well.

Nevertheless it is also obvious and true that humans incessantly engage in horrific acts of physical and mental violence. Each day there are reports of war, mass murder, and mayhem. These forms of violence, as the twentieth century showed in all its brutal clarity, can now occur in previously unimaginable ways on a global scale. They are, we might say, clearly *pathologies,* where the unconscious forces we have explored bend thought and behavior in ways that protect something powerful, harmful, yet largely invisible. And we are not speaking about intentional deceit and malice, which is common enough and easy enough to comprehend; instead we are talking about the relationships among human

violence, human suffering, and certain symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness, which are also common enough but far more difficult to comprehend.

As we know, we can only begin to comprehend rhetorical unconsciousness when we achieve a certain level of self-alienation, somehow beyond the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable. In the constellation of functioning discourses made possible by the hegemonic Symbolic/Imaginary matrix, or the ruling order of what passes for common sense and lawfulness, we now realize there are things unknown, unconscious symbolic codes, and the use of codes within the unknown that provide us with a meaningful sense of self. When speaking of rhetorical consciousness and unconsciousness, then, we are speaking of different aspects of *languaged* consciousness, different forms of alienated knowledge. We have the merely self-conscious, who primarily see things from their perspective. We then have the artful, intentional rhetors within the realm of common sense, and they enjoy a type of self-reflexive knowledge (i.e., knowing the value of stepping back from one's position within the Symbolic/Imaginary in ways that others do not and using that knowledge to intervene artfully). They are meta-self-conscious. Still we do not yet have the conceptual tools for political psychoanalysis. For that we must move through the third aesthetic break.

Critical meta-self-consciousness, which requires the third aesthetic break, is the ability to identify negative fields of discourse, identify their symptoms, and then intervene, when possible, for the sake of realization. Whereas the intentional rhetorical traditions focus on locating all of the available means of persuasion offered by a common sense situation, studies of rhetorical unconsciousness focus on locating the repressed gaps between and among the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary or between and among the materiality outside of the thinkable, the symbolic structures that unconsciously enable the thinkable, and the fantasies within the thinkable. Instead of focusing on what is said, as almost all rhetorical critics understandably do, those seeking to identify the contours of rhetorical unconsciousness focus on what is not, or cannot be, said or sometimes even imagined. Those contours emerge most clearly during confrontations with unexpected difference, such as when, in the movie *The Truman Show,* a movie light falls from an otherwise invisible ceiling into the middle of a show that revolves around the central character, who does not know it is a show. As he is the black hole around which the entire set revolves, the set is normal life itself, until the fortunate fall. Or after a Coke bottle falls from a plane into an isolated tribal village in the film *The Gods Must Be Crazy,* we see how community relations are completely reconstructed as a result of this empty signifier, this other fortunate fall. Since members of the tribe had never seen glass before, let alone formed glass with writing on it, let alone a plane, the object is magical. In such cases the entire structure of the political is transformed as a result of the sudden

appearance of the real Real, which in these cases were products of the imaginary Real, which intruded upon the hegemonic discursive regime. It is this revelation of a gap, triggered by intrusions and transgressions, where the contours of rhetorical unconsciousness are best revealed.[84]

This leads directly to the notion of political psychoanalysis, or how one works to explore these intrusions and transgressions that reveal the rhetorical unconscious. Fields of the unsayable are revealed when some actuality emerges that existing symbolic codes are incapable of managing, thus triggering a proliferation of discourse around the gap revealed between what is happening now and present conceptual means. Fields of the unspoken are also only revealed when transgressed, since they unconsciously structure the conditions of possibility for agency. Fields of the unspeakable are revealed through intentional and unintentional forms of subjective transgressions, for these intrusions, paralleling the intrusions of the Real into the Symbolic, reveal the limits of the speakable and doable.

Exemplifying political psychoanalysis, we have the common situation where something cannot be said or done without punishment (i.e., a component of a field of the unspeakable), and these things that cannot be said or done take on many different forms for a wide range of purposes, intentional or not. For example, a comedienne or journalist is arrested for certain public statements considered a threat to the state. Analyses of rhetorical unconsciousness, then, focus on what one is *not* capable of saying, what *cannot* be said, rather than what can be said, as well as what *must* be said, paying special attention to the intrusions into, and transgressions of, the otherwise unrecognized limits of the negative discursive fields operative in the situation. That is, since hegemonic limits, when best functioning, tend to remain fully unquestioned, intrusions and transgressions help reveal those limits.[85] Once the limits are revealed, they are made available for critical meta-self-conscious reflection.

Since all discursive systems and their related negative fields are necessarily repressed, otherwise there would be no production, no capacity, no agency, analytical questions revolve around the different ways the repressed returns in symptomatic forms of individual and collective "aesthetic" behavior. What is the sort of productive *repression* that leads to violent and tragic political regimes, such as German National Socialism and Stalinism, whose members are willing to torture and kill largely innocent and unarmed people, as opposed to the sorts of *productive* repression that lead to more peaceful and happier political conditions? What sorts of productive repression obscure the limits of the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable, and what sorts encourage their interrogation? What sorts of symptoms are reflective, in other words, of widespread derealization, and what sorts of symptoms promote realization (i.e., a clearer alignment of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real)?

In this sense political psychoanalysis is, as a method, a reaction in retrospect to the productively repressed. Its goal, however, which is not reduced to reaction, is to identify the repressed, its symptoms, and the consequences of those symptoms, as a matter of ethical responsibility to realization. Given that many symptoms, and much of human suffering, cannot be addressed by reason, and given that cynical forms of persuasion feed upon particular symptomologies, analyses of rhetorical unconsciousness are only concerned with material cultural symptoms as signs pointing elsewhere.

Political psychoanalysts look at four phenomena: (1) the emergence of new realities, whether natural, historical or cultural, revealing the field of the presently unsayable, which transforms the Symbolic; (2) the Symbolic itself and its unspoken aspects, which have material force and create the conditions of possibility for the Imaginary; (3) fields of the unspeakable within Imaginary relations; and (4) the symptoms of these negative discursive fields in relation to realization and derealization. These four foci relate to four axioms of political psychoanalysis: (1) new materiality, emerging into consciousness from the unsayable, forces transformations in the symbolic codes and their consequent imaginaries; (2) language, assessments of value, roles, and technology all structure individual and collective subjectivity transintentionally and materially, remaining unconscious or at best subconscious; (3) various language games, disciplinary practices, professions, groups and so on have certain things that are proper to say and not to say; and (4) symptoms emerge in material culture as a return of the repressed, and they vary widely in their nature.

Such an approach to the political requires a third aesthetic break. First, as political psychoanalysts, we must fully appreciate how the acquisition of language logically results in a primary form of consciousness and unconsciousness, followed quickly by other rules that determine what can be said and done for reward or punishment. Second, we must not forget the principal rhetorical lesson: we must work to be beside ourselves, moving conceptually from mere self-consciousness to meta-self-consciousness. But, third, to become critically meta-self-conscious we must do something more: we must noncynically alienate ourselves from the automaton of the Symbolic and the Imaginary, within even meta-self-consciousness; that is, we must work to better understand how objects such as money and technology transintentionally structure subjectivity and how gender, race, nation, and so on are quasi-fictions. Fourth, because the quasi-fictional and transintentional status of subjectivity is productively repressed, we must look for symptoms. Fifth, we must attempt to assess how the symptoms are inverted reflections of negative discursive fields, providing examples that illustrate the entire process. Sixth, we must seek to determine whether the symptoms are pathological, revealing a dysfunctional discursive regime of derealization. Seventh, and finally, we must consider ways to intervene in the pathology in the service of realization.

CHAPTER 3

Artificial Personhood

We have now discussed how the Symbolic unconsciously structures subjectivity, and in this specific sense we are automatons. In addition to this, people playing roles automatically enjoy diminished responsibility, for they are compelled to play the role, as when an actor reads their lines, or a soldier obeys an order despite his or her conscience, or a lawyer helps a criminal go free. Because subjectivity has these automatic aspects, different forms of artificial personhood, at different times and locations, uniquely reflect rhetorical unconsciousness as productive repression.

We have also seen how we are all, in a sense, artificial persons, or puppets, so long as we are merely self-conscious. Within this merely self-conscious world, no doubt some people are less artificial than others: they are smarter and ask more questions, are more empathetic, are better listeners, and so on, while others are so locked in their unquestionable beliefs that they are willing, if not happy, to do violence on behalf of those beliefs. The former type of person, we might say, would naturally be the more meta-self-conscious, while the latter would naturally be the more merely self-conscious, meaning the most unconscious and likely the more pathological.

Within the Imaginary, functioning as it does through the Symbolic to translate the Real, artificial personhood not only manifests itself through dolls, puppets, marionettes, and robots, but also in sycophants, compliant workers, films and fictions, avatars, dreams, those afflicted by somnambulism or under hypnosis, actors, commodities, corporations, and even the state itself. To show this to be true, this chapter and the next provide extended examples of rhetorical unconsciousness and its material/cultural symptoms through the historical exploration of artificial personhood, primarily at the Symbolic level. The studies focus on the ways in which transformations in technology and money relations impacted symptoms of artificial personhood in the European transition from feudalism to capitalism. Such transformations are built upon the prior unconscious foundation of a productively alienating language and a sense of thrownness that is simultaneously empowering and repressed, but we shall mainly overlook

primary and tertiary repression to stay focused on secondary symbolic forces and their unconscious persuasive impact on material culture.

We shall simultaneously review, through these extended examples of rhetorical unconsciousness at work in material culture, different forms of alienation, or different degrees of realization and derealization. As Bruce Fink notes, "Alienation represents the instituting of the symbolic order . . . and the subject's assignation of a place therein."[1] True enough, so we will begin from these variously assigned places, reviewing the productive repressions of a fading feudalism and an advancing capitalism, as well as the impact of that transformation on aesthetic/political symptoms. We are, then, initially speaking of the secondary symbolic codes through which the subject is assigned a place, but this is not to deny a limited form of agency from that place. The assigned place, however, is nevertheless assigned transintentionally and hence unconsciously; therefore the subject, no matter their level of agency, is irremediably split: "The subject is split between ego . . . and unconscious, between an ineluctably false sense of self and the automatic functioning of language (the signifying chain) in the unconscious. . . . The *subject is nothing but this very split*."[2] I, however, am working to show that the subject is potentially and actually something far more, but it nevertheless remains imperative to stress at the outset this automatic functioning of the Symbolic within all subjectivity and the central importance of artificial personhood.

The Subject as Automaton in Late Renaissance France: The Human Machine and the Dolls of Court

In many ways, we, as self-conscious subjects, are automata. The automatic aspect of subjectivity is related to our entering the Symbolic, which, as we have seen, is a set of linguistic and macrocultural codes into which we are thrown at birth, and then our development as subjects is built upon a series of productively repressive forced choices. It is in this specific sense that language speaks us, and we become artificial persons, or puppets, mouthing the words of the Other. As structural linguistics teaches us, every isolated element in a language, or in any symbolic system, is somehow empty unless placed in a relational context, and the same is true for each of us as alienated, self-conscious beings. In this sense we are empty persons desiring fullness yet only finding possible fulfillment in relation to an Other we already uncannily mirror.

We are partly artificial persons when we play any role, especially a real-life role where our duty requires the suspension of our judgment or the repression of our speech and affect. "Moral predicates," according to Elizabeth Wolgast, "belong to individual people, not to roles or abstractions," and "features of artificial persons, both single representatives and the state as a whole, block the attribution

of moral responsibility."[3] The challenge is to shake ourselves out of the slumber of our automatism, in all its forms, to provide the conditions of possibility for reasonably dealing with that automatism.

Even our day-to-day lives contain any number of reassuring automatisms. As Peter Sloterdijk notes in *You Must Change Your Life,* "99.9 per cent of our existence comprises repetitions, mostly of a strictly mechanical nature."[4] Echoing a sentiment one might find coming from Nietzsche, Sloterdijk concludes that a "first enlightenment came about when the spiritual teachers showed that humans are not so much possessed by demons as controlled by automatisms. They are not assailed by evil spirits, but by routines and inertias that force them to ground and deform them. What impairs their reason are not chance errors and occasional errors of perception—it is the eternal recurrence of the clichés that render true thought and free perception impossible."[5] Calling for "de-automatization," or a new ability for individuals to kill "the marionette inside them" or an undergoing of the third aesthetic break, Sloterdijk seeks ways to help us gain perspective on codes and roles that make us quasi-robotic.[6] Yet there is much in rhetorical unconsciousness that works against such efforts. Eventually we will return to this challenge: how can political psychoanalysis promote realization?

Before providing possible answers to the problem of automatism, for the sake of illustration, since we could focus on any number of historical eras and locations when analyzing rhetorical unconsciousness, we will focus primarily on Renaissance Paris and London, late feudal Germany, and early capitalist Paris, though our theater more broadly will be Western Europe and the specific symptoms of artificial personhood that then prevailed. While the choice could have been otherwise, I am going to focus not on fields of the unspeakable but instead on the force of the symbolic Real and the unconscious influence of fields of the unspoken on material culture. Political psychoanalysts could just as easily look at productively repressed speech at the Imaginary level, focusing instead on the real Imaginary, or what cannot be said without punishment, as the unspeakable works to protect the emptiness of organizing absences. Why are specific issues off limits? What organizing absences might they reveal? What are the repressively productive function of those unspeakable issues? Here, though, instead of focusing on productively repressed speech at the Imaginary level, we are more interested in unconscious symbolic forces such as transintentional monetary logics, the distributions of technologies, and transformations in the larger political economy.

At the secondary level of productive repression, we also encounter the effects of reification, where "immediacy and mediation are themselves aspects of a dialectical process."[7] We shall view some of the symptomatic consequences of that process as capitalism secured its position in Western Europe, witnessing

a dialectical process between the artificial and the actual person, enmeshed as actual persons are in symbolic mediation. It is a struggle between a thing becoming a person and a person becoming a thing, which is also the site of the uncanny.[8] Reification, for example, is a common theme of film, which itself constitutes an example of artificial personhood (i.e., the image of real persons projected onto a wall, along with the mechanical recording of real voices). We have encountered the uncomfortable humor of this queer human predicament of being simultaneously a real and artificial person again and again across the years in film: for example, in *Metropolis* (1927), *Modern Times* (1936), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), *Blade Runner* (1982), *The Truman Show* (1998), and *Ex Machina* (2015). Of course film is only one of a wide array of forms of artificial personhood, with each historical era and location having its own unique instantiation of those forms. There were, for example, moving statues in ancient Egypt, in the grottoes of Renaissance royalty, and then at Disneyland. So while capitalism creates its own forms of artificial personhood, such as the limited liability corporation and the wage laborer, the phenomenon of artificial personhood tout court can obviously not be associated solely with capitalist alienation. In fact there is no question that theories of artificial personhood predate capitalism, for it is evident theoretically in early Christian debates over the actual body versus the social role played by that body.

Let us begin our investigations in late Renaissance France. Our two opening main characters in this focused historical study are Julien Offray de La Mettrie and René Descartes. As popular thinkers, they themselves constitute material-cultural symptoms of the productively repressive symbolic forces of their time, for they are aesthetic proofs of the return of the repressed in an inverted form. In an age still dominated by Christian belief in the immortality of the soul, La Mettrie and Descartes scandalously thought of the human animal as an automaton, or a living machine, illustrating how a given age, limited to its concepts, economies, and technologies, produces its own theories and practices of artificial personhood.

La Mettrie and Descartes asserted most emphatically, with little by way of reservations, that humans are machines. In his written fragment "Treatise of Man," written in 1633 but prudently published posthumously in 1666, Descartes did his best to balance what he called the "terrestrial machine" of the human body with the "ghost in the machine" that is the soul (located, apparently, in the pineal gland).[9] La Mettrie's *Man a Machine* was published anonymously in 1747, carrying "to its radical conclusion a scientific revolution begun over a hundred years before."[10] Sharing the fate of Descartes' "Treatise of Man," La Mettrie had personally witnessed his previous book, *The Natural History of the Soul,* being burned by the public hangman, and then he was left to imagine the burning of *Man a Machine* as he sat in exile in Holland.[11] Of course, to say man was a mere

machine was unspeakable, according to church doctrine, and both the books and their burnings were different symptoms of that productive repression.

Descartes, being prudent, had been careful to argue explicitly that human souls are different from matter and that we survive the death of the body. La Mettrie, though, was openly atheistic and thoroughly materialist: "The human body is a self-winding machine, a living representation of perpetual motion," and without "food the soul languishes, goes into a frenzy, and, exhausted, dies."[12] Insisting that the soul was actually the mind, he went so far as to claim that our thought depends entirely "upon how our machine is wound up."[13] La Mettrie, according to Kara Reilly, "created a materialist argument that the human body not only functioned like an automaton, but that the soul could not exist, because the mind was intrinsically inseparable from the body."[14] For Descartes the body was a clock whose spirit was akin to the invisible forces that make a pendulum swing, while for La Mettrie the human was an animal pure and simple, a mere machine, not unlike a clock, that simply wound down, stopped, and fell apart.

The case has been made that the hegemonic rationalism of this period in human history, at least among philosophers and scientists, made possible by the rediscovery of ancient mechanics and the subsequent rise of machinery, constituted a "radical shift [that] was largely influenced by the religious wars of the Reformation and a sense of permanent crisis in European institutions during the early modern period, . . . offer[ing] stability in time of crisis."[15] There is, however, an automatic aspect to the rational as well, which is quite unlike the realm of the reasonable, where the automaton is placed in perspective, if not in a critical meta-perspective. This should give us pause about the rampant rationalizations that take place within neoliberal economic regimes, where individuals are reduced to the status of a commodity with a monetary value and everyone pursues self-interested tasks without considering their unintended consequences. It should also make us wonder about how artificial personhood expressed itself as a symptom of the unspoken before capitalism.

An automaton is defined as "a machine that contains within itself the power of motion . . . a figure which simulates the action of a living being . . . [or] a human being acting mechanically in a monotonous routine."[16] There are strange similarities and subtle distinctions between acting mechanically and mechanical action, between that which actually thinks for itself and that which only appears to think for itself (e.g., the merely self-conscious), and these ever-shifting similarities and distinctions have produced symptoms of artificial personhood in material culture since time immemorial.

There were, in fact, highly sophisticated pneumatic and hydraulic devices in the ancient world. In ancient Egypt, for example, where statues purportedly had souls, there are many reports of "talking statues," with "whispering priests on the other end serving as mouthpieces for the gods."[17] In ancient Rome there is the

famous instance of the talking statue at the funeral of the murdered Julius Caesar. Mark Antony, at a fever pitch in his eulogy, taking up Caesar's bloody tunic with his sword, was accompanied by "an image of Caesar himself made of wax . . . , [which] was turned round and round by a mechanical device, showing the twenty-three wounds," which then dripped red from the effect of a heated rod inserted into the device, "driving the audience into a murderous frenzy."[18] Mechanical theaters, or theatrical automata, date back at least to Hero of Alexandria, who lived in the first century C.E., and his writings were among the first Greek works to be translated into Latin in the sixteenth century, given the practical utility of mechanics.[19]

While the arts of mechanization were not completely lost in the Middle Ages, they had a checkered history. In the thirteenth century, for example, there was the famous "fountain tree of Karakorum" that served alcohol on demand at the Throne Hall of the Mangu Khan, "which used biological automata with seeming responsive reaction."[20] While aspects of the fountain were triggered automatically, such as the silver trumpeter at the top, there was a man hidden inside the base of the tree providing the actual liquor. There is also the oft-repeated story, mythic as it is, of Thomas Aquinas destroying an artificial man made from brass by his teacher Albertus Magnus. According to legend Aquinas was greeted by a "noteworthy automaton that [Magnus] was said to have spent 30-odd years creating. The automaton 'dared to salute its master's formidable pupil . . . [who,] convinced that it had something to do with the devil,'" destroyed it.[21] Fact and fiction blend, whether through trickery or myth-making, in such stories, which often include such things as talking heads and other magical forces tied to alchemy. Much of this mythology was transcended over the course of the seventeenth century, as the mechanism slowly supplanted the lingering traces of magic in Europe.[22]

In "The Role of Automata in the History of Technology," Silvio A. Bedini concurs that the construction of automata, prior to the twentieth century, "had its greatest period of development following the rise of mechanism with the revival of Greek culture during the Renaissance."[23] In 1501 Giorgio Valla posthumously published fragments of ancient writings on pneumatics in Latin, including some of Hero's works, and this was followed by a number of similar publications over the course of the sixteenth century. Entrepreneurial individuals were eager, with the rediscovery of these mechanical thinkers from the ancient world, to make use of this recovered knowledge to create machines, from clocks and waterwheels to looms and weapons. More to the point, concerning our focus here, the "distribution of these scientific treatises," according to Bedini, resulted "in considerable preoccupation with hydraulics and pneumatics and their application to *biological* automata."[24]

Among the most impressive application of hydraulics applied to automatons over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the elaborate

gardens of the royal palaces of Renaissance Europe, as well as inventions in clock making and automatic toys, particularly for royalty. There was a parallel movement of equal importance, however, among those working in medicine, to create an artificial person.[25] This movement culminated in the mid-eighteenth century in the work of "the reigning genius of this mechanical world," Jacques de Vaucanson, who reached the ultimate technological limits of artificial biology in his day.[26] Let us take each of these two movements—the renaissance in mechanics and the attendant desire to create biological automata—in turn, focusing on two very different symptoms of secondary Symbolic repression.

Keep in mind that the automatic aspects of subjectivity are in the Symbolic, in the common sense symbolic systems into which we are thrown, where we double ourselves aesthetically, à la Schiller, by becoming self-conscious. To protect ourselves from the abyss of subjectivity, we find early comfort and reassurance in the mirror stage, where we recognize our selves as whole and obvious, even though that recognition is an inverted image, as are the material-cultural symptoms of negative discursive fields. What we are tracing, then, when tracing the history of artificial personhood in all its variations, are symptoms of this fundamental doubling of ourselves in the broader material culture.[27]

Descartes was fascinated by automata. As a young man, he would stroll by the grottoes of the royal gardens of Saint-Germain on the Seine, where he always found a magical and mythical scene: "Six spacious and eerily lit grottoes housed numerous mechanical statues cunningly constructed so as to enact mythological scenes with apparent spontaneity. Their limbs and even their faces were laced with hydraulic tubes, shaping their features and gestures. The visitor unwittingly activated these automata by stepping on springs concealed under floor tiles. At his approach a bathing Diana first modestly hid herself among the reeds, then a particularly testy Neptune, brandishing a trident, menaced the spectator from a sea-shell chariot, after which a monster rose up from the deep and spewed water in his face."[28] Descartes is also reported to have made automata, maintaining a lifelong fascination with mechanical toys. In his famous and highly influential *Discourse on Method,* he used the notion of the automaton as a metaphor for the human body, though shying away from direct comparisons between human beings and automata.[29] Nevertheless his moving of the soul to the pineal gland was the beginning of the end for hegemonic faith in the magical embodied-yet-eternal soul, slowly to be replaced by a mind-body dualism and an ever-increasing scientific focus on the "mechanics" of the body and the mind.

The idea of a mechanical human was certainly in the air during Descartes's lifetime and in the following century as well, mainly due to advances in micromechanics. In 1673 Athanasius Kircher produced "a head which moved the eyes, lips, and tongue, and by means of the sounds which it emitted, appeared to be alive."[30] A contest was held a century later by the Academy of Sciences in St.

Petersburg, Russia, to create a machine that could properly articulate speech, and several artists produced working models. Just decades earlier Pierre Jaquet-Droz created complete human automata, which still exist in working order, and displayed them in Paris, London, and elsewhere. Jaquet-Droz, even when limited by the technology of his time, created an automaton of a young boy sitting at a writing desk, capable of writing any message up to forty letters. Other of his automatons include a young artist that draws sketches and a girl who plays the clavichord.[31]

Reilly, in discussing a famous and still-surviving automaton of Marie Antoinette playing a similar instrument, provides a fascinating corollary argument about how the queen, and courtesans and courtiers in general, "worked best" when understanding the "politics of the face," realizing that "a carefully mechanized nature" is embodied both in automata and aristocrats.[32] Leopold Mozart, father of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and a composer himself, remarked that "the women at court looked like 'detestable Nuremberg wooden dolls.'"[33] It is perhaps no coincidence that the "first fine workshops of skilled clock and instrument makers" were in Nuremberg; that is, the micro-mechanics of the courtier reflected the advanced micro-mechanics of clock-making in Nuremberg.[34] So just as the women of the French court closest to political power became living dolls, scientific men were attempting to create human machines.

The religious community hardly knew what to do with these newfound secular interests in objects that moved automatically and in humans as machines. In Aristotle's metaphysics, not to mention Christian theology, the soul was conceived as separate from the body, and the principal quality of the soul and evidence of its separateness from matter was that it self-moved. Automatons problematically self-moved but had no soul; therefore they were somehow demonic, unnatural, and deceptive. Just as Saint Augustine chastised the Egyptian priesthood for creating the illusion of talking statues and supporting the fiction that the statues spoke and Aquinas legendarily smashed Magnus's automaton, those in Descartes's time with the most mechanical ingenuity were regularly accused of sorcery. Despite such controversies between the church and Renaissance science, "if the seventeenth century adopted Descartes's mechanical philosophy, then the eighteenth-century elite manifested it in the material world."[35] This manifestation took on a variety of sublimated forms, from talking heads to aristocratic dolls.

Another key actor in the history of artificial personhood, also caught up in the world-historical tension between a receding worldview based on magic and faith and an emerging one based on mechanization and rationality, is Vaucanson, who was "unquestionably the most important inventor in the history of automata, as well as one of the most important figures in the history of machine technology."[36] His biographers agree that at a very early age he was proficient at

producing automata. When he created "flying angels" after joining the Jesuit order of Minims of Lyon in 1727, he was ordered to destroy them, along with his workshop, after which he left.[37] It is likely at about this time that he met Claude-Nicolas Le Cat, the head surgeon of Rouen, who was actively involved in the construction of an artificial human, and it is certain there was a lifelong competition between the two men. In 1741, at the suggestion of Louis XV, Vaucanson and Le Cat competed "to construct an '*anatomie mouvante,*' an automaton that replicated all the vital organs of the human body," though the competition was never completed.[38]

We should not question the technical abilities possessed by Vaucanson. By 1735 he had begun his construction of a life-size figure of a flute player, which he exhibited in 1737.[39] His automata, according to Jessica Riskin, were "attempts to discern which aspects of living creatures could be reproduced in machinery, and to what degree, and what such reproductions might reveal about their natural subjects."[40] Vaucanson created a duck that could eat, digest, and defecate, and in so doing he "sought to highlight the scientific contributions of his works beyond their mere entertainment value," claiming that "the motions in his automata . . . replicated as closely as possible . . . the function of natural bodies."[41] While his inventions were also commercial ventures, participating in the transition from feudalism to capitalism, Vaucanson's automata made important contributions to mechanics because of their structural subtleties.

Vaucanson, therefore, spent his early life working on automatons, but he spent his later life on automation, and the shift is crucial, for it has everything to do with reification and the unconscious power of the Symbolic in history. The expansion of market relations, along with the rise of mechanics, transintentionally led to a dramatic acceleration of the pace at which things were turned into people and people into things, simultaneously reflecting as a symptom our uncanny relationship between our subjectivities and the Real via the automaton Symbolic. Having reached the limits of what was technologically possible in creating androids, and unable to meet the challenge presented by Louis XV, Vaucanson sold all his automata in 1743, as the income from publicly showing them became unnecessary after he was appointed as an inspector of France's silk factories in 1741. In his new position, he became "an examiner of new machine inventions for the Academie Royale des Sciences," developing "a large collection of machines of his own design."[42] In 1744, while traveling to Lyon in order to mechanize and modernize its silk industry, he was met "with fierce opposition by the [craft] workers, resulting in the single most serious strike of eighteenth-century France, which was violently suppressed."[43] Two years later, having barely escaped with his life, "he was admitted into the Academie Royale des Sciences on the strength of his [invention of the] automatic loom," which radically transformed the economic landscape for workers across France.[44] As Gaby Woods notes, "At

the turn of the eighteenth century to the nineteenth century, makers of automata turned away from constructing curiosities in order to design the machines that would replace human labor. From that point on, men were required to operate, repetitively, 'mechanically,' the objects that had usurped them."[45]

Reification, or that uncanny process of turning things into people and people into things, has taken place in different ways in different times and places, but there is little doubt that during the age of mechanization, which accompanied the late Renaissance and early Enlightenment periods and which also accompanied the early emergence of market relations in Europe, the process was accelerated. Larger systemic and transformative events in the Symbolic related to money and technology resulted in new symptoms in material culture.

Just as Vaucanson transitioned from attempts at making human machines to making machines that turned humans into robots, interest in the mechanistic world view began to wane, as a reaction to the "machine man" set in.[46] As summarized by Minsoo Kang, the automaton as organizing metaphor moved through several subtle phases during the rise and then triumph of bourgeois rationalism and the commodity self: from "the magical automaton of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the rational automaton of the mechanistic age, and the ridiculous and pitiful automaton of the late Enlightenment, a new image of the uncanny automaton emerged in the fevered imaginations of the Romantics."[47] All these subtle changes in aesthetic attitudes toward the automaton were accompanied by larger structural changes in the political and economic spheres, particularly the relative decline of the church and absolute monarchies and the relative rise of the state and market relations.

As a primary symptom of rhetorical unconsciousness, or the return of the repressed in a materialized form, automata have existed since time immemorial, from Egypt's talking statues to today's most advanced robotics. Each age, however, has had a different organizing set of metaphors for that uncanny realm between life and death, the animate and the inanimate, the self-willed and the merely apparently self-willed. In the specific age we are exploring more closely, late Renaissance France, I have focused on the rise of mechanization. Here "the idea of a mechanical natural world was a marked epistemic shift away from the Neoplatonic magical concept of Nature as alive and creative," which dominated the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, when what little there was of mechanization appeared to border on sorcery.[48] During the mechanical age, which dominated the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, it was thought that "machine-people lived in a machine-state in a machine-cosmos, [and] the automaton emerged as the most powerful and conspicuous intellectual emblem of the era."[49] A focus on the automaton, the attempt at creating artificial life, and then the emergence of automation were symptoms of the unconscious persuasive power of shifting configurations of technology and value relations.

This era in France, and Europe on the whole, occurring in the wake of the disastrous religious wars of the first three decades of the seventeenth century, arguably led to the existential need for a philosophy of stability and certainty, such as that provided by Descartes's rationalism, where the world was akin to a clock susceptible to perfection.[50] In the political realm proper, the main symptom of these changes was the materialized idea of the sovereign state with a will of its own emerging from the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, which legally instantiated the nation-state principle, with the state's being explicitly theorized as an artificial person.

Later, in the wake of the French Revolution, when notions of freedom from tradition prevailed, attitudes toward the automaton shifted, and instead of being a miracle of mechanics or feared for its proximity to the evils of magic, it became associated instead with the puppet or "people in polite society [being] nothing but automata going through the motions of their programmed activity."[51] À la Mozart in reaction to those aristocratic dolls and the mechanical nature of court, the automaton came to be associated principally with the stupid, the oppressed, conformists, tyrants, or any person or thing "which is moved by a force beyond it" and "with no free will of its own."[52]

These blurred lines between the self-moving and the merely apparently self-moving, between conformists and independent thinkers, between the living and the dead, will never go away, since we, as self-conscious creatures, live precisely within these lines. Given this reasonable if unspoken fear of ours that somehow our subjectivity is artificial, a tissue of tropological dreams within the abyss of the infinite, it is perhaps unsurprising that yet another myth grew up around Descartes's latter days and the role of an automaton within them.

It is a point of historical fact that Descartes fathered an illegitimate daughter named Francine, whom Julian Jaynes suggests may have been named after Tommaso and Alessandro Francini, who constructed the Saint-Germain automata.[53] It is also true that Francine died at the age of five in 1640, Descartes was later summoned to the court of Queen Christina in Sweden, and he thought the trip would kill him. A persistent myth, however, is that Descartes was caught on the ship to Sweden with an automaton of his lost daughter. "It was said that Descartes always travelled with this machine girl . . . and that it was quite impossible to distinguish the features of a real child from those of this automaton."[54] During the trip to Sweden, a storm purportedly ravaged the ship. Whether in fear for Descartes's life or fear that his "scientific" ways were dooming the ship, the captain came to his empty quarters to find the mechanical monstrosity and threw it overboard, at which time, supposedly, the storm miraculously abated.

The story presents the automaton not as the brilliant if sacrilegious invention that reveals the secrets of nature, showing how we are much like machines, but as the uncanny, as the lost place of the soul, which Descartes, La Mettrie, and

others transposed onto mind. As part of the general Protestant trend to squeeze the last remaining drops of magic from the world, the fable of Francine seems to summarize the anxieties of a worldview shifting from Neoplatonism—where the ideal is separate from and superior to the real—to the mechanistic, rational, and "enlightened" view that we are all somehow little more than machines, even if machines that can be fixed and perfected. Then comes the growing fear that our automaton-like features are something dreadful, perhaps prophesying the goose-stepping armies of the coming centuries.

In mid-seventeenth-century France, productive repression displayed itself through a wide range of symptoms via forms of artificial personhood. The dual aspirations to create mechanical life and to turn people into the appendages of machines were the primary modes through which negative discursive fields were sublimated. The court's fashion began to mirror that of dolls, and courtiers were conceived as perfect machines "managing their faces." At the same time, members of the aristocracy were entertained by ingenious toy automata, even as the scientific community, later embodied in individuals such as Vaucanson and Le Cat, separated themselves from the earlier alchemists and theosophists of the early Renaissance who raised fears among the faithful. These mechanical scientists, by publicly displaying their work both as commodity and medical invention, worked diligently at making moving statues and even artificial life. All of this, of course, is happening during the slow transition from feudalism to capitalism. By the 1840s in Paris, with the revolutionary triumph of the bourgeoisie, artificial personhood had completely transformed into another type of symptom altogether: the commodity self.[55]

In France, therefore, over the course of the late sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, the notion of the automaton was an embodied organizing metaphor for subjectivity, where the unconscious Symbolic aspects of changing economic and technological relations led to a clear set of symptoms, as the return of the repressed, in material culture. The artificial person was at first something to be feared as demonic, then entertaining, as were the mythic and playful waterworks in the gardens of aristocratic elites, but it simultaneously moved to serious medical and mechanical scientific applications. Those working on androids, while technologically limited in their early attempts to create them, succeeded alternatively in creating machines that directly influenced the lives of craft workers. There was the actual (real Real) mass displacement of workers through the application of new technologies (the imaginary Real) such as the silk loom, and yet these subjective shocks were largely the result of the transintentional and unconscious forces of shifting Symbolic arrangements (the symbolic Real).

Given the autocratic and largely Catholic history of France, we would not expect artificial personhood to be related to the republican state, since criticizing the "king as state," who ruled metonymically by a supposed divine right, was

unspeakable. Instead the "political state" was aestheticized by the elite at court and rationalized by the scientists. This is decidedly not the way artificial personhood manifested itself in England during approximately the same time period, where the negative discursive fields contained a different mix of structural elements: Protestantism overtaking Catholicism, stronger institutional and economic checks on the monarch, and more established market conditions.

Artificial Personhood in Late Renaissance England: Voids, Masques, Puppets, and the State

In any geographic location at any given time, artificial personhood, like all symptoms of repressed discursive fields, assumes different configurations, based in part on the transintentional economic and technological forces that help to create the conditions of possibility for tertiary forms of productive repression, where fields of the unspeakable are additionally at work. Or, put another way, different configurations of the Symbolic lead to different sorts of symptoms in the Real and the Imaginary, and the Imaginary in turn influences the Real. A symptom here does not necessarily designate an illness; instead it is an aspect of material culture reflecting constellations of productive repression at the Symbolic and Imaginary levels. We would expect, therefore, that rhetorical unconsciousness and manifestations of artificial personhood would have been different in England and France, even in the same historical era, and such in fact was the case.

This does not mean there was no overlap at all between symptoms in England and France, since the mechanical worldview impacted all of Western Europe and expanding market relations were certainly not limited to England, but to say instead that the dominant constellation of symptoms in both locations was unique nonetheless.

As we know, for example, capitalism came relatively late to France, when compared to England, as did bourgeois republican government. Artificial personhood in France between the late sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries arose in response to the productive repressions of Catholicism, feudalism, monarchy, and mechanization, whereas in England during the same time it arose in response to the productive repressions of an ever more powerful Protestantism, capitalism, parliamentarianism, and mechanization. On the economic front, France did not officially ban feudalism until the French Revolution, by an act of the National Constituent Assembly in 1789, while England abolished the practice in 1660 through the Tenure Abolition Act. On the political front, as opposed to absolute monarchy in France, English monarchs were compelled to accept restraints on their power as early as 1215, when the Magna Carta—or "the Great Charter of Liberties"—was signed. The so-called Glorious Revolution in England in 1688, overthrowing the last Roman Catholic king, James II, was in many ways a business venture, with the incoming King William, of the Dutch, agreeing to a

permanent parliament in exchange for whatever funds he might need in prosecuting war. As the Dutch were leaders in international banking and international trade at the time, the Protestant revolution was also a revolution in the political economy with profound structural effects. As a result of these key differences, the bourgeois class in England gained political representation more quickly, and the blending of international commerce with the aristocracy came almost a century ahead of France in such vehicles as the East India Company.[56] Given that market relations and limited monarchy came earlier to England than to France, one would expect that fields of the unspoken—and unspeakable—would be different and that symptoms of artificial personhood would take on different forms as well. So what, precisely, were those symptoms?

Less than twenty years after Descartes's *Treatise of Man* was published, in which he dared to compare humans to machines, Thomas Hobbes published his equally infamous *Leviathan,* in which the political state was conceived as an artificial person. In a book that, like La Mettrie's a century later, would be publicly burned, and accused as well of bringing plague to the city of London, Hobbes made a clear and easily understandable distinction between what he saw in everyday life as "natural" and "artificial" persons: "A Person, is he, whose words or actions are considered, either as his own, or as representing the words and actions of another man, or of any other thing to whom they are attributed, whether Truly or by Fiction. When they are considered as his own, then is he called a Natural Person: and when they are considered as representing the words and actions of another, then is he a Feigned or Artificial Person."[57] Taking this reasoning to its logical conclusions, in his introduction to *Leviathan,* Hobbes stresses that the "State . . . is but an Artificial Man," that "Sovereignty is an Artificial Soul," and the "laws, an Artificial Reason."[58] For Hobbes, then, we are artificial persons when our words are not our own. The more we speak or act with the voice or in the name of another, the more we become artificial.

Such a clean distinction—between natural and artificial personhood—is difficult to maintain, however, in the sense laid forth by Hobbes, in light of structural linguistics and post-structuralism, since even as "natural" persons we are shot through with the structural absences within the Symbolic, à la Fink and Chiesa, and our concrete subjectivities are driven unconsciously by structurally consequential Symbolic forces. We are *always* speaking through the voice of the Other, at least in the sense of primary repression; therefore our natural personhood is at least in part automatic and artificial. We could, though, update Hobbes thusly: we all have the artificial personhood of our thrownness, comprising for all intents and purposes Symbolic forces creating the conditions of possibility for agency, and yet *within* that productively repressive space one either speaks for oneself or allows others to speak through her or him. It is as if a puppet is to be either a consistent character or a conduit for any character whatsoever. Due

to our Symbolic unconsciousness, necessary to unleash the productive imaginative power (the imaginary Symbolic) of local common sense (the symbolic Imaginary), we are always, in this specific sense, artificial persons or automatons, speaking through the language of the Other. Within primary repression and the secondary forms of Symbolic repression built upon that, we make a politically consequential choice: either we speak for ourselves, saying what we actually know and believe, relatively speaking, and taking responsibility for our forced-choice actions, or we do and say what others tell us to do and say, relatively speaking, suppressing what we know and believe for some purpose or another.

In Hobbes, then, we see an important conceptual advance in theories of artificial personhood: using contemporary terminology, we could say that built upon the unconscious of the Symbolic, we still must make choices within the Imaginary, and there are basically two valences: the self-responsible and the self-irresponsible. The decisive problem, however, is recognized when one sees that the latter type, or the self-irresponsible artificiality of personhood, is structurally unavoidable whenever an individual plays a clearly defined social role or when any sort of collective decision-making occurs. If a committee negotiates to a collective decision, then it really is not one person's will but a collective will through which one speaks. Even sovereignty itself, where the law apparently stops in its final word, is patently artificial, if politically consequential as a fantasy.

The distinction between a real person and a person's public role was recognized at least as early as the 1200s, when Catholic theologians discussed the differences between the *corpus verum* (true body) and the *corpus mysticum* (mystical body).[59] The debate centered on the Trinitarian nature of God and how it was possible that Jesus could be in three forms: a physical body, embodied by a relic or object, and something eternal. Then, given the papacy's perceived need to control the secular state, the debate moved quickly to the political. In the "assertion of the 'Lord's Two Bodies'"—the physical and the spiritual—Kantorowicz recounts, "we seem to have found the precise precedent of the 'King's Two Bodies.'"[60] That is, the *corpus mysticum* of the church, as the "body" of Christ, was transferred to the king, and this at a time in history when the papacy and monarchies were most closely intertwined across Europe. The English, however, took things a step further, and it was a move closely related to Hobbes's notion of the artificial soul of sovereignty: not only was there a mortal, physical king and an immortal, ideal kingness, but there was also the mystical body of Parliament.[61] This important distinction makes late Renaissance England an especially interesting place to study symptoms of artificial personhood comparatively, since these parliamentary pressures were nonexistent at the time in France. Once again different rhetorical unconsciousness, different productive repression, different subjectivities, different symptoms, different politics.

In England at this time, ideal visions of the eternal and mystical body of the monarch were used by the populace to repress the actual monarch productively, while monarchs employed ideal visions of their subjects to productively repress them. As Edmund Morgan shows convincingly in *Inventing the People,* "as the fictional exaltation of the king [as ideal representative of God who can do no wrong against his loving people] could be a means of controlling him, so the fictional exaltation of the yeomen [as ideal and God-loving subjects who love their ruler as much as the ruler loves them] could be a means of controlling them."[62] By casting a "mystical person" onto a "natural person" or the ideal upon the actual, in sum, wonders in the political could be worked. Such casting, however, is primarily a function of the Imaginary and fields of the unspeakable, whereas here my focus must remain on larger, structural changes in the technical and economic environment that unconsciously supported the imaginaries to be so cast.

Symptoms of artificial personhood in England were not restricted by any means to the emergence of the sovereign state, which Hobbes defended philosophically through his specific notion of the artificial person—in this case the political state proper—as any subjective entity whose words and actions are in fact those of another. It is worth retaining our focus on this notion, however, given the contemporary theories of subjectivity we have explored. If an artificial person is one who speaks with the voice of another, then mere self-consciousness is fully artificial. This is a crucial point. Given primary repression and our thrownness, we are always already representing the words and actions of an other in a sense, and our agency is limited by the forced choices provided by the given discursive regime, but there are other senses in which we obviously either speak for ourselves or act as we allow others to demand. The ancient Roman republicans, as did the English Puritans who read them, made precisely such a distinction, which is one reason why they were all hostile to the stage. Are you speaking for yourself truly or feigning as another? Are you true or false? It was for this reason that supporters of the Commonwealth and parliamentary rule, having cut off the head of Charles I, also insisted on closing the commercial London theaters, where the artificial head of the people spoke.

This brings us to other important examples of artificial personhood in England, parallel with the events in France, where the repressed returned in unique forms of material culture: the new permanent public and commercial theaters, among the first to be built in Europe since the demise of ancient Rome, and the masques held at court, including those performed for the benefit of the ill-fated Charles I. The first theatrical form was an inverted mirror of the rhetorical unconscious of counterhegemonic subjective forces under the sway of emergent market forces, while the second theatrical form was an inverted mirror of the rhetorical unconscious of the still-reigning hegemonic subjective forces, clinging

to the last remnants of divine right and feudal magic. Each theatrical form is an illustrative expression of artificial personhood in Renaissance England and of rhetorical unconsciousness.

In the ancient Roman republican world, the relationship between republic and theater was strained at best, for clear distinctions were made between one's public performance as a citizen and one's acting as another on the stage, with the latter viewed as little more than prostitution. The same debate went on in England about the status of theater and theatrical representations, culminating in the closure of England's commercial theaters in 1642 for the duration of the Commonwealth. We might wonder, then, about the relationship between political authority and its theatrical symptoms, including the antitheatrical symptoms of the Puritans.[63] There clearly was some sort of relationship between the political and the theatrical. As Morgan notes, "the Long Parliament closed the English theatres . . . [but when] the king was restored in 1660, so was the theatre."[64]

Before market relations and a permanent Parliament were more firmly established in the late seventeenth century, the English theater thrived under the likes of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, who in turn variously flourished from the reigns of Queen Elizabeth to Charles I. Shakespeare and Jonson had a hand in both theatrical worlds, though Jonson was more fully engaged in the presentation of masques for the court. In both theatrical settings, despite their substantive differences, there were consistent elements. Just as the court masque was both the most extravagant form of entertainment for the royalty and a vision of how the monarchy conceived of itself, so also were the public stages places where the rabble could gather, at a price, to be sure, to observe representations of themselves and their ideals. Intriguingly, not only were the theatrical performances in both cases mises en abyme, or inverted reflections of negative discursive fields, both Shakespeare and Jonson are known to have intentionally used this device—the mise en abyme—with the highest degree of meta-self-conscious artistry; that is, both authors told stories within stories that reflected the larger story of the theatricality of life, where all the world is a stage.

Why, in a period of transformational crisis before, during, and after the disastrous religious wars of the early 1600s, when England was witness to "a simultaneous collapse of agriculture, trade, industry, and political authority,"[65] did these self-reflective theatrical genres emerge and develop? Why in England, in its early transition from feudalism to capitalism, do we see theatrical displays that feature mises en abyme, or a doubled reflection within the subjective?[66] Whatever our answer might be, or however that answer might relate to secular theology, must wait for a time. For now it is enough to recognize that there was a real struggle over the role of the theater in England, with two very different conceptions, both of which symptomatically reflected the unconscious Symbolic transition of England from quasi-republican monarchy to emergent capitalist empire.

For our present purposes, the period of greatest interest regarding theatricality in England—roughly the period extending from the late sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries—is difficult to trace briefly, given its rich relation to artificial personhood, but we can begin by placing this historical moment in context within the much larger history of Bartholomew Fair, the largest and most famous of the London fairs, which lasted from the early thirteenth century until officially ending in 1855.[67] If nothing else, changes in what constituted entertainment in the fair was a function of changing times, as well as a reflection of the larger subjective conditions across the centuries in England.

If the public commercial theaters in the earliest moments of English capitalism were the parliamentary house of the lower classes, then what can we make of Bartholomew Fair as a festive space apart from the normal? In the early 1200s, when the fair first emerged, it was directly associated with the Priory of St. Bartholomew, founded in London by a grant from Henry I to a monk who had formerly been his jester.[68] There is an interesting story to recover, to be sure, about the function of jesters and buffoons in English history and elsewhere, especially in relation to artificial personhood and rhetorical unconsciousness. Jesters, after all, were highly prized by monarchs, and they were specifically employed to speak the unspeakable, when all others, for the sake of propriety, could not. As we would expect with rhetorical unconsciousness, real life represses what can only be said symptomatically. There is, then, a sort of wisdom in the excellent jester who recognizes how best to play along the delicate borders of what must not be said. Francis Hugh Mares makes the distinction between the "domestic fool, often a half wit," and "the 'artificial' fool, who [is] well aware of true values as other men, and yet [chooses] to act as if he were not."[69] The artificial fool transgresses the hegemonic subjective order intentionally by acting stupid, thus becoming the one who speaks the unspeakable by merely joking or not knowing. It is a comic form of the unknown known, a relief valve for fields of the unspeakable, and a form of limit work.

Early entertainments at Bartholomew Fair were surprisingly learned and urbane and surprisingly rhetorical, and this during a time when fairs were closely associated with feudal markets or liminal locations of exchange. As related in Henry Morley's history of the fair, "In its earliest years, when closely associated with the Priory and its educational system, the youth on that occasion [would] dispute, some in the demonstrative way, and some logically. These produce their enthymemes, and those more perfect syllogisms. Some, the better to show their parts, are exercised in disputation, contending with one another, while others are put upon establishing some truth by way of illustration."[70] The students, after displaying their skills in intentional, meta-self-conscious rhetoric, would then "wrangle with one another in verse, contending about the principles of grammar . . . attacking their schoolmasters without naming names . . . with true Socratic

wit."[71] So while there were carnivalesque elements to these early entertainments (e.g., the permitted if properly oblique attacking of schoolmasters) and no doubt more troublesome things going on at the fair's fringes, the entertainments were still tied primarily to religion, rhetorical education, and rudimentary forms of exchange.

Less than a century later, however, the entertainment was quite different. In 1305 "the traders and pleasure seekers, the friars and the jesters, clothiers, tumblers, walkers upon stilts" stopped their merriment to enjoy the gruesome execution of the captured Scottish hero William Wallace, who was dutifully castrated and disemboweled before being quartered and beheaded. Then, according to Morley, "there was mirth again."[72] Playful, public rhetorical disputation had been replaced in less than a century by gruesome public executions and then jousting tournaments among knights, with the kings of England, France, and Scotland attending together in 1357, under the unspeakable and repressed shadow of Wallace. Such dramatic shifts in what constituted entertainment continued apace over the years, as structural changes in the larger Symbolic climate unconsciously recommended.

Bartholomew Fair, at the height of its presence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was, while increasingly grotesque and bawdy, also an important site for puppetry, which is yet another important symptom of artificial personhood. "Puppet theater was a pervasive presence in the streets and marketplaces of early modern England," according to Scott Cutler Shershow, and "itinerant puppeteers were also active in London at the yearly fair in Smithfield," where Bartholomew Fair was held.[73] While all societies have some form of dolls, puppets, and marionettes, the important questions for political psychoanalysts are what they say and why. Why must an object speak, and what voices come out of these voiceless objects?[74]

Max von Boehn, in his comprehensive survey of puppets and dolls, points out, for example, that "the first quarter of the eighteenth century [was] the most brilliant period for the marionettes in France," though a married couple was beheaded during the French Revolution "because their [marionette] was considered too aristocratic," having ridiculed the republican cause.[75] It should come as no surprise that a famous hand puppet created by Laurent Mourguet in Lyon in the late eighteenth century, in the wake of loom automation, was originally dressed as a silk worker.[76] Mourguet, a barber who worked to attract customers with puppets, initially performed shows featuring a character borrowed from the Italian commedia dell'arte that in England would later become Punch: a brutal sort of puppet with brutal ways of speaking and acting, often with extreme physical violence and the most biting of unspeakable statements. So successful was he at the enterprise that Mourguet became a professional puppeteer, drawing upon working-class themes of the workers displaced by automation.

On the one hand, one can see how puppets can work within the Imaginary and its fields of the unspeakable. It is no surprise that Mourguet's hand puppets would be popular in Lyon, since they spoke to the conditions of the repressed workers, and the workers identified with the puppet's dark humor, which articulated what for some uncanny reason could not be publicly said by real persons. With puppets an actual person's voice is veiled by a moving object that sometimes speaks the unspeakable, and yet those wishing to hear the unspeakable concentrate on the puppet, not the puppeteer.[77] Then again, who is speaking? The puppet speaks, as does the person behind the puppets, who is speaking the unspeakable through an object, but that person is pulled themselves by the strings of the Symbolic, along with its attendant fields of the unspoken.

On the other hand, why truthful and frank speech must be redirected to an object presents an enigma: what, after all, is the relationship between, say, negative discursive fields and the types of voices that emerge in our aesthetic human productions? Our challenge, therefore, is to consider how these puppets doubled the voice of the reigning Symbolic and Imaginary orders, symptomatically speaking the voices of the silenced (e.g., the workers displaced structurally in part by technology, the married French puppeteers dying for speaking the unspeakable). This is not to say that the invention and distribution of the silk loom singly caused Mourguet's puppets to say what they said, even if puppets are an aspect of material culture that reflects the repressed, but to say instead that the puppets' meaning what they meant was made possible by transintentional forces structuring the larger Symbolic order, which remained silent until spoken through a puppet: the return of the repressed in material culture.

It is impossible, of course, to provide anything here like a history of puppetry and theater in England, though both phenomena, if studied more closely, would even more nicely reflect negative discursive fields. What we can say, though, is that in puppetry and theater, we have objects that speak, the speech of another is expressed through a speaker, stories provide an inverted reflection of the subjects who watch them, and sometimes the unspeakable is spoken. Returning to the aspects of rhetorical unconsciousness outlined earlier, there is a dialectical tension between the dark matter of what is unknown (i.e., real Real) mixed with transintentional Symbolic forces (i.e., the symbolic Real) and the relatively conscious black holes of the unspeakable (i.e., the real Imaginary). Turning back to our silk workers, our displaced craftspeople, the unsayable and the unspoken would in part be the appearance of the silk loom, emerging from the imaginary Real, motivated in turn by the earlier resurrection of mechanics, the slow decline of feudalism, and the slow rise of market logics. Within the cultural common sense built upon those Symbolic and Real factors, it is interesting that the people "see themselves" and laugh at what the puppet or actor says comically, tragically, or uncannily. Only when they see themselves and the puppet-like aspects of

their situation expressed by a puppet or marionette, or through an actor on the stage, can they gain Imaginary access to the guiding hand or the strings attached. In this funhouse of mirrors, where London puppeteering is concerned, the puppets were to actors as the actors were to authors, who often wrote in deference to an imaginary monarch, in a confused matrix of limited agencies and displaced object voices.

Ben Jonson, throughout his theatrical career, had a "virtual obsession with the performing object," as "the literal conditions of puppetry . . . serve[d] as a metaphor for the larger cultural process . . . and the analogy between the theatrical and the social 'role.'"[78] Given Jonson's conception of subjectivity, "humanity is, as in Plato's parable from the *Laws,* a kind of puppet-like body mastered from within and from without, moved by its own inner 'motions' and yet also capable of being filled by the breath, spirit, or inspiration that descends from some transcendent, divine sphere."[79] There were highly sophisticated notions of artificial personhood in the air, whether identified by that term or not, in late Renaissance England.

Let us now turn to forms of theater, public/commercial versus court masque, as two very different symptoms of productive repression, with different political valences, in this period of England's history. We know that the public commercial theater thrived under Shakespeare and other dramatists of his time, under a weak republican monarchy, and we also know that the theater was later suppressed during the Commonwealth. Surprisingly enough, concerns about the theater were not raised so much by theologians, though they certainly had their concerns, as by middle-class merchants concerned about public health, idleness, and the "dissolvent" powers of commercialization. The public theaters were surrounded by brothels, involving some of the more unsavory elements of society in the commercial theatrical spectacles. On the commercial stage, there was no use of perspective, and acting took on the form of public oratory, with actors pleading their case to audiences. The actors performed right in front of the audience members, with many of the lower sort standing in the pit within arm's reach.

The public, commercial stage was in some ways a rehearsal ground for emergent bourgeois sensitivities, as crass and low as some of those sensitivities could be. For Jean-Christophe Agnew, "the seventeenth century [public] stage was . . . disposed to enact the representational crisis of authority occasioned by England's increasingly boundless market," where even "the soliloquy or the aside signaled . . . new conceptions of the autonomous individual."[80] The soliloquy remains, and was recognized at the time, as another method for being beside oneself. In his *Characteristics,* specifically in his "Advice to an Author," Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury, praises the soliloquy as "the ability to divide ourselves into two parties."[81] This, he says, we do productively in the service of realization: "we [have]

each of us a patient in ourself; [and we are] properly our own subjects of practice."[82] However, and as always with the subjective, there is the repressed flip side: where "the grand artifice of villainy and lewdness, as well as of superstition and bigotry, [is] to put us upon terms *of greater distance and formality with ourselves,* and [thus] evade our proving method of soliloquy."[83] Such a statement regarding the derealizing use of an act to distance ourselves from ourselves, as opposed to realization that occurs by confronting the false formalities of the automaton, resonates clearly with concerns over expanding fields of the unspeakable. Instead of gaining a greater distance from ourselves to critique ourselves, as we can in a soliloquy, we gain a greater distance through formalities to keep from having an honest conversation with ourselves. The greater this subjective prejudice, the deeper one's rhetorical unconsciousness.

If the public commercial theaters were the proving grounds for the lower and emergent middle classes, their lower House of Parliament, where an honest conversation was sought, then the masques at court were the Imaginary proving grounds for royalty. The court masques were spectacular theatrical displays that were not tragedies or comedies so much as idealized representations of how those associated with royalty, and especially the sovereign, wished to imagine themselves: as mythic gods bringing order out of the chaos of nature.[84] In the masque, as opposed to the commercial public theaters, the scenery was presented in perspective, but only the sovereign had the seat with perfect perspective. The entire production was presented so that the only perfect view was reserved for the reigning monarch. This, in turn, lent subjective power to space, since the closer one sat to the sovereign, the better one's perspective, in more ways than one. The masque was the "ceremonial form most typical of aristocratic and court entertainment," which was "based on allegorical representation . . . acting out an idealized version of the constituted hierarchy."[85]

Before discussing some of the symptomatic details of the masque, we should first consider aspects of the larger political economy in which this version of theater existed. What were the Real and Symbolic factors working unconsciously to shape the different imaginaries of the time, when it came to conceptualizing theater? Before 1577, we know, there "was no effective criticism of the [public] stage."[86] Only a plague in 1577, which killed almost one-fifth of London's population, led to regulations concerning theaters as locations where large numbers of people would congregate. Two permanent commercial playhouses called the Theater and the Curtain had been built, and after the plague criticisms against public theater began to mount. There were concerns among the more propertied classes about the licentiousness of the rough crowds, the threats to public health and decency, the idleness of the spectators, and the particularly ugly fact that more people attended the theaters on Sunday than the churches, even though church attendance was enjoined by law. There were additional concerns that "a

play engaged a man too deeply, render[ing] him effete and effeminate" and that the theater attracted homosexuals: a claim strengthened by the fact that men played women's roles.[87] For the stern-minded Protestants, the theater also deprived England of the labor of actors and others living frivolously by the stage, where plays promoted hypocrisy and deceit and were a rival to religion.[88]

"Hostility to the theatre," of course, "is as old as the theatre itself," from Plato's banishing of theater from his ideal republic to "the rock flinging crowd" in 1783 that "stormed into the pit of a newly opened theatre in Philadelphia."[89] Conversely, in England as early as 1599, "the Earl of Southampton . . . was able to pass his time going to plays every day," and the "commercial exploitation of the stage [had already begun to have] a considerable impact upon the content of the drama."[90] Why was there an explosion of theater as Protestantism and its Puritan variety was gaining effective counterhegemonic status? How might this impact the production of masques? After all, while all this trouble was brewing in the public theaters, in ever-increasing numbers of performances out of perspective, and reflecting the tastes of the nature that must be ordered, its dialectical opposite was flourishing.

It is useful to spend a little extra time on the masque as a symptom of artificial personhood, particularly as expressed in the work of Jonson, for it is what we might call a pure symptom as an endless mise en abyme. If in France members of the aristocracy were dressed up like dolls, in London the members of court were dressed up like gods and fairies and otherwise participating in aspects of material culture that Patricia Fumerton has so precisely characterized as the consumption of the void.[91] In using a concept—the void—that is resonant with the notion of black holes and Lacan's lack, Fumerton provides a detailed history of the subtle transformation of three telling aspects of material culture at this time among English royalty: (1) an ultimately hopeless retreat into some sense of true privacy, which influenced not only architecture and the politics of space but also the more exclusive enjoyment of voids, or sweets; (2) how the "void" became integrated into Jacobian banquets and masques; and (3) how Jonson's late, unperformed masque, *Neptune's Triumph for the Return of Albion,* was a perfect mise en abyme aesthetically sublimating the larger structural transformations taking place in colonialism and trade.[92] In studying the masque and its associated practices as symptom, therefore, our emphasis should remain on the terms *consume* and *void,* since shifting practices of consumption made themselves manifest in everything from architecture and foodstuffs to theatrical performances and political revolution.

Fumerton's important book, *Cultural Aesthetics,* provides excellent examples of material culture as symptom. King James I, she observes, simply could not find sufficient privacy, and this not only influenced architecture but also involved productive repression through the development of rituals of influence related to

that ultimately impossible privacy. Fumerton explains how "a desire for privacy—for isolation from the public—drove medieval lords from the large hall to the more private great chamber above. And what happened? The great chamber often grew as large as the hall and even more ceremonial. So the lord withdrew into a room within the great chamber. But then the withdrawing room became a dining room as well, so he withdrew for his privacy further within, and within, and within. By the second half of the seventeenth century, private closets had become so public that lords and ladies were driven to add closets onto their closets, all in the search for privacy."[93] Fumerton discusses how, when meals were public in the large halls of medieval castles, sweets and confections made of spices—and sometimes even including rare gems—were served between courses, while the great communal table was being avoided. At some point in the impossible quest for some semblance of privacy without power, these voids—the name given the sweet treats—moved as well into more private and politically intensive areas.

Privacy, of course, was impossible for the monarch, as the black hole, since any Symbolic or Imaginary relation was fraught with terrible and real power, being located so close to its center. For the actual monarch in that role as the absent center around which all discourse bends in the real Imaginary, there was a structural problem impossible to avoid: being invited into those private areas was just as important to courtiers as sitting as close to the monarch as possible at the masques. The politics of space and one's relationship to the monarch's privacy was the ultimate form of power. "The number of gentlemen of the privy chamber and of the bed chamber (the latter practically a new department formed by the King) grew alarmingly under James."[94] One can imagine the uncanny aspects of the privilege of accompanying the king to the toilet, with the king using the toilet in front of a series of aristocratic attendants. Nevertheless this privacy in public, accompanied by the impossible desire for pure privacy, was a material-cultural symptom of its time. King James's quest for privacy, and the voids he took with him, always led to eager followers, even into those most private of closets, where sometimes the most special persons could see, perhaps, a tiny portrait of something secret inside a locket.[95]

Masques too, at the height of their popularity and influence, were consumed as a void, as they stood, in an inverted reflection, for those little sweet nothings shared in the impossible privacies of power. "Replacing the void but not incorporating its spirit, language, and practices, the masque rose, like cake dough, to become the last, sweetest dessert of royal entertainment. The masque was a void proclaiming the detachment of the King's 'private' self. But the very notion of 'proclaiming' privacy whispered a reversal in the sense of the self. James's 'inside' was being exposed 'outside.'"[96] Strangely enough, James "envisaged masques in his Banqueting House as in some sense private events," attended after withdrawing to some private chamber to consume voids then coming to his main void, the

masque.[97] Then, during the masque, what was finally discovered was a perfect perspective on an ever-receding interiority, an abyssal gaze into a distorted mirror, ultimately bringing self-destruction in its derealizing wake. Scott C. Shershow goes so far as to call the masques "theological theater," in which, as often in both Shakespeare and Jonson, we stand "at the apex of a dizzying abyssal structure of play within play within play."[98] Masques evolved from mirrors to mises en abyme. According to Fumerton, "Rather than represent a single cosmos, masques developed separate 'outward' and 'inward' worlds: the public antimasque (played by professional actors) and the private main masque (performed by a select company of lords and ladies). This segmentation was self-perpetuating: the main masques of such later court productions as Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue* (1618) and *Neptune's Triumph* often underwent further subdivision through the intrusion of a second antimasque (splintering into many more antimasques under Charles I)."[99] Just as architecture split up until there were closets inside closets with lockets inside of chests, so also in the masques there were plays within plays within plays within plays. Also, because only James had perfect perspective, the paradox was "that the King thus himself became a stage watched . . . [and] an 'inside outside.'"[100] The assembled audience was structurally compelled to wonder what the better and more perfect perspectives might be, in relation to the monarch, who alone had perfect perspective. And what did he see? He saw a mythic replica of the fantasy he had about himself. Inigo Jones designed scenes for many of these masques, ensuring their ethereal and mythic quality and ensuring as well that the focus went from wilderness to ever more complex and beautiful order and interiority, an illusion enhanced using perspectival scenery.[101]

This abyssal structure, not only of the monarch seeing images of images of himself in masques but in the commercial theater as well, where the site of subjectivity was problematized, is unique to this time in London. This ever-complex fragmentation, whether in architecture or the self, led eventually to the development of the pure mise en abyme in material culture, as with face-to-face mirrors. Let us pause, therefore, to consider how this structure is reflective of unconscious Symbolic orders, illustrated beautifully in the abyssal structure of Jonson's play *Bartholomew Fair,* where "Jonson literally appropriates puppet theater by directly importing it into his play."[102]

In *Bartholomew Fair,* which completely dislocates the site of agency and voice, not only is there a puppet theater reflecting the larger play and the larger world outside of the play, but there is also a character in the play, Lantern Leatherhead, who, as the showman, serves as an interpreter of the puppets. When a Puritan character, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, begins to argue with the puppets, the following mise en abyme is presented: an actor plays a puppet master interpreting puppets and a character in the play argues with the puppets, who themselves are

given voice by hidden people; furthermore, in the play one of the puppets at first represents a historical figure, but then he breaks character to speak as himself in defending the theater.[103] Keep in mind that the voice behind all of this is Jonson, whose voice is automatically enabled by the English in which he lives, and he claims to write in deference to the monarch. Ultimately "just as the king frames the whole play [in the masque], secure in his entwined literary and political authority, so the author pervades the mere performance from his position of inviolable externality: a sovereign voice whose presence transcends (and also requires) its own absence, a voice that reaffirms its own mastery in the apparent act of relinquishing it."[104]

Here we have all the makings of forms of material culture symptomatic of the shifting Symbolic and Real conditions in which these aesthetic forms functioned. We have the dark matter of the real Real and the symbolic Real in the rising transintentional power of Parliament via the rise of market power, largely related to emergent colonialism and the slave trade, and we have the black hole of relational political power centered in the person of the divine monarch in the real Imaginary. The royalty seeks to run from this terrible public pressure to be the state, the focal point of power relations, by retreating into ever-deeper privacy, but that privacy is impossible. Instead sovereigns are compelled by their position, as black holes, to display their private selves in public in a grand display of their position as a focal relation. By being the only ones enjoying perfect perspective, they are structurally bound to a system where some are necessarily closer to the center of power than others and thus enjoy a more complete perspective. When utterly alone, however, what is a king?

We have the field of the unsayable, located in the real Real, including the plagues that swept through London, which were blamed both on the public theaters and Hobbes. We have the field of the unspoken, including the slow structural transformation from feudalism to capitalism, which involved changing value relations. Mechanization and land laws, for example, dramatically changed labor relations. And then we have the field of the unspeakable, summed up nicely in the epilogue to Stephen Orgel's *The Illusion of Power:* "Viewed from the outside, the Banqueting House, the masque, could be seen to provide the monarchy chiefly with an impenetrable insulation against the attitudes of the governed. Year after year designer and poet recreated an ideal commonwealth, all its forces under rational control, its people uniquely happy and endlessly grateful . . . , [but] after a decade of ideals, a disenfranchised Parliament at last declared its authority by virtue of the realities of its power, and the absolute rule of the Stuart monarchy was revealed as a royal charade, a theatrical illusion."[105] As opposed to the silk workers in Lyon, who could not speak for themselves but could laugh instead at their voice coming from a puppet, one could not, in the end, locate the source of voice at all in the autocracies of James and Charles I.

The old, well-ordered world of the Middle Ages, where everyone knew their place, was disintegrating in the face of new market realities. People were quickly becoming commodities, and this process was accompanied by vertiginous realization in the public theaters and an equally vertiginous derealization on the part of the Crown. The aristocratic world was literally falling into pieces, and as it did so, as a symptom, its finest aesthetic artifact reduced all perspectives to one, which was a perspective that eventually consumed itself.

Indeed there was also something violent surrounding this enjoyment of the void, an expression of both frustration and ecstatic consumption. During the eating of voids, those privileged enough to be invited were welcome to "breake the Platters, Dishes, Glasses, Cuppes, and all other things, for this paste [was] very delicate and sauerous."[106] This violence reached unprecedented heights in the years leading up to the decapitation of Charles. By that time it had become common practice, at the end of the masque, which succeeded the antimasques, formally concluding with the "revels dance" with the audience, for attendees to charge the stage, tear down the perspective scenery, and strip "the masquers of their rich furnishings."[107] In a great destruction, and a magnified version of the destruction of dishware in the consumption of voids, it was a cannibalistic feast upon the lingering flesh of a dying era. And who was in this audience? It was an "audience [that] became threateningly public as rich merchants and common gentry infiltrated the aristocratic elite."[108] Those who rushed to rip apart the masque were a combination of declining aristocrats and increasingly rich citizens engaging in nothing less than a frenzy of consumption.

The masques were fully consumed, but not all consumers were equal. Many of the banqueters were bankers, who functioned most closely around the unconscious Symbolic of market relations. It was not long before some of the richer of the rising bourgeois citizens began building banqueting houses of their own, complete with their own voids.[109] Fumerton implies in her specific phrasing how all these twists and turns between masques, voids, and the declining aristocracy and rising bourgeois class unconsciously mirrored the changing structure of the English economy: "The hunger of banqueters for masques and spiced voids was strangely similar to the consuming hunger of the financial market for exotic spices. It was this partnership of aesthetic and financial 'appreciation' that made cannibalistic consumerism—expressed in tearing down a masque or annihilating a sweet banquet—the natural vent for artistic experience."[110] What was ultimately discovered beneath the masque was "the coin of middle class trade,"[111] which eventually led to the destruction of the ultimate void: the monarch. Even the execution of Charles was performed as a masque, complete with actors in costume, and his butchered body was completely consumed by a mob allowed to tear it limb from limb, even dabbing handkerchiefs in his blood, all of which was later dutifully sold on the market as souvenirs and personal ornaments.[112]

That headless, dismembered, and consumed political body, after wandering about as a Commonwealth for several years without a theater and then as a weak restored monarchy, eventually became the British Empire and the forerunner of advanced capitalism. As Fumerton keenly observes, "by 1620 the East India Company devised . . . a vast decentered network of exchange in which multiple routes of goods and plural orbits of money joined to create a sort of perpetual motion machine of deferred expenditure . . . or ceaseless circulation of never-quite-present worth."[113] Value in land was slowly being replaced by "moveable property," the property of virtuous character was slowly being replaced by the property of return on investment, and the Industrial Revolution was only a century away. It was now time for subjectivity to follow suit, engaging in its own circulation of never-quite-present worth.

This tarrying with the void of subjectivity was even reflected in the commercial theater. There, as in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair,* the people were taught "to confront the possibility that the self was a contingent, arbitrary, and instrumental affair, not a natural or supernatural calling. [In this sense,] Renaissance theater formally reproduced the same symbolic confusion that a boundless market had already introduced into the visual codes and exchange relations of a waning feudal order."[114]

Before moving on to the emergence of the commodity self as a symptom of the unspoken dimensions of rhetorical unconsciousness in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Europe under advancing capitalist conditions, where the rationality of market relations was increasingly trumping the reason of public deliberation, let us quickly turn, in concluding our first in-depth historical exploration of the material symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness, to theatricality in France almost two centuries after Shakespeare, for comparative purposes.

Before and after the French Revolution, changes in the public theaters in Paris, reviewed so carefully by Richard Sennett, occurred as the "theater of the city" lost many of its features, and "self-distance was on the way to being lost."[115] Sennett maintains that it was a form of productive alienation when people were compelled, prior to the Revolution, to play clearly recognized public roles.[116] With the rise of mass culture and the loss of these public roles, we begin to see a shift to notions of personality as a response to that loss. Prior to the Revolution, people were compelled to enact recognized roles in the city, where clothing laws and other visual rules allowed people to recognize who one was (i.e., in their *role*). After the Revolution the loss of the city as theater led to an increasing focus on privacy and personality: when everyone looks the same, one must look for subtler clues as to actual character.[117] Sennett similarly notes the parallel development of the rights of the individual and the actual loss of individuality created by market logics, as personality via public roles was replaced by the fear of impersonality (i.e., not really being someone).[118] That is, the drive to an impossible

personality, as with the drive to an impossible privacy, is an unconscious symptomatic reaction to mass society, mechanization, and the person as commodity. This shift from playing public roles to the search for individual authenticity began less than sixty years before Paris became a center of capitalism, with department stores, price tags, dandies, and flaneurs. By then artists had to sell their work to the market, thus triggering aesthetic responses from Bohemia to French Realism.[119]

Around the time of the French Revolution, Thomas Jefferson was U.S. ambassador to France, and in his travels across Europe he was disgusted by the poverty and filth endured by the working classes in the major cities. He then returned to America with his anti-Federalist concerns, now long forgotten, about the dangers of corporations.[120] Jefferson was highly conflicted over the necessity of manufacturing, seeing how industrialization in Europe had impoverished vast portions of the population and given that "merchants have no country. The mere spot they stand on does not constitute so strong an attachment as that from which they draw their gains."[121] Regardless of such concerns, the old feudal order, the monarchical leviathan of Hobbes, that great artificial person of the political state, was slowly being replaced by a new order of market relations in England and, somewhat later, France. In that transition the old order, where everyone knew their place, was replaced by a new order where the voice could not be found, and artificial personhood transformed into the commodity self.

CHAPTER 4

The Commodity Self

According to the principles of rhetorical unconsciousness related to primary and secondary repression, it is impossible to finally arrive at a fully true self, save for the actuality of our being in history, which is ultimately unsayable. Even critically meta-self-conscious individuals are still irremediably thrown, limited to whatever subjective negotiations are possible in their given discursive regime, and driven along as well by transintentional symbolic forces. These facts do not fully negate agency, however, since the second aesthetic break allows people to step outside of their mere self-consciousness to gain a truer and better perspective on the symbolic Imaginary. The third aesthetic break then provides even greater agency, even more productive self-alienation, by revealing that subjectivity is composed of a constellation of politically consequential productions that must be interrogated for what they inevitably repress. Even if we become conscious of our thrownness and reflexively aware of transintentional forces, our subjectivity is still thrown, like a ventriloquist's voice. Unconscious forces do not stop doing their work, and the repressed continues to return as a symptom.

Describing the force of these symptoms, emerging as they do from productive repression, Žižek points out, in one of his many critiques of Kant's philosophy, that "every synthetic unity [assumed to be the goal of reason] is based on an act of 'repression,' and therefore generates some indivisible remainder."[1] That is, every attempt to unite "our entire experience of the universe into a rational organic structure,"[2] which we do when we interact with the world imaginatively, will result in something being left over, some symptom reflecting the inevitable failure of that attempt, or the unavoidable failure of any subjective structure. These negative discursive fields unconsciously work continuously to shape the constellation of the discursive regime, fractured as it is into innumerable and interacting fragments. This failure is structurally unavoidable, such as the execution of the king, the total consumption of the masque, and the impossible search for privacy or a true self.

Any search for an ultimate privacy of the self is futile, when one is a subject in a discursive matrix. To be truly alone physically, like the impossible private monarch, is to have no subjective relation whatsoever, which is subjective death.

And yet, if someone has language, they are, de facto, never subjectively alone. Self-conscious beings can find no self at the center of the cogito, as the ability to think self requires language, which is primordially provided by the Other, as is the notion of being alone. The symptom is always there, ready to be read as a return of the repressed, just as when the masque emerged as an aesthetic form, only to be invaded by bankers; this is precisely when the banqueters were about to consume the aristocracy, and the bankers were really helping to tear apart the masque and eat it up, even as their ships were leaving the ports to enslave, colonize, and trade with the world.

I have already provided a few select examples from history to show how material culture, especially in the form of automatons and automation, puppets and theater, symptomatically reflected localized forms of rhetorical unconsciousness. These symptoms, these leftovers, were largely triggered by transintentional shifts in monetary relations and technology, set within nascent national and racial imaginaries, specifically during the transitions in France and England from feudalism to capitalism, with England transitioning first. We will now look at two singularly powerful forms of productive Symbolic repression in more saturated capitalist environments: the commodity self and corporate personhood.[3] To explore the effects of these forms, which manifested themselves as types of subjective being, we will first look at the concept and processes of reification, both for individuals and groups, where people are turned into things and things into people.

Every macroeconomist knows that most people today are intimately tied up with market logics, whether they know it or not and whether they like it or not. Powerful transnational organizations with tremendous economic clout, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization, compel states to change their economic policies to avoid such things as higher interest rates. Only a small handful of countries, such as North Korea, dare to resist the system, and much to their peril. The phrase "market logics" simply means that everything is reduced to a rational cost-benefit analysis, and individuals are reduced to what they are worth via monetary compensation. Companies invest in their human capital, value is based on return on investment, and the individual is otherwise consumed by market logics, becoming in turn a consumer.

As with all Symbolic systems, market logics, as productively repressive, have positive and negative consequences, displaying a variety of symptoms. In 1711 Joseph Addison visited London's Royal Exchange, which arguably at the time was the heart of an emergent global capitalism. In observing the chaotic scene, he reflected on the positive influence of market logics, which seemed a veritable blessing and harbinger of world peace: "I look upon [the busiest period of the day on the Exchange] to be a great Council, in which all considerable Nations

have their Representatives. . . . I am wonderfully delighted to see such a Body of Men thriving in their own private Fortunes, and at the same time promoting the Public Stock. . . . Nature seems to have taken a particular Care to disseminate her Blessings among the different Regions of the World, with an Eye to this mutual Intercourse and Traffic among Mankind, that the Natives of the several Parts of the Globe might have a kind of Dependence upon one another, and be united in Common Interest."[4] As opposed to Thomas Jefferson, who later distrusted the merchants for having no allegiance to a nation, Addison asserted that "there are no more useful Members in a Commonwealth than Merchants."[5] We know that all identities—and all Symbolic systems upon which those identities are produced—have both constraining and enabling dimensions, but how did these dimensions play out in theory and practice as market logics swept across Europe? What was the Imaginary content of this tension over the productive and destructive aspects of capitalism, industrialization, and the general mechanization of society?

In "Rival Views of Market Society," Albert O. Hirschman addresses precisely this tension between the positive and negative aspects of market logics in the early days of capitalism.[6] A former World Bank employee, Hirschman was "enormously struck" to find a curious convergence in the French and Scottish Enlightenment traditions regarding the positive aspects of capitalism, the productive valence of productive repression, or the capacity side of the capacity/constraint relation of market logics.[7] He discovered that Montesquieu, in France, had stridently maintained that wicked "passions" could best be controlled by well-considered "interests," just as James Steuart, in Scotland, assuredly asserted that "'the complicated system of modern economy (i.e., the interests),' was necessarily the 'most effectual bridle [that] was ever invented against the folly of despotism.'"[8] As Addison had observed in London, if people stayed focused on their interests, then their native passions tended to be tamed.

In David Wallace Carrithers's introduction to Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws,* he points out the convergence between Montesquieu and Adam Smith regarding the automatic good of market logics: "In reading Montesquieu on monarchy . . . one is reminded of Adam Smith's theory of enlightened self-interest, where by each individual's desire to reach [their] own profit automatically furthers the public good."[9] This comparison is taken from arguments in Smith's *The Wealth of Nations,* where he observes that the baker does not bake bread to feed the community but to feed his family, but as an indirect consequence he feeds the people (i.e., the famous invisible hand of the market, exemplifying the unconscious rhetorical power of the Symbolic).

Montesquieu and Smith offered alternative ways of thinking about the productive power of unconscious Symbolic forces, without, of course, using that terminology. Montesquieu's central claim in *The Spirit of the Laws* is that different

types of imagined communities, and therefore different types of government, are transintentionally formed by environmental and physical factors. Individuals "are influenced by various causes, by the climate, the religion, the laws, the maxims of government; by precedents, morals and customs, from whence is formed a general spirit that takes its rise from there."[10] Political and economic societies are positive expressions of their natural, historical, and symbolic environments. Smith, while noting the possible dangers to subjectivity caused by the ever more complex division of labor under capitalism, also focused on the productive consequences of that division. For example, he emphasized the positive, rather than the negative, aspects of a maximum division of labor in his discussion of the mass production of pins: "One man draws out the wire, another straightens it, a third cuts it, a fourth points it, a fifth grinds it at the top for receiving the head; to make the head requires two or three distinct operations; to put it on, is a peculiar business, to whiten the pins is another; it is even a trade by itself to put them into the paper; and the important business of making a pin is, in this manner, divided into about eighteen distinct operations."[11] As a result such a group could make a massive number of pins as opposed to the isolated artisan. So when it comes to raw production, there is no question that the division of labor is a highly productive form of repression. While metaphysical questions about the possible soul-crushing effects of such repetitive tasks on individual subjects have been given a nod now and then, such positive and rational assessments of the value of mass production and a maximum division of labor were later made manifest in Taylorism and Fordism, or through scientific management, standardized mass production, and mass consumption of the commodity.

While one may question the structural impacts of capitalism on subjectivity, those who view it both positively and negatively view "its 'spirit' as an assault on preexisting systems of ideas and socioeconomic relations."[12] According to Hirschman, both Montesquieu and Smith would "have shuddered—and revised their thinking—had they realized where their ideas would ultimately lead."[13] The same could be said for Marx, whose disciples used his work for the productive repressions of Marxism, which led to Stalin and other pathological horrors. What Hirschman primarily seeks to understand is how "commercial, banking, and similar money-making pursuits became honorable at some point in the modern age after having stood condemned or despised as greed, love of lucre, and avarice for centuries past."[14]

How was it that greed became good, and the upstart banqueters became their own little kings? On the surface the answer is simple: dominant ideology always follows the fantasies required of the hegemon, and the useful fiction of divine right had to give way to the invisible hand of the market, as the former was deemed in an increasingly mechanical age to be metaphysical and irrational, while the latter was deemed pragmatic and rational. "A feeling arose in the

Renaissance," notes Hirschman, "and became firm conviction during the seventeenth century, that moralizing philosophy and religious precepts could no longer be trusted with restraining the destructive passions of men."[15] One of the main reasons theorists of political economy, from Montesquieu and Smith to Hayek and Friedman, have praised market logics and their automatic nature is because it is universally assumed that, as noted by Addison, people will suspend their more general prejudices when their self-interest is involved. While Montesquieu thought of one's personal interest, one's self-interest, as a matter of personal reputation and glory, in both "English and French histories—that meaning was being narrowed, by some process, to the pursuit of material, economic advantage."[16] Thomas L. Friedman makes the same basic argument in his *The Lexus and the Olive Tree,* spending a chapter defending the claim that "no two countries that both had McDonald's had fought a war against each other since each got its McDonald's."[17]

In the wake of the long religious wars of the early seventeenth century, coupled with the rise of mechanistic and rationalist thought, it was thought that the only way to control the passions was by setting interests against one another, unleashing self-interest in anarchic competition. The separation of powers in the U.S. Constitution is based upon such thinking, as is the practice of encouraging foreign countries to invest in one's national debt. This general praise for the positive influence of unrestrained self-interest, however, had a long uphill climb, and negative voices were numerous. Usury under Catholicism, as we have seen, was a mortal sin.[18]

As we would expect, contra the spin provided by Addison, Adam Smith, and Hayek on the productive side of the productive repression of market logics, political economists in equal numbers focused on the negative aspects of market logics, the repressive side of productive repression, and the constraining valence of capitalism. The most well-known theorist is, of course, Marx, who, in opposition to Smith's praise of the division of labor, considered the process as nothing less than "the terrible grinding forces of a market system in which the labor of human beings bec[omes] simply one more commodity in a world given over wholly to the production and consumption of commodities."[19]

Marx also stresses in his monumental *Capital* that there is a theological aspect to a commodity, which is also negatively valenced: "A commodity appears, at first sight, a very trivial thing, and easily understood. Its analysis shows that it is, in reality, a very queer thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties . . . [though the] mystical character of commodities does not originate . . . in their use value."[20] It is the exchange value that matters as symptom. The theological character of the commodity is to be found in its exchange value, which contains a magical element: the amount that will be paid above the use value because of some aura surrounding the product. The aura is a symptom

with derealizing consequences: attraction to the commodity is akin to the automaton, where desire is drawn to something ultimately empty, something mechanical taken for having a will.

In Max Weber's famous descriptions of rationalization and bureaucratization, he shows how laborers, involved in market logics, are nothing more than human capital, parts of a machine, and that "no special proof is necessary to show that military discipline is the ideal model for the modern capitalist factory, as it was for the ancient [slave] plantation. However, organizational discipline in the factory has a completely *rational* basis. With the help of suitable methods of measurement, the optimum profitability of the individual worker is calculated like that of any material means of production."[21] Lukács characterized this process, where humans are measured mechanically for their profit function, as a logical complement to the theological aura of the commodity, as one of reification, or that "inexorable process through which the capitalist system breaks the processes of production and distribution down into smaller and more manageable units in the name of a greater efficiency until society as a whole beg[ins] to mirror in its structures . . . a process of purely economic specialization."[22] Human beings are reduced to nothing more than calculations of profit and loss within an alienating system of ever-greater discursive specialization, ever more fine-tuned aspects of productive repression at the tertiary level.

This, then, brings us to a type of artificial personhood characteristic of our age, where people are turned into commodities and objects are given assumed subjective qualities. Reification, therefore, is not simply when we, for example, reify our love through the purchase of a diamond ring (with its imagined aura), but also when our value as individuals is measured strictly according to the logics of return on investment.[23] In purchasing a commodity, we often layer an imaginative fantasy onto an inert object, which then speaks in the broader discursive economy, and we also have an imaginative fantasy layered upon us determined by how much value—in terms of money—we can generate.[24] To place such thinking within my own theoretical poetics, the unconscious Symbolic forces of market logics in the symbolic Real (i.e., the unconscious, disciplinary, and structuring effects of symbolic codes), through colonialization, mechanization, industrialization, and so on, led to new sets of symptoms in artificial personhood, especially through processes of reification resulting from the spread of market logics. As with the transition from feudalism to early capitalism, and as should be expected, some symptoms of market logics are relatively pathological, while others are relatively healthy, with some leading to derealization and others to realization.

Reification: People as Things and Things as People

Put simply, what are the key relationships among artificial personhood, reification, and the commodity self? How, in other words, does the unconscious

Symbolic influence of market logics lead to the commodity self as a symptom of artificial personhood? Karl Löwith helps us to explore these questions in "The German Spirit during the Nineteenth Century," an essay in which he explains how, for Marx, "the wage earner incorporates the universal problem of bourgeois society, the economic nature of which consists in the production of a depersonalized world of merchandise."[25] We have, that is, two mutually interdependent symptoms of market logics (i.e., the wage earner and the commodity form), and the two symptoms are deeply interrelated, fused within the taking of profits or the invisible extra one is charged beyond use value. Under the influence of these interrelated symptoms, Marx warns, "the outcome of all our inventions and all our progress seems to be that material forces acquire spiritual life, and human existence becomes a dumb, material force."[26] A concise definition of the dual valences of reification, this means that "in the bourgeois-capitalist world the product dominates man," although, according to Löwith, "man is not immediately aware of this perversion, for his self-consciousness is reified to an equal degree."[27] Workers for wages are compelled to sell themselves and be assigned a value that is alienated from their more broadly considered contributions to the fabric of human existence, but this is productively repressed in the commodity form and stolen from them in the faux-theological extra of profit. In this sense "Marx compares man in bourgeois society to merchandise. Like the latter, he has a dubious, 'ambiguous character': a 'value form' and a 'natural form.' As merchandise, something is worth so and so much money, what it is by its natural constitution is indifferent in respect to its mercantile value."[28] Just as the monarch has two bodies (the actual monarch and the monarch as role), so too does the individual in capitalist society have two bodies (the actual person and the value of the person as a function of exchange). Thus we see the two fundamental, structural self-alienations of market logics: the artificial personhood of being both an alienated subject and an object of exchange value.

On the capacity-generating side of reification, however, here is an economic system that leads unintentionally, in its alienating effects, to the second aesthetic break, since the otherwise natural alienation of primary repression is brought to self-awareness in the pursuit of self-production within cosmopolitan competition. This objectification of the subject is then sublimated as an inverted reflection of the repressed into the pursuit of the commodity object, which is what the individual can afford or is willing to buy given their value.

Theories of ideology also emphasize the alienation of labor into commodities: commodities with theological dimensions. Exemplifying this emphasis, complete with its theological overtones, is David Hawkes's review of alienation and representation in the Marxist tradition. Speaking of the "objectification of labor," how "capitalism involves an alienation of ourselves, as well as an objectification," and how "money thus represents human labor in objectified form" as

the "universal commodity," Hawkes makes the following claim: "When we alienate our activity (which is to say our lives) in the form of commodities, and then allow those commodities, in the abstract shapes of finance and the market, to dictate and command our lives, we therefore commit a secular form of idolatry."[29] Because of this idolatry, or worship of inanimate objects, and because of this "'fetishism of the commodity,' we no longer see the 'real' thing, but only its 'form of appearance.'"[30] The capitalist Imaginary, built upon the black hole of the desire for certain commodities, is in turn built upon the unconscious structure of the Symbolic, in this case market logics.[31] Under the conditions of advancing capitalism, the Symbolic network is increasingly composed of money relations based on market logics; therefore "money achieves an active, *self-generating power* through which it shapes the lives of concrete individuals."[32] The self-generating power of the Symbolic is a crucial point, explaining how the automaton runs.

The key theorist of this uncanny process of reification, where our subjectivity is queerly intertwined with the inanimate, is Lukács, especially in his book *History and Class Consciousness,* and even more precisely in the chapter titled "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat."[33] His work is a useful introduction to the more specific notion of the commodity self as symptom of saturated capitalism. Drawing directly upon Marx's theory of the commodity, Lukács works to show "that commodity fetishism is the central, definitive characteristic of capitalist society" and that "commodity exchange depends on the ability of a figure, a symbol, to become real. It depends, that is to say, on the power of ideas to impose themselves on material reality."[34] This should come as no surprise, as our ontical cartography expressly shows the interrelations among the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. In the fullest sense, structurally speaking, alienation of the subject into the commodity is the imaginary Real (i.e., fantasy made actual), working through the imaginary Symbolic (i.e., the artful use of codes), constrained by the black hole of the commodity (as *objet petit a*) and the real Imaginary (i.e., the productive prohibition against contact with the organizing absence). Whatever agency there may be in the Imaginary, however, and whatever sorts of pleasure are created by the commodity form, it is also a reflection of the symbolic Real (i.e., the unconscious disciplinary and structuring effects of symbolic codes in the actual) of market logics. We invest a narrative onto objects, just as symbolic technologies, in their structural distribution, are invested in subjects.

Lukács, following Marx, sought to maintain a clear distinction between the world of objects and the ways in which objects are invested with meaning. He reemphasizes Marx's insistence that the "ground and the earth have nothing to do with ground rent, machines have nothing to do with profit."[35] How, though, do ground rent and profit emerge as symptoms, or inverted reflections of negative discursive fields, and what sorts of productive repression are at work here?

The answer: it is largely the dumb work of market logics, their automaton-like nature, that is the motor of the entire subjective machine in saturated capitalist milieus. It is a contemporary, fully human irrationalism, as opposed to the irrationalism of nature. "[People] are constantly smashing, replacing and leaving behind them 'natural,' irrational and actually existing bonds, while, on the other hand, they erect around themselves in the reality they have created and 'made,' a kind of second nature which evolves with exactly the same inexorable necessity as was the case earlier on with irrational forces of nature."[36] The old order of assumedly centered human subjects has been replaced with radically decentered subjects who must relationally make themselves or be nothing. In this transformative process, however, we have created a problematic second nature, through the commodity form, that is just as irrational as our earlier, more mythic selves.

We do not know the degree to which Lukács's writing was influenced by the shadow of Stalin or how much he actually believed in some of his arguments as stated, but he was clearly of the opinion that the only group capable of critical meta-self-consciousness was the proletariat: "the knowledge yielded by the standpoint of the proletariat stands on a higher scientific plane objectively."[37] Because it is the proletariat who are alienated by selling their labor, thus experiencing the profit's being taken from them, they alone objectively are the repressed, and so they have a unique stake in the recovery of the repressed. This position was taken by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, who insist that "the poor are victims of the global order of [capitalist] Empire" and that "the poor embody the ontological condition not only of resistance but also of productive life itself."[38]

In such a reading, the more one becomes a commodity self, the more one inhabits the position of the repressed, and, as the symptom of the repressed, the greater the impulse to revolt. Such a reading leaves unacknowledged and unaddressed, however, the question of what the proletariat looks like when almost everyone lives on wages and the majority perforce invest in markets, as is the case in saturated capitalist conditions, such as those that persist in the United States. It also leaves unaddressed the productive aspects of this repression, or the empowering aspects of commodity selves. Regardless, and leaving the empowering side of the question open for the moment, contemporary critical political theory suggests that a far better term for what Lukács calls the proletariat and Hardt and Negri call the "poors" *counterhegemonic force*.[39] In the critical political theories of Laclau, Rob Asen, Michael Warner, and others, what we actually encounter in the great clash of subjectivities in our everyday lives are hegemonic groups who tend not to question the status quo or who make sure to question it "properly," and this is because what goes unquestioned is beneficial for them. Conversely those alienated by hegemonic forms of collective belonging, which exploit them, naturally wish to question and test the limits of negative discursive fields.[40]

Antagonisms thus inevitably arise against any individual or collective identity, as demands build up around the edges of the imagined yet impossible unity of the personal or group self. If the hegemonic forces fail to address the demands of those antagonized, then the antagonized will coalesce around their own empty signifier, and if they have enough material power, they can then force the hegemonic structure to change.[41] Perhaps the best book discussing this process of hegemonic transformation over a period of centuries is Neta C. Crawford's *Argument and Change in World Politics,* where she displays this process of effective counterhegemonic forces transforming slavery into forced labor, then military colonialism, then economic colonialism, then "nation building."[42] This at least helps us to think about how collective identities are formed and transformed, but it does not tell us about the types of Symbolic forces that may be working behind the scenes or through material cultural artifacts right in front of us, such as the theatrical events we attend.

Lukács believed, or at least publicly argued, that only members of the proletariat were able "to achieve consciousness of the process of reification," and this was because "by selling their labor-power, its members objectified themselves, turning themselves into commodities."[43] Put otherwise, "Subjectively—where the market economy has been fully developed—a man's activity becomes estranged from himself, it turns into a commodity."[44] As commodities come to impact "the internal structure of a society," society itself is remolded "in the image" of the commodity. This makes the situation circular and self-binding, as the charms of the commodity come to seem preferable to the arduous and dangerous quest for revolution against the dehumanizing yet productively alienating influence of the market logic automaton.[45]

As the wage earner is reduced to a commodity self, the commodity becomes a source for desire, or an *objet petit a,* some particular thing or idea that comes to stand for ultimate fulfillment and (impossible) self-unity.[46] A child, perhaps, may want a very specific sort of doll, while an older person may desire the "ultimate" car or home. The problem is, as with all black holes, the closer we approach the event horizon, the emptier those desires usually appear, and we discover that the *objet petit a* is not it. This, though, is to remain focused on the negative valence of market logics, failing to provide us with concrete historical examples of the productive symptomology of this process of endless disappointment.

The question of reification and the commodity self, therefore, ultimately must return us to the notion of productive self-alienation. Just as language alienates us from nature and symbolic codes alienate us from our intentionality and sense of self, is it not also the case, and logically so, that capitalism, as an economic process structuring subjectivity, is also productively alienating? Surely different capitalist systems create different symptoms. After all, capitalism in the United States is very dissimilar from capitalism in China or Denmark. When

speaking of advancing capitalism, I speak primarily of the advancement of unchecked market logics that dehumanize us, turning us more into automatons, where our value as humans is distorted by market pressures. There is also, nevertheless, the agency of the Imaginary to redefine how those pressures shall be managed: there are, in other words, various interventionist symptoms in the otherwise autonomous logics of markets.

Given our understanding of identity, where all forms of identification simultaneously constrain and enable, repress and produce, we would assume that capitalism would be both productively *alienating* and *productively* alienating. We would also expect the same from the processes and products of reification.

Lukács insisted, with Stalin watching, that the proletarian, or the person who is treated for all intents and purposes as a commodity, is the only person who can gain the self-consciousness of the commodity, though his examples are limited by a partially essentialist Marxist framework. Let us look then to concrete examples of capitalist reification in different historical settings as it existed in practice, specifically in England, France, and Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, primarily because capitalism took root at different times in these countries. What, in other words, were the symptoms of artificial personhood, as they related to the commodity self, in those different times and places? How did those symptoms reflect then-hegemonic negative discursive regimes? Were the symptoms pathological or healthy, leading to derealization or realization? How can we tell? It is to these questions that I now turn.

Commodity Selves in Early Capitalist England, France and Germany

History reveals that Lukács was incorrect in assuming the proletarians would become aware of their commodity-like status, leading them to a "revolutionary consciousness."[47] Instead of the proletariat being the source of revolution and resistance, history suggests that anyone who is out of power, feeling if not actually being repressed by the hegemonic political order, has a revolutionary consciousness, but this has very little to do with a consciousness of being a commodity. While individuals may believe they are not paid enough or valued enough at their job or that they are being held down by the man, we see little evidence of a revolution against capitalism or market logics in general. Even democratic socialists tend to support market logics, so long as there are sufficient safety nets for disadvantaged or underprivileged citizens. Communism is all but dead, and all one has to do is look at China to witness communist politics within an unapologetically capitalist economy.

Rather than witnessing the development of revolutionary consciousness, it appears to be the case that when market logics take over a particular area of society, different versions of commodity selves emerge, based on the other Symbolic logics and forms of productive repression in which they are embedded. While I

can only provide a limited number of examples from Western Europe here, it would be interesting to see how the commodity self is currently manifesting itself in China or Pakistan, or anywhere else in the world where wage labor and market logics have come to dominate. But for now, on to early capitalist Europe, and the theories and types of commodity selves that emerged in that historical setting.

In the middle of seventeenth-century England was Thomas Hobbes, writing about not only the artificial personhood of the state but also the importance of personal artificiality, because of the nature of speech. For Hobbes "True and False are attributes of Speech, not of Things. And where Speech is not, there is neither Truth nor Falsehood."[48] A person living in the world of speech is the same as an actor "both on the stage and in common Conversation," since "passions unguided, are for the most part mere madness."[49] The sane, therefore, understand the importance of wearing a mask, where the self is a type of mobile property or commodity to be traded in an open exchange (i.e., one's brand). As expressed in the 1610 play *If It Be Not Good, the Devil Is in It,* "He that would grow damn'd rich, yet live secure/Must keep a case of faces."[50] Hobbes also recalls that the etymological roots of the word *person* comes from the Latin *persona,* which "signifies the *disguise,* or *outward appearance* of a man, counterfeited on the stage; and sometimes more particularly that part of it, which disguiseth the face, as a Mask or Visard."[51] A century later in France, Denis Diderot, in his essay "The Paradox of Acting," also emphasized how a great actor "excels at simulating, though he feels nothing," for the "actor who believes in his own tears . . . cannot act consistently."[52] Jean-Jacques Rousseau then attacked "the city as theater," since "the theatrical qualities of life in Paris . . . [were] spreading to all the capitals of Europe."[53] These early debates over public theatricality and the self as something to be traded publicly, we must remember, occurred before the French Revolution, and we have already witnessed the fear of public theatricality in England a century earlier.

It is difficult to understand today how, prior to the Glorious Revolution in England and the French Revolution, individual personality was blotted out, or at least radically underplayed, by public costumes and makeup, particularly related to the face, in both London and Paris. As Sennett reminds us, "What makes the 18th Century street wear fascinating is that . . . [at] home, one's clothes suited one's body and its needs; on the street, one stepped into clothes whose purpose was to make it possible for other people to act as if they knew who you were. One became a figure in a contrived landscape; the purpose of the clothes was not to be sure of whom you were dealing with, but to be able to behave as if you were sure."[54] This dressing to embody a role was especially evident in the treatment of the face. "Marking the face with little patches of paint was the final step in obliterating the [natural] face. The practice was begun in the 17th Century, but only

by the 1750s had it become widespread. In London patches were placed on the right or left side of the face, depending on whether one was Whig or Tory. During the reign of Louis XV, patches were placed to indicate the character of the Parisian: at the corner of the eye stood for passion; center of the cheek, gay; nose, saucy."[55] Artificial personhood here, in the plain sense, is the importance of wearing a specific kind of mask that elicits a specific kind of response. One is known by objects. The truth is not in the substance of the person but in an intentional and well-managed performance in the given realm of common sense whose truth is in the response it encourages. In ever-growing European cities, anonymity was increasingly a problem, but clothing helped to maintain some semblance of role visibility. Things changed dramatically, however, after the English and French Revolutions, as capitalist relations began to more aggressively replace feudal relations, and the importance of productively repressive self-fashioning reached far beyond the province of courtiers.

Transformations in dress and behavior among the rising middle classes, as market relations began to spread across Western Europe, were not the only symptomatic changes in material culture. There were dramatic changes in land distribution as well, not dissimilar from the simultaneous changes witnessed in the architectures of royal privacy. In England between the closing of the Catholic monasteries by Henry VIII in 1536 to the Restoration in 1660, "between a quarter and a third of England's total landed area entered the private market," and those "unable to own or rent land joined the swelling ranks of wage labor."[56] Peasants and craftspersons previously living off the land and via barter and other forms of primitive exchange suddenly found themselves homeless. In the mid-sixteenth century, wages fell to their lowest level in three centuries, when labor mobility was at its height and with London expanding in size from approximately 200,000 people in 1600 to almost one million by 1800.[57] Regarding such events, where market logics unconsciously led to land policies transintentionally structuring the conditions of possibility for subjectivity, Marx noted that the workers were no different than puppets controlled by the strings of changing economic circumstances: "We see here, on the one hand, how the exchange of commodities [the displaced peasants of late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century England] breaks through all local and personal bounds inseparable from direct barter, and develops the circulation of the products of social labour; and on the other hand, how it develops a whole network of social relations spontaneous in their growth and entirely beyond the control of the actors."[58] The unconscious persuasive power of money relations, in this case via the privatization and sale of church and state lands, shifting the substance of the symbolic Real and thus resonating through all aspects of rhetorical unconsciousness, was driving the displaced peasants to the cities, where they were eventually put to work in England's mechanistic industries.

Capitalism, and accelerated processes of self-commodification, came late to Paris in comparison to London. Whereas the bourgeois revolution in England was won by 1700, the same could not be said of France. There absolute monarchy held on tightly under Catholicism, with the bourgeoisie not fully triumphing until the 1870s. Due to the persistence of aristocracy and royalty in France or the persistence of "the dead, reactionary echo of a past time," in Hegel's words, the 1800s were witness to a series of violent revolutions following the French Revolution in the late eighteenth century. Each of those subsequent revolutions reflected seismic shifts in the larger Symbolic world in the slow but triumphant march of market logics.

As this productive repression through the expansion of market logics took place, there were parallel changes, as one would expect, in aesthetic symptoms. In the world of aesthetics proper, for example, there was the early emergence of French Realism in painting, followed by the Bohemians in literature, and then a series of art movements and public arts that more fully blended reality and fantasy, all while Paris became a dream world of mass consumption. Vanessa Schwartz does an excellent job of showing the primary aesthetic forms of artificial personhood, as public entertainment, that emerged as capitalism took root in Paris: from public morgues to wax museums, then from panoramas to film.[59] All these entertainments were uncanny, where the lines between the real and the fake and the living and the dead were blurred. These entertaining diversions were among the key symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness, reflected in public spectacles in Paris, and they all were the result of the desire on the part of the rising bourgeoisie to see some trace, or at least experience a copy, of the Real.[60]

Just to be clear, recall that here we are working to isolate symptoms of secondary repression, where unconscious Symbolic forces, as dark matter, help to maintain the outer shape of the subjectively possible. If primary repression is inescapable, as the first aesthetic break, leading to symptoms of artificial personhood (e.g., consciousness, alienation), rhetorical unconsciousness also reveals itself at the secondary level through different aesthetic forms providing inverted mirrors of the Symbolic. The aesthetic proper, including puppets, dolls, the theater, and public entertainments, and the aesthetic of collective fantasies ranging from rent to national character, all speak the unspoken, thus providing opportunities for political psychoanalysis from the perspective of the third aesthetic break.

Let us take a clear example of speaking symptoms reflecting productive repression: after the failed workers' rebellions of 1848 that swept across Europe, which are now largely forgotten, and with the resulting inroads of bourgeois rule, the workers were repressed actually *and* aesthetically.[61] So what, then, were some of the resulting speaking symptoms? At a time when proper bourgeois homes had pastoral paintings of happy peasants, free in their bucolic world from

the cruel hubbub of the city, and where in fact "the spirit of [the] new regime was egotism and money worship," the French painter Gustave Courbet became "the artist of the lowly," often creating huge paintings depicting the lowliest of persons and professions.[62] His art, which has come to be known as exemplary of French Realism, revealed the repressed through fine art, and so his was a positive symptom in the service of realization. According to Linda Nochlin, in her book *Realism,* Courbet's "unidealized, startlingly direct and matter-of-fact representations of contemporary lower-class subjects, utterly devoid of the small-scale, patronizingly picturesque charm which had made genre paintings of similar themes acceptable, even if not theoretically admirable, in the eyes of right-thinking Frenchmen, made their Salon debut in 1850–51, at the very moment when the triumphant bourgeoisie had deprived those very lower classes of most of the advantages they had [briefly] won on the barricades of 1848."[63] Courbet's work was anything but art for art's sake. Instead it was a critically meta-self-conscious response to what had become unspeakable.

Capitalism, however, would not be stopped by art. The actual and subjective freedom embodied in Courbet was steadily replaced by the automatisms of market logics.[64] By 1863 Charles Baudelaire was writing a series of newspaper installments titled "The Painter of Modern Life," where he sought to articulate the strange new world of commodity selves, which to his mind ranged from common laborers to dandies and from flaneurs to shoppers in the new things called department stores. By this time Paris had grown to well over 1 million inhabitants, on its way to 2.5 million by 1896.[65] For Baudelaire, who sought to capture the spirit of mid-1800s Paris in his life and writing, "modernity" meant a type of self-distancing that allowed an individual to experience the eternal in the transitory: "By 'modernity,' I mean the ephemeral, the fugitive, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is the eternal and immutable."[66] "The Painter of Modern Life," where modernity is so defined, is primarily a celebration of his contemporary Constantin Guys, a sketch artist capable of capturing, Baudelaire believed, this eternal element in the ephemeral. Baudelaire's philosophy of the modern anonymous city is also, however, and perhaps even more centrally, a paean to the ability to enjoy being alone—immersed *and* detached—in a crowd, as well as an aesthetic celebration of how culture brings order out of the chaos of nature, even with culture's own admitted chaos.

In Baudelaire's day, with the rise of mass bourgeois culture, when artistic geniuses either had to be wily entrepreneurs, like Courbet, finding ways to produce scandal around their work, otherwise become "popular," or starve, there was a reasonable backlash among committed artists for having to prostitute themselves to the lowest common denominators of public taste to earn a living. Other denizens of Paris at the same time included the dandy and the flaneur, the first being an impeccably coiffured gentleman spending and living freely, who

found the greatest of pleasures in being blasé, capable of shocking everyone without ever being shocked, and the second being a person who loved to watch—two very different ways of being productively self-alienated.

In addition to the commodity self of the wage laborer, then, and artists who struggled in various ways with their commodity status, there were two other character types that emerged during the solidification of market relations in the first half of the nineteenth century, illustrating the prostitution those relations required. The flaneur, on the one hand, was "the secret spectator of the spectacle of the spaces and places of the city," the person who would go "about the city in order to find the things [that would] occupy his gaze and thus complete his otherwise incomplete identity."[67] Dandies, on the other hand, had "no other calling but to cultivate the idea of beauty in their persons," and they would all be "perfectly content with a limitless credit at the bank."[68] These were two very different subjective reactions to the emergence of bourgeois culture in Paris, when the primary public entertainment for the nouveau riche and the dying aristocracy was ballet, danced by their favorites, with card playing and other loud merriments during the performances.

Just as the masque was a material-cultural symptom of the rhetorical unconsciousness of royalty during the transitional phase from feudalism to capitalism in England, the material-cultural symptoms of advancing capitalism in Paris resulted in dandyism as a cult of the self, and *flâneurie* as the cult of being lost in the Other, often among those most impoverished by, and alienated from, the prevailing and increasingly superficial and spectacular norms of the rising bourgeois class.

Gabriel Tarde, observing bourgeois denial and superficiality, believed the bourgeois subject was "hypnotized" and "unaware of the extent to which his social behavior [was] rooted in semiconscious entrancement by prestige."[69] As a result of this superficial quest for prestige as money making and spending, Tarde did not believe that "the hypnotized consumer can be fully awakened from entrancement by publicity so that he can make reasoned, conscious choices . . . , [for the bourgeois subject] is a veritable somnambulist."[70] The problem was not the desire for the possession of objects so much as the "internal desire or need incarnated in the commodity."[71] This somnambulism, then, led to derealization. Indeed it was difficult to say anything seriously in the era of Louis Phillipe, between 1830 and 1848. Siegfried Kracauer, in his study of Jacques Offenbach, the comic genius of Parisian operetta as the bankers assumed power, mentions as an aside that "Louis Napoleon saw clearly the need for banishing all sense of realism, all capability of seeing things as they really were and detecting the paradoxes and antagonisms latent within the new regime. His object was to keep the country in a perpetual state of hysteria, prevent it from ever having time for cool reflection."[72] Even in the wake of the bursting of this illusion, the rebellious workers

in 1848 were once again militarily repressed, and then they were fully repressed, back in the factories and stripped of their short-won powers, such as guaranteed work. So much was obvious, and so much could not be explicitly stated, save through art and modes of subjective resistance. Nor was it easy to be serious under the later reign of Napoleon III, even via art, as Richard Wagner discovered when attempting to put on one of his "heroic" operas, *Tannhäuser,* in 1861. The opera was disrupted by the "gentlemen" of the Jockey Club, the same elite who frequented the frivolous ballet, many ever seeking the status of dandy, who gathered in small packs to drown out the German abomination with catcalls and noisemakers. Baudelaire, who was present at the event, was disgusted by the scene: "Wagner's opera is a *serious work,* demanding sustained attention; it is hardly necessary to point out how this fact must tell against its chances in a country where the chief reason for the success of classical tragedy lay in the opportunities which it offered for distraction. In Italy people eat sorbets and dance can-cans in the intervals of the performance in which the dictates of fashion do not include applause; in France we play cards. 'How impertinent of you to want to force me to give your work my continuous attention . . . when all I ask of you is to provide me with an after-dinner pleasure, not an occasion to use my intelligence.'"[73] Paris was changing quickly, money more blatantly represented raw power regardless of class or rank, and Baudelaire was there to "sketch" his times, in all their alienation, in his own way.

Baudelaire, who is central to the history of Parisian bohemianism, was well aware of the work of E. T. A. Hoffmann in Germany, particularly Hoffmann's theory of comedy, which was based on the productively self-alienated subject. Hoffmann, who died in 1822, became famous primarily for his plays in which the uncanny and the automaton play central roles.[74] Hoffmann's theory of comedy, outlined in Baudelaire's essay "On the Essence of Laughter," is based on "a permanent dualism in the human being—that is, the power of being oneself and someone else at the same time."[75] Baudelaire was interested in Hoffmann as an "absolute" comic who does everything on purpose within a perfectly constructed duplicity: "an artist is only an artist on condition that he is a double man and that there is not one single phenomenon of his double nature of which he is ignorant."[76]

What did it mean when, in Germany, a distrusted revolutionary sympathetic with the workers' rebellions of 1848, Wagner, became a "heroic" defender of the nationalist myth in a country late to nationalism and capitalism, while in Paris a totally frivolous ballet was presented to the members of the Jockey Club? Is it a surprise that Hoffmann was in Germany writing about the uncanny relation between the living and machines fifty years before the national unification of Germany in 1871, while the first department store, the Bon Marché, had already opened in Paris in 1852? In Germany there remained that aesthetic phase of

distrust of the machine, fear of the automaton, as if the machine (market logics?) would so overtake us that we would become indistinguishable as object and subject. While King Ludwig II of Bavaria was living in his dream castles into the 1880s, with their secret grottoes and private theaters, where no distinctions were made between acting and being oneself, people were window shopping for commodities with fixed prices in Paris.[77] Germany was still in the semifeudal Romantic Age, while France and England had gone headlong into capitalist modernity. Baudelaire tried to experience both ages simultaneously.

In Paris the public theatrics of haggling were now gone, with a passive role assigned to consumers and their consumption. Here, watching and sometimes mocking, were the dandies and flaneurs, the latter of which Walter Benjamin associated with "the rationality of capitalism and, especially, commodification and the circulation of commodities," since the "*flâneur* is someone abandoned in the crowd [and] in this he shares the situation of the commodity."[78] While flaneurs may have thought they were above it all, in fact they were yet another symptom of it all. While one might think of the flaneur as a resistant figure, for the most part, at least according to Benjamin, they were more a reactionary symptom to ever-expanding market relations: "The crowd is not only the newest asylum of outlaws; it is also the latest narcotic for people who have been abandoned. The *flâneur* is someone abandoned in the crowd. He is thus in the same situation as the commodity. He is unaware of this special situation, but this does not diminish its effects on him. It permeates him blissfully, like a narcotic that can compensate him for many humiliations. The intoxication to which the *flâneur* surrenders is the intoxication of the commodity immersed in a surging stream of customers."[79] Isolated as humiliated commodities, flaneurs also possessed a commodity soul, which had a certain sympathy for this whole scene: a sort of heroism of alienation.[80]

Earlier in Germany, Goethe, who died in 1832, foresaw the coming development of the commodity self long before its full presence was felt in his beloved Weimar of the early nineteenth century: "Wealth and speed are what the world admires and strives for . . . and all possible facilities for communication are what the cultivated world desires in order to over-cultivate itself and thereby to stick fast to mediocrity. . . . The fact is that this is the century for able minds, for quick-thinking, practical men with a certain dexterity which enables them to feel superior to the crowd, even though their gifts do not put them in the first rank. Let us try to remain true to the principles with which we came . . . [for] we shall be the last members of an era which may not return so quickly."[81] In Goethe's conversations with the amanuensis of his latter days, Johann Peter Eckermann, he consistently held to his basic premise that the goal of great art is to create motifs, or to capture the universal experiences of all humans. Contra the "creative destruction" of saturated capitalism, he insisted that the "world remains always the

same; situations are repeated," and art must capture these universal experiences.[82] Goethe's, however, was indeed a lost cause, for, as he predicted, mass consumer society led to a cultural leveling of which he would never have approved, with public art moving increasingly away from its rightful role in edification to little more than entertainment and distraction, particularly in Paris.

So in Paris around the middle of the nineteenth century, repressed workers, Realists, dandies, flaneurs, and consumers were all symptoms of the newly triumphant market logics. At the same time, however, there was another movement in art related to Bohemia, where artists got lost among not only the anonymous masses but also their art, and their ways of living tended toward "self-vaporization," by which I mean the dissolvent tendency to seek autonomy from the automaton-like qualities of (bourgeois) subjectivity.[83]

So while mass consumption and market logics took root in Paris, before they did so in Germany but well after England, the Bohemians continued on their path toward self-vaporization, while the "dandy focused his energy on the cultivation of his own person."[84] One sought to dissolve themselves in the crowd, like a commodity, and the other sought to stand out in the crowd as the height of self-mastery, also like a commodity. The term *dandy,* according to Jerrold Siegel, was used as early as the 1760s "to describe someone with pretensions to elegance," but during the Napoleonic Wars, precisely "when the aristocracy was losing its grip on European society," certain wealthy individuals would put on the mask of aristocratic externals: "appearance, bearing, pretension, disdain." These were "elements of upper-class life most easily appropriated by one who had no claim on the deeper and subtler web of family tradition and connections."[85] There were, then, two "opposite theater[s] of self-dramatization" available to those caught in the crosshairs of emergent market logics: one with a valence toward self-cultivation as upper-class mask and one with a valence toward self-vaporization in the face of reification.

While the dandies were blasé by policy, the Bohemians were anything but. Passionate to the core, they "loved the city for its bandits and prostitutes, its 'monstrosities blooming like a flower,' because every departure from the norms of ordinary life opened up a space where the imagination could expand to its own limits."[86] The "Arch-Bohemian" Alexandre Privat d'Anglemont was a renowned night owl, ever in search of these monstrosities. To make a living as a writer, as a prostitute to the market, Privat d'Anglemont wrote a series of stories about the underside of Paris, and this is what made his reputation among the buying public. He would go out late in the evening to study the poorest and most wretched of the city's citizens, the greatest victims of the newly emerging economic regime, in the end claiming that theirs "was a realm where all things seemed possible, where no stable principle of reality set[s] limits to the power of fantasy," and where, "if somebody told me that there exists in some far-off street

a man who makes knife handles out of old moons, I would believe it."[87] Nevertheless, in spite of his honest wonder about the imaginative ways in which humans manage to stay alive when left to their raw wits in utter poverty, Privat d'Anglemont himself, to survive, had to sell the stories to the market of bourgeois citizens eager to hear a salacious or wondrous tale or two of the world beneath them, the world the victorious bourgeoisie had productively repressed: a stolen glimpse into the unsayable and unspeakable.

While dandyism "reconstructed [a false] aristocracy so it could become a vehicle for the modern exaltation of the individual self," Bohemianism "was a characteristic product of the materialistic society that had abandoned any shared spiritual commitment for the anarchic principle of pure individuality."[88] Bohemia, in other words, like dandyism, was a symptom of the emerging market automaton. While members of the Jockey Club played cards and their mistresses danced, and the flaneurs pretended to be above it all by assuming the perspective of the meta-spectator, two fierce and different reactions were taking place on the streets via arts of the self: self-adulation and self-vaporization.

Our primary question is how these various forms of the commodity self are related to the rhetorical unconsciousness of advancing capitalism. As we have seen, in the late Renaissance and in the age of machines, people were very concerned about the nature of the soul and their relationship with automata. The English masques were one of the great last gasps of imagined centered subjectivity, and later the puppets had to tell the tale of the silk workers in Lyon. Yet well into the 1800s, Germany was still divided into a mosaic of principalities, where the freedom to trade had not yet overcome the endless tolls on the Rhine. Supported by a still-fresh Romanticism, hope sprang for arts capable of helping to shape more beautifully subjectivity in the face of the oncoming storm of reification. Wagner created his heroic proto-nationalistic operas based on Teutonic mythology just as Germany began to enter modern, capitalist Europe. Hoffmann was still writing about the uncanny relationship between the human and the machine, which was in practice almost a century earlier in the work of Vaucanson and Le Cat in France and a century earlier in England, when capitalist relations first took root, in pursuit of the void. In Paris, a century ahead of Germany in the race toward market relations yet a century behind England, the dominant forms of public art were fully frivolous, a matter of putting on a good performance of aristocracy or getting lost in the crowd, intoxicated by the monstrosity of the modern capitalist city. These monstrosities included the workers toiling invisibly in the factories and dying young in the slums, with Courbet revealing the repressed via art. These, in sum, were among the clearest symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness in their day: material/cultural manifestations of human subjectivity indirectly reflecting the productively repressive aspects of emergent market logics. The market was turning people into commodities, where

an individual's value was based not on their fundamental humanity or their earned character, let alone their eternal soul, so much as what they were able to sell. This, for many among the more meta-self-reflective, cheapened culture and sullied the human spirit, as an individual's value was reduced to a fully unreasonable, yet structurally overpowering, rationality.

As Lukács observed in "Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat," such material-cultural symptoms, from the dandy to the Bohemian, have everything to do with the slow process of commodification, for "the problem of commodities must not be considered in isolation or even regarded as the central problem in economics, but as the central, structural problem of capitalist society in all its aspects."[89] For him "the essence of the commodity-structure has often been pointed out. Its basis is that a relation between people takes on the character of a thing and thus acquires a 'phantom objectivity,' an autonomy that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people."[90] And look at what London and Paris were like for individuals lost in the masses, where one had no choice but to be radically anonymous in public. Friedrich Engels despised this impersonality, observing with disdain that people in London in the middle of the nineteenth century "crowd by one another as though they had nothing in common, nothing to do with one another, and their only agreement is the tacit one—that each keep to his own side of the pavement, so as not to delay the opposing streams of the crowd—while no man thinks to honor another with so much as a glance. The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest becomes the more repellant and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together within a limited space."[91] The sociologist Georg Simmel maintained that "before the appearance of omnibuses, railroads, and streetcars in the nineteenth century, men were not in a situation where, for minutes or hours at a time, they could or must look at one another without talking to one another."[92] In the 1830s there were even laws forbidding work peers to engage in public discussion in France, and "privacy in public" became yet another symptom of market logics in the large cities.[93]

While it would be useful to continue our historical readings of the symptoms of the repressed Symbolic forces of market logics, these are meant merely to be illustrative rather than exhaustive and merely representative of the first phase of political psychoanalysis: identifying the aesthetic symptoms of negative discursive fields, in this case at the level of the Symbolic and its unconscious structuring influences. Were we to zoom in more closely, say, on the discourses surrounding the public exhibitions of paintings in Courbet's day, or on the discourses surrounding mass National Socialist gatherings in Germany, we could see the unspeakable supporting the unspoken in an inverted manner, but this other analytical level will be bracketed in order to move to the second phase of

political psychoanalysis, which is reading the symptoms and their relative relation to realization and derealization.

The Productive Alienations of Capitalism

As I have worked to show, artificial personhood in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, especially in France and England, was built upon the notion of the human as a machine or as at least part automaton. This led to the transition from soul to mind as part of the demystification of the world via Protestantism. Having reached the technological limits of their day, those seeking to create moving statues—if not artificial life—turned to automation. All of this reflected the process of reification: things being turned into people and people being turned into things.

At first the automaton was frightening, associated with magic and sorcery in the late Middle Ages, but then it became amusing and entertaining, as with the waterworks in the grottoes of elites, situated within mythology, playfully interactive, and in perfect control in a world that was out of control. Associated with advances in science, particularly medicine, automatons were a significant part of popular culture. When attention turned to the scientific and medical uses of automata, revealing how human anatomy worked like a machine, this triggered a Romantic backlash in support of the ideal and the spirit, even as members of the court dressed up like dolls, and when the human-machine problematic turned uncanny and frightening, it was associated eventually with the fake aspects of official culture and blind obedience to authority.

In England, conversely, artificial personhood was primarily associated with the state and political affairs, where anytime one speaks with the voice of another it is artificial, rather than natural, where one speaks with their own voice. Leaving primary repression momentarily aside, and how we always, in a sense, speak with the voice of the Other, the distinction was still to be retained between truly speaking one's mind (in the realm of common sense) and speaking in the voice one thinks they should use to manage the politics of false appearances.[94] We also saw how two very different theatrical practices reflected the two major factions engaged in imaginative warfare over their unconscious Symbolic positions. The public, commercial theater, without perspectival scenery, was more like oration to the lowest house of Parliament, while the private royal theater, with its perfect perspective for the monarch, was a mise en abyme of royalty's own fantasy of the centered subjectivity of the black hole they were.

Later in England and Paris, as capitalist relations began to spread more intensely in the wake of the Industrial Revolution and global colonialism, artificial persons emerged as commodity selves, though of different types and at different times. While in Germany art remained uncanny under Hoffmann and heroic

under Wagner, in England the stock market emerged as a place where self-interest was rightfully viewed as transcending local prejudices, where the pursuit of money pacified otherwise antagonistic parties. There is a parallel form of celebration in Jürgen Habermas's influential *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere,* in which he praises the rise of the bourgeois class as a temporary check against the arbitrary powers of absolutism.[95] Unfortunately when the balance of power eventually switched irretrievably to the bourgeois class, Habermas points out, the window of opportunity for public deliberation closed.[96] The division of labor was celebrated for its productive power, and the alienations of the same were underplayed, while an oppressed class of wage laborers became a primary symptom of market logics. In Paris the repeated defeats of workers' revolutions led to their consequent repression, both physically and ideationally, which in turn triggered the French Realists to reveal the status of those who had been repressed. Privat d'Anglemont made a career out of telling the stories of the most wretched of these people. Flaneurs and dandies emerged on the streets of Paris, also as symptoms of the variously productive repressions of market logics: the former pretending to be above it all as the ultimate spectator, and the latter seeking to retain "the last spark of heroism amid decadence," in Baudelaire's romantic account.[97] In the midst of these aesthetic symptoms, the last attempts at freedom from the chains of the commodity were being taken by the Bohemians. By getting lost in the crowds, taking drugs, and otherwise seeking to discover the eternal and mystical in the quotidian, they began to move away from realism and toward art for art's sake. Amid all of this, in both London and Paris, were the majority of the merely self-conscious shoppers, gathering at the new department stores, making their purchases, and otherwise enjoying the culture of the copy.

It seems clear, therefore, that we have two very different types of aesthetic symptoms here. French Realism, for example, was an aesthetic gesture specifically designed to reveal that which had been repressed by hegemonic forces, as were Offenbach's operettas. Both were designed to create greater realization by forcing the rising bourgeoisie and the dying aristocracy to look directly at what they otherwise refused to acknowledge. Conversely the members of the Jockey Club wanted to avoid thinking seriously about anything, just as the masques in England were designed to replace reality with mythic fantasy, to focus inwardly so closely that an implosion became inevitable. While both valences are symptoms of the unconscious and transintentional forces of emergent market logics, one tends to reduce the fields of the unspeakable that support that unconsciousness, while the other tends to expand the fields of the unspeakable to maintain politically consequential fictions.

Given that all identities, both individual and collective, are a function of capacity and constraint, production and repression, we would also expect that

symptoms of that productive repression would display both pathological and healthy forms: the former seeks to deny the constraining and repressive dimensions required for the productive capacity, given some benefit from making such a compromise, while the latter seeks to speak the unspeakable and unspoken for the sake of healthy political transformation, almost always at the cost of that benefit.

When thinking about how rhetorical unconsciousness is disciplined by both the symbolic Real and the real Imaginary, or the dark matter of the Symbolic and the black holes of the Imaginary, it should be reemphasized that this repression is a requirement for our limited agency. That is, to function within the rationalities of common sense (e.g., "I sell cars"), one cannot too carefully question their assumptions (e.g., "We sell cars at a price that will ensure the monies that come in significantly exceed the monies that go out, so in a way we are ripping the people off"), otherwise the entire system collapses. There are, then, good reasons why fields of the unspeakable exist, since without them there would be no productive discursive repression, no symptoms of our aesthetic status, no culture. There are, however, excellent reasons for speaking the unspeakable, especially when what is repressed leads to unnecessary human suffering. For example in Courbet's day, there were stone breakers and ragpickers living in horrific poverty. There were children working and dying in the factories, while untold numbers starved to death in unheated urban hovels. For the dying aristocracy and the sons of the rising banqueters/bankers in England, however, there was merely the consumption of a void, and later, in Paris, there were the frivolous ballets—though if it was an operetta by Offenbach, audiences laughed uproariously at themselves and their rhetorical unconscious without knowing it.

If it is true that some aesthetic symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness exacerbate that unconsciousness, suturing Symbolic unconsciousness with complementary fields of the unspeakable, while other aesthetic symptoms ameliorate the more negative consequences of rhetorical unconsciousness, by shrinking fields of the unspeakable and making unspoken forces available for meta-self-conscious reflection, then this clearly suggests the possibilities for political psychoanalysis. There are different fields of ignorance, unconsciousness, and repression, resulting in symptoms with different consequences; therefore different types must be distinguished. It also suggests that in political psychoanalysis, as we have done here in rough outline, one must first locate the aesthetic symptoms of, for example, our artificial personhood, then study the ways they tend either toward realization or derealization or the shrinkage or expansion of fields of the unspeakable, and then, third and finally, intervene, as a secular-sacred duty, to support the more positive forms of productive repression, given the inevitability of that process and recognizing that all law has its obscene underside.

CHAPTER 5

Secular Theology and Realization

Now we must move from description to criticism, which entails defending criteria for analytical evaluation. We have already reviewed a theoretical and methodological apparatus that locates different forms of rhetorical unconsciousness, and we have reviewed different historical exemplars of symptoms of that unconsciousness, specifically those of artificial personhood and commodity selfhood. How, though, are we to assess these various symptoms? How do we more generally distinguish the healthy symptoms of *productive* repression from the pathological symptoms of productive *repression*? While both elements are intertwined, they are not equally intertwined in the same way across time and circumstance, as we have seen.

While we must repress to produce, to live, to enjoy, and to know, we are not all equally repressed or repressive. Any cursory glance at different individuals or communities, let alone at human history, easily proves as much. Some live in horrifically oppressive conditions, while others enjoy relative freedom and safety. Some manage to build their lives around dreams, while other lives are reduced to meaninglessness. Some are subject to incessant physical and emotional violence, while others are not. If all discourses are productively repressive in different ways, with some leading to healthy outcomes and others leading to unhealthy outcomes, it is our duty, perhaps even our sacred duty, to understand better the causes of these various outcomes and then act accordingly.[1]

It is one thing to say that unconscious persuasion is just as important as self-conscious persuasion, if not more important. It is another to say that rhetorical unconsciousness manifests itself through symptoms based on productive repression. It is yet another to provide synchronic and diachronic cartographies for identifying and describing the structural and quasi-agentic aspects of rhetorical unconsciousness. Finally it is yet another thing to provide historical examples of such symptoms through manifestations of artificial/commodity personhood. The greatest questions, however, remain: how do we judge these symptoms, and how are we to react to them intentionally?

To distinguish healthy from unhealthy forms of productive repression and to clarify my criteria for judging the return of the repressed, which is the

never-ending reflection of the unsayable, the unspoken, and the unspeakable in the face of the Real, we must now turn to secular theology: secular because it is concerned with the quality of human existence; theology because it is concerned with the meaning of human existence. Specifically we must turn to the controversially named death of God theology within the Christian tradition: a theology that clears a path to the ethics of political psychoanalysis and the critique of the symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness.

Our discussion, therefore, returns us full circle to Schelling and the "dark ground of spirit." Recall that in McGrath's reading of Schelling the unconscious "does not mean simply without consciousness, wholly other than spirit and subjectivity, but rather, spiritual activity which is not self-aware" and that "nature reaches unconsciously toward consciousness, an end it achieves in [humans]."[2] We can now update this to say that consciousness is not merely the unsayable, or that which is "wholly other than spirit and subjectivity," but also the subjective, which is based on the unconscious will of nature, the automaton of the Symbolic, and the more specific productive repressions of the Imaginary. While the past is determined and gone, the future is full of possibility because of this blend of materiality, unconsciousness, and consciousness, and this blend has culminated in animal life existing, and suffering, in the materiality of history, with consciousness of history made possible by humankind's aesthetic breaks. This leads us to political theology.

The interrelated histories of theological and secular law are well known. "'Theological secularism,' or 'secularist theology,'" Nomi Stolzenberg explains, "is a tradition of thought that derives the intellectual case for the necessity of secular law from theological premises."[3] The religious roots of political theory have been traced by a range of scholars, from Ernst Kantorowicz to Giorgio Agamben to Carl Schmitt.[4] As Mark C. Taylor—a death of God theologian—points out, "Every religious schema must provide a way to figure the real," but the vast majority of these religious schemas, according to him, have only captured aspects of the larger theological-political picture.[5] Monists (who reason both/and) locate the real in the present, in immanence, while dualists (who reason either/or) locate the real in the transcendent. Taylor, by way of synthetic compromise, offers a "third religious schema," where "the real . . . is neither present nor absent; rather, it is irreducibly interstitial or liminal . . . [and it] is the *matrix* in which possibility and actuality emerge."[6] The ontical cartography of rhetorical unconsciousness is a map of this liminal and interstitial real, which includes both actuality and possibility, because of subjectivity.

Taylor's third religious schema, in translation and with slight modification, becomes a secular theology when applied to rhetorical unconsciousness and its symptoms. To wit, there is the actuality of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary in history, and yet, for each individual human subject, there is also the

experienced Symbolic and Imaginary dimensions, which in turn can influence the actuality of the Real. It is neither a both/and nor an either/or situation for self-conscious subjects, but an immanence and transcendence simultaneously.

To explore death of God theology and its relevance to political psychoanalysis, I will briefly turn to the different ways contemporary theorists—such as Žižek—speak of agency, for they do so in light of death of God theology.[7] To understand human agency and its limits properly, which reaches its fruition in the real Symbolic, we must keep in mind our ontical cartography of rhetorical unconsciousness, the third religious schema, the automatic aspects of the Symbolic, and the return of the repressed as political symptom. We must remember all of this not only because this is the thread of our argument, but also because agency, within death of God theology, deals precisely with the different ways we can respond to these inescapable limits that accompany subjectivity.[8] Finally I will suggest my own synthetic compromise, which will lead me to conclude.

We are now familiar with the various gaps and elisions that are part and parcel of subjectivity: those within the Symbolic itself, à la Fink and Chiesa; those between subjects and subjects; and those between subjects and objects. These gaps and/or elisions are inherent to the Symbolic and Imaginary internally and externally, producing symptoms in material culture. So let us directly address those gaps and elisions. Once we become self-conscious subjects, through Schiller's moment of entering language, when we become aesthetic beings, there is an immediate and permanent gap, or rupture, between our Imaginary sense of self and our material being. This is primary productive repression: we leave the oceanic self, which is the Edenic experience of life forms without language, and enter the alienated Symbolic realm of self-consciousness. It is our fortunate fall. Then, once we more fully enter the Symbolic, we become involved in secondary forms of productive repression, such as the gender, ethnic, national, and economic relations into which we are thrown. Here we have yet another gap between the unspoken and the unspeakable, framed by the unsayable. Then there are the motivated elisions, in various productively repressed forms, between subjects themselves, within the Imaginary, based upon what people think the Other wants of them and how they respond to that impossible demand. There is no overcoming of these gaps or the majority of the elisions; instead there is a never-ending negotiation, a never-ending sublimation, a never-ending symptomology.

So how do death of God theologians respond to this inescapable predicament? In general they maintain that the actual, historical death of Christ suggests that God was "self-abandoned" by becoming human.[9] Both Thomas J. J. Altizer, a prominent death of God theologian, and Žižek, who also draws heavily upon Christian motifs, view "Christianity as the religion of atheism, and the actually existing church as a betrayal of the true meaning of the gospel,"[10] and this

atheism proclaims God as a suffering humanity unto death leading ultimately to self-responsibility, with no justification whatsoever for the costly false reassurances provided by an imagined master.

As metaphor death of God theology suggests there is no master to fall back on other than ourselves, as the suffering meta-self-consciousness of Being. This frank confrontation with the overwhelming truth of our self-responsibility and the avoidance of any reassuring and unquestionable fantasies are, in fact, for these "Christian atheists" the sincerest search for God. By resolutely refusing all metaphysical comforts in the search for truth, no matter the discomforts of that truth, the person who has gone through the third aesthetic break must incessantly critique any dogmatic assertions seeking to ensure that the inescapable gaps of subjectivity go unaddressed or distorted in the service of derealization. Political psychoanalysis, which includes recognition of one's daily encounter with the automaton, instead requires that the repressed takes center stage and that the return of the repressed is critiqued as the symptom it is, in the spirit of realization.

Most people, many death of God theologians insist, do not have the heroism to face directly the void, the abyss, the black holes, the dark matter, the gaps between subjectivity and objectivity, between the Symbolic and the Imaginary, and within the Imaginary itself, because of the primordial need for metaphysical comfort, and so they seek a master who will look over them, judge them, and tell them what to do instead of looking after themselves and judging for themselves. The metaphysically comforted, the dogmatic, become rigid in their increasingly unquestioned assumptions, primarily out of fear and a deep sense of personal inadequacy, and an expanding field of the unspeakable provides comforting, if ultimately disabling, forms of false reassurance. The heroic type confronts that rigidity in the spirit of realization, since the greater the repression, the more pathological the symptoms, and thus we have our conservative and revolutionary forces in constant tension one with the other.

There has been excellent work done in the philosophy of psychology on the range of ways of relating to common sense, with some leaning toward a crippling hyperreflexivity toward the Other and others leaning toward a crippling desire to know what the Other wants. In some extreme cases, the subject can be totally incapacitated, unable to move or act in their crippling self-questioning as to what should be done, while in other cases the subject acts without regard for the common sense worlds into which they are thrown. Giovanni Stanghellini provides a fascinating discussion of subjectivities crippled by their relationship with the Other in his essay "The Psychopathology of Common Sense." He discusses how some maladjusted subjects are "hyper reflexive." Because they have not absorbed common sense "optimally," they lack "ipseity," which is "a pre-reflective modality of self-awareness [that] guarantees that I sense myself as the center of

my own experiences and that I feel myself as distinct from the object I am perceiving and assures that my representation of that object is experienced as distinct from the object itself."[11] "Hyper-reflexive" types who lack ipseity experience a "loss of automatic action," and there is a "lack of the feeling of distinctiveness between the self and the outer world."[12]

Interestingly ipseity, or the "optimal" prereflective automaton of common sense, provides the subject with the sense of being "centered," which is the thing theorists from Freud to the post-structuralists tell us precisely that we are not, and yet the inability to optimally assimilate one's common sense world leads to very different symptoms. Stanghellini explicitly claims that problems in locating the "optimal relatedness to common sense" is often "the origin of the development of full-blown psychotic symptomatology,"[13] such as we see in highly derealized discursive environments.

Wolfgang Blankenburg also theorizes how common sense can become pathological. For him people with healthy forms of subjectivity can balance their sense of self with their sense of the Other, for as "long [as] the person develops in a healthy manner, each of these poles remains related to and counterbalances the other."[14] Conversely in relation to common sense, schizophrenics experience "a withering away of a sense of tact, a feeling for the proper thing to do in situations . . . and a general indifference toward what might be disturbing to others."[15] Some find themselves lacking "the ability to distinguish between the relevant and the irrelevant," or they think issues through to the point of absurdity. Here, then, we see the "grounding" value of the automaton, its taken-for-grantedness, and the value of the illusion of centered selfhood. As the "healthiness of common sense rests on habituality," schizophrenics could "improve . . . if only they would reflect less."[16]

There is, then, a certain economic relation between the automaton, its grounding properties, and its robotic potential. Normal common sense, on the one hand, is a healthy form of bypassing the abyss of subjectivity in the spirit of a balanced productive repression. Those unable to optimize their relationship with common sense, whether crippled by endless questioning or by brutal disregard for their discursive setting, suffer pathological consequences. On the other hand, normal common sense is unhealthy precisely because it too has its pathological potential, bypassing the gaps of subjectivity, becoming rigid in helpfully reflecting less, and in so doing disallowing a certain range of critique or deviance.

Might secular theology provide a third way of thinking through the relationship between common sense and healthy and pathological subjectivities? I believe the answer is yes. Secular theology not only is about secular law emerging from theological roots, but it is also a radical critique of dogma, religiosity, or any sort of closed-mindedness that pathologically denies the gaps of subjectivity and the inevitable complexities of negative discursive fields, all the while appreciating

the value of productive repression. Exemplifying such a view, Caputo and Vattimo assert that "violence is the fact of shutting down, silencing, breaking off the dialogue of questions and answers."[17] Such a fundamental concern over the expansion of fields of the unspeakable is clearly in line with political psychoanalysis. Violence occurs when the unspeakable reaches a tipping point, when there is no why, and the disciplining of open or innocent questioning is always a clear sign of pathology.

Several commonalities between secular theology and the critique of rhetorical unconsciousness, therefore, are clear.[18] For both secular theologians and political psychoanalysts, it is a truism that as individuals and groups becomes increasingly repressed, or the more rigid they become in their relationship with unquestioned and/or unquestionable presuppositions, and/or the more those presuppositions are imposed upon them, the more we should come to expect increasingly pathological symptoms, eventually leading to violence. Fields of the unspeakable, or the black holes around which our agency revolves, shrink and expand under different discursive conditions, while dark matter, or the unconscious effects of the Symbolic and the truths that escape us, are always at work. Mirrored symptoms in material culture occur when the Symbolic transforms, and pathological symptoms appear when fields of the unspeakable expand. For this reason, according to both secular theology and political psychoanalysis, critical meta-self-reflective individuals must always be on the lookout for increasingly repressed or repressive discourses, especially when a historical or natural truth is being repressed, as this is the strongest possible sign that pathological symptoms, in the form of the return of the repressed, are sure to follow. The challenge is to trace specific types of repression to specific pathologies, both at the macro and micro levels, as I have attempted to do here on the macro, Symbolic level.

Secular theology and political psychoanalysis are also based upon the empirically verified belief that healthier political communities have majorities who are eager and welcome to make arguments freely, question authority, test limits, and comically respond to dead ideas and hypocrisies. When people are allowed to do these things, there are always illuminating effects and greater realization, whereas in demagogic rule, with its mind-deadening spectacles, we find the opposite effects. When productive constraints are available for analysis, fields of the unspeakable remain maximally functional and reasonable. What is true that is not openly stated is largely related to compassion, politeness, and tact. In favorable discursive conditions, the symptoms of the unspeakable are ameliorated by a vibrant public sphere, effective public debate, and flourishing arts. These, of course, are ideal conditions, and there are always fields of the unsayable, unspoken, and unspeakable doing their productive work; therefore it is safe to assume that the normal situation is one where fields of the unspeakable are large and material culture is in some ways obscene. This obscene supplement is the

pathological aspect of the unduly repressed, and it must be confronted, ethically, for the sake of realization. Defending this claim is my final task.

The Death of God and the Subject as Agent

What does it mean to *realize* something? What is realization? When the fictional Paul Bäumer, in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front,* returns home on leave from the horrors of the front, telling his hometown elders about the brutal facts of meaningless death, they are immediately and deeply offended, insisting he knows nothing about it, their jingoistic nationalism blinding them to the truth of history their very blindness reflects. The front, one could say, is itself a pathological symptom, but of what? And what, more precisely, is the jingoistic nationalism a symptom of? It is Bäumer who experiences the actuality of the symptom and who alone realizes the rhetorical unconsciousness of his countrymen. Sobered, he returns to the front and dies along with forgotten millions of automatons, even while his—and all the dead's—countrymen go on living in their symptom-producing dreams. How is this possible? How strong are these forces of derealization, the soothing fictions that cover the gaps in ourselves that cannot be faced, and what are their symptomatic consequences?

Think of the widespread German amnesia in the last half of the twentieth century with respect to the fate of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, with their common refrain "I had no idea," or today's widespread amnesia in Israel regarding the fate of displaced Palestinians. In Germany this amnesia took root just as the property of German Jews was suddenly vacant and available, the Jewish stores vandalized and closed, with open violence inflicted upon innocent Jews everywhere. Then again, there exists the films of German soldiers being forced to watch the results of the death camps, the so-called concentration camps, which they view in complete horror and disgust: the automaton soldier coming to realization. One wonders what more evidence Bäumer's fellow Germans, faced with frequent reports of the dead and the maimed, no matter how doctored by the "Ministry of Information," and with artificial limbs visible everywhere, would need to be honest with themselves.[19] One must wonder what powerful forces keep us from being honest with ourselves, even to the point of creating a symptom such as war, with its subsidiary pathological fantasy of ethnic-national belonging.

Conversely there is something true about realization. One realizes she really did forget her purse, or habitually walks to her car only to realize she took the bus that day. As we have seen, the actual is thoroughly intertwined with the subjective, since a purse and a bus have Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary dimensions. All too often we realize something too late, or at the end of some arduous sequence in the consequential wake of actual words and deeds. We really did forget our purse. We really did take the bus. We really did deserve that promotion.

Regarding the latter, we also realize our dreams, meet our goals, and fulfill our aspirations, whether merely self-consciously or not. This is why some versions of Lacan are overly cynical, assuming that whenever we approach our obscure objects of desire we are disappointed. This is clearly not always so. As with all subjective experiences, realization has its negative and positive aspects, truths that come upon us and truths we produce.

It is another matter altogether how unconscious one's dreams, goals, and aspirations are, for one may have many hopes, and yet many may border on madness. Are they based on mere self-consciousness, as with Bäumer's fellow citizens, or on meta-self-consciousness, as with parliamentary debates about the war effort, or on the model of Bäumer, whose alienating experiences led him to the borders of critical meta-self-consciousness? Realizations are often painful, devastating, such as a fatal diagnosis or the death of a loved one. The sometimes horrid and plain truth of the real Real, even down to the mysterious fate of our self-conscious being, is beyond the ability of words to express adequately. In certain strains of new age metaphysics, we hear that humans are much revered by the larger spirit world, since we, as eternal souls, are willing to become three dimensional, suffer, and die in an ultimate ignorance to learn some lesson or experience some truth. There is, in other words, a great bravery in being the temporary eyes of God. The more secular version of such exceptional bravery, where individuals and groups face the abyss without running to soothing fictions, is expressed by Žižek: "The very need of an external master is a deceptive lure: [a person] needs a master in order to conceal from [her- or himself] the deadlock of [her or his] own difficult freedom and self-responsibility. In this precise sense, a truly enlightened 'mature' human being is a subject who no longer needs a master, who can fully assume the heavy burden of defining [her or his] own limitations."[20] This is a secular form of theological bravery: the ability to face the abyss, the gaps, the unconsciousness of subjectivity while refusing the metaphysical comforts of derealization. It is a bravery, apparently, reserved for the few. Who, after all, might think to risk the double alienation to be endured by simply asking Bäumer, in front of fellow townsfolk, "so tell me, what is it *really* like at the front?" and then listening, knowing that being persuaded would mean a second alienation. The first alienation would be to lose the fundamental fantasy providing metaphysical comfort (i.e., the superior and just German cause), and the second alienation would be from the community of those remaining in the fundamental fantasy: your family, friends, and neighbors, all hopelessly lost in rhetorical unconsciousness.

Those seeking a master, or someone to save them, tend to judge their own actions in light of the presumed judgment of an Other. Secularly speaking, the idea of a God who is always watching is an outstanding mechanism for productive self-alienation, since it places one's actions in perspective, since someone is

always watching.[21] Foucault, for example, speaks of the panopticon, designed by the utilitarian Jeremy Bentham, which is an architectural structure encouraging self-surveillance. It is a prison, school, military barracks, and so on, designed so that the people do not know if they are being watched, but knowing that sometimes they are secretly watched, they incessantly watch themselves. Foucault relates this to the internalization of discipline over the course of the development of capitalism, with the shifting symptom of public executions as evidence. In the age of monarchs, there were gruesome public executions, often, as at Bartholomew Fair, as forms of public entertainment. Such spectacles were eventually replaced by private executions in the advanced capitalist states, as public disciplining was no longer necessary, given the rise of self-surveillance. Also the one who seeks a master needs someone else to watch them, instead of embracing the fact of their irredeemably alienated and gap-filled status and taking responsibility for that status. This desire for a master, both secular theology and political psychoanalysis would suggest, is a negative form of productive repression, since the burden of the lack, the constitutive failure of the subject, is projected onto an enemy or something presumed to be blocking enjoyment.

The ideal here, from a political psychoanalytic point of view, would be to help the master-desiring subject to move through the third aesthetic break (i.e., critical meta-self-consciousness) or to help them, to use Lacan and Žižek's terminology, traverse the fantasy of mere self-consciousness. For Žižek a person only "traverses their fantasy" by gaining at least "the minimum of distance from the fantasmatic frame that organizes [their] enjoyment."[22] Adam Kotsko sees links in such thinking—about the need to be free of a master and thus capable of traversing the fantasy—stretching from Søren Kierkegaard to Žižek: "Just as Kierkegaard's God must be understood as the lack of an overarching guarantee of life's meaningfulness, so also the properly 'theological' level is that which exposes the human subject as self-legislating, with no master—meaning that for Žižek, 'theology,' properly understood, refers to the most radical atheism."[23] Yet this is a hopeful and future-oriented radical atheism, designed in the service of a more honest relationship with our situation as uniquely self-conscious and mortal subjects. Human history, however, shows that such hopes—that people can go without a master and take personal responsibility for the impossibility of their situation—are just that, only hopes. The powerful drive for metaphysical comfort, widespread transcultural and transhistorical ignorance, transintentional Symbolic forces, and fields of the unspeakable proves too much. As history repeatedly shows, there are in fact many, many people who require a master for a variety of reasons, both recognized and not, related to an understandable existential anxiety; thus we have the endless pathologies of negatively valenced productive *repression.*

In the face of death and the real Real upon which we are crucified, unique as self-conscious beings, at the known pinnacle of self-consciousness, who cruelly

must anticipate our demise, going back into the darkness and the possible if not likely loss of this wonderful gift of knowing the object, and given what Nietzsche recognized was the much-needed metaphysical comforts demanded by those who cannot face the abyss of the actual human situation, where there is no overarching guarantee of life's meaningfulness, we shall always have the tragic projection of the void onto others, the silencing of discomforting truths, and the securing of the borders of the speakable to avoid the void at all costs. Then, predictably enough, pathological political symptoms shall emerge, like the realities of the fronts of wars mirroring the repressed fantasies of the frankly deluded people back home.

Exemplifying such a pathological response to existential anxiety in recent history were reports in 2015 that male soldiers of ISIS, seeking to create a twentieth-century caliphate that would return portions of the Middle East to the faith-based thinking of the Middle Ages, before and after raping captured Yazidi women, would politely take time to pray. Binding and gagging sometimes virginal preteen girls, they would defend their actions to others and themselves by claiming that in raping the women they were "drawing closer to God, or engaging in a form of *ibadah* or 'worship.'"[24] Here we encounter the perversion of the obscene Father, the one who transgresses the Law of the Father, or what we might call the natural excess, or excretion, or supplement, or remainder, of the violence of all law, when its limits become unquestionable in a sea of derealization. These individuals, from the point of view of secular theology, are utterly unconscious. They are willing to engage in extreme acts of violence in support of their fundamental fantasy, from which they obtain massive (perverted) enjoyment at the expense of others. They are also collaborators in atrocity, able to displace responsibility for their actions onto their fundamental fantasy, saying, as did Adolf Eichmann, one of the major organizers of the Holocaust, at his trial in Jerusalem, that they were merely fulfilling the will of their superiors and following the sacred law.

A distinction, therefore, must be made, for the sake of an agency as free as possible from the automaton, yet which recognizes how the automaton provides the very ties that bind, between what we might call the faith of the unfaithful's escape and the faith of the faithless, who are faithful.[25] This, according to death of God theologians, is a matter of how one responds to the possibility that God, who became human, died. Does one respond by contracting into religiosity and dogmatic closed-mindedness, expanding the field of the unspeakable and enforcing clear limits on acceptable discourse, or does one expand into the awesome abyss of the freedoms and responsibilities of critical meta-self-consciousness? For Altizer the death of the old master God is an opportunity at redemption from fictions, leading us to the actual God who is now present in every face and every instance of unjust suffering.[26] It is a thoroughly humanist religion without

dogmatic religiosity, though there is no utopia, no avoiding the abyss and its productive repressions.[27]

For Altizer many of those theorists encountered in our discussion of rhetorical unconsciousness, from Hegel, Marx, and Freud to Derrida, Agamben, and Žižek, "these greatest and most radical creators of modern atheism, have ironically proved to be the most seminal influence upon twentieth-century Christian thinking."[28] This means that for "the radical Christian, there is no way to have true faith apart from an abolition or dissolution of God himself [as a master who can absolve us of personal responsibility]."[29] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who died at the hands of the Nazis, also theorized "a 'religionless Christianity' that would discover ways to speak 'in a secular' way about 'God' and would regard itself 'as belonging wholly to this world.'"[30] "Christian theology," Altizer maintains, has been thwarted "from reaching its intrinsic goal by its bondage to a transcendent, a sovereign, and an impassive God."[31] In place of this bondage to the need for a big Other, onto which we project our lack of responsibility, Altizer suggests a religion that is "a historical faith," which "celebrates the human reality of history as an epiphany of the Word . . . , for it is only in the actual and contingent processes of history that Spirit fully becomes flesh," and so suffers.[32] Consequently it is our uniquely sacred duty to grasp the truth of that history, its causes, and our responsibility as the mirrors of Being.

When speaking about the death of God, Altizer insists that he is talking not about "a withdrawal of God" but the death of the transcendent God: "An authentic language speaking about the death of God must inevitably be speaking about the death of God himself. The radical Christian proclaims that God has actually died in Christ, that this death is both a historical and cosmic event."[33] Karl Löwith, from a very different direction, turns to Marxism to provide the most severely atheistic interpretation: "'Once the beyond of truth has vanished, it is the task of history to establish the truth of the here and now.' Once the 'sacred image of human self-estrangement' has been unmasked, criticism must unmask the same self-estrangement in its unholy, profane, economic, and social image, and revolution must transform it."[34] Thus Löwith provides yet another characterization of the third aesthetic break and the task of political psychoanalysis.

Death of God theologians affirm the sacredness of the human situation, but they also assert that the search for whatever God might be must surely relate to the truths of nature and history. Like Marx they too argue that God has come down to Earth, into the problems of truth in the here and now, and that religious truth now involves "the descent of the sacred into the profane."[35] The death of God "does not propel man into an empty darkness, it liberates him from every alien and opposing other, and makes possible his transition into . . . the final coming together of God and man."[36] Do we know and acknowledge our limits,

or do we not? Do we face our existential situation as directly and honestly as possible, or do we retreat into derealization? How much are we capable of realizing?

There is much in dogmatic religiosity that stands in our way. Taylor, as we have seen, disassociates religiosity from religion, associating the former with a closed-mindedness wrapped in derealizing fictions and the latter with an open-mindedness to the inescapable conundrums of subjectivity. In translating the Symbolic as "the finitizing of the infinite," since it organizes the chaos of Being into meaningful units via the symbolic Symbolic and the symbolic Imaginary, and the Imaginary as the "infinitizing of the finite," since it creates very real castles out of the air of the Symbolic via the imaginary Imaginary, the imaginary Symbolic, and the imaginary Real, Taylor gives a critical theological twist to religiosity, resonant with Hegel's notion of our "unconsciousness going amazingly far." "The finitizing of the infinite figures the schemata that lend life meaning and purpose. These forms function as screens or filters that bring order to chaos by creating a world that provides temporary stability. The more effective schemata are, however, the more rigid they become until security breeds a certainty that turns destructive. Religion degenerates into religiosity when the finite as such is absolutized by constructing foundations that are purported to be unshakable."[37] Taylor then points out how the ongoing, networked interactions among the Symbolic ("schemata that lend life meaning and purpose") and the Imaginary ("the infinitizing of the finite") "disrupts, dislocates, and disfigures every stabilizing structure, thereby keeping (the) all in play."[38] But what of the symptoms? We see the destructive tendencies of presumed certainties. How, though, does this help us to judge various manifestations of rhetorical unconsciousness and the return of the repressed?

To answer that question, death of God theology suggests that there are inevitable limits to our subjectivity that should not be papered over by reassuring fictions that fly in the face of all evidence, even though this papering over is the norm. The power of rhetorical unconsciousness is clear, as Bäumer discovered in his fictional town and as one could witness in historical fact during the trial of Eichmann. Such reassuring fictions are reflections of constellations of negative discursive fields that result in pathological political symptoms, from the riotous consumption of royal masques to the mass rallies of Nazis. Realizing that material culture is driven by unconscious forces and a propensity of subjects to desire a master, to displace their desires into objects (from the talking puppet to the commodity), we, as death of God theology suggests, are in a position of truer agency, having thus moved through the third aesthetic break. This realization does nothing to stop the symptoms, of course, but it does change our conscious relationship to them. We have distanced ourselves yet further from the derealizing power of our artificial personhood, the automaton, our being moved by the

presumed will of the Other, and have moved instead toward greater realization, as painful and difficult as that realization might be.

Death of God theology, therefore, suggests an ideal freedom in self-responsibility, resulting from our knowledge of negative discursive fields. By going through the third aesthetic break, we can say with confidence that symptoms, resulting from the productive repression of rhetorical unconsciousness, take on one of two valences: one toward derealization and the other toward realization. While both valences are necessarily founded upon primary and secondary repression, one strengthens that repression and expands the fields of the unspeakable, while the other transforms that repression by revealing, and thus better managing, unspoken and unspeakable fields. Therefore the symptom could be, on the one hand, that increasing "rigidity . . . that turns destructive," tied to a lack of play in a discursive regime overrun by schemata; that desire for a master; or that world where the automaton takes control over "the ghost in the machine."[39] On the other hand, the symptom can be seen as an opportunity to witness the return of the repressed, the trigger of a revelatory process in which the unspoken and unspeakable are artfully articulated, potentially leading to greater realization.[40]

As our ontical cartography shows, subjectivity is an ongoing negotiation between multiple aspects of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary; therefore it is inevitable that our subjectivity is tenuous at best, as circumstances are constantly changing. Regarding the real Real, as Taylor points out, "every structure . . . emerges through events that can be neither anticipated nor controlled."[41] Our imaginative strategies "inevitably fail; the repressed never goes away and always returns to create openings [where matters seemed settled]."[42] Productive repression demands fields of the unspeakable. Nevertheless within all of this is the potential agency of the Imaginary, or "the activity through which the figures that pattern the data of experience emerge, are modified, and dissolved," which is the active use of speech and its subsidiary symbolic codes (i.e., the imaginary Symbolic). *Use,* however, is a relative term, depending upon the ratio between the automaton, or the unconscious Symbolic, the truer agency of meta-self-consciousness, and the even truer agency of critical meta-self-consciousness. The use of speech within mere self-consciousness is unconscious, and meta-self-conscious realms intentionally manipulate that unconsciousness while remaining unconscious. Things are not the same with the use of speech after the third aesthetic break, where we intentionally intervene in the unconsciousness of the first two levels, seeking to focus on the inevitable gaps of subjectivity, their repression, and the material effects of that repression.

At the heart of this negotiation between the three Lacanian registers—his Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary—are the black holes and the dark matter, both

simultaneously constituting the inevitable failure and the inevitable success of productive repression, which is composed around at least three "gaps," as outlined by Žižek in *The Parallax View.* Characterizing three parallaxes, or gaps in our thinking seen differently from different perspectives, he presents the following list: (1) the philosophical gap, which we have explored as primary repression, or the "ontological" parallax between the oceanic self and self-consciousness; (2) the scientific gap, "or the irreducible gap between the phenomenal experience of reality and its scientific account/explanation"; and (3) the political gap, or the political parallax, where "social antagonism . . . allows for no common ground between the conflicting agents."[43] The first parallax is fundamental and universal, while the second is fractured into constellations of the dark matter of nature, history, and the Symbolic, while the third is fractured into discursive constellations around the black hole of subjectivity, the black hole of Symbolic lack, and the black holes of power, all of which are firmly ensconced in the Imaginary. Using a different poetics, we have the cogito (i.e., the empty yet receptive void of primary repression), self-regulating negativity of the Hegelian type (i.e., where posited structures dialectically encounter the unanticipated), and the Freudian death drive, or productive self-alienation (i.e., the impossible sublimation).

Individual and collective subjects must necessarily negotiate these gaps, these parallaxes, and there is a range of ways of doing so, from the unhealthy to the healthy. These range from the more universal desire to know what the Other wants—assuming the Other knows what it wants, which is not the case—to obscene and perverse behaviors that contribute to human misery. The obscene supplement is not simply the perverse, or the love of the law as a protection for unethical transgression, but in all dogmas projecting an enemy while simultaneously strengthening the repressive aspects of negative discursive fields. Such obscenities are diametrically opposed to those behaviors that reveal those overly repressive aspects in the spirit of realization.

Actual human history, as the history of self-consciousness, is, therefore, an endless struggle between these two forces, these two valences of derealization and realization, between the shortsighted and the farsighted. In his *Phaedrus,* Plato discusses this struggle, of how the human is pulled between the ideal and the real, or the heights of the sacred and the depths of the profane, and how the soul must manage these two forces.[44] For Plato, since the state should support the health of the soul, the ideal must be supported at the expense of the real, which is a fallen state. The ideal rests in eternal forms, of which our individual souls are one. Without taking a position on soul as a metaphysical and speculative question, I instead maintain that the history of self-consciousness is a struggle between derealization and realization, with the former, historically speaking, always having the upper hand. Furthermore history also suggests that religiosity has been a primary source of derealization and the violence that accompanies

certainties that turn destructive. Who will deny the historical relationship between differences of religion and violence, across recorded human history, including today? The long religious wars of the early seventeenth century led to the deaths of almost a third of the German-speaking population, and over eight million perished over the questions of religious dogma. What of the war today between Muslim jihadists and the Christian, capitalist West? What are jingoistic, ethnic nationalism and religious fundamentalism if not pathological forms of secular religion?

For Žižek we can never escape obscenities acting in the name of the truth of law. Here is his logic, spelled out at length, showing how phenomena such as ISIS, Boko Haram, Al Qaeda, or other groups who engage in terrorism against their enemies are created naturally via the primary and secondary forms of repression we have already looked at closely.

> Primordial repose [in the oceanic self] is first disturbed by the violent contraction, of self withdrawal [the mirror stage], which provides the proper density of the subject's [Imaginary] being; the result of this contraction is a deadlock that tears the subject apart, throwing [them] into the vicious cycle of sabotaging [their] own impetus—the experience of this deadlock is dread at its most terrifying. In Lacanese, these [violent contractions] create a sinthome, the minimal formula of the subject's consistency—through the sense of having a centered self, the subject becomes a self-conscious creature proper, and anxiety is precisely the reaction to this overproximity of one's sinthome. This deadlock is then resolved through Prohibition, which brings relief by externalizing the obstacle . . . into an . . . impediment. As such, Prohibition gives rise to desire proper, the desire to overcome the external impediment, which then gives rise to the anxiety of being confronted with the abyss of our freedom.[45]

So there are three anxieties being managed by the fundamental fantasy of the subject's consistency that drive subjectivity toward derealization: (1) the dread of nothing, of death, of the black hole of subjectivity; (2) the dread of the overproximity of the externalized obstacle, or that which is productively prohibited, which is merely a placeholder for desire, or a scapegoat, for the first, existential anxiety; and (3) dread of the abyss of true freedom, where one submits and unquestionably follows the Law of the Father, no matter how obscene, instead of accepting full responsibility for their actions within acknowledged and incessantly tested limits. There is, however, potential freedom from this circle of anxiety, though this requires the third aesthetic break; it requires the most theological bravery, and this is something, for Žižek, that the zealously religious—in a fundamentalist, dogmatic sense—cannot accomplish. They are too filled with dread, and so they seek metaphysical comfort more than the groundless abyss and the

freedom of realization. Then come the obscene symptoms. Ultimately a truer form of agency is the incessant critique of these obscene symptoms in the service of realization.

Against the Obscene Supplement

Whenever variously empowering limits become unquestionable, from those more fully unconscious to those that are metaphysically comforting, whether purely structural or imposed by law or force, and because that involves derealization via productive repression, there are inevitable obscene symptoms or various ways the repressed returns in perverse forms. It is these more perverse forms that are the precise targets of political psychoanalysis: symptoms of highly repressed and repressive discursive fields that provide obscene enjoyment based on the unnecessary repression of others, or symptoms reflective of fantasies that fly in the face of realities. The problem, politically speaking, is that the perverse forms never go away; instead they emerge in different iterations in different discursive conditions. According to Žižek, and Walter Benjamin as well, there is always something obscene, and violent, about the law, not only the law proper but the Law of the Father, or the dominant subjective code. The law is, Žižek says, a paradox "grounded in the constitutive excess of representation over represented."[46] Yes, state power represents, to some extent, the interests of certain subjects, and the state is to some degree under their control, but "at the level of the superego underside, however, the public message of responsibility . . . is supplemented by the obscene message of the unconditional exercise of power."[47] Obey or else.

The certainty of sovereignty is always accompanied by something pathological, something obscene and beyond reason, as it is, at its limit, unquestionable, and the arbiter of the exception. True believers, following the law through some chosen master, imagine themselves absolved from personal responsibility, for they do whatever they must do because they are simply following the law (e.g., the jihadi rapists).[48] For these desperate true believers, Eric Hoffer claims, "Faith in a holy cause is to a considerable extent a substitute for the lost faith in ourselves."[49] This displacement of personal responsibility for one's actions is "the ultimate ethical failure," since "being God's instrument means that one is permitted and even encouraged to break the common moral laws in the service of a[n imagined] higher goal" or to "adopt the perverse position of [being] a direct instrument of the big Other's will."[50] When one allows themselves to be subject to another's will, they run straight into the arms of artificial personhood and the automaton-like features that lead to the worst political psychopathologies, though the risk is endless and in many ways inevitable.

Just as lethal as the pathological symptoms of true believers, whose need for metaphysical comfort prevents them from honestly questioning taken-for-granted assumptions, are the ones displayed by those whom Sloterdijk has identified

as having achieved enlightened false consciousness. Here are those perverse individuals who know the law they follow is a sham but cynically follow it anyway, for various types of enjoyment. This is why Žižek suggests that an excellent practice in the service of realization is to take the law literally. Take, for example, the speed limits on U.S. highways, which now are usually between fifty-five and seventy miles per hour. Anyone who drives a car, however, knows that most people drive about ten to fifteen miles per hour over the speed limit, with the police watching. If cars going the legal speed limit blocked each lane, then most people would go crazy from being denied their extra enjoyment.[51]

This extra and perverse enjoyment woven into the system of the law is precisely why we must be as effective as possible in critiquing the kinds of concepts and practices that become hegemonic in automatic circumstances, where discursive fields are vast, involving grotesque distortions, with labels for subjects such as "heroes," "hesitators," and "cowards."[52] In this sort of militarized cynicism, such labels ensure that anxiety is displaced onto the exteriorized enemy. Those with enlightened false consciousness prey upon subjects through such language, and this in subjective situations where everyone is interjected into forced choices and where the guilt of submission must be compensated for through overzealous identification with the group, eventually, or else. This leads to the pathological: "Let me pray to God before I do you unspeakable harm." The rapist might selflessly work in a soup kitchen in his local, devastated situation for those historically repressed and purposely under-resourced. Still this is a pathological theology, since the price to be paid for the sympathy is total obedience to a masked, perverse enjoyment: "I must rape you as God commands, so that I can continue to do His good works."

Sloterdijk, like me, wants to separate enlightened false consciousness, or true cynicism, from what he calls kynicism, or "the urge of individuals to maintain themselves as fully rational living beings against the distortions and semirationalities of their societies."[53] The hegemonic powers, managing, whether wittingly or not, aspects of the given negative discursive field, "definitely see there is an element of truth in [the provocations of the kynics], but proceed with oppression" anyway.[54] Kynicism is reasoned resistance against the unquestionable, while cynicism is productive *repression,* where *ruling* and *lying* are synonyms. This lying, however, is complex, and so the pairing of *kynic* and *cynic* is too blunt of a theoretical instrument.

No doubt there is totally cynical enlightened false consciousness, as we have seen with the manipulators of the second aesthetic break, and there is the false consciousness of those who have not even made that second break, and then there are the careful critics within the system and careless ones outside with little left to lose. Realistically speaking, no one can be fully liberated from the automaton or the unconscious aspects of the Symbolic, and few can be even partially

liberated from fields of the unspeakable, functional as they are and enforced by an ultimate violence. There can be no fully cynical or kynical subject, only subjects tending in different ethical directions.

We see a much more nuanced, carnivalesque version of this lying in championship wrestling, written about so insightfully by Roland Barthes in his essay "The World of Wrestling." In championship wrestling it is the mythic form that counts, not whatever might be thought of as "the facts," which is why "out of five wrestling-matches, only about one is fair."[55] What matters far beyond material truth (e.g., is it a sincere, professional wrestling match or a theater show?) is ethical consistency, and nothing drives the crowds as wild as a wrestler who breaks a law and then calls upon that very law in his own defense, punctuated with the periodic "joy" of the vanquishing of a clear "bastard." As an image or representation of the larger ethical battles of society, the perfectly understandable anxiety about the general lack of social justice is usefully sublimated into a form of ethical entertainment based on well-known symbolic codes and something particularly reassuring, as a performance within a performance, as opposed to the real world where the codes are far less clear. We can usefully compare this carnivalesque version of affective identification to Sloterdijk's broader argument in *You Must Change Your Life.* He insists that the ideal actually only requires the perfection of a "neutral" routine, such as learning to dance, sculpt, juggle, play a guitar, make books, design software, and so on. There is tremendous enjoyment to be gotten from playing with the surfaces of a clear symbolic model and, in so doing, perfecting an increasingly intelligible, useful, and perhaps even beautiful human product. It is the perfection of nonviolent sublimation that matters. "What the public wants is the image of passion, not passion," because the art is in the role, not in what is "behind" the role, and the truth of human existence is always indirect.[56]

This brings us back to different types of agency. We know what totalitarian states are like, for the mass graves are proof, with their torture centers, militarized police forces, internal spies, and absence of free speech. No doubt such states exercise agency, but of a pathological type based on widely repressed and repressive discursive fields and their consequent material symptoms. This is productive *repression.* We also have the sincere, noncynical agency of those who do their best to resist such states, working, say, for the resistance or nongovernment organizations or otherwise organizing relief efforts. This is *productive* repression in the form of compassion and empathy in the realm of meta-self-consciousness. With the third aesthetic break, however, we are looking at agency in a very different light. Now we come to realize the agency of the merely self-conscious, the meta-self-conscious, and the critically meta-self-conscious. The main political dangers come primarily from the first group, because they have not yet learned to be beside themselves. This ignorance is particularly explosive when combined

with the enlightened false consciousness of cynics from the second group. Both groups promote productive *repression,* with the former due to their fears and shortcomings, which they cannot directly confront, and the latter due to their meta-self-conscious ability to manipulate those fears and shortcomings for personal or factional purposes, at the expense of broad swaths of the population.

In judging the return of the repressed, and the contours of productively repressive discourses, therefore, we must first distinguish between the naive and cynical imposition of Symbolic and Imaginary orders, which go unquestioned or are declared objective, natural, inviolate, and no longer in need of discussion, and epistemic forms of knowledge. For example productive repression in the sciences requires just such assumptions of naturalness and objectivity, given the weight of empirical evidence and the evolution of testing.[57] There is a laser focus on a specific set of questions, and broader public concerns are largely bracketed out. This too is a form of agency, but not the type we are looking for as political psychoanalysts of rhetorical unconsciousness. Instead of naive, cynical, or scientific agency, we are speaking of a critical agency capable of ameliorating the damage, innocent or not, done by these other forms.

The sort of agency we are looking for is located in the Imaginary realm opened up by the third aesthetic break, a self-distancing from cultural common sense and meta-self-conscious persuasion sufficient to gain perspective on the limits and contours of negative discursive fields. It is the recognition that in the realm of subjectivity there is always some sort of obscene violence, some symptom, some excess, yet that "excess" takes different forms in different situations. Whenever repression takes precedence over healthily sublimated production and negative discursive fields expand, pathological symptoms invariably emerge. So what might the truer agency of critical meta-self-consciousness entail?

Death of God theology suggests that the sincerest way to worship God is to pursue what is true, both in nature and in history, since the Word, and our unique relationship with it, makes this reflective truth possible. Nature is neither true nor false, and there is nothing absent in nature, but this is not the case with subjectivity, which is both true and false and absence often trumps presence. Given the truth of subjectivity, however, and if we honestly pursue what subjectivity teaches us over the course of time, then, even in our endless grief, we can find ways to sublimate that grief into beautiful aesthetic forms. The key is to separate the productive disciplining of artists, scientists, professionals, and others who accomplish specific tasks in the grand scheme of the discursive economy from the sort of "disciplining" that goes on in the rhetorical realm or the realm of practical wisdom. Members of the former types are out there rationally pursuing their tasks, largely oblivious to the resonance of their work with the larger world. This chaos, however, calls for political management. As opposed to fields of the unspeakable for makers, which are semijustified considering what is being

made, fields of the unspeakable in the broader realm of public rhetoric can easily become pathological, expanding dramatically as power is consolidated.

We have, however, the critically meta-self-reflexive power to respond to these pathological conditions once recognized for what they are. Our entrance into the Symbolic may be a fall from our oceanic self, but ultimately, for death of God theologians, this is a fortunate fall. Referring to the fall of Man in the Genesis story, where eating from the Tree of Knowledge and thus acquiring language condemned humans to be like the gods, these theologians speak explicitly and consistently about how fortunate we are, as self-conscious beings, to have fallen into the Symbolic. In Žižek's terms, when discussing the Gospel of Saint Thomas, "the Fall . . . is already a Salvation which we misrecognize as a Fall."[58] It is a salvation not in some eternal sense but in the sense of realization, epiphany, and enlightenment, specifically related to Schelling's "dark ground of spirit," the forces of the black holes and the dark matter, which incessantly compose negative discursive fields. It is to be always on the lookout for these dark forces, especially given that all subjectivity is founded on repression.

Let us return, finally, to the masques of the English court and the commercial London theaters, considering them as symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness to be judged. And let us not be fooled: the artistic minds involved in the construction of masques and public plays knew precisely the sorts of codes to employ to get their messages across. As Stephen Orgel reminds us in *The Illusion of Power,* as the parliamentary forces became increasingly dissatisfied with what they saw as a corrupt and alienated monarchy, "the legal profession was on the whole uncomfortable about . . . Divine Right . . . [and so in] 1634 the Inns of Court took the remarkable step of retaining Inigo Jones and James Shirley in an attempt to speak to the king in his own language. The lawyers presented a masque at Whitehall that was, for all its courtly splendor, diplomatically but unequivocally critical of the royal policies, and undertook, through the power of poetry, to persuade the royal spectator to return to the rule of law."[59] King Charles, soon to lose his head, was dutifully impressed with the show of republicanism, complete with perspectival scenes from republican Italian city-states. Nevertheless two weeks later he presented a masque of "his own view of his place in the commonwealth . . . [that] conceive[d] the royal will as central to an unprecedented degree."[60] It was a competition of ideal representations, with the lawyers and others trying to persuade Charles to republicanism and Charles insisting on the superior beauty and perfect perspective of absolutism.

If the masque in general was an aesthetic reflection of the productive repressions of divine right, or the language understood by Charles, then indeed it was a symptom of derealization. In fact Charles did not realize the distance between his ideal and mythic self-presentation, privately presenting his self to the court through the stage, even at his execution. Before that event, which itself was a

symptom of the return of the repressed, there was little room for questioning the limits of his power. At his execution he carried the ideal dignity of the king, handing out small ornamental gifts to his favorites as he passed, the executioner and attendants, some in butcher costumes, waiting. As we have seen, there were accompanying symptoms in architecture and spatial relations resulting from the sovereign desire for greater and greater privacy, which was impossible. The deeper the privacy became, the greater the reflection of power via access, similar to the spatialization of politics at the masques themselves. This all occurred at a time when monarchs were increasingly surrounded by other private attendants, as they used the bathrooms and lounged in their bedrooms. Then the additional symptom of the banqueters/bankers storming the stage and consuming the masque's expensive voids unconsciously reflected the larger changes taking place in the Symbolic.

All the while, in the mix of the imaginary Real, emerging from new human relations of exchange, and the symbolic Real, or the unconscious disciplinary power of those new relations, was the very real power of the rising bourgeoisie, particularly through banking and colonial trade, including, of course, in slaves. No longer could the monarch control the freedom to trade, to monopolize profiteering, in the dawning days of global capitalism. Who, though, could tell at the time that closets inside of closets, the eating of voids in secluded little buildings or turrets, the consumption of the masque by the rising bourgeoisie and the dying aristocrats, were symptoms of what could not be said in the discursive regimes of colonialism, slavery, and divine right?

At the same time, we know that public, commercial theaters were also rising as a cultural force, as yet another material-cultural symptom of the rhetorical unconsciousness of their age. Focused on historical tragedy and farcical comedy, it is difficult to see how the commercial theater was as unconscious as the masques of the monarchs. This was more like speaking truth to power through a puppet, no less than the puppeteer of Lyon with his wooden silk worker. This is not to say there were no unconscious Symbolic and Imaginary forces at work in both the masque and the commercial theater. It is to say instead that the people's house of Parliament focused not on fantastic ideality but instead on the tragic aspects of power and the comic ridiculousness of certain aspects of life. Kings James and Charles preferred a theater that was a mirror of how they fancied themselves, and in the end they were lost in their reflection. Shakespeare and Jonson preferred a theater that was a mirror of this mirror, a great mise en abyme, in ways that led to deeper reflection on the part of the "rougher" public.

While we could go through each of the earlier examples of aesthetic symptoms one by one, explaining how they ranged from the healthy to the pathological, suffice it to say that some, such as the best of the court jesters, the French Realists, the silk worker puppets in Lyon, and the republican masque for King

Charles, sought to speak the unspeakable through an aesthetic medium, while others, such as King Charles with his masques, or the Jockey Club in France with its prostitution-dancehall culture, or the rising bourgeoisie with their tiny pictures of happy peasants on their walls, were ensuring that certain zones of thoughtlessness existed for personal pleasure and reassurance. Then again, there was Wagner trying to get serious with his Teutonic mythology, which proved to be its own symptom as harbinger of ethnic German nationalism. Yet he too attempted to create great art in the wake of his controversial support for the ultimately failed workers' revolutions. Similarly Jacques Offenbach used myth to speak the truth to power through another type of object: the operetta. Yet he himself was impossibly caught up in the marketization of art in his day. Still we might say that Offenbach was likely the healthiest form of resistance to the rhetorical unconscious of his day, while Wagner, even though an avowed sympathizer with the workers' rebellions, as well as the Jockey Club members who mocked him, both in their own way retreated into fantasy. Offenbach used fantasy to tell the truth, while the others used fantasy to suture a fantasy.

To make such distinctions, when all is said and done, between tragic, obscene, and perverse symptoms and heathier, funnier, happier symptoms requires a serious and sustained cataloging of how we go about not knowing things, including what I have identified more specifically as our "unknown knowns." As expressed by Agamben, "The ways in which we do not know things are just as important (and perhaps even more important) as the ways in which we know them. There are ways of not knowing—carelessness, inattention, forgetfulness—that lead to clumsiness and ugliness, but there are others . . . whose completeness we never tire of admiring."[61] He laments that "we lack even the elementary principles of an art of ignorance" and how "the art of living is . . . the capacity to keep ourselves in harmonious relationship with that which escapes us."[62] This treatise of mine has attempted to provide a window onto these "arts of ignorance," which are more precisely described as arts of ignorance, unconsciousness, and repression.

We are impossibly ignorant of the infinite specificities of history, and thus subject to broad stereotypes, and we are ignorant as well to what escapes the grasp of science. We are unconscious of the Symbolic mechanisms we live self-conscious life through, which include language, money, technology, then gender, race, nation, and class, with the latter blending more deeply into the Imaginary. We then must repress a great deal of discourse to be normal, to play by the rules of the presumed Other we are supposed to know, and to gain a profession. These subtler distinctions must be made to grasp that which escapes us and why it escapes us, with the goal of moving away from the obscene symptoms of productive repression and toward truer agency beyond enlightened false consciousness.

Conclusion

Agency and Realization

When Schelling wrote of the dark ground of spirit, he spoke of "spiritual activity that is not self-aware" and of how "nature reaches unconsciously toward consciousness, an end it achieves in [the human being]."[1] Accordingly we, as self-conscious creatures in possession of the word, are arguably the flower, the pinnacle, of nature's unconscious desire to know itself, and so this is a sacred relationship with the truth of "Being," no matter how much that truth eludes us. Yet within this unique capacity lies a dialectical relationship with rhetorical unconsciousness and degrees of self-consciousness related to a political aesthetics. In his study of Schelling's theory of the unconscious, S. J. McGrath asserts that the "convergence of unconscious processes with goal-oriented activity makes art an inverse image of nature: natural entities appear deliberately designed but are unconsciously produced; artworks appear unconsciously produced but are deliberately designed. Art and nature are therefore complementary revelations of the indifference of consciousness and unconsciousness in the absolute."[2] On the most abstract and metaphysical plane, this may well be truth, but we have been precisely interested in the difference between relative consciousness and unconsciousness in the human part of the absolute equation, because, while nature and art both have their unconscious aspects, not all unconsciousness is equal in human affairs. As repeatedly emphasized, where there is greater rhetorical unconsciousness, one can expect more pathological symptoms in material culture; where there is less, there are fewer. When freedom of speech is tragically curtailed, negative discursive fields expand and derealization is in the ascendant. When freedom of speech is comically expanded, realization is in the ascendant. This type of freedom is based on what Kenneth Burke called "true irony," where comedy is not bitter but filled with empathy and humility, recognizing the frailty and natural failings of the human creature: sacred, alienated, afraid.[3]

There are reasons why Schelling, and secular theological perspectives in general, should come first in our work on rhetorical unconsciousness, for he deals with the unsayable, which is the unknown basis of all subjectivity. Nature does appear to have a mind of its own, what appears as order emerges from what appears as disorder, and the animate emerges from the inanimate, only to return to the apparently disordered and inanimate nature that produces this ordered animation.[4] So on the one hand, we should have a certain reverence for this apparently unconscious mind of nature, which creates life and self-will. On the other hand, even if we do not believe in the soul, or the eternal form each of us might have beyond our bodily incarnations (à la Plato), this self-consciousness is a frankly miraculous temporary privilege, to be the eyes and mind of nature, if only for a moment, reflecting upon itself.

Still, in the face of eternity and our evident meaninglessness in the grand scheme of things, when we face the abyss directly, we can understand a widespread if repressed human nausea, coupled with the desperate desire for metaphysical comfort. As death of God theologians insist, however, it is facing this nausea with a steadfast belief in the truth, whatever that honest truth might be—and resisting the pathological consequences of derealization—that constitutes the highest form of bravery, wisdom, and true religious faith.

Our human world, however, is filled with pathological forms of ignorance, unconsciousness, and repression, and this apparently is also our lot as a species. Once we acknowledge these broader valences of rhetorical unconsciousness and our general ignorance in relation to the same, and once we consider the sort of ethical relationship that entails, we must immediately come down to earth.

In actual practice, as opposed to the ultimate and the ideal, rhetorical unconsciousness is a powerful and dangerous force. Here I have worked to describe rhetorical unconsciousness in its various dimensions and to provide clear historical examples of symptoms of the return of the repressed. The goal was to find ways to critique and intervene in processes of derealization, which are legion, and to rethink artful political action in the wake of the third aesthetic break. Given the incessant horrors and injustices of human history, we can secularize such a theological view with Benjamin's "weak Messianic power" or his taking of a "revolutionary chance in the fight for the oppressed past."[5] Translated in the terms of rhetorical unconsciousness, it is our weak powers of agency and realization that are always in battle with the strong powers of automatism and derealization, and there is a sacred duty in fighting for realization.

In a statement resonant with Gustav Mueller's Hegelian conception that "the good of yesterday become[s] a fixation to be overcome, an enemy of the good today," Mark Taylor says the same thing of dogmatic religiosity, which is a derealizing symptom, as opposed to the need to be as completely alienated from dogma as possible: "It is important to recall that the two sides of the imagination

are expressed in the two moments of religion. Constructive figuring provides the forms and norms that render life meaningful and purposeful. Once articulated, however, these figures and patterns tend to become fixed and resist change by being absolutized in various types of religiosity. Eventually, ideas and norms that fail to adapt to changing circumstances are displaced by competing schema that allow people to function more effectively."[6] If we replace "constructive figuring" with the use of the Symbolic via the Imaginary, particularly as it resides in the imaginary Real and the imaginary Symbolic, acknowledging the automatic aspects of the Symbolic, coupled with the need for metaphysical comfort, we can understand why the forms and norms that make life meaningful—such as being a hero in defending one's country—can "become fixed and resist change." This is what Bäumer discovered in *All Quiet on the Western Front.* Sadly it often takes a great deal of violence for new competing schema to replace what is fixed and resistant to change, which by definition tends toward derealization.

Our ultimate goal, then, given the real powers of rhetorical unconsciousness, once we better understand its structure and how it operates in material culture, is to find ways to intervene in pathological repression, discovering arts of resistance to the gruesome seriousness of what passes for the real, where only a jester or a puppet can say out loud what everyone knows is an unknown known.[7]

To defend the art of political psychoanalysis as the identification and critique of symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness and how it leads us to an ethics of intervention in processes of derealization, I will conclude by first restating the main steps of my argument, suggesting, in light of our historical examples, how this places us in a new relationship with self-consciousness, providing new possibilities for agency and realization. I will then explore the larger implications of the analysis of rhetorical unconsciousness for rhetorical studies in general, clarifying the meaning of political psychoanalysis and its clear difference from clinical psychoanalysis.

This study began with the claim that we are all persuaded by that of which we are ignorant, that of which we are unconscious, and that which is repressed, and this constitutes our rhetorical unconsciousness. The specific content for these negative discursive forces that productively repress, I then stressed, is composed of three types: fields of the unsayable, fields of the unspoken, and fields of the unspeakable. Fields of the unsayable constitute the outer limits of the subjective, while fields of the unspoken are the codes we use—and are used by—unconsciously. This is the dark matter that contains our discursive universes. Fields of the unspeakable are repressions that lead to different symptomatic capacities. These are the black holes around which our discourses circulate. Because these twin forces have a direct impact on the political, political psychoanalysis is called for. Political psychoanalysts seek to identify and critique the return of the repressed as a symptom of rhetorical unconsciousness and to interrogate the

imposed limits of productive repression in the service of realization and political health.

Such a framework, I maintain, helps to resolve the seemingly irresolvable impasse between defenders of intentional rhetoric and critical rhetorical approaches based on post-structuralist accounts of persuasion, where intentional agency is radically problematized. To characterize this resolution concisely, however, first requires that the terms of the debate are clear, starting with the tricky word *rhetoric*. I reviewed the intentionalist rhetorical tradition as it emerged from ancient Greece and Rome and how that tradition constituted a second aesthetic break, or the ability to step outside of oneself to gain greater perspective on the given conditions of cultural common sense. Composed of technical, sophistic, and philosophical branches, however, the intentionalist rhetorical tradition never proved capable of stepping outside of meta-self-reflection, save for hints here and there, such as Bacon's discussion of the idols or Novalis's conception of subjectivity as poetics. Therefore, to address this incapacity and identify its contours, I then drew upon argumentation theory as well as aspects of traditional rhetorical theory to show that there is always a penumbra of ignorance that surrounds our subjectivity.

Once the central distinctions between intentional and unconscious rhetorical processes were clarified, and in order to provide the clearest possible map of the structural aspects of rhetorical unconsciousness, built upon the broad Lacanian categories of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary, I next turned to an important debate between Žižek and Laclau over the proper definition of the Lacanian Real. To set up this debate, and to set the stage for an ontical cartography of the subject/object relation, I stressed the usefulness of thinking about self-consciousness as that which is formed between the twin forces of black holes and dark matter, the former identified in the map as the real Imaginary (i.e., the productive prohibition against contact with the organizing absence) and the latter primarily identified with the symbolic Real (i.e., the unconscious disciplinary structuring effects of symbolic codes).

The resulting map of rhetorical unconsciousness has nine aspects, each of which are crucial for appreciating the structural elements of unconscious persuasion: three dimensions each at the level of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary. The three dimensions of the Real are the real Real, the real Symbolic, and the real Imaginary. Respectively these are the dimensions of the actual and constitutive limits of nature and history, the Symbolic, and the productive prohibitions of the Imaginary. Next, at the Symbolic level, or in the dimension of the automaton, there is the symbolic Real, the symbolic Symbolic, and the symbolic Imaginary, which respectively are the unconscious disciplinary force of codes, codes themselves as systems, and the useful elements of codes. Then, at the level of the Imaginary, there is the imaginary Real, the imaginary Symbolic, and the

imaginary Imaginary, and this is where most of our delimited agency resides, ranging respectively from the invention of objects to the use of codes to pure fantasy.

Given these nine dimensions of the ontical, I concluded my mapping procedure by asserting that the unsayable, and the truly actual, are located in the real Real (i.e., that which lies outside the limits of the subjective). The unspoken is located in the symbolic Real, though it is alone made possible by the automaton of the symbolic Symbolic, and the unspeakable is located in the real Imaginary, where repression makes subjective production possible. These, then, are the primary zones to focus on when thinking about rhetorical unconsciousness.

Although rhetorical unconsciousness is located principally in the real Real, the symbolic Real, and the real Imaginary, this is no reason to ignore the nature and function of the other six dimensions, especially since changes in any influence the others. So if the real Real is actual nature and history, which in its infinite specificity impossibly eludes complete realization, the real Symbolic is our sense of truth, as it always must be, in retrospect. It is this sense of truth that motivates action. It is the positive assertion of the limits of subjectivity, always ultimately falsified by the ever-changing real Real. The symbolic Symbolic is clear enough—it is the codes themselves as objects and forces—and the symbolic Imaginary is composed of the useful elements of those codes or the elements available to be deployed. That deployment depends upon the limited agency of the imaginary Symbolic, which is the individual's actual use of codes, which results either in the imaginary Real, where something is creatively made that then circulates in the actual, or in the imaginary Imaginary of unrealized fantasy.

A structural map alone, however, fails to capture the dynamic nature of rhetorical unconsciousness and its temporal and political dimensions. While we can "take photographs" of rhetorical unconsciousness in particular times and locations, as was done in this study, it is in fact a never-ending film. The ontical map provides a synchronic look at rhetorical unconsciousness, but it is equally important to take a diachronic look, recognizing that productive repression never ends and never stops producing variously healthy and pathological symptoms. Thus I turned to Foucault, Ranciére, and Freud to show that all identities simultaneously enable and constrain and the distribution of the sensible never stops, and how all that passes for civilization requires some form of productive repression.

Finally, before turning to the automaton of the Symbolic and historical examples of artificial personhood, I reviewed how individuals acquire rhetorical unconsciousness over time. First we experience Schiller's aesthetic status through the primary repression of language, which is then quickly followed by the secondary and tertiary repressions of Symbolic and Imaginary enculturation. Historically speaking, within this process most individuals are productively repressed in ways that keep them merely self-conscious. These are the unconscious racists,

the jingoistic nationalists, the religious fundamentalists, and others who are so sure they are correct that they are willing to harm others for their Imaginary cause. The second aesthetic break, which I associated with the intentionalist rhetorical tradition, unfortunately fails to transcend this impossible quest for subjective certainty. While a step forward in consciousness, paradoxically as the ability to step back from one's given subject position and become alienated a second time—not only from nature but also from one's common sense position—and in so doing gain perspective on a common sense rhetorical situation, there are still several problems related to agency. How do we avoid factionalism and unenlightened self-interest? More philosophically we are still forced to make decisions in an ultimately undecidable terrain, and we cannot do this without presumed certainty. This, then, led to my reassertion of the crucial importance of rhetorical unconsciousness and its symptoms, which appear clearly only after a third aesthetic break.

While the chain of reasoning is admittedly long, it culminates in the following set of questions: What are the material-cultural effects of ignorance, unconsciousness, and repression in subjectivity and history, given that they are necessary components of our tropological existence? How do we identify symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness in history?[8] When we do locate symptoms, what are their relationship to realization? To answer these questions, I turned from theory to praxis, arguing that, because there is a little repressed automaton in all of us, given that our imaginaries are built unconsciously upon the Symbolic, a reasonable site for the analysis of rhetorical unconsciousness was in historically situated forms of artificial personhood. It is the automaton that enables and constrains, but it does so blindly. Couple this with the deep need for metaphysical comfort, and one has the ingredients for a mindless society that loves to march, to be lost in the masses. Because there is so much that is not said, cannot be said, and should not be said in what passes for real life, we necessarily see aesthetic forms reflecting what remains unknown, unconscious, and repressed.

As my decided focus has been on secondary Symbolic forces and their automatic functioning, I picked times and locations in history with which I was already familiar, and the goal was to focus on transintentional forces such as technology and money, since these forces are known to shape subjectivity in unconscious ways. Turning to the late European Renaissance, I reviewed the reemergence of mechanics and its impact on medieval subjectivity and how the attempt to create a human machine was transformed into automation, which in turn structurally displaced artisans. At the same time, aristocrats at court were dressing up like dolls, and puppets were dressing up as silk workers. In an autocratic and Catholic France, coming late to the party of capitalism, there were unique symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness in material culture. The dolls of court were a material sign of derealization, imaging the clockworks of

Nuremberg, with the ideal courtier behaving in a highly disciplined and stylized manner around vast fields of the unspeakable, while the silk worker puppet spoke the truth to power through an object, thus leading to realization.

The uniqueness of the French situation was proven by contrast with the English, who were ahead of the French when it came to republicanism and capitalism. Increasingly Protestant, and against the Catholic monarchs, the English widely enjoyed commercial theaters in ways unprecedented since ancient times. They also turned their thoughts to the political state as an artificial person. While English monarchs enjoyed their own theatrical displays in court with their perfect perspective, consuming a spectacular mirror of themselves and their fantasies, the rowdy working populace were paying good money to attend smart theatrical oratory, even on Sundays, where the follies of despotism and the comedy of smug self-assurance were regular fare. What was unspoken was the rising commercialization of England, triggered by its land reforms and its emergent and violently competitive colonial activities, not the least of which was the commodified and reified body of the slave. The rise of market logics, and the long history of parliamentary checks on monarchical authority, no matter how weak, led to different manifestations of rhetorical unconsciousness. The court masque and slavery were clear pathological signs of productive repression, while the plays before the people, and the recognition that the state is somehow artificial, were healthy symptoms of realization.

To provide additional evidence that different times and places reveal different sorts of symptoms, based on hegemonic constellations of negative discursive fields, I returned to France after capitalism was more firmly entrenched. If market logics are indeed a type of automatic Symbolic force, then what kinds of symptoms would that increasingly powerful unconsciousness produce? In France we saw derealization set in as the bourgeois victory over the feudal order was consolidated in the wake of a series of failed workers' rebellions. Conversely there were the French Realists, in the wake of the defeat of the workers, who used art to problematize the Imaginary and material repressions of the bourgeois regime. Dandies and flaneurs, as well as Bohemians, then emerged as representative subjective types. The dandies and flaneurs attempted to retain some sense of fabricated aristocratic aloofness from the commodification of everything, but in so doing reflected commodities themselves in an inverted form. The Bohemians, like the modernist art for art's sake movement that followed, engaged in the arts of self-dissolution. If we were to go further ahead in time, to the beginning of World War I, we would see not only the horrific pathological symptom of the war itself but also art reflecting the schizophrenic aspects of advanced capitalism via Dada and surrealism.

In concluding these historical reviews, I stressed the importance of the emergence of reification, or the process under capitalism where people are turned

into things, such as wage earners, while things, such as corporations, are turned into people. This uncanny relation mirrors our Imaginary relationship with the Symbolic, for, within mere self-consciousness and even meta-self-consciousness, we remain, for the most part, unconscious puppets of the language of the Other, which we mistake as our own. What else, though, can we do?

This, at last, brings us to agency and realization. What agency can we possibly have if we are puppets of the Other, taking our common sense and pregiven worlds as truth itself, when just outside the limits of our subjectivity are truths unimaginable? What agency can we have if our desire for metaphysical comfort keeps us from being honest with ourselves, if not violent toward others? How can we realize anything if we shut our ears and mouths to anything that falsifies or problematizes long-cherished beliefs? Recall the images of the tens of thousands of cheering young men across Europe at the announcement of World War I. Such pathological madness was a result of the symptom of nationalism, which accompanied the loss of faith in the soul and the value of true character. Recall too the images of the Nazi concentration camps, with their automaton officers and their will to exterminate the innocent. Recall Pol Pot's army in Cambodia killing anyone wearing glasses or speaking a foreign language, or the merciless genocide of the "Tutsis" by the "Hutus" in Rwanda.[9] Where, in history, do we not see pathologies of horrific proportions popping up everywhere? What unspoken and unspeakable things lead to such horrors?

Agency, therefore, cannot be limited to the notion of imposing one's will, for that occurs even for barely sentient beings. Any conception of agency, or anything along the line of free will, must first acknowledge the penumbra of our ignorance, the automaton of the Symbolic, and the productive repressions of the Imaginary. The symptoms from these forces shall not abate. What symptoms should we be looking for, and how should we address them?

This raises the central question in relation to political psychoanalysis. Is it a "deep structure" hermeneutic, a form of therapy, or a revolutionary praxis? Arguably it could be all three, though here I have focused primarily on the first aspect: symptoms in material culture reflecting rhetorical unconsciousness. In my analyses, however, I have worked to distinguish relatively healthy and unhealthy symptoms, and at least in this sense they also seek to serve a therapeutic function. As opposed to clinical psychoanalysis, which focuses on individual psychological well-being, political psychoanalysis focuses on collective psychological well-being. It is assumed that in some political states, broadly conceived, people are happy and healthy, while in others they are unhappy and sick. Different constellations of negative discursive fields lead to different material-cultural symptoms, as we have seen, with different political valences.

To be revolutionary, however, and to serve as a practice of intervention, political psychoanalysts would need to find concrete ways to discourage pathological

symptoms while encouraging healthy ones. What might arts of resistance to rhetorical unconsciousness look like? We have seen that arts proper, from French Realism to Offenbach's operettas to today's comedy news shows in the United States, can serve the purposes of realization, just as other forms of art contribute to derealization. One could imagine a critical meta-self-reflective and intentional rhetorical art that would respond directly to symptoms of rhetorical unconsciousness, which of course would first require the deep hermeneutic skills to map that unconsciousness, coupled with a strong ethical stance in relation to human community.

In thinking through what it might mean to resist the processes of derealization artfully in support of a more robust form of agency, it is useful, as I move to conclude, to rethink what it means to be in a rhetorical situation. Lloyd Bitzer maintained that a rhetorical situation is one where words can effectively address some exigence, some emergent circumstance. Inevitable death, for example, is not a rhetorical situation, as words cannot make a difference. Richard Vatz responded to say that words themselves create exigencies, and then Barbara Biesecker, drawing upon the tools of Derridean deconstruction, sought a dissolving synthesis of the two positions. However, the third aesthetic break, which includes the identification of the return of the repressed, leads to a new conception of the rhetorical situation: there is a symbiotic relation between agency and the Real, with the Symbolic intervening. As the Symbolic is autonomous, we must recognize that automatic dimension in order to account for it, thus my focus on various aspects of artificial personhood. The norm is for the automaton *not* to be accounted for; therefore we end up with less healthy symptoms, less healthy sublimations. To grasp the contours of the rhetorical situation even more fully, one must step outside of meta-self-consciousness to reveal the repressed, made manifest in the symptom. Once what is repressed is revealed, through the analysis of its symptoms, we can determine whether those symptoms tend toward realization or derealization. If the former is the case, if we seek to turn political psychoanalysis into political practice, then we find ways to support those symptoms. If the latter is the case, then we find ways to oppose them.

This, in perhaps an expected dialectical turn, returns us to the Aristotelian rhetorical perspective. By going through the post-structural labyrinth in order to discover rhetorical unconsciousness, we once again return to the sunny realm of intentionality. Of course artificial personhood is only one, if ubiquitous, symptom of rhetorical unconsciousness, as the three negative discursive fields impact all rhetorical situations. One can easily imagine mapping fields of the unspeakable in all sorts of situations, moving political psychoanalysis into organizational, small group, and interpersonal settings. Having done so, intentionally, then one can intentionally intervene in pathological conditions to support *productive* repression.

All of this, sadly, is quite high-minded, particularly the notion that we could intervene politically, in a truly impactful way, in the pathologies of productive *repression*. The global literacy rate remains only at about 85 percent, and the quality of transcultural education around the world remains frightfully low. Our world is still composed of an anarchy of states that have developed around local languages and cultures under the pressures of others doing the same, resulting in the formalization of some languages at the expense of others and the creation of relatively arbitrary state borders that are under constant contestation. These states have imagined national characters, both consciously and unconsciously supported, that tend toward the pathological. We also see the power of the automaton everywhere, from armies of marching soldier-robots to robot workers on assembly lines. Market logics, which also tend toward the pathological, also remain on the ascendant, and processes of reification show no signs of slowing down. Technological advances in robotics and artificial intelligence make Vaucanson's and Jaquet-Droz's creations look like child's play, and who knows what the future holds when it comes to the interpenetration of living bodies and technologies.[10]

All, however, is not lost. History is replete with examples of artful resistance in even the most horrific of circumstances, and incessant advances in communication and transportation technologies create ever-new channels for therapeutic interventions into rhetorical unconsciousness. The greater the degree of derealization, the more oblique critique must be, since fields of the unspeakable are vast and the power of the automaton is strong. Still, even in these instances, effective resistance is possible. Even for the sophists, when living under tyranny and perforce limited to style, style itself was artfully deployed as an oblique form of protest. Take the contemporary soap opera *Noor,* in Turkey, which shows an independent woman supported by her strong and handsome husband. While condemned by deeply unconscious religious clerics in Saudi Arabia, it is by far the most watched soap opera in that state, where women's rights are brutally curtailed in light of the insecurities of men.[11] Often, in fact, we see the truth being told through fiction, since what passes for truth is itself a fiction.

The point, ultimately, of political psychoanalysis, via the analysis of the return of the repressed, is to reveal the repressed artfully in the spirit of realization. This requires identifying fields of the unsayable, fields of the unspoken, and fields of the unspeakable, as well as the material-cultural symptoms of that productive repression. The compass of political psychoanalysis seeks to determine whether the valence tips toward the productive or the repressive, toward realization or derealization, in the endless quest to reveal the pathological tendencies of rhetorical unconsciousness.

Notes

An Introduction to Rhetorical Unconsciousness

1. There are about sixty graduate programs in the United States in rhetorical studies, and about fifteen in Europe. The numbers elsewhere drop precipitously. For United States programs, see the Rhetoric Society of America, "Graduate Programs." For European programs, see the Rhetoric Society of Europe, "Rhetoric Programs in Europe."

2. By "market logics" I mean cost/benefit analyses based on return-on-investment logics, where an individual's "value" is determined by how much money they control or bring in. They can be the most terrible of people—no matter. A person who inherits a family fortune can live in obscene luxury on the backs of underpaid workers. A person who successfully hits a professionally pitched baseball three out of ten times can command hundreds of millions of dollars, while a chemist curing a global disease may earn hundreds of thousands, someone who "gives their life for their country" tens of thousands, and untold numbers go hungry. This theme is explored in chapter 4, which considers the commodity self as a symptom of artificial personhood in advanced capitalist conditions.

3. *Random House Dictionary of the English Language,* 2nd ed., s.v. "rhetoric."

4. Ibid., s.v. "rhetorical."

5. Such a view resonates somewhat with Barbara Biesecker's (1989) characterization of the rhetorical situation. Lloyd Bitzer (1968) initially characterized the rhetorical situation as one in which an exigence, or some material event, could be addressed artfully through language. Richard Vatz (1973) wrote a response, emphasizing how language itself can create exigencies. Biesecker then responded, drawing upon Jacques Derrida's notion of "différance" to characterize the rhetorical situation as one of articulation, where the audience is an ever-shifting "event structure" in the impossible management of difference. In part I am working to regain sites of agency within the unconsciousness of such event structures, triggered by the Symbolic. On the debate over the rhetorical situation, see Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation"; Bitzer, "Rhetorical Situation"; and Vatz, "Myth of the Rhetorical Situation."

6. Meta-self-consciousness seems to appear only after the invention of written language, as if orality was good enough for mere self-consciousness and only the alienation of language into writing, or literacy, could trigger meta-self-consciousness. What moves us from mere self-consciousness to meta-self-consciousness to critical meta-self-consciousness is the central theme in political psychoanalysis, which is quite unlike clinical psychoanalysis, as we shall see. On the lengthy transition from orality to literacy

in ancient Greece, as well as that transition's impact on subjectivity, see Havelock, *Muse Learns to Write.*

7. For fine summaries of rhetoric's survival and utility during the Middle Ages, see Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages;* and Murphy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Traditions.*

8. Critical approaches to rhetoric developed in earnest in the United States beginning in the 1980s, with the appearance of seminal essays such as Wander, "Ideological Turn in Modern Criticism"; McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric"; and McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture."

9. For an intellectual history tracing the movement from "the [linguistic] sign" to "the [embodied] subject," see Silverman, *Subject of Semiotics.* I too seek to stress the *embodied* nature of the subject, the historical *truth* of the body, which tends to fade away in some strands of structural linguistics and post-structuralism, especially given the influence across Europe of Ferdinand de Saussure, who, as a linguist, focused on the structure of language, not on our embodied political relationship to the structure of language and its ethical-material consequences, as critical rhetoricians do.

10. See, for example, Biesecker's review essay "Rhetoric and the 'New' Psychoanalysis"; Gunn's "Refitting Fantasy"; Lundberg's important *Lacan in Public;* and miscellaneous essays appearing outside of rhetorical studies proper, such as Randall Bush's "Rhetoric, Psychoanalysis, and the Imaginary." Outside of rhetorical studies, psychoanalytically inflected literatures on unconscious aspects of subjectivity are vast.

11. Mueller, introduction, 34–35.

12. In deploying my theoretical apparatus, I draw creatively from Lacan's famous three "registers" of the Real, the Symbolic, and the Imaginary, which will be explored in depth in the following chapters. That said, my usage is also unique, and it is not intended to be an "accurate" reflection of Lacan's own usage, just as my take on the unconscious is distinct from that in, say, object psychology or in Freud's notion of the Oedipus complex. As Gunn rightly notes, "we must be careful to consider the rhetoric of psychoanalysis, resisting, for example, the temptation to present Lacan's many concepts as having a stable meaning independent of this or that context." Gunn, "On Dead Subjects," 508.

13. Clear examples of such inverted symptoms are found in Alain de Botton's insightful discussion on "how to suffer successfully" in *How Proust Can Change Your Life.* According to de Botton, those who suffer unsuccessfully display symptoms that strangely mirror the very issues or facts they repress. A mise en abyme, briefly stated, is a story within a story that reflects the larger story.

14. Such a procedure arguably provides a much-needed bridge between "old" and "new" approaches, or "traditional" and "critical" approaches, to the rhetorical enterprise writ large.

15. Such a perspective, which focuses on the complexities of the unsaid, resonates with Philip Wander's notion of the "third persona," or the voices implicitly excluded from a discourse. See Wander, "Third Persona." This was followed almost two decades later by Charles E. Morris III's "Pink Herring and the Fourth Persona," where Morris discusses a "masking rhetoric" that silences and targets invisible audiences (i.e., the fourth persona).

16. Schelling, *Ages of the World,* 120. While I do not correct sexist language prior to, say, the 1960s, all quotations referring to "man" or "mankind" should of course be understood to mean "people" and "all people."

17. For a perfectly logical defense of the existence of an immortal soul, see Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul,* esp. 173–244.

18. For a more in-depth discussion of the rational and the reasonable and their (mis)use by various critical theorists, see Bruner, "Rationality, Reason and the History of Thought."

19. On his elaborate critique of our subjective relationship with the objective, see Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason.*

20. Hardenberg, *Novalis, Philosophical Writings,* 129. By using the word *tropological* the early German Romantics sought to emphasize how we experience the world through language, which is based on metaphor, metonymy, and so on. In the deployment of the rhetorical, there are tropes and figures of speech: the former changing meaning and the latter adorning speech for stylistic effect. To speak of subjectivity as tropological is to say that we experience the actual world through language and thus *aesthetically,* via *symptoms.*

21. Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man,* 119; emphasis added.

22. For an influential take on the development of human language, see Vico, *New Science of Giambattista Vico,* 127–53. For Vico poetic metaphysics gave way long ago to poetic logic, as "imaginations shrank and the power of abstraction grew" (128). Human subjectivity, with the slow development of language, moved from a mythical logic (i.e., the age of gods) to a logic based on reasoning and universals (i.e., the age of heroes) to our present world of languages and letters (i.e., the age of humans). In fact, however, for Vico "poetic wisdom" recognizes that gods, heroes, and humans are intimately intertwined, as tropes, in all aspects of human subjectivity.

23. See McGrath, *Dark Ground of Spirit,* and Hegel, *Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* 196–97. We should take care, however, to presume neither what sentience is like for other creatures nor their relation to Being. It is obvious that dogs and elephants, for example, clearly experience joy, empathy, and grief. Dogs will rightly drag their feet when being taken into a known veterinarian's office, and even the smallest bug runs from the shoe.

24. Schelling, "Stuttgart Seminars," 206.

25. Ibid., 207. We shall return to some of the theological implications of rhetorical unconsciousness and Schelling's views in chapter 5.

26. Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying," 250.

27. Mueller, introduction, 15. Though the book's title is intimidating, Hegel's *Encyclopedia* is a relatively clear and concise summary of his highly complex and systematic philosophy, designed specifically for the undergraduates of his day.

28. Allison, introduction to Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena,* xxxii–xxxiii.

29. See, for example, Fink, *Lacanian Subject,* 153–74.

30. This is somewhat different from Freud's notion of "primal repression," which he refers to as "a first phase of repression, which consists in a denial of entry into consciousness to the mental (ideational) presentation of the instinct. This is accomplished by a fixation . . . and 'after expulsion,'" since repression "lies simply in the function of

rejecting and keeping something out of consciousness." See Freud, *Collected Papers,* 4:86. *Primary* repression more specifically refers to the necessary repression of the arbitrary aspects of the languages into which we are thrown, and secondary forms of repression, such as those characterized by Freud in his essay on repression, emerge from within that primary repression.

31. P. Eisenstein and McGowan, *Rupture.*

32. Stanghellini, "Psychopathology of Common Sense," 201.

33. On argument fields see Toulmin, *Uses of Argument,* 11–43.

34. See Catherine Chaput's *Affect and Our Capitalist Investments.*

35. The alphabet, complete with vowels, for example, dramatically impacted ancient Greek culture. On this topic see Havelock, *Muse Learns to Write.* For broader historical reviews of the influence of communication technologies on subjectivity, see Kittler and Winthrop-Young, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter;* E. L. Eisenstein, *Printing Press as an Agent of Change;* and Ong, *Orality and Literacy.* For these scholars technologies do not so much determine consciousness as strongly influence intentional self-consciousness, and vice versa.

36. Žižek, "What Rumsfeld Doesn't Know."

37. Dowd, "Powell without Picasso."

38. In this sense other sentient beings cannot be automatons, having avoided the word.

39. For an introduction to the term *mise en abyme* and its history in relation to literary and artistic phenomena, see Dällenbach, *Mirror in the Text.* My own interest is in manifestations of mises en abyme in material culture and how often these mises en abyme take place through what are commonly thought to be aesthetic forms proper (e.g., theater, puppetry, clothing).

40. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis,* 149. For summaries of Lacan's specific notions regarding unconsciousness and subjectivity, see Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan;* Chiesa, *Subjectivity and Otherness,* esp. 34–59; Fink, *Lacanian Subject,* esp. 14–23, 153–72; and Gasperoni, "Unconscious Is Structured like a Language."

41. Realization and derealization occur at both the individual and collective levels, for the greater the degree of realization among individuals, the greater degree of realization in the community.

Chapter 1: Conscious and Unconscious Rhetoric

1. Aristotle, *Rhetoric of Aristotle.* For an introduction to rhetorical theory in ancient Greece, which was foundational for subsequent theorizing on rhetoric as an art, see Kennedy, *Art of Persuasion in Greece.*

2. This "varnishing" is an aspect of the unspeakable, where finding common ground requires climbing the ladder of abstraction, avoiding hot-button issues, observing formalities, and so on.

3. Such a perspective on the arts of persuasion, which rests upon the relatively meta-self-conscious manipulating the relatively merely self-conscious as puppets, does not contradict Schelling's notion that the history of life is from the conscious to the

self-conscious to the meta-self-conscious. The question for Schelling, ultimately, is when we shall enter a new phase of meta-self-consciousness and what that might look like.

4. On Schiller's conception of the aesthetic, see Ranciére, *Politics of Aesthetics*.

5. Some contemporary philosophers, when relating their work to religion or seeking to contribute to the discussion of humankind's relationship with Being, refer to this moment of rupture, this initial alienation from Being via language and self-consciousness, as "the fortunate fall," or part of Being's plan to know itself ("I am that I am," Exod. 3:14). For a challenging take on such work, see Žižek, *Puppet and the Dwarf.* Again we see the mise en abyme, the mirror of subjectivity: knowing knowing.

6. See Dale Carnegie's bestseller, *How to Win Friends and Influence People.*

7. I adapt this taxonomy from Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition;* and Kennedy, *Art of Persuasion in Greece.*

8. Exemplifying the "if it works, it is good" perspective, see Forbes Hill, "Conventional Wisdom—Traditional Form."

9. For a rather brutal yet basically true account of the "five easy steps to mass persuasion," devoid of all the difficult problems associated with virtue and the right, see Bernays, "Manipulating Public Opinion." Adolf Hitler, for example, was quite aware of early image politics and the arts of mass persuasion, as to some extent was Benito Mussolini. See Heller, *Iron Fists.*

10. Isocrates, Vol. 2, Translated by George Norlin. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 327.

11. Guthrie, *Sophists,* 187–88.

12. This ancient Greek conception of the sophist as a physician of the state resonates with my own project to explain, display, and critique materialized reflections of rhetorical unconsciousness.

13. Plato, *Collected Dialogues,* 229–307.

14. For Plato's accounts of Socrates's death, see the wonderful dialogues *Crito* and *Phaedo,* where Socrates, consoling those who anticipate Athens's great loss, discusses the nature of death and conscience and how, by obeying the latter, there is nothing to fear from the former. Plato, *Collected Dialogues,* 27–98. On Plato's "aesthetic state," see Barish, *Anti-Theatrical Prejudice,* 5–37.

15. Plato, *Collected Dialogues,* 475–525.

16. *Random House Dictionary of the English Language,* 2nd ed., s.v. "sophistry."

17. In support of this claim, see Kennedy's discussion of the sophists in *Art of Persuasion in Greece,* 52–79.

18. I have explored these processes, where abstract style is used to evade state censorship while mobilizing resistant populations, in earlier work. See Bruner, "Carnivalesque Protest and the Humorless State."

19. On the aesthetic dimensions of politics, see Marcuse, *Aesthetic Dimension;* Ranciére, *Politics of Aesthetics;* Chytry, *Aesthetic State;* and Bruner, *Repressive Regimes, Aesthetic States and Arts of Resistance.*

20. For Plato's thoughts on why poets, musicians, and others must be censored to maintain the high value of truth in an "ideal" state, see *Republic of Plato,* vol. 1, esp.

chap. 3. The text has often been noted for its totalitarian tendencies, where even the sorts of music played and stories told must be tightly controlled. Plato claims that only the state is allowed to lie, not poets or storytellers, who must tell morally edifying stories, and that the rhythm, style, and character of music must also be tightly controlled by the state. The notion was that imitation breeds political realities; therefore to control political realities, one must control imitation. *The Republic* also contains Plato's famous theory of the cave at the beginning of book 7, where he compares human consciousness to the perception of shadows. This is an early example of "being beside oneself" in the sense of the third aesthetic break. See *Republic of Plato,* vol. 2. Plato's productive self-alienation was limited by his notions of control and the certainty of truth, assuming that those in control of the state somehow knew better than the artists what fictions were proper for the people. From the perspective of rhetorical unconsciousness, all such fictions constructed by the state or anyone else are symptomatic of what is repressed in the given historical conditions.

21. For an example of the breadth of knowledge required for true eloquence, according to Cicero, see *Cicero: On Oratory and Orators,* 44–45

22. For a contemporary approach to the ideal conditions for persuasion, see Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action,* vol. 1, *Reason and the Rationalization of Society,* and vol. 2, *Critique of Functionalist Reason.* Habermas's way of viewing the communicative act is diametrically opposed to that of Jacques Lacan and others who study the rhetorical unconscious. This is because a focus on rhetorical unconsciousness soon reveals that "ideal" expectations of rhetorical situations are stuck at the level of meta-self-consciousness, denying the inevitability of symptoms that are sometimes pathological. The "ideal" is also always variously repressive. For a representative anecdote, see Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!,* 102–5.

23. Common sense theory has a long and illustrious intellectual history. One branch (e.g., Aristotle) focuses on sensory amalgamations, while another focuses on enculturation processes (e.g., Giambattista Vico). My own focus is clearly on the latter branch, though our subjective relationship to the Real and the Symbolic is thoroughly sensory. For a very different approach to the unconscious from the perspective of neurophysiology, where the human is understood to work as a machine, see Mlodinow, *Subliminal.* Affect is also a worthy complementary study for those interested in the collective construction of what passes for common sense.

24. On the concept of *geworfenheit,* see Heidegger, *Being and Time.* The concept is simple: "The world into which we are thrown, without personal choice, with no previous knowledge (*pace* Plato), was there before us and will be there after us." Steiner, *Martin Heidegger,* 87. It is *pace* Plato because, as opposed to this notion of arbitrary thrownness, he believed in the soul-as-ideal-being's knowing everything, having an essence, where what we call learning is actually remembering what has been forgotten through our having unfortunately fallen into object form.

25. Those unfamiliar with the classical rhetorical tradition can begin by reading Cicero's *On the Orator* and Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory* and, while perhaps less inspiring, the collection of notes that make up Aristotle's *Rhetoric.* Less inspiring still, yet conceptually rich for budding and seasoned speechwriters, is Thonssen and Baird's

Speech Criticism. The latter is a representative text on the handbook side of rhetorical studies, conceived as the analysis and production of public address, including the various parts of speeches, inventional categories within parts, universal and particular aspects of different rhetorical situations, examples of tropes and figures, and so on. The best scholarly sources for traditional public address studies, otherwise known as neo-Aristotelian analysis, can be located in issues of the *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* especially in the 1950s and 1960s.

26. Later, in my lengthier discussion of derealization and realization—terms that denote the expansion or contraction of rhetorical unconsciousness—I will have cause to return to the productive critical capacities enjoined by rhetoric as an intentional art: first, it is true, one must gain a perspective from outside of oneself; then one must gain perspective on one's productive alienation; and then, recognizing the structural dangers of presumed certainties in the realms of the probable, one can begin to map negative discursive fields, identify their symptoms, then artfully intervene in the service of realization. The final step is a return to intentionality at the critical meta-self-conscious level.

27. Descartes, *Philosophical Works,* 1:3. Written in the late 1620s, the text was published posthumously in Dutch in 1684 and Latin in 1701. Haldane and Ross's translation displays Descartes's amazing range of interests and deeply insightful mind. We will return to Descartes when discussing automatons and artificial persons, as he, like many in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, had a strong and abiding interest in automata and the human as a machine.

28. Descartes, *Philosophical Works,* 1:22.

29. For his critique of what he viewed as the pernicious influence of Descartes on educational practices, see Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time.* Another individual who crippled the way rhetoric was conceptualized in the university system in the mid-sixteenth century in Europe was Peter Ramus, who (in)famously divided invention and arrangement from style, memory, and delivery, placing the former under "logic" and the latter under "rhetoric." Thus any relationship between informal reasoning and its relation to the political, ethical, legal, and so on was pedagogically mystified. The best account of Ramus and his influence is provided by Ong, *Ramus.*

30. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics,* esp. 203–25.

31. Ibid., 211–12.

32. Ibid., 211.

33. For an example of how contemporary argumentation theorists concur with the claim that the realm of rhetoric is the realm of the probable, not the certain, see Perelman, *Realm of Rhetoric.* Perelman claims that a proper understanding of rhetoric "implies putting classical epistemology and metaphysics into question," since anything that is fully necessary or arbitrary "is reasonable only to the degree that it is maintained by arguments and eventually clarified by controversies which normally do not lead to unanimity" (159–60).

34. Chapter 6 of Aristotle's *Ethics* is ultimately devoted to prudence, as practical wisdom, with four culminating themes: (1) the political sciences are a species of prudence; (2) prudence must be carefully distinguished from science and intuition (*nous*); (3) good

deliberation on the probable should be distinguished from other intellectual qualities; and (4) prudence is related to natural virtue and virtue proper. Aristotle might well wonder about contemporary political science, with its quantitative proclivities. See Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics,* 213–25.

35. See, for example, Critchley, *Faith of the Faithless,* 221.

36. As opposed to Aristotle's clean division between types of knowledge, contemporary thinkers explore the rhetorical dimensions of science. See, for example, Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions.* Dominant scientific paradigms, according to Kuhn, are slowly eroded by discoveries and events that falsify them, ultimately leading to the paradigm's collapse and its replacement with something new, and the process repeats itself endlessly (e.g., from Ptolemy to Copernicus to Isaac Newton to Albert Einstein).

37. Toulmin, *Uses of Argument.* As we have seen, Toulmin speaks of the field-dependent and field-invariable aspects of argument. There are, however, many ways of conceptualizing fields. Professionally and intellectually speaking, there are fields and subfields, and we must also ask how social categories such as race, nation, or gender constitute equally influential, perhaps "invariable" fields. Foucault's structuralist theory of "discursive formations," or "games of truth," and the "effective statements" they make possible is an attempt to map how fields interact yet maintain themselves. See Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge.*

38. With our mug example, once both arguers *realize* each other's values, achieving the "transcendent" self-alienation required by meta-self-conscious rhetoric (i.e., if they kept fighting, then they would have remained rhetorically unconscious, being merely self-conscious), they can work together, should they choose, to agree to use mugs that both keep coffee hot and protect the environment. Other issues, however, such as the rights of an unborn child versus the rights of the mother, as we see in abortion debates, do not lend themselves to such easy compromises. Nevertheless decisions must always be taken in an ultimately undecidable terrain, in situations inevitably involving competing, partial truths. Those making decisions must minimize, if not ignore altogether, the perspectives left behind.

39. Condit, "Hegemony in a Mass-Mediated Society."

40. See Weintraub, "Theory and Politics of the Public/Private Distinction."

41. For Gramsci's discussion of hegemony, see Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* 12–13.

42. The debate between Condit and Cloud continued over a series of subsequent essays, beginning with Cloud's essay "Hegemony or Concordance?" This was followed by Condit's "Hegemony, Concordance and Capitalism," Cloud's "Concordance, Complexity, and Conservatism," and Condit's "Clouding the Issues?"

43. Cited in Kaufmann, *Hegel,* 185–86.

44. Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life,* 17.

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid. A contemporary example of monumental history can be found in recent changes by the Texas School Board impacting the content of history textbooks across the United States. Walker, "Don't Know Much about History." The goal of the board

was to produce more conservative citizens, properly patriotic and supportive of free enterprise.

47. Nietzsde, *On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life*, 17. In reference to the Texas School Board, one can imagine the treatment of Marx, or Eugene Debs, or even Helen Keller's adult life as a radical activist for workers and women's rights. For an in-depth discussion of monumental history at work in U.S. history textbooks, see Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me.* Loewen discusses how market pressures tend to lead to noncontroversy, leaving issues related to labor, class, internationalism, and secularism decidedly out of bounds. So an automatic Symbolic force (market pressure) led to symptoms (the composition of the Texas School Board and the content it is concerned about) with political consequences, since the most concerning issues are a mirrored reflection of what market pressures require (i.e., wage labor, class division, corporate globalization).

48. Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life,* 19. In the digital age, it also includes the automatic collecting of data, regardless of its use.

49. Ibid.

50. This raises the question of whether any grievance can justify the destructive force of critical history, which seeks to unmask egregious repressions in the dominant order. Finer distinctions must be made between those who perceive a grievance and those who have one. A wealthy, middle-class third generation of initially illegal immigrants might be against immigration because of its impact on jobs, while an illegal immigrant is often desperate for a just opportunity. While the former is correct in fact (i.e., there will be an impact on jobs), they themselves are the beneficiaries of the system, so their position is inconsistent; while the latter are incorrect in fact, by going against established law, they are ethically attempting to escape the arbitrary (disadvantaged) conditions into which they were thrown, including the potential racial bias of immigration law.

51. Ibid., 22.

52. Ibid., 18–19.

53. "Nation" and "nationalism" are in scare quotes because "the nation" is largely imaginary.

54. I borrow the phrase "true believer" from Hoffer, *True Believer.* While Hoffer should have emphasized more clearly his focus on *reactionary* mass movements, he rightly observes that such forms of collective identification, where repressed discursive fields expand, "hold a following . . . by freeing [followers] of their ineffectual selves—and it does this by enfolding and absorbing them into a closely knit and exultant corporate whole" (42).

55. For a rich discussion of variously "comic" and "tragic" attitudes toward history, from a political perspective resonant with my own, see Burke, *Attitudes toward History.* Basically true irony, and the comic frame in general, is an attitude toward the historical that acknowledges human incompleteness, being necessarily somehow mistaken, and therefore avoids the tragic: the incessant and hopeless quest for completeness and certainty that structurally requires deep unconsciousness and the creation of an enemy scapegoat.

56. Caputo and Vattimo, *After the Death of God,* 188; Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 253–64; Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History."

57. On Nietzsche's profound influence on Foucault, and for a persuasive argument that Foucault sought to "politicize" Nietzsche, see Simons, *Foucault and the Political.* For a clear account of Nietzsche's influence on rhetorical theory, whether those in the field of rhetorical studies are familiar with that influence or not, see Behler, "Friedrich Nietzsche's Theory of Language."

58. Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," 85. Notice that normal human society, à la Freud, is a form of domination that is variously productive, based upon the repression of actual historical facts or unconscious prejudices that rule an age.

59. Marcuse, *Aesthetic Dimension,* 22. Marcuse rhizomatically appropriates Schiller, arguing for an "aesthetic" relation "in the face of the gruesomely serious totality of institutionalized politics" that *passes,* due to hegemonic forces, for the real. See Marcuse, *Essay on Liberation,* 63–64. With Marcuse the fictions of art contribute to realization because they say some truth that cannot be said in "real life." This is different from the sorts of fictions that lead to derealization and political pathologies.

60. An important exception to this claim would be Lundberg's discussion of "failed unicity" in *Lacan in Public,* 1–16.

61. Vulgar Marxism assumes that the base of material production controls the superstructure of culture. Neo-Marxism understands the agency of subjective production and the power of language to transform the political. There is a dialectical rather than causal relationship between modes of production and the superstructure.

62. All subjectivity is in aesthetic retrospect.

63. Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying," 250.

64. Ibid., 251.

65. Ibid., 252.

66. Eagleton, *Ideology,* 137; emphasis added.

67. Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto,* 28. This vulgar Marxism is akin to technological determinism, denying agency, when there is a dialectical relation between the actual and the ideal.

68. Marx and Engels, *German Ideology,* 67; emphasis added.

69. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy,* 109.

70. Ibid., 112. See Dino Franco Felluga's "Modules on Althusser," which contains a useful summary of Althusser's contributions to ideology critique. Althusser moved away from the "cultural dupes" problem toward a more structural approach to economic unconsciousness.

71. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy,* 112–14.

72. For those interested in useful comparative histories of the concept of ideology, see Hawkes, *Ideology,* and Eagleton, *Ideology.*

73. See Lacan, "Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function." The image in the mirror seen by a toddler that is "them" is an uncanny inverted double, both "them" and obviously "not them" as an image, a reflection. Thus again we see the fundamental importance of the mise en abyme, or the image of an image internally framed yet distorted in its doubling, as a foundational principle of subjectivity.

Chapter 2: The Ontical Structure of Rhetorical Unconsciousness

1. On prophetic madness and possession by spirits, or "internal second voices," see Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational.* Furthermore, for a rich history of the idea of the unconscious, see Ellenberger, *Discovery of the Unconscious.* See also Foucault, *History of Madness.*

2. Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational,* 189. For Plato's account of Socrates's trial and defense, see Plato, *Collected Works,* 3–26. There Socrates speaks of the demon who helps him to recognize the right from the wrong. Always following the demon's advice has consistently led to the good, as far as Socrates can tell, so he has nothing to fear from following the truth wherever it leads, even into death.

3. Faith in the soul or spirit of persons, nevertheless, has remained widespread. As Plato's Socrates declares in his death chamber, surrounded by mourners, we know not how we appeared from nothing, and so why should that apparent nothingness be feared? See the lovely dialogue *Phaedo* in Plato, *Collected Dialogues,* 40–98. There Socrates consoles his guests about death as he drinks the poison, to retain his good conscience for the other world, where surely he will be favorably judged, even as they cry for him and he dies.

4. For two of Freud's most precise characterizations of consciousness and unconsciousness, see his essays "Repression" and "The Unconscious" in Freud, *Collected Papers,* 4:84–97, 98–136. Freud, of course, did not "discover" the unconscious. A rich resource on the history of how unconscious aspects of human subjectivity have material effects that can be identified and sometimes ameliorated is Ellenberger's *Discovery of the Unconscious.*

5. See Plato, *Collected Dialogues,* 1244.

6. Dodds, *Greeks and the Irrational,* 214–15. Even given our irrational and base attributes, there is something "divine" in human reason.

7. Winquist, *Surface of the Deep,* 239.

8. Weber, *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.* Randall Collins points out in his introduction that, for Weber, "rational capitalism is not just radical Protestantism but the historical phenomenon of Christianity, indeed the entire Judeo-Christian tradition" (xxiii).

9. Ibid., 104.

10. Ibid., 112.

11. This "active self-control" moved, as we shall see, to "self-fashioning" via commodities in those areas of Europe most influenced by market logics, such as Paris and London, in the nineteenth century.

12. Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto,* 15. I shall return to this concept when discussing the unconscious rhetorical dimensions of the commodity self as an expression of the field of the unspoken.

13. See Bacon, *Essays,* 278–80.

14. Bacon, *New Organon*, 48–49. We see such Idols of the Tribe on a larger "spiritual" scale during the age of nationalism, in which we are still living, where every officially recognized citizen in every country around the globe is encouraged to see their people as

a chosen people with clear friends and enemies. See, for hideous examples of the rhetorical unconscious working its worst, the images of spontaneous outbursts of mass joy among the young men in London, Paris, Berlin, and Moscow when the First World War was announced, even though they would soon be its very real victims, in Eksteins, *Rites of Spring.*

15. Ibid., 49.

16. And as we are mise en abymes to Being, so are our aesthetic symptoms mises en abyme unto ourselves.

17. Ellenberger, *Discovery of the Unconscious,* 22–40.

18. Leiber, introduction to La Mettrie, *Man and Machine and Man a Plant,* 7. This points back to the notion of the human as automata and points as well to the future of robotics, artificial intelligence, and neuroscience. Today the notion that humans are machines is only bolstered by advances in these and other rational fields, where, for example, studies of stroke victims show clearly how damage to different parts of the brain directly causes predictable changes in subjectivity.

19. For a concise characterization of Lacan's concept of castration, see Kay, *Žižek,* 160. It is an unfortunate term, an "updated," post-Saussurean twist on Freud, which describes the forced choice and the repression of that forced choice of our entrance into language and its subsequent effects of subjectivity.

20. Foucault, "Truth and Power," 60; emphasis added. In the same volume, see his essay "The Repressive Hypothesis," where repression, or the imposition of limits, is shown to be productive of material practices. For example, if viewing women's ankles is considered obscene and forbidden, then the lacework industry will surely boom, given that men will be looking for ankles and women will be teasing the ones looking.

21. "A 'distribution of the sensible' . . . is always a polemical distribution of modes of being and 'occupations' in a space of possibilities." Ranciére, *Politics of Aesthetics,* 42.

22. Freud, "Repression," 111. We temporarily leave aside Novalis's claim that the poetic creates the symptomatic and that material phenomena, for humans, have something of the poetic in them.

23. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents,* 13. This notion of the unified self as a mask or facade is explored later in my review of theories of the split subject and the automaton/artificial person.

24. Žižek, *Parallax View,* 246.

25. If one combines Foucault's "structuralist" work in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and Ernesto Laclau's neologistic notion of populism in *On Populist Reason,* they would have a good sense of the sort of formal and contingent subjective power I speak of.

26. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents,* 27.

27. English translations distort the spiritual side of Freud, rendering him improperly as a sort of medical psychiatrist. Instead, in "The Question of Lay Analysis" (1926), he defined his "as a profession of secular ministers of souls who don't have to be physicians and must not be priests." Cited in Bettelheim, "Freud and the Soul," 64.

28. "Note on the Unconscious in Psychoanalysis," 54, 50.

29. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis,* 24. See also Ellenberger, *Discovery of the Unconscious.*

30. For an attack on oedipal thinking in psychoanalysis and its negative consequences for political theory and practice, as well as for an alternative "materialist psychoanalytic" politics, see Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus.* For Žižek's attempt to respond to their critique of his work, see Žižek, *Organs without Bodies.* For a nice clarification of the debate between libidinally based conceptions of the unconscious and the unconscious dimensions of capitalism, see D. W. Smith, *Essays on Deleuze.*

31. Much of the debate among rhetorical theorists drawing upon Lacan, such as Biesecker ("Rhetoric and the 'New' Psychoanalysis"), Lundberg ("Royal Road Not Taken"), and Gunn ("On Dead Subjects"), revolves around which aspects of the register are most central to the rhetorical. Biesecker arguably emphasizes the Real, Lundberg the Symbolic, and Gunn the Imaginary, and each has a rich understanding of Lacanian theory. My work seeks instead to locate precise sites of rhetorical unconsciousness, showing its functioning in all three registers.

32. Derrida, *Writing and Difference,* 278–93. For an interesting reading of Derrida's essay, see Taylor, *After God,* 297–312.

33. Saussure, *Course on General Linguistics.*

34. Classic examples of linguistics being applied to culture are provided in Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology,* and Lévi-Strauss, *Raw and the Cooked.* For a condensed history of structural linguistics and its troubled history with materiality, see Adams and Searle, *Critical Theory since 1965,* 5–12. Note the mise en abyme: "that which structures the structure."

35. Sturlock, *Structuralism,* 57. Emphasis added to indicate the unconscious symptomatic aspect of that which Lévi-Strauss maintained structured the structure: kinship relations. The structural anthropologist, in this instance, served as a type of social psychoanalyst, locating the centralizing unconscious symptom that produced in culture what was repressed as the organizing absence.

36. Derrida, *Writing and Difference,* 279.

37. Lear, "Give Dora a Break!," 200.

38. Laclau, *On Populist Reason.*

39. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks.* To be precise, Gramsci distinguishes between civil society, or "the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private,'" and political society, or the state. The former establishes "hegemony" through the fabric of everyday life, based upon a certain "'spontaneous' consent," while the latter intervenes only when that "spontaneous consent has failed" (12).

40. Bruner, *Strategies of Remembrance.* Misusing the term *strategies* at the time, implying the process was somehow intentional, I now view the book's examples as illustrative of rhetorical unconsciousness.

41. Agamben and Heller-Roazen, *Homo Sacer.*

42. Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz,* 29. We cannot ever appreciate the untold suffering here and in this time. Levi asks us to remember the victims each time we have a sip of soup or be damned for our thoughtlessness.

43. On the notion of metaphysical comfort, see Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner,* esp. aphorisms 7, 8, 17, 18.

44. Lippmann is well-known for having formulated his philosophy of the public, which questions the ability for public reason to succeed in the age of mass democracy. See, for example, Lippmann, *Public Philosophy,* esp. 16–27. See also Duffy, "Who's Who."

45. We would expect the symptom to be an inversion of the repressed as the mirror relation it is.

46. Of course Germany is not now what Germany was then. It is not a matter of present-day judgment so much as a matter of historical accuracy and discernment in respect for innocent victims of past political madness. It only makes sense that we would want to prevent such pathologies from occurring again, as they have time and time again, including in the twentieth century, from Germany to Cambodia to Rwanda. We must look coldly and dispassionately, as political psychotherapists, at what happens when "there is no question" why and what unconscious forces are supporting such mindlessness.

47. Sport events are often fully invested with pathological fantasies leading to violence, and there are plenty of instances of riots breaking out at stadiums or fans of one team attacking the fans of another. Such relations are clearly pathological, with an overinvestment of a collective or personal anxiety into what is largely an arbitrary relation. However arbitrary that relation might be, some do, on a rather consistent basis, become pathologically overinvested.

48. For an informative review of the "no label movement," the "brand wars," and the takeover of public space by branding, see Klein, *No Logo.*

49. It is difficult to parse the issue of black holes and subjectivity visually. One can imagine, though, that subjectivity is composed of many guiding abstractions, materialized in practice, that function as constellations of black holes. For example, what does it mean to be "a good German," "a 'real' man or woman," "white" or "black," "a good Muslim" or "Christian"? As they are empty signifiers, a correct answer to any of these questions is impossible, and one cannot control which signifiers will count, or for what, as circumstances shift. Therefore the black holes are actually constellations of abstractions that can be variously triggered as the larger subjective environment, composed of common sense, shifts, which involves shifts in dark matter as well.

50. A resonant outline is provided in Cates, Bruner, and Moss, "Recuperating the Real."

51. The essays making up the debate appeared in the following order, with the first being an extended review of Laclau's book *On Populist Reason:* Žižek, "Against the Populist Temptation"; Laclau's response, "Why Constructing a People Is the Main Task of Radical Politics"; and Žižek's counterresponse, "*Schlagend aber Nicht Treffend!,*" where he engaged in an extensive discussion of the Lacanian Real to characterize the theoretical differences between himself and Laclau. The German is roughly translated as "You swung at me but not well."

52. Adams and Searle, *Critical Theory since 1965,* 9–10. One wonders what some strands of post-structuralism would look like if, instead of drawing upon Saussure's semiotics, they drew upon the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce, which explicitly includes the referent, or the ways in which objects impact mind. For a clear characterization of Peirce as a "semiotic realist," see Nathan House and Christian Kloesel's introduction

to Peirce, *Essential Peirce,* xxxix–xl. I am certainly a semiotic realist, as House and Kloesel define the term.

53. The concept "under erasure" is described concisely in Gayatri Spivak's translator's preface to Derrida, *Of Grammatology,* xiv–xx.

54. Derrida, *Limited Inc.,* 144; Foucault, "Truth and Power," 60.

55. Accordingly "the final signified for which one searches is radically excluded from thought as it concerns an incommensurable dimension, namely the Real." Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan,* 41. This is the "orthodox" view of Lacan's Real.

56. Žižek, "Against the Populist Temptation," 566.

57. Laclau, "Why Constructing a People Is the Main Task of Radical Politics," 657–58; emphasis added. Here we have the Real (as actuality, whatever that might be) as being fully outside of the Symbolic, only periodically disrupting the Symbolic. The entire debate, when all was said and done, was to clarify that fact that there were several types of Reals, in addition to the one emphasized by Laclau.

58. Note that the real Real, the symbolic Symbolic, and the imaginary Imaginary are mises en abyme.

59. Žižek discusses the fortunate fall in *Puppet and the Dwarf,* 15, 86, 118. We shall return to this notion in the penultimate chapter.

60. Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan,* 77, 85–86, 233–34. Lemaire uses Freud's term, but I think problematically. We cannot "repress" anything until we have entered language, and so a distinction should be made between primary repression via the entrance into language, à la Schiller, and primal repression via the entrance into culture, à la Freud. The first is alienation via a Symbolic code proper; the second is alienation via the imaginative use of codes.

61. Ibid., 53.

62. Ibid., 69.

63. Ibid., 51.

64. Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action,* 9.

65. While I do not favor the metaphor of castration, as it echoes Freud's oedipal essentialism, it is clear enough conceptually to help explain why self-consciousness is accompanied by a formal, universal unconsciousness.

66. Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan,* 68.

67. Schelling, *Ages of the World,* 44.

68. Fink, *Lacanian Subject,* xi.

69. Chiesa, *Subjectivity and Otherness,* 75. This is yet another way of characterizing the first aesthetic break.

70. Notice that we are already slipping here into secondary forms of productive repression regarding sexuality, which necessarily requires that the subject already be in a language. In our larger discussion, we are still at the level of the acquisition of language only, not the negotiations that occur once inside the Symbolic. Nevertheless the universal no creates the conditions of possibility for the yes, instantiating "the empty center that closes off the play it opens up and makes possible," à la Derrida.

71. Lemaire, *Jacques Lacan,* 59.

72. Ibid., 6–7.

73. Sarah Kay describes in greater detail how the concept of castration shifts considerably in the passage from Freud to Lacan to Žižek. See Kay, *Žižek,* 32–33

74. While Freud discusses castration and the Oedipus complex in many of his writings, a good place to begin is his essay "Some Pathological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes," in Freud, *Collected Papers,* 5:186–97.

75. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus,* 313.

76. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus.*

77. Much is made of this double misrecognition, as we shall see. See, for example, Chiesa, *Subjectivity and Otherness,* 14–19; and Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political,* 17–18.

78. Bettelheim ("Freud and the Soul," 92) more precisely and interestingly translates the terms as follows: the ego is the I, the id is the It, while the superego is the Above-I. Healthy subjects, despite existential despair, achieve a "reasonable dominance of [their] I over [their] It and Above-I." Translated again, we might say that the healthy subject manages to maintain relative autonomy from, and a solid empathy for, others despite being an object subjected to a big Other. Yes, we are material objects, and we are subjected to the big Other, but the healthy individual maintains maximum agency under these constraints.

79. Fink, *Lacanian Subject,* 1.

80. Cf. Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!* 1–9.

81. I continue to use the term "games" in Ludwig Wittgenstein's sense of language games. These games are obviously deadly serious, and the failure to play them properly can lead to poverty, illness, and misery, though success can lead to the opposite conditions. See Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations.*

82. Such distinctions can only be made in retrospect, by focusing on what has been repressed, then working to reveal the repressed in the spirit of greater realization. For an example of derealization as policy, see Lim, *People's Republic of Amnesia.*

83. See, for example, Laclau, "Universalism, Particularism, and the Question of Identity."

84. The films themselves, as with all widely popular films, as Žižek notes, are themselves symptoms. Why, he asks, were films such as *The Matrix* and *The Truman Show* so popular in the United States in the years prior to the terrorist attacks in 2001? What might they have been telling us about the rhetorical unconscious? See Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real,* esp. 2–20.

85. I discuss this from a Foucauldian perspective in Bruner, "Rhetorical Criticism as Limit Work."

Chapter 3: Artificial Personhood

1. Fink, *Lacanian Subject,* 53. Fink analyzes the necessarily unconscious aspects of symbolic codes, whereas I am more interested in the symptoms of this unconsciousness in material culture. Both perspectives on the Symbolic, however, resonate with Kenneth Burke's notion that humans are thoroughly involved in self-productive negativity.

2. Ibid., 45.

3. Wolgast, *Ethics of an Artificial Person,* 112.

4. Peter Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life,* 406. The book is about the power of repetition in the construction of the beautiful self, arguing for aesthetic specialization coupled with "de-automatization."

5. Ibid., 405.

6. Ibid.

7. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness,* 155. We experience the world actually, in our bodies, and via the mediation of the Symbolic, which variously enables yet universally alienates us within the Imaginary.

8. The "uncanny valley" is the point at which what is living and what is dead become indistinguishable. For a useful introduction to the concept, which relates to artificial personhood's queer and unsettling nature, see Mori, "Uncanny Valley."

9. See René Descartes's fragment "Treatise of Man" in *Philosophical Writings of Descartes,* 1:99–108, in which he makes the clear claim that humans are beautifully wrought machines or moving statues. See also Roach, *Player's Passion,* esp. the chapter "Nature Still, but Nature Mechanized" (55–92).

10. Roach, *Player's Passion,* 60.

11. Wood, *Edison's Eve,* 3–15.

12. La Mettrie, *Man a Machine and Man a Plant,* 32.

13. Ibid., 34–35.

14. Reilly, *Automata and Mimesis,* 96.

15. Mayer, *Authority, Liberty and Automatic Machinery;* Reilly, *Automata and Mimesis,* 50.

16. Wood, *Edison's Eve,* xviii–xix.

17. Reilly, *Automata and Mimesis,* 24–25. Saint Augustine condemned communicating with soulless matter as idolatry in his *City of God,* 62.

18. See Suetonius, *Twelve Caesars,* 40–41; Beacham, *Spectacle Entertainments of Early Imperial Rome,* 90–91. An actor playing Caesar's ghost simultaneously appeared on stage.

19. Bedini, "Role of Automata in the History of Technology," 25.

20. Ibid., 33–34.

21. Reilly, *Automata and Mimesis,* 25; Wood, *Edison's Eve,* xvi. According to Victoria Nelson, Magnus and Aquinas also mutually stressed "the importance of attaching abstract ideas to concrete images . . . or [developing the] eye of the imagination." See Nelson, *Secret Life of Puppets,* 92. It is an open question whether Nelson's notion of "corporeal looking" might relate to the critique of the automaton.

22. Roach, *Player's Passion,* 80. Showing the mythical status of the Aquinas story, Max von Boehn alternatively claims that Magnus's automaton was "a lovely woman." See Boehn, *Dolls and Puppets,* 259. How myths emerge around automata is arguably a secondary symptom of the original symptom, or the horror following the desire.

23. Bedini, "Role of Automata in the History of Technology," 24.

24. Ibid.; emphasis added.

25. Ibid., 26.

26. Wood, *Edison's Eve,* 17.

27. Dews, "Eclipse of Coincidence," 22.

28. Roach, *Player's Passion,* 62. For another brief description of the Renaissance and early Enlightenment waterworks of the royalty, see Bedini, "Automata and the History of Technology," 26–28.

29. Reilly, *Automata and Mimesis,* 67–69.

30. Bedini, "Role of Automata in the History of Technology," 38.

31. For photographs and descriptions of Jaquet-Droz's human automata, see Reilly, *Automata and Mimesis,* 87–92.

32. Ibid., 92.

33. Ibid., 94.

34. Price, "Automata and the Origins of Mechanism and Mechanistic Philosophy," 21.

35. Reilly, *Automata and Mimesis,* 73.

36. Bedini, "Role of Automata in the History of Technology," 36. The special importance of Vaucanson is universally recognized among scholars studying the history of automata.

37. Ibid. In *Edison's Eve,* Gaby Wood provides a more extraordinary account of Vaucanson's achievement: "In 1727, to celebrate the visit of one of the heads of the Minims, he decided to make some androids, which would serve dinner and clear the tables. The visitor appeared to be pleased with the automata, but declared afterwards that he thought Vaucanson's tendencies 'profane,' and ordered that the workshop be destroyed" (19).

38. Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines,* 107.

39. Bedini, "Role of Automata in the History of Technology," 37; Reilly, *Automata and Mimesis,* 83–86; Wood, *Edison's Eve,* 21–31; Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines,* esp. 103–6, 139–43.

40. Riskin, "Defecating Duck," 601

41. Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines,* 111.

42. Bedini, "Automata in the History of Technology," 38.

43. Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines,* 106. The suppression of the workers and the voicing of their economic plight illustrate a field of the unspeakable.

44. Ibid., 107.

45. Wood, *Edison's Eve,* xix.

46. For a deep account of the historical influence of mechanization, which flowered in the seventeenth century, see Dijksterhuis, *Mechanization of the World Picture.*

47. Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines,* 184.

48. Reilly, *Automata and Mimesis,* 80.

49. Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines,* 112.

50. Ibid., 135.

51. Ibid., 147.

52. Ibid., 148.

53. Jaynes, "Problem of Animate Motion in the Seventeenth Century," 224.

54. Reilly, *Automata and Mimesis,* 68–69. For other accounts see Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines,* 122–23; and Wood, *Edison's Eve,* 3–4. Each point to earlier sources of the myth.

55. See, for example, Williams, *Dream Worlds.*

56. On England's revolutionary history, with special emphasis on how those revolutions impacted the nation's political economy, see Bruner, *Democracy's Debt,* 189–214. See also Pocock's magisterial *Machiavellian Moment.*

57. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* 83.

58. Ibid., 1.

59. Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies,* esp. 193–232.

60. Ibid., 199.

61. Ibid., 227.

62. Morgan, *Inventing the People,* 169.

63. According to Stephen Orgel, "Roles in plays, to Puritan observers, were impostures and lies," while from the court's perspective, "the parts we choose to play are not impersonations but ideals. They are what we wish to be, and they reveal not so much the way we want others to see us but the way we want to see ourselves." Orgel, *Illusion of Power,* 60.

64. Morgan, "Puritan Hostility to the Theatre," 340.

65. Agnew, *Worlds Apart,* 12.

66. Returning to Schelling, Dews speaks of this doubling of ourselves as follows: "Schelling does not set up a stark contrast between object and subject [as does Descartes and Kant], between a radically inert, ahistorical Real and ultimately delusive historicizations. . . , [Instead it] is the secret intercourse between two essences, one questioning and one answering, one ignorant though working to know, and one knowledgeable without knowing its knowledge." Dews, "Eclipse of Coincidence," 22.

67. It was a mere shadow of its former self well before then. Morley, *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair.*

68. Ibid., 1. Jesters in various forms have existed for millennia, and they were especially ubiquitous in ancient China. See Otto, *Fools Are Everywhere.*

69. Mares, "Origin of the Figure," 26.

70. Morley, *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair,* 62.

71. Ibid. Unlike today, the intentional rhetorical tradition was alive and well among educated students, who learned the basics of public disputation and competitive oratory. The times, when literacy was a luxury for a minority, encouraged sophisticated levels of critical thought, though these conditions would not outlast the transition from feudalism to capitalism. Where do we see college students today playing publicly, "foolishly," and offhandedly with such skills?

72. Ibid., 70–71.

73. See Shershow, *Puppets and "Popular" Culture,* 45.

74. For a provocative take on the voice within the Symbolic, where voice has something in it of the ventriloquist's dummy, see Dolar, *Voice and Nothing More,* in which he discusses "the object voice," or "the autonomy of the signifier and the voice" (144).

75. Boehn, *Dolls and Puppets,* 321–22. Yet another example of the enforcement of the unspeakable.

76. Ibid., 322.

77. Often at puppet shows, including the latter versions of Punch and Judy, the puppeteer is hidden from view, though other forms of puppetry use a wide range of means to present their speaking objects.

78. Shershow, *Puppets and "Popular" Culture,* 56, 66, 67.

79. Ibid., 75–76.

80. Agnew, *Worlds Apart,* 10–11.

81. Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times,* 1:112.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid., 115; emphasis added.

84. Orgel, *Illusion of Power.*

85. Bristol, "Carnival and the Institution of Theater," 642.

86. Ringler, "First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack on the Stage," 405.

87. Morgan, "Puritan Hostility to the Theatre," 341.

88. Ringler, "First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack on the Stage," 408.

89. Morgan, "Puritan Hostility to the Theatre," 340; Barish, *Anti-Theatrical Prejudice.*

90. Ringler, "First Phase of the Elizabethan Attack on the Stage," 412. Ringler estimates that, in a city of less than two hundred thousand people, perhaps more than a half million admissions were sold annually in the late sixteenth century. If true, then one can imagine the power of the theater at this time among the general populace.

91. Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics,* esp. 111–67.

92. On the early commodification of the slave's body, see Best, *Fugitive Properties.* The condition of the slave was unspeakable, since the system of global trade depended upon that commodity. Who can wonder that such repressed human suffering would return in a range of cultural symptoms?

93. Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics,* 128. There is literally a mise en abyme in architecture, all impossibly revolving around the subjective black hole of power.

94. Ibid., 142. For a parallel example in eighteenth-century France, see Colet, *First Gentleman of the Bedchamber.*

95. There is a similar public interiority to be found in the waterworks grottoes frequented by Descartes. At the center of such grottoes was often a "cabinet of curiosities," filled with natural objects that looked human made and human-made objects that looked natural or tiny materialized black holes of the uncanny. See Reilly, *Automata and Mimesis,* 32–33. See also Bredekamp, *Lure of Antiquity and the Cult of the Machine.*

96. Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics,* 136.

97. Ibid., 140.

98. Shershow, *Puppets and "Popular" Culture,* 98.

99. Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics,* 143.

100. Ibid. Just as the organizing absence, à la Derrida, both structures the structure and yet is "outside" of the structure.

101. See, for example, the series of images in ibid., 144–46.

102. Shershow, *Puppets and "Popular" Culture,* 99.

103. Ibid., 104.

104. Ibid., 106.

105. Orgel, *Illusion of Power,* 88–89.

106. Thomas Dawson, cited in Fumerton, *Cultural Aesthetics,* 132.

107. Ibid., 160.

108. Ibid., 161.

109. Ibid., 166. Fumerton notes that "by the sixteenth century, 'banqueter' was used for 'banker.'"

110. Ibid., 167.

111. Ibid.

112. Ibid., 7. "The executioner and his assistant wore fantastic disguises of black masks, wigs, and false beards akin to the get-ups of antimasquers. Their tight-fitting costumes were those of sailors or butchers," Ibid.

113. Ibid., 181.

114. Agnew, *Worlds Apart,* 113.

115. Sennett, *Fall of Public Man,* 267.

116. Sennett, then, reverses Wolgast's assumption that playing a role leads to a lack of personal responsibility, suggesting instead that role-playing is productively self-alienating, as we experience, in a revelatory way, the distinction between being ourselves and playing a role.

117. We see a similar symptom in U.S. national politics emerging after the widespread dissemination of television, accelerated by the introduction of cable and the twenty-four-hour news cycle, as the electorate became more concerned about the personality of candidates than their actual policies. Rather than asking the more difficult question of what the candidate stands for in actual practice in their public role, it is much easier to ask, "Is this someone you would like to share a beer with?" On how television changed presidential image management, see Jameson, *Packaging the Presidency.* The election of Donald Trump in 2016 once again radically changed the imaginary landscape of presidential authority.

118. See Sennett, *Fall of Public Man,* esp. 313–40.

119. Seigel, *Bohemian Paris;* Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities.*

120. Mayo, *Jefferson Himself,* 112–13; Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern,* 184–87, 330.

121. Jefferson quoted in Rahe, *Republics Ancient and Modern,* 185.

Chapter 4: The Commodity Self

1. Žižek, *Ticklish Subject,* 33. We might think of the indivisible remainder as the void, then the consumption of the void, then the violent public consumption of the void.

2. Ibid., 32.

3. I reject the term *late capitalism,* suggesting as it does that capitalism is somehow in its old age. Quite the contrary. Since at least the late seventeenth century, we have seen market logics increasingly saturate global space and human relations, for better and for worse. In saturated capitalist environments, such as we variously see in the United States, Europe, China, and so on, an ever-greater percentage of the world's population is being caught up in market logics and thus in the unconscious processes of reification.

4. Addison quoted in Mackie, *Commerce of Everyday Life,* 203–4. The *Tatler* and the *Spectator* were a series of published papers on manners and culture among the rising bourgeoisie in London during the reign of Queen Anne.

5. Ibid., 206.

6. Hirschman, "Rival Views of Market Society"; and Hirschman, *Passions and the Interests.*

7. Hirschman, *Passions and the Interests,* xxii.

8. Ibid.

9. Carrithers, introduction to Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws,* 67–68.

10. Ibid., 289. The notion of a repressed unconscious dimension of subjectivity was unknown in Montesquieu's time, but given this and other quotes, there is no doubt he believed that subjectivity was shaped by local transintentional forces, where the subjective was largely conditioned by the objective.

11. On the indirect benefits of self-centered competition and the division of labor, see A. Smith, *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations,* book 1, section 2.2. On the division of labor in pin production, see book 1, section 1.3, 3

12. Hirschman, *Passions and the Interests,* 4.

13. Ibid., 4–5.

14. Ibid., 9.

15. Ibid., 14–15.

16. Ibid., 38.

17. T. L. Friedman, *Lexus and the Olive Tree,* 12. This theory held true until the Russia-Georgia conflict in 2008 and McDonald's pulled out of Crimea in 2014 after the Russian annexation.

18. See, for example, Hoffman, *Usury in Christendom.* Hoffman is unfortunately associated with Holocaust denial, though he vigorously opposes the label. Beyond the controversy the book, as its title suggests, traces the history of the demise of usury as a mortal sin. The demonization of Jews in Germany in the twentieth century was an historical echo of this "sinfulness," as the National Socialists wanted capitalism without capitalism.

19. Marx quoted in Hirschman, *Passions and the Interests,* 27.

20. Marx, *Capital,* 71.

21. Weber, *Economy and Society,* 1156; emphasis added.

22. Dowling, *Jameson, Althusser, Marx,* 27.

23. A diamond ring is a perfect example of an object around which has been constructed an aura, precisely for extracting an exchange value redoubled in fantasy. The diamond purportedly represents true love, and with quite a profit.

24. The aura around a commodity is only largely imaginative because there are in fact qualitative differences among objects, and objects still do have use value. Some cars, for example, are better built. Others, however, are advertised as "sexy" cars or "luxurious" cars. The question is to determine the "more than" quality of the object and its function as symptom.

25. Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche,* 152.

26. Marx quoted in ibid.

27. Ibid., 154–55.

28. Ibid., 310.

29. Hawkes, *Ideology,* 97.

30. Ibid., 100.

31. An alternative, positive assessment could go as follows: "No, in fact the imaginary investment into random objects is a good thing, whether those random objects be local sports teams or something nice for the house. Our existential anxiety, irreparable as it is unto death, *needs* sublimation, and what a fine and relatively peaceful way it is to transform such fears and needs into pleasant things like a winning home run in the final game, or a well-furnished home according to one's tastes." Our rhetorical unconsciousness is always a both/and, being necessarily alienating and repressive, and the stuff of self-conscious life itself. As political psychotherapists, perhaps we should welcome these benign affective investments.

32. Hawkes, *Ideology,* 102; emphasis added.

33. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness,* 83–122.

34. Hawkes, *Ideology,* 110. This is the precise opposite of Laclau's rendition of the Real, which "impinges" from the outside on subjectivity. Here the idea "impinges" on materiality.

35. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness,* 92.

36. Ibid., 128.

37. Ibid., 163.

38. Hardt and Negri, *Multitude,* 129, 133.

39. By critical political theory, I mean those theories that move through semiotics, structuralism, and post-structuralism, conceptualizing the political accordingly. They seek in the main to explain collective identity construction, how and why it occurs, and how different political regimes display different symptoms based upon what is excluded or repressed.

40. Laclau, *On Populist Reason;* Asen, *Counterpublics and the State;* Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics.*

41. Nancy Fraser calls materially effective counterpublics "strong," as opposed to "weak" counterpublics that unite under an empty signifier but can force no major structural changes. See Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," 129–32.

42. Crawford, *Argument and Change in World Politics.* Crawford's work also shows how broader structural factors deeply influence the failure or success of various humanitarian efforts and how systems of Symbolic association tend to be organized around a dominant set of politically consequential fictions.

43. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness,* 113–14.

44. Ibid., 87.

45. Ibid., 85.

46. For two concise characterizations of the *objet petit a,* see Kotsko, *Žižek and Theology,* 36–37, and Kay, *Žižek,* 165–66.

47. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness,* 171. The U.S. presidential campaign of 2016 provides a useful way of thinking about how the proletariat responds to their oppression. If we define the proletariat as the counterhegemonic, or those antagonized by the hegemonic system, then those who supported the failed candidacy of Bernie Sanders were a potentially revolutionary force, but so were the supporters of Donald Trump, for very different reasons. Sanders spoke the unspeakable of corporate rule in the spirit

of realization, while Trump played upon the fears of those repressed by that rule in the spirit of derealization. And yet neither truly represent "revolution," if by the term we mean the overthrow of a government.

48. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* 15.

49. Ibid., 83, 37.

50. The play, by Thomas Dekker and John Webster, is quoted in Agnew, *Worlds Apart,* 57.

51. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* 83.

52. Diderot, *Paradox of Acting,* 6.

53. Rousseau, *Politics and the Arts,* quoted in Sennett, *Fall of Public Man,* 115.

54. Sennett, *Fall of Public Man,* 68–69.

55. Ibid., 70. This reminds us of the senior Mozart's complaint that the women of the French court looked like "Nuremberg dolls." In Germany the Romantic period had not yet begun.

56. Agnew, *Worlds Apart,* 52.

57. The population of Paris, over the same period of time, grew from about 400,000 to only 550,000. See Sennett, *Fall of Public Man,* 130–33.

58. Marx, *Capital,* 112.

59. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities.*

60. It is an interesting question why there arose a desire for the copy, rather than the actual, in Paris during the rise of department stores, price tags, and mannequins. It is another to ask why the workers' revolutions were lost in the shadow of the earlier French Revolution.

61. See Marx, "Class Struggles of France."

62. Seigel, *Bohemian Paris,* 94, 84.

63. Nochlin, *Realism,* 46–47.

64. Courbet, who died in exile in Switzerland, self-consciously embraced his freedom from all institutions, religions, political bigotries, and so on.

65. Sennett, *Fall of Public Man,* 131.

66. Baudelaire, *Painter of Modern Life,* 12.

67. Tester, *Flâneur,* 7.

68. Baudelaire, *Painter of Modern Life,* 26.

69. Tarde quoted in Williams, *Dream Worlds,* 347.

70. Tarde quoted in ibid., 350.

71. Ibid., 353.

72. Kracauer, *Jacques Offenbach and the Paris of His Time,* 152.

73. Baudelaire, *Painter of Modern Life,* 140. Baudelaire's respect for the "seriousness" of Wagner's work is interestingly compared to Nietzsche's assessment of the same. Nietzsche ultimately came to see Wagner's work as a sign of nationalist decadence or a life-negating morality. See Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner,* 156.

74. See, for example, Hoffmann, *Best Tales of Hoffmann,* esp. "Automata" and "The Sand-Man," 71–103; 183–214.

75. Baudelaire, *Painter of Modern Life,* 165.

76. Ibid.

77. The story of the "mad" King Ludwig, who died in 1886, is a fascinating tale of an individual who sought to make the real and the fictional indistinguishable. See Zarek, *Tragic Idealist.* Ludwig's efforts left him labeled as mad, though Zarek's close study of his life reveals that this is hardly the case; instead he sought to impose the Imaginary upon the Real. On the simultaneous mass consumption occurring in Paris, see Williams, *Dream Worlds.*

78. Tester, *Flâneur,* 13.

79. Benjamin, *Writer of Modern Life,* 85.

80. "Around 1840," Baudelaire recalled, "it was briefly fashionable to take turtles for a walk in the arcades [the new enclosed shopping malls], [for] the *flâneurs* liked to have the turtles set the pace for them. If they had had their way, progress would have been obliged to accommodate itself to this pace. But this attitude did not prevail." Quoted in ibid., 84.

81. Goethe quoted in Benjamin, *Selected Writings,* 186.

82. Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe,* 82. The term *creative destruction,* as coined by Joseph Schumpeter, is meant to describe progress in capitalism: new demands and desires destroy the institutions built to address old demands and desires. See Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy.*

83. This search for art's autonomy, including autonomy from market forces, backfired in modern art, or art for art's sake, for ultimately its best examples now sell for millions of dollars. Nevertheless art's separating itself from the vapidities of bourgeois consumerism led away from realism to movements such as impressionism and cubism, culminating in Dada and surrealism. Unfortunately for such artists, capitalism encourages resistance in order to commodify the cool, so the more art resists, the more valuable, after the artist's death in most instances, it becomes.

84. Seigel, *Bohemian Paris,* 114–15.

85. Ibid., 99–100.

86. Ibid., 108.

87. Privat d'Anglemont quoted in ibid., 140.

88. Ibid., 100, 113.

89. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness,* 83.

90. Ibid.

91. Engels, quoted in Benjamin, *Arcades Project,* 428. Today's urban freeways are even more brutal, with everyone isolated in their little tin cans, aggressively flying past one another in total isolation or otherwise crammed together in long, equally angry traffic jams.

92. Simmel quoted in ibid., 433. Baudelaire was equally disgusted by willed ignorance toward the presence of others.

93. Sennett, *Fall of Public Man,* 214.

94. On speaking the truth to power as an ethic, see Foucault, *Fearless Speech. Parrhesia* is the term for speaking the truth to power, and, according to Foucault, "the *parrhesiastes* was needed to disclose those truths which would ensure the salvation or welfare of the city" (102). Think again of the function of the court jesters.

95. See Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere.*

96. As a rule, then, we can say that whenever there is a sufficient balance of powers to ensure that one hegemonic group is incapable of enforcing their will on other hegemonic groups, realization will tend to occur. Conversely when tyranny or oligarchy prevails, so does derealization.

97. Baudelaire, *Painter of Modern Life,* 28–29.

Chapter 5: Secular Theology and Realization

1. Again, political psychoanalysis returns to intentionality, thus bridging perceived gaps between traditional forms of public address studies and critical-rhetorical forms.

2. McGrath, *Dark Ground of Spirit,* 99–100.

3. Stolzenberg, "Political Theology with a Difference," 18.

4. See, for example, Kantorowicz, *King's Two Bodies;* Agamben, *Kingdom and the Glory;* Schmitt, *Political Theology.*

5. Taylor, *After God,* 37.

6. Ibid., 40.

7. This death of God theology does not, in my opinion, fall under the critique leveled by Eric Voegelin, who argues that "Gnostics," such as Hegel, Marx, and Nietzsche, are "swindlers" who stop themselves from questioning their fundamental presumptions, and where the "murder of God is committed speculatively by explaining divine being as the work of man." Voegelin, *Science, Politics and Gnosticism,* 36. The death of God theology reviewed here is precisely in the service of a limit attitude, and the divine in the human is our subjectivity via alienation, as a reflection of the divinity of matter and its unconscious forms. The divine is not the work of humans, save in a very specific sense, and questioning fundamental presumptions is at the very heart of the work examined here.

8. For a sampling of perspectives on death of God theology, see Altizer, *Gospel of Christian Atheism;* Taylor, *After God;* Caputo and Vattimo, *After the Death of God;* Winquist, *Surface of the Deep;* Kotsko, *Žižek and Theology;* and Žižek, *Puppet and the Dwarf.*

9. Kotsko, *Žižek and Theology,* 151.

10. Ibid., 152.

11. Stanghellini, "Psychopathology of Common Sense," 203.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., 204.

14. Blankenburg, "First Steps toward a Psychopathology," 314.

15. Ibid., 305.

16. Ibid., 309–10. See also McConnell and Gillett, "Lacan for the Philosophical Psychiatrist."

17. Caputo and Vattimo, *After the Death of God,* 93.

18. Similarities between post-Kantian philosophy and contemporary critical theology are discussed by Charles E. Winquist in *Surface of the Deep,* 199–211. He discusses "postmodern secular theology," suggesting that the "language of the death of God is God-language. The thinking of the end of metaphysics is a metaphysical thinking" (239). Focusing on our limits, he insists, is a sacred task.

19. See Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 443–59. In chap. 19, "Artificial Limbs. Functionalist Cynicisms II: On the Spirit of Technology," Sloterdijk refers to the Nazi "comradeship with the machine," a body that is "all prosthesis" (452, 457).

20. Žižek, *Parallax View,* 91.

21. See Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* 195–228.

22. Žižek quoted in Stavrakakis, *Lacan and the Political,* 109.

23. Kotsko, *Žižek and Theology,* 123.

24. Callimachi, "ISIS Enshrines a Theology of Rape."

25. Critchley, *Faith of the Faithless.*

26. Altizer, *Gospel of Christian Atheism.*

27. Caputo and Vattimo, *After the Death of God,* esp. 1–24. The authors refer to Mark C. Taylor as a theorist of "postmodern theology" (3), linking death of God theology and deconstructive philosophy, as does Derrida and Lacan. See also Winquist, *Surface of the Deep,* 203.

28. Altizer, *Gospel of Christian Atheism,* 21.

29. Ibid., 25. In my interpretation Altizer means the absent or transcendent, even vengeful God: the God of the faithless faithful in need of their metaphysical comforts (at the expense of realization).

30. Kotsko, *Žižek and Theology,* 150. See also Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison.*

31. Altizer, *Gospel of Christian Atheism,* 42.

32. Ibid., 45–46.

33. Ibid., 44–45.

34. Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche,* 350.

35. Altizer, *Gospel of Christian Atheism,* 104.

36. Ibid., 107.

37. Taylor, *After God,* 347. Taylor's title mixes two themes. First, if we take the death of God seriously, then we are "after," or past faith in, a master who displaces our own responsibility; second, that hard look at our responsibility requires our being more truly "after" whatever God might be. Those "before God" tremble in fear of an Other who judges them as if from a distance, relieving them of ultimate responsibility for their actions, since they act out of fear. Those who are "after God" must face the difficult truths of our rhetorical unconsciousness, moving forward in full knowledge of the black holes, dark matter, and the other impossible gaps involved in our unique subjective experience of the actual and refusing comforting lies.

38. Ibid.

39. Habermas says this in other words when suggesting that the "system" overwhelms the "life world." However, in the absence of a theory of rhetorical unconsciousness, he makes the key error of assuming that the majority of people can achieve the third aesthetic break at will. Political psychoanalysis is based on the opposite assumption: the desire for metaphysical comfort is so strong, as are the powers of black holes and dark matter, that derealization is the natural tendency. In arguing that religious dogmas must be left at the door when entering a court of law, for example, Habermas blithely

asserts that "all that is required here is the epistemic ability to consider one's faith reflexively from the outside and relate it to secular views." "Religion in the Public Sphere," 9–10. I instead would expect that, as a result of different negative discursive fields, different symptoms are always appearing, and it is precisely the unwillingness or inability "to consider one's faith reflexively from the outside" that expands the unspeakable fields and leads to pathological symptoms.

40. Consider again the court buffoon as a mechanism for ensuring the unspeakable gets spoken in some way. Compare that to "comic" news in the United States and elsewhere, where the hypocrisies of politicians and pundits are mercilessly unmasked. The question is to what degree such mechanisms are sufficient to retard political pathologies. Regardless of our answer, we should note the therapeutic importance of such mechanisms.

41. Taylor, *After God,* 304.

42. Ibid.

43. Žižek, *Parallax View,* 10.

44. Plato, *Collected Dialogues,* 493–94. Noting that "the function of oratory is in fact to influence men's souls," it is a true crisis when "a master of oratory, who is ignorant of good and evil, employs his power of persuasion on a community as ignorant as himself" (505–6). The deeply cynical or unconscious persuade in ways that are detrimental to subjectivity, while only those who are both eloquent and know the difference between good and evil can heal the political state. Plato was willing to turn to totalitarianism to achieve such "health," while I suggest a turn to the limit attitude of the third aesthetic break.

45. Žižek, *Parallax View,* 89.

46. Ibid., 336.

47. Ibid., 337.

48. In no way do I want to suggest that all of the faithful within religiosity are equally unconscious, for a positive aspect of many religions is a true love and concern for others, especially those in need. This empathy is a sign of *productive* self-alienation. The question is to what extent dogma must be accepted by those being so loved and concerned for, or if the love for the other is indeed greater than the love for the metaphysical comforts of the loving subject. Has the fantasy been traversed, allowing for unconditional love, or is the fantasy still intact and love depends?

49. Hoffer, *True Believer,* 14.

50. Kotsko, *Žižek and Theology,* 63; Žižek, *Parallax View,* 369.

51. On the importance of obeying the letter of the law, and how such obedience reveals the transgressive "addition" to the law, see Žižek, *Plague of Fantasies,* 27–30. See also Kotsko, *Žižek and Theology,* 57–60.

52. Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason,* 220.

53. Ibid., 217–18. The term *rational* here should be replaced with *reasonable,* to be precise.

54. Ibid., 218.

55. Barthes, *Mythologies,* 22.

56. Ibid., 18. See Gracián's defense of the wisdom and heroism of masks: Gracián, *Pocket Mirror for Heroes,* 7–9. Wisdom, for Gracián, is wearing one's masks well, concealing true intention in a world of the merely self-conscious.

57. In 2016 Elon Musk's SpaceX program had a rocket return to Earth, backward, and land safely on a barge in the ocean. After several failures the mind-bogglingly complex procedure finally worked. No doubt what is natural about accomplishing such a task is part and parcel of objective modifications necessary for success. What use that technology is put to, however, and how that technology, creating new Symbolic relations, will impact subjectivity, are issues related to practical wisdom. On the historic landing of the craft, see Sheridan, "In First, SpaceX Launches Recycled Rocket and Spaceship."

58. Žižek, *Puppet and the Dwarf,* 87.

59. Orgel, *Illusion of Power,* 79.

60. Ibid., 83.

61. Agamben, *Nudities,* 113.

62. Ibid., 113–14.

Conclusion: Agency and Realization

1. See McGrath, *Dark Ground of Spirit,* 99–100.

2. Ibid., 100.

3. Burke, *Grammar of Motives,* 514–15. See also Burke, *Attitudes toward History,* for additional insights on the tragic and the comic in identity construction.

4. Such paradoxes are at the heart of Diderot's "D'Alembert's Dream," where he too discusses the secular-theological implications of rhetorical unconsciousness, speaking as if in a dream about how forms emerge from the formless, life from the lifeless.

5. Benjamin, *Illuminations,* 254, 263.

6. Taylor, *After God,* 308.

7. I have addressed the broader historical relationship between hegemonic aesthetic forms and arts of resistance elsewhere. See Bruner, *Repressive Regimes, Aesthetic States and Arts of Resistance.*

8. No book could possibly capture even the major forms in which rhetorical unconsciousness is manifested. We have not even touched, for example, upon the productively repressed in interpersonal or small group settings. Nor have we studied other crucial forms of artificial personhood such as corporations and the sovereign state. We would find the return of the repressed here as well, with symptoms leading either to realization or derealization.

9. These identities were the result of colonialism; thus they are placed in scare quotes.

10. For a major first salvo in the intellectual debate over the relationship between the subject and technology, see Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto."

11. Ambah, "Soap Opera Has Saudis Glued to TV."

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