Laurence A. Rickels
MINE

[**intro**] [first] [second] [third] [shaft]
[notes]

The accident happened, because it recurred.

A young miner, Matts Israelson was his name, disappeared in any one of the cave-ins going down in the copper mines of Falun, Sweden, between 1676 and 1677. He went down alone that night, they say, to light his pyre. To his fellow miners he was known as Fet Matts, presumably because he had a weight problem, or perhaps because he was just the type to sweat a lot, like Hamlet. He definitely had a problem waiting. His disappearance, which in turn disappeared, never getting a real date, began to be reversed when, in 1719, a young man's corpse was discovered during renovations or expansions of the same old mine which was by then so steady-state, production-wise, that the company was going for more, and more accessible, infrastructures of profit and savings. It was a connecting tunnel that yielded the spectacular disconnection of a loss come back, intact and undisclosed. While the body the miners discovered still marked the spot of accident, what with legs severed but lying by, as parts with their whole, nevertheless this unidentified object was, science fiction aside or inside, perfectly preserved. Even the tobacco in the dead miner's matching container was decay-proofed by the mineral solution which treated the whole corpus to mummification.

It was also a flashback to the inaugural image for the introduction of discourse into mining. Preceded only by a long itemized dedication, the opening line of Georgius Agricola's De Re Metallica calls the metallic arts to assembly lines of part for whole: "Most illustrious Princes, often have I considered the metallic arts as a whole, as Moderatus Columella considered the agricultural arts, just as if I had been considering the whole of the human body; and when I had perceived the various parts of the subject, like so many members of the body, I became afraid that I might die before I should understand its full extent, much less before

I could immortalise it in writing." [1]

Fear of dying and the body building of a discourse out of parts and compartments animate mining for a monstrous parting. Just add a century or so and we have the mummified body. The "and" Agricola dealt us with his representation of the science of mining in terms of his relationship to his own corpus or body, dead or alive, enters the stage left without recognition or identification. Because the body without context did acquire a witness, and thus made the primal scene, when an old woman arrived just in time to identify the preserved corpse as that of her fianc�, lost forty-three years ago. What cuts in right here is the scene, with names and places forgotten or displaced to protect the innocent of mourning. Once the forgettogether was in place it could also skip a context, even a country. This scene became the primal opening of a certain German Romantic reception, an opening which belonged, between those lines, to a death cult inside our mass media culture, our state of ongoing technologization.

The skipped beat, which Sweden had to hand to Germany to protect, project, and police, was picked up in 1808 by Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert who recorded the incident in his Views from the Dark Side of the Natural Sciences. The volume was turned up full blast, and the reception of the mining scene finely tuned, throughout the movement or momentum that was German Romanticism. While Wagner too planned an opera around the synapse of this connection, but only in synopsis form, Johann Peter Hebel, Achim von Arnim, Friedrich Hebbel, E. T. A. Hoffmann, and Hugo von Hoffmannsthal worked it on out and built it into the corpus of a reception. Here is von Schubert's opening cover. It is the scene as it gets encapsulated right at the opening of a reception, and right before it is swallowed whole, on eternally postponed time release:

In like manner, that remarkable corpse, the one described by H�lpher, Cronstedt, and the Swedish scholarly journals, also decayed into a sort of ash, even after they had placed him, to all appearances transformed into stone, under glass to keep out the influence of air. This former miner was found in the Swedish iron mines in Falun in the course of tunneling a connection between two shafts. The corpse, saturated in sulphuric acid, was at first soft and supple, but then petrified through contact with the air. Fifty years he had been lying low at a depth of three hundred meters in that acid water and no one would have recognized the unchanged facial features of the youth who died in the

accident, no one knew the time he had passed in the shaft, since the local records and legends concering all accidents were unclear, if it had not been for the recognition of his once beloved features, recollected and preserved within an old faithful love. For as the people crowded around the salvaged corpse to gaze on his unknown still-youthful physiognomy, there arrived a little old gray-haired mother, on crutches, who sank to her knees with tears in her eyes for the beloved dead man who had been her betrothed, and she praised the hour that had granted her, right at the portals of her own grave, such a reunion, and the people watched with amazement as this odd couple was reunited, the one who retained his youthful appearance even in death and down in the deep crypt, and the other one who had preserved the youthful love inside her faded and decaying body. The group looked on as this fifty-year silver wedding anniversary transpired between the still youthful bridegroom, stiff and cold, and the old and gray bride, so full of warm love. [2]

So who's mourning now? Who's dying now? This was the beginning of the Romantic safe text: a text of disconnection in place of sexual union, a text or corpus kept safe, in the safe-like preserve of a mine shaft or in Snow White's coffin of see-through chemical embalming. It's a scene we're still making in our mass-media sensurround. We still count down as German Romanticism's late arrival. E. T. A. Hoffmann, whose Sandman story Freud would read to great special effects in the essay "On 'The Uncanny,'" provides the missing link, the link with the missing, between us and them. Hoffmann's "The Mines of Falun" reorganizes the subterranean disconnection as lying between equal but nonsuperimposable plots, one of Oedipus, the other of Burial, a force field of tensions sparking between technology and haunting. What Freud himself referred to, in the closing line of his essay "On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement," as "the underworld of psychoanalysis" fills the space between, the space, as always, of "being two." It's the deep space of what is mine.

Psychoanalysis remains, to this day, the owner's manual to our ongoing technologization and group psychologization over the undead body of the other, who always goes first, and thus renders us at once immortal and suicidal. The story of this underworld accident -- which gives us two chances, the one that gives us pause, the preservation of the hiding of loss, the other that gives us the outside chance of ultimate mourning or unmourning through the big reunion that's also a

major disconnection -- belongs, therefore, primally placed, within the psychoanalytic transmission of our mass media sensurround.

[**intro**] [first] [second] [third] [shaft] [notes]
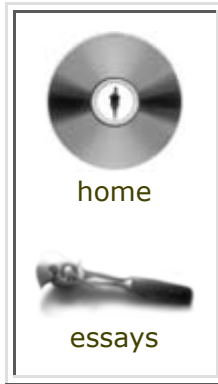
Laurence A. Rickels
MINE

[intro] [**first**] [second] [third] [shaft]
[notes]

FIRST LEVEL

It proves posssible to extract the photo-archival history of mining's documentation, and with it, a certain genealogy of media, already between the lines of Agricola's sixteenth-century treatise on mining. [3] While the illustrations in Agricola's study are more models than plans, their enabling conditions are the same: "Thus, two fifteenth century inventions, printing and perspective, provided necessary technical and conceptual groundwork for sixteenth century illustrated books on anatomy and engineering." [4] Mining was thus, along with anatomy, the first technical-scientific enterprise to make it into pictures. Pictures are always seconding the motion of the acceleration they represent as faster means of knowing, both at a glance and from above. Agricola's introduction of cut-away views of mining, in particular, begins "to manifest an ontological similarity to mining itself. The eye digs away from the side, a metaphorical miner cutting at right angles to the actual diggings being pictured. The line of sight intersects the plane of physical toil. A hierarchy of labour and knowledge is charted here, at this intersection of 'digging' and 'looking;' the mole-like work of the diggers is subordinated to command from above and beyond the mine. . . . Quite literally, the line of sight assumes the privileged status of supervision." [5]

In the language of dreams at least, or at the latest, building upward can also mean to build down there, in the underworld. We saw the interchangeability of one space, now high, now low, in Fritz Lang's Metropolis. Ernst Kris also takes building to the group-psychological high-low point: "Painters conclude pacts with the devil in order to compete with God, while builders, heirs to the builder of the Tower of Babel, commit suicide." [6]

The underworld is the internalization of the Tower of Babel.

Schliemann's excavation of Troy shared not only with Dante's Inferno the same nine circles but also with Babel the diminishing width of the bottom -- the diminishing return, in other words, of the top. On his way to the internalization or excavation of a suicide pact, Schliemann traveled to California in search of his missing brother Ludwig, who had emigrated to the Coast in 1849. When Schliemann followed one year later, the brother was already dead. But at the same time the survivor was there in time for California's declaration of statehood -- an event of such performativity that Schliemann was instantly turned into a citizen too. It was, then, the brother's legacy (which Schliemann expanded by introducing the sale of conserving-canned-goods first to the gold-rush miners and their hangers on, then in Russia, where the Crimean War in particular helped him out) that backed Schliemann's final confrontation with the perfectly, prophylactically preserved Trojans which he dug up only to see break down to dust. While Schliemann's uncovery and recovery efforts remained within the limits of literary phantasm, their double plot pumped it all up with the stowaway identifications of unmourning. How else could this Blitz of a forgotten or denied past (which archaeology always, traumatically, secures) pack enough momentum to cause one once sceptical professor, who had ridiculed Schliemann's project in print, to commit suicide.

Once upon a time there were Japanese plans to build under the ground in a group effort to find more personal space uninvaded by the earthquakes that would get absorbed, all-naturally, below the surface. The underground setting, an environment limited in resources and in terms of waste disposal, is just the test case for population control which the Japanese have been making for centuries. At that same time focus was fixed on the origin of Sadam Hussein's bunkers, which overlapped with earthquake-proofing technology. It was time to fast-rewind to a primal origin of modernist architecture not only along the faults and divides of catastrophe but also deep down in the mines. [7]

The mine was our first completely artificial and technologized environment. The funereal flickering that for centuries accompanied disasters down the shaft was outshone, around 1870, by electric illumination, which threw the high beam on a new sensurround of techno-accidents (which, all agreed, still recalled earthquakes). In the light of electricity, accident could now be doubled and contained in the preemptive mode of preparedness. The funereal phase of

technologization or industrialization had given way to the illuminated textuality of our consumerist skill at going with the infotainment flow of media technologization. Once the lights could be turned on and off, catastrophe could be simulated, control-released, and made interchangeable, along one line of simul-forecast, with the accident, the chance, the other, the other's death. The uncontrollable event, the advent of the other, is what we were given to rehearse or repeat in the inoculative mode of shock absorption.

Consider in terms of this new-found space of illumination (what Heidegger would later call, calling to mind television, Lichtung) the directions Wagner gives for the opening scene of the Second Act of his unrealized "Mines of Falun" opera:

The theater represents the depths of a completely unilluminated shaft. A weak light beam approaches from above. ... The back wall of granite brightens gradually and seems to draw back. A growing bluish light spreads everywhere. Wonderful crystal formations reveal themselves to our gaze. They take on gradually the forms of flowers and trees. Gleaming precious stones glow on them; other crystal formations take the shape of beautiful maidens, intermingling as in a dance. Surrounded by a curious glow there sits in their midst a beautiful woman, preciously adorned. One hears from up above Ulla's voice: Elis, Elis, I am yours! In an instant the shaft is transformed back into its earlier state. [8]

Wagner places the mine right where his opera would be, once he hid the orchestra and turned off the house lights: inside the electric-theatrical prehistory of cinema. The first occasion for Siemens in Germany to build an electric generator was for the running of the artificial grotto or cavern that Ludwig II, Wagner's first major groupie, built in the back of his Linderhof property for private communion with Wagner's total art. The king was seated, as group of one, in the swan boat while the orchestra, concealed of course, played on and on. As in Metropolis, where the underworld zombies labor not to produce what's for sale but only to keep the city (and the film) illuminated, running, animated, the Siemens generator at Linderhof supplied only animation: air and water current and lights, action. When the blue light was on, the king was in Capri, the first cavern spot to be libidinized early on for attraction of tourists. When the red light came on Ludwig was deep inside another tunnel of love, Wagner's legendary Venusberg.

From the shock absorption downed at amusement parks to film-administered doses of shock, it was the body of the group that got built. Thus, natural disaster, which now came only fully technologized, shared its aftershocks with every group member forever in the self-absorbed state of preparedness. Techno crash became the synchronic laboratory (like the one provided by disease and death on the person of the evolving human subject) for the diachronic prospect of evolution -- by the machine, the techno-body, the body of the group.

In eighteenth-century Europe, the removal of cemeteries from the center of town to the suburbs inaugurated a redistribution of modern architectural projections. The tomb took over the entire garden, now Elysium or Forest Lawn. On the way to these mortuary parks, the eighteenth-century project of relocation of the dead to the outskirts (which in Paris alone counted, in the space of one concerted effort, 50,000 exhumations) scooped countless examples of "live" burial. In the season finale of this eighteenth-century renovation of the image of death -- and of the dead -- we saw an epidemic outbreak of vampirism Back East in Europe and between the headlines of Western journalism, pop lit, and scholarship.

The representation or repression of the dead was no longer to take the exclusive form of some punitive, castrative skeleton. Going back to Greek models, death was now to be viewed as the twin sibling of sleep, as natural, even beautiful. But this doubling of sleep and death led, in the course of the relocation of graves, to uncanny prospects for waking up on the other side of this doubling, the endless divisions of burial alive. Thus the dead, this time in the temporal mode of doubling, just had to return. Fear of the dead, in the form of fear of live burial, and of one's own sleeping or unconscious state, drove the death-wish motor of their projective rebound.

In the twentieth century, Corbusier made the move into Freud's second system. The second tension (other than the one brought to us by haunting and exhumation) to be built into modern architecture (namely, catastrophe preparedness and shock proofing) hit the center of town (in other words, everywhere and everyone at once). The construction of Jonestown had begun. The replacement, beginning in the eighteenth century, the first full-on era of our technologization, of love and war by friendship and suicide had reached consciousness. Since, in Corbusier's words, "architecture dwells in the telephone," and

any house is a "dwelling machine," one that should be as "practical" "as a typewriter," "surgery" had to be performed on city center, on the "heart" of the problem Corbusier was all set to solve. [9] He proposed a redevelopment program that World War Two realized on many other stations free of change. Thus in 1941 a certain Eric Estorick could report back, in the context of "Morale in Contemporary England," one of the many freebies Corbusier was foreseeing: "A new Coventry is being conceived now, which is to be zoned and planned so that out of the old life a newer and more spacious kind of living can come." [10]

Connect the dots to Corbusier's plans for Paris: "The quarters Marais archives, Temples and so on will be torn down. But the old churches will remain. They would display themselves in the midst of the green -- is there anything more seductive?" Between the green spaces (dotted with churches) Corbusier planned Babelesque skyscrapers, reverse shots of underworlds (which, as in Dante's inferno or Schliemann's excavation of Troy, were reversals of the Tower of Babel). He built up these "brains of the city" to exercise, via "telephone, cable, radio," machine-control over "time and space." Corbusier dropped or displaced the suburban trend of modern building which has nevertheless skirted the main issues of the center.

Total war had entered relations between self and other or, rather, between the ego and its introjects. The bunkers that survived World War Two were the legacy of an architectural directive or phantasm beginning way down in the mines. Corbusier's bunker-style designs borrowed air circulation and compartmentalization features directly from ship technology (another technology modeled after the projected survival of mine catastrophes) and suspension techniques from the means and proofs of shock or quake absorption underground and above.

What was mine had always and already grown outward: modern cities arose as vast interior spaces, the streets just like tunnels, or at the bottom, mine shafts. The invasiveness of technology across landscapes was being doubled and contained by sealing off artificial interiorities from what was merely natural. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, techno-aestheticist science fictions featured subterranean or submarine high-tech salons (like in Eve future and 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea) which to this day remain on one continuum with plane cabins, business offices, hotel rooms, the shopping mall, the movie theater.

[intro] [**first**] [second] [third] [shaft] [notes]
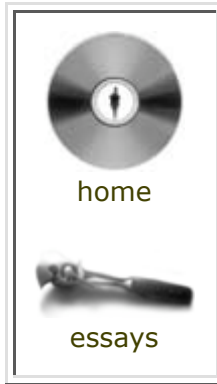
Laurence A. Rickels
MINE

[intro] [first] [**second**] [third] [shaft]
[notes]

SECOND LEVEL

Shakespeare's Hamlet coincides with the opening of Sweden's last or lost century of world power. The Baltic belonged to Sweden. The salient imagery in Hamlet ultimately aims (while overshooting, overflowing the mark) at dissolution and the contaminating spread of its no longer containable poison in ears within ears. But first, right at the opening "porches" of the haunting that introduces the drama and trauma, the imagery splits: one double goes underground to dig mourning and the other goes over ground, up to the blemish marking the spot we're in when face must be saved or kept. The ghost who drops over every witness his cone of secrecy is also an "old mole," an underworld creature. The grave digger, hailed as the master builder, puns around Hamlet's question about the current dig's intended content. The grave digger says the grave is "mine" because he's digging it. The trouble with the corpse (Polonius's body for example) is the trouble with this grave. Someone is always left over, missing, in the one-to-one correspondences between dead bodies and their proper interment.

The rejoinder or reply in Hamlet is called by Hamlet, in the series of his cagey dealings with the spies, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, "replication." One such rejoinder, in the context of what's mine, is elaborated by Hamlet as he plots the demise of the two spies who would assassinate him: "For 'tis the sport to have the enginer/ Hoist with his own petar; and it shall go hard/ But I will delve one yard below their mines,/ And blow them at the moon." And Hamlet closes the parenthesis by exiting with Polonius's corpse. The proper burial of Polonius secures an honor for the family's name given in the military image of firing a salute into "the woundless air." The woundless heir, Hamlet, will be granted, together with all the other corpses piled up by the end, the military honor of shooting. Hamlet could not be an heir

because of wounds or moles he couldn't carry or overcome precisely because the blemish was right in his mother's face, right in his relations with her body, that is with his own body. The narcissistic wounding is woundless, without remainder, without that work on what's left which cannot but admit the future, the other, the time to come. The future belongs to another family line: Hamlet, the living end of the former line, went the one way of all replication, of the merger with technology that cannot yet go through. All that's left to do, for Hamlet or for you, is self destruction.

Swedish tourism to this day recognizes the story of Fet Matts only as oddity or anecdote, a side show in the natural history of science, in a prehistory that belongs in the home Swede home. Sentimentality, even in its German-theoretical setting, must find its balance over against acts of violence it in every sense contains. Thus German Romanticism was there when Mercedes test drove models for safety measure using dead children as the dummy drivers. Indeed the kid corpses probably did give a better indication than just another dummy of what a driver might be expected to suffer or survive in a crash. To make the long story short, the Swedish history of the Falun reunion didn't stop dead in the tracks of Romance. It was always all about this body which the authorities kept above ground to display as a "curiosity." And the ex marking the spot of witness, who figures so identificatorily in the German reception, was a quite forgettable participant in the line of her ex's relic production: she didn't have any wait problems, but was quite remarried and remuneratable when the trouble began with a corpse primal tourism just couldn't bury. She glady made the fast change from mourner to beneficiary when she took money for the claimed body's unburial and display. The mummy miner was a good sideshow to supplement what was left of the attraction, by 1719 for example, of what had been mines. In the case of Sweden, tourism (and in the first place tourism of the Falun mines) was introduced to pick up the slack or slag where mining had started to go unproductive.

The mines became the big part of the grand tour of Sweden. A saying from the seventeenth century is still recycled on brochures published by the Dalarna County Tourist Office: "He who has not seen Stora Kopparberget has not seen Sweden." [11] When Matts Israelsson disappeared, the mines were still on a peak: the mining company today known simply as Stora, which was founded in 1288 as the first stockholding company in world history (the undertaking of mining is of

course considerably older), was still in the seventeenth century, the century of Sweden's successful bids for world power, the largest supplier of copper on the planet. But the supplies started bottoming out around the time the preserved body was found. The history of these copper mines runs the same course as that of Sweden's imperial aspirations. By 1719 Sweden had been forced to withdraw from the running for world power. The retrenchment of these aspirations within the new industries of culture belonged equally, say, to the exploits of the Actor King and to the ongoing exploitation of the mines for tour appeal.

Linne visited the mines in Falun in 1734. As a whole he characterized the attraction as "'Sweden's greatest wonder, but as terrible as Hell itself.'" [12] Linne also attended the viewing of the preserved corpse which he saw as not so much "petrified" as "encrusted or transformed into a stalactite." When it was first found it was completely supple still, like the body of miracles belonging to some saint. Five years before Linne took the tour, the body, which had started to harden and decay around the edges, was restored and wired in place. By 1749 it was determined that the corpse, being no longer presentable, should finally be burned. But the trouble with Matts was that several exhumations followed. In 1860 the remains were up in the church attic. 1930 was, to date, the date of his last burial. Follow the bouncing corpse: a certain history of Sweden gets inscribed with each advance or placement of the eternally decaying body now inside, now outside a place of proper burial.

In 1992 the mines ceased copper production and became the exclusive preserve of tourism. Stora does, however, continue to supply the pigment used in the blood-red paint, the local color, Faln Rodfarg, which is still applied with the age-old guarantee of its preservative effect on the wood it stains.

When H. M. Enzensberger joined the tour in 1982 he visited an 18th century iron work center, which he could call (even though shut down in the 30s) the source of Sweden today. Enzensberger imagined encountering there a "democratic, primal founding stone or prehistoric rock." [13] Yes. But. What's mine in this connection is already over. There's no room for history in Sweden: just social studies for days. [14] Certainly Sweden served as a kind of model for Europe by the proven ability to get the most out of next to nothing. Some call Sweden the first modern state. But history had to be history before the mythic best

of possible societies could be Swedish. The disconnection that is there, however, belongs to a certain disowning or un-mining of the continuity shot in the foot Sweden gave itself by association with Nazi Germany. Barter relations with the Third Reich -- Swedish iron and steel for German coal -- just didn't break off, not until 1944, by which time it must have been evident which side was going to win. Poul Bjerre, a Swedish psychotherapist who early on had hitched his negative transference onto new Jungian directions in analysis, agreed to represent Sweden in the international outfit designed to give the Nazi German aryanization of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis cover or credibility. In 1947 he published a study entitled "Sp�kerier" (that's right: hauntings). From 1933 onward he had been given to consider Hitler as psychotherapist. And then it was all over. Except for the hauntings.

In the postwar period, Friedrich Jurgenson, an artist displaced by the events of World War Two, from Russia to Sweden, discovered the Voice Phenomenon: the dead can rearrange white noise, the static between radio stations, even the sounds of regular recordings into communications from the beyond that only the tape recorder can register. Just let the tape recorder run, then play it back, over and over again: the record that speaks for itself makes contact with the deceased. For Jurgenson his first contacts were all with the World War Two dead, who were now all in it together, Churchill, Hitler, Goring, a Russian Jewess. "I followed attentively the tape recording, to the point where the woman's voice with a Jewish accent announced Hitler's presence. . . . 'Heil! [...] that was Hitler, he isn't ashamed of himself!' And then followed those strange words, which were added by the woman with a changed and disconcerted voice: 'That was Hitler -- he sees you! I tell you, Hitler -- he loves me!'" Death is the great healer. Jurgenson in Sweden became the talk show host with the most ghosts from World War Two. "Wasn't it remarkable that Hitler and G�ring, these two fundamentally different figures, to whom fate granted the leading roles in apocalypse number two, should be making themselves known to me on the tapes. Hitler conducted strange monologues, and G�ring sang happily on my tapes." [15]

The tapes go on and on. But what they turn around is the inadmissable fact that the Third Reich represented Sweden's last bid, even if only by proxy or by no default of its own, for world domination. After that, Sweden's splitting image as neutral state provided coverage of ghostly

communion and cover for transformation of a Sweden of iron, steel, dynamite, and rockets, among many other military-techno inventions and identifications, into everything that's today artificially Swede. Postwar German-born actresses in Hollywood learned to pass as Swedish. German porno industries passed themselves off as Swedish. German sentimentality went on a diet and took up the sing song of sexy neutralization or castration.

The Marquis de Sade also took the tour through the "model of the North," but in 1775:

> After I had spent some three months in Stockholm, my curiosity was directed toward those famous mines about which I had read so much and wherein I imagined I might encounter some adventures similar to those related by the Abb� Pr�vost in the first volume of his anecdotes. [16]

De Sade visits the Taperg mine which he contemplates as emptied out by just about everyone's indebtedness to the English. This "subterranean" monument to the "avarice of a handful of men ... capable of dominating so many others," must resemble the Catacombs, which he recently toured in Rome and Naples. But: "I was mistaken. Though situated far deeper in the bowels of the earth, I was to discover there a solitude less terrifying." In the bowels there is a less terrifying solitude. What's more, the bowels are habitable, containing in the case of this mine a "veritable subterranean city: streets, houses, churches, inns, much hustle and bustle, work being performed, police, judges: in short, everything the most civilized city of Europe might offer." [17] In the spot of civilization he is in, deep in the bowels, de Sade dines on "a kind of Swedish bread commonly used in rural areas made of the bark of pine and birch trees, mixed with straw, some wild roots, and kneaded together with oatmeal. Does one need any more to satisfy one's veritable needs?" The tour of the mine is set up as preamble to the story of lovers betrayed, to the story's living ending in the punishment of the guilty party inside these mines, an ending overtaken by a still unassuaged avenger penetrating even "the bowels of the earth" to pursue the prisoner. But the filler or background that's on tour has already gone the full circuit of de Sade's discourse within a communion feast in the bowels of the earth, one that will surely make him feel his own bowels. It's the feeling, the satisfaction of one's veritable needs, that proves to be for him always a less terrifying sensation than all the many others that must have
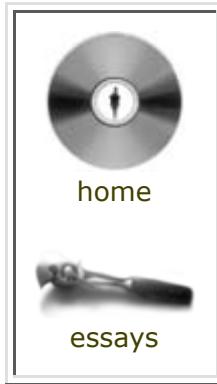
terrorized him.

Seattle, the West Coast outpost of Swedenicity, is built up upon its original city, which remains beneath the streets as an underworld surrendered to rats and tour groups. The original city proved uninhabitable with the introduction of the toilet. The pressure of the water around and under the low-lying town was such that the toilets couldn't be flushed and even gushed like geysers when the pressure was on. Then they tried building their toilets on top of large pedestals. But that didn't stop them gushing. So a higher city was built on top of the city that couldn't flush, and wasn't flushed. Before the rats and the diseases they carried drove the entire population up inside the city above, the subterranean city served as red light district, as the wrong side of the tracks turned around on the vertical axis of multiple bowels.

The labyrinthine underworlds we go down or out represent, Freud advised in his 1932 lecture on the "Revision of the Theory of Dreams," "anal birth." [18] A few years later, the Disney revision made Snow White work like a cleanser. By the time of its release, World War Two had shut down the international circulation of all Hollywood productions, even when they were associated with Disney, whose good German name, according to Nazi propaganda, was really Distler. It was an agonizing time of transition for Nazi Germany. Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, so long awaited by the other mass culture of Mickey Mouse, was the first Disney production to be held up at the border, because now the war was on. German newspapers gave long reviews of the Disney masterpiece being shown in London. Only the leadership could watch the film in the archives in Berlin. Hitler had his own copy. It was his fave. Only the neutrality of Sweden, once reviews of London screenings were blacked-out by the war's escalation, provided Central Europe with some kind of access to the world of Disney.

Both Snow White's sanctuary with the dwarfs and her home with stepmother bear deep down relations with mines, crypts, dungeons, tight spots of anality. While the dwarf miners dig the excremental underworld for shiny diamonds, Snow White, first thing, cleans up their filthy bachelor cottage. It takes her loss to recognize their loss: they must not have a mother she concludes. Back in the castle, following another mirror brief, the stepmother descends into her crypt lab and dungeon space which bears all the filth Snow White is trying to wash away in another place. The original plans for the film, carried out to the drawing and cel stage, included, inside the dungeon, the

stepmother Queen's capture and chaining up of Prince Charming placed or splayed agonizingly on S/M display. The shiny apple offered by the Queen in her dirty guise is toxic, an excremental bit that gets stuck in Snow White's throat. There's a catch to her happy ending, a catch in her throat: it's the unmournable loss of her mother, which can only go down undigestible in anal unbirth. On the outside there's Snow White, all shiny in her glass coffin. On the inside, within the anal underworld, a loss remains hidden and preserved.

[intro] [first] [**second**] [third] [shaft] [notes]

home

essays

Laurence A. Rickels
MINE

[intro] [first] [second] [**third**] [shaft]
[notes]

THIRD LEVEL

Mining was the first technology to be institutionalized as science and discipline. Paracelsus already knew enough on his own to go study down in the Tyrolean mines, a unique lab space for experimental treatment of accidents and diseases. In the Central European culture of Bildung, the home turf of such doctors of monstrous body Bildung as Caligari, Mabuse, Frankenstein, the first mining academies were opened in the 1760s in Freiburg, Berlin, and Prague. By then Novalis could be both a mining engineer and the author who in "Hymns to the Night" would dig deep into what's mine about the other's death. In Sweden, never so far away from Central Europe -- the how-to manual that gives Dr. Caligari his remote control over a medium is the property of the University of Uppsala -- mining also fit the corridors of modern institutionalization. Before his turn to mysticism, Emanuel Swedenborg was the inventor of iron smelting, salt pans, and docks and locks. He also officiated on the Royal Board of Mines. Jumpcut. The cinema of Ingmar Bergman goes as deep as his proper name: somewhere between German and Swedish, the Bergman could be another name for "miner."

The modern sciences of geology and archaeology were born out of the spirits of mining excavation which all along shared the transgressive desire or dread of grave robbery. Yes, the minerals were seen from the Middle Ages onward as organic, maternal outgrowths concealed and protected inside the womb that one had to but also should never penetrate. The legendary journeys into the underworld that double as the constitutional narratives of so many nations were most likely based not only on the mining experience, and mining operations indeed extended back into antiquity, but also, at least at the same time, on the concerted efforts of grave robbery which went for the gold in Egypt, Mesopotamia, or Crete, the gold that bankrolled the more

mobile "Western" cultures that took their origin from Greece. The loot of burial was thus the primal capital for the latest ventures of our culture. A new and improved death cult had to be fashioned too out of the literal and material pileup of mummification of body and preservation of goods. The first step away went the way of cremation, the original emergency line of defense of the dead and their supplies against the robbers. Finally the steps went all the way to the dramatic staging of rites of passage and journey of the dead. At the origin of community spirit and its recycling centers, this stage served up the drama of the Greeks for the working through of the trauma of the other's death, but now in symbolic, mobile, transportable, and transferable terms. But mining has always kept open lines of return with the earliest phases of preservation or disposal: the murdered Romanovs, for example, were ditched in a nearby mine.

By 1912, the year Totem and Taboo went public, the Cargo Cult was introducing yet newer terms into this genealogy of the dead. The techno gadgets of the white man were received by the Melanesians as media of long distance built by their long distant, their dead, to communicate and commune with them. But the white man, the vengeful phantom, kept the Cargo -- the sum of all messages and all gadgets -- to himself. With the arrival of media technologies not only the Melanesians trashed the old belief systems structured around the round trip, the journey between life and death. Instead they set up what they took to be telegraph poles across their islands, beating them with the desire for direct live connections with their dead. Mediums standing by would await messages via the belly sounds vertriloquized by ancestors down the relay of poles. Under techno conditions we want immortality now, we want long-distance connections with our long distant, our dearly departed. But what always happens is some unmourned specter disconnects or interrupts the broadcast, thus completing the system of unmourning, which is part of technology's program.

The legacy of mining went up into the formulation of the modern science of geology. It was the discovery of deep time, time that could be correlated with space, originally in the simple but subtle sense that what digs down into the earth also goes back into the past. Deep time contradicted the strict Christian accounting of the time alotted for human history, and made room or space for the evolutionary time scheme. Evolution also allowed the first time scheme in history that

could account for technological innovation, the discontinuous shifting along the front lines of our media-technological extensions, and thus time out still for the appointment or dis-appointment with the other and for the time it takes to mourn or not to mourn in techno culture. In 1895, the science fantasy of time travel drove a split into a future determined by the evolution of our machines. The time traveler in H. G. Wells's The Time Machine arrives, in the future, somewhere between the German pleasure garden of Metropolis and "California." But the gadget loving teen friends forever live just a heart beat above an underground populated by another species, evolved from the class of miners and workers, which keeps the machines below ground and the split between above and below running in exchange for consumer rights to all that cute flesh up there. The time traveler saves one of the teens, his girl Weena, only to lose her and then, in the time trip back home, lose the immediacy of this loss to the dissolution of what one barely remembers upon waking up from a dream. H. G. Wells was raised by his mother in the dresses that should have been worn by the girl that died on his mother, who just couldn't let her daughter go. This is where the trans- of time travel, the across that H. G. Wells had to bear in childhood, begins and ends. In the course of the story, the orifice-like connections between the worlds above ground and below, the holes and throats of the time traveler's first contact with the split in the future, are regularly described as wells. The split fits one name and one corpus. Little sister can be put to rest, a settling of accounts that will open up the new accounts of science fiction to follow in far greater technological detail. The open display of the mother's unmourning on the body of her surviving child did not, however, stuff a crypt down the child. Nor did the same scenario, his later Dracula identification notwithstanding, make Andy Warhol the carrier of his sister's crypt. The cross dressing performed for love of mother is already a work of mourning, a work, however, long deferred in its terms of outcome. In The Time Machine, in a world of vertical oppositions in deep mine time, a world of sudden techno-evolutionary changes, H. G. Wells gave the loss that had been draped across him a place of rest, the resting place at once of prehistory and of some science-fantastic future.

By the end of World War One, the deep time of technologization was populated with ghosts, as witnessed by the rise of three institutions dedicated to the study of the double and the undead: the occult science of Spiritualism, the film medium, and psychoanalysis.

Notwithstanding the new depths to which time had sunk beginning with mining technology, and the parallel universal of new heights and speeds, which the same claustrophobically controlled environment shot up into the skies, into outer space, in planes or rockets, the automatic progress or infinitude of technologization in any case still choked on the exhaust of loss or lack. Yes, there was a death cult inside technologization just the same, one that cannot be overlooked, at the latest following Freud's inside viewing of the libido flow of narcissism (with no place to go) under the newest laboratory conditions of shell or mine shock afflicting soldiers en masse inside techno-narcissistic relations with their prosthetic media. Even gadget love, to the extent that it is also at the same time a medium of identification, has its origin in trauma.

Already beginning in the sixteenth century, and then going through more and more phases, complete with military distinctions, mining and warfare served as the chief agents of technologization. The use of explosive mines, which is as old as war, disappeared from war's theater at the end of the 18th century only to reemerge in the Russo-Japanese War, the first war to send psychiatry to the front to treat the psychological casualties of detonations. The shock of the mines technologized and internalized the trauma of warfare marking the spots we were already in with internal conflict and eternal loss.

During the First World War trench warfare turned European borders into a noman's land that was at the same time one big mine (also in the sense that was lying out there in prospects for detonation). Cinematic projections (the only entertainment that could satisfy in the modern work and war world) and psychotic hallucinations (as in the drug-induced gadget loving of Ernst J�nger or the double case of Fritz Lang and Hitler) were sprung from the detonation of crypt trenches. This tunnel vision of trenches or mines rehearses or repeats the non-peripheral vision of cinematic picturing.

Mining for ore and the undermining of the modern battlefield gave us rights of appropriation over the world of materials, supplies, resources, and reserves. It was down in the mines that getting blasted was won for the money, two to go. Because mining forged the drive of the proper, the drive to call something or someone mine, even or especially in death. But the mother's body was at the same time up for penetration in the course of its transformation into what, in the name of fathers, can be called mine, and before the transfer of the rest,

what's left, can be made to the group for safe keeping. In the beginning, therefore, there was primal repression.

In Edgar Ulmer's The Black Cat, we witness the cinematic playback of the interiority of mummified bodies holding the place of our always narcissistic relations with our own bodies, which began, in the first place, as the relationship to the mother's body, the only body around and the one that without exception is declared off limits (Freud's "primal repression"). These mummified women in their Snow White coffins are emplaced right where the long-range guns had fired in the lost war. They are the batteries of the narcissistic charge set off by trauma and charging itself on hold, a blast from the past war held back in the crypt of longdistance relations. But then Werdegast cannot not recognize a loss when his daughter, the second or double Karin, is declared alive after all, only then to be found dying, right before his eyes. Werdegast now moves to protect the substitute, the American wife, with his life, and sends the American couple out of the crypt into the space of substitution, circulation, survival. At the same time he sets off the telegraphic detonation of the "undermining" of the fortress crypt. The citizens of the European techno death cult, just as the Frankenstein monster says of himself and his mate at the close of James Whales's Bride of Frankenstein, "belong dead."

All key inventions of the industrial revolution were punched in by innovations required for safer, faster mining. The steam engine was first developed to drain groundwater from mines (drowning was a common way to go for miners coming to catastrophic ends). The first steam-powered locomotives hauled ore. By the early 1800s the British town of Newcastle was surrounded by a dense network of railways between the mines and the water ways. Canals were first built to improve on natural waterways for easier transport of the ore. Even the so-called second industrial revolution was built up on the longdistance extensions and networkings of the mining industry. When the trains that first transported ore were reopened as vehicles for all travelers, the reception of accident was also opened up along this extension of the underworld. Like the miners, train travelers, while passing through tunnels, experienced the same loss of contact with nature. For both miners and train passengers, this tunnel vision belonged both to the safe passage of technologization and to a danger zone. Train wrecks were common enough, at least for phobias to be a common development. Passage through tunnels -- the way mining first entered

mass culture -- was particularly risky. Trains contributed the first public form or forum of psychic trauma when the shock of real or anticipated accidents was recognized as the cause of psycho-cultural disorders. Amusement parks and films supplied the catastrophe preparedness by injecting doses of train wreck into the sensorium to absorb future shock. We withstand shock by getting wired: we learn to get a blast out of being terrified through a culture industry of simulations of catastrophe. This development overlaps not only with the early history of cinema, but with that of psychoanalysis too. Freud's train phobia was based, according to his auto-excavations of early memories, on a childhood recollection of a train trip taken with his mother some time following the death of his younger brother Julius. Freud remembered that he got his primal first look at his mother's nude body in the railway compartment they shared. But when he looked out the window at the industrial mining landscape they were passing through, techno chips passing in the night, he thought he saw an underworld of tortured lost souls. It was at this time that Freud commenced carrying the secret cargo his mother slipped into him in transit: the unmourned remains of Julius.

The double, Freud's summary term for all the modes and features of afterlife or unlife, was originally, as he puts it, a form of insurance which the ego took out against its own unthinkable mortality. The opening up of the train complex of traumatic neurosis, phobia, catastrophe preparedness, which came up direct from the mines, was accompanied by the spread of the concept and institution of accident, health, and life insurance. Originally instituted in Roman times as a means of setting aside the funds required for one's own burial, insurance spread its calculation of risk between life and death with each vehicular extension of our longdistance community. Thus shipping was the first risky business to be insured (all forms of property soon followed). But by train and plane time, in time, that is, for world war or total war, accident and health insurance were the facts of life in society. The psychological casualties of train wreck, persons suffering, for example, from railway spine, were therefore doubly registered, once as neurotic, and once more, for good measure, as virtual malingerers, as pension or insurance neurotics. This sliding scale of valuation, along for the more psychological modes of diagnosis, was thus in the ready position in time for World War One and its shell shock epidemic. If in the second half of the nineteenth century, science fictions about underground worlds often share a fantasy of
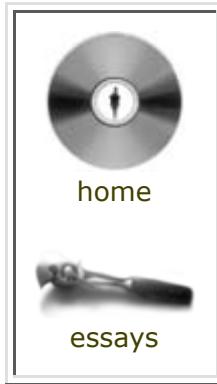
classlessness that has been brought to us by some new technology or energy source which, even more than electricity, makes life in all lanes automatic, then this science fiction of energy or technology makes displaced reference to the real-life mix and match of insurance coverage and catastrophe preparedness. This new mode of group psychologization or technologization did undermine historical conflicts, like those of class, in exchange for a bond between self and other forever and never based on risk.

The group psychology Freud set on Darwin's primal horde credited post-Marxian precursors who had recast the crowd's occult rapport with delusions and superstitions (the underlying bond of crowd behavior according to studies current at the time Marx left implict and excluded a psychology of the group) along hypnotic (and thus media-technologized) lines. Marxism emerged during the first funereal phase of technologization or industrialization which gave way, around 1870, to the illuminated, plugged in, consumerist context of group psychology. As Walter Benjamin confirmed in his own Freudian reception of media technologies: no group psychology without catastrophe preparedness. The first disasters to be contained by the group they at the same time built were the techno-accidents and crashes that reminded everyone of earthquakes. Natural disasters were simulcast (via antidotal group identification or shock absorption) alongside the accidents brought to us by technology. In other words: no group psychology without media technology (which transmits, on station identification, our participation in or anticipation of catastrophes preprogrammed to tune in as techno-accidents). In Eve future, the techno platform, on which Hadaly (the narcissistic object and increment of group identification or mutual identification) shoots up from the crypt once Edison turns it on, shakes to the sounds of earthquake. Shock is always getting injected shot by shot into its reception. The shot of trauma induces -- addiction-style -- auto-micro repetitions looping back onto larger repetitions (phantasm reruns or unconscious blocks of time). At this living end, the techno-underworld becomes again the last resort of blowup-dolly perfection -- of that which is, however, the controlled release (on the side that's not the happy face) of suicide.

Telegraphy was first put to practical use in making tunnel passage safer for train travel: the all-clear at the other end was thus communicated to the train entering the tunnel at the other end of the

line. Telegraphy gave us the first means of long-distance remote-control ignition of mines and other wartime or industrial explosives. Amusement parks, which to this day are built up on top of this second phase of mining technology, began with the tours and celebrations held in caverns, mines, and tunnels where visitors were kept safe from but real proximate to risk and accident. The first large scale developments of this theme of thrill inoculation could be found inside works of science fiction about underground civilizations. In William Delisle Hay's Three Hundred Years Hence (published in 1881), the underground setting is all world's fair in its mobilzation of every representative architectural style imaginable -- pagodas, mosques, temples, Swiss chalets -- to cover the mineral slopes of the artificially illuminated, animated underworld. Electricity turned on the last resort of the subterranean fantasy. Light and music could now beam up from nowhere. But the backgroundization of the senses always tunes in the death-wish static of identification overload.

[intro] [first] [second] [**third**] [shaft] [notes]

Laurence A. Rickels
MINE

[intro] [first] [second] [third] [**shaft**] [notes]

THE SHAFT

We're deep in the spot marked by the disjunction Freud first lodged, as plaint, inside his essay "Mourning and Melancholia" between mourning and the aberrant forms of mourning, which, however, do not put in their ghost appearance in the same essay, but always in some other place. It's in Totem and Taboo that Freud runs through the program of unmourning with station stops -- stations identification -- at haunting, vampirism, technology, and projection, all of them the stations of a double crossing between our get-well and our death wishes. To read Freud psychoanalytically means to be nonphobic about any juxtaposition that just happens with whatever is coming at you, and way cool with the way the sequence of readings is to be rearranged in a shakedown for just the right latent fit. Because even or especially inside the corpus so devoted to questions of mourning, there was also repression of mourning. There was an unmournable death, in Freud's case the death of his younger brother Julius, whose unacknowledged loss or losing was transmitted by the mother to the surviving son, and it opened up a gap in transmission, one that is at the same time a clearing for a certain readability. We arrive at least at last at an inside view of the otherwise veiled connections between technology and the unconscious. For the sake of completion or interminablity, let the record show that psychoanalysis is the science of doubling, haunting, undeath -- and that it itself, as corpus, remains in turn haunted within the projective trajectory of an encrypted loss, full of diversions, therefore, away from the safe deposit it protects. For every Oedipal plot set up in emergency measure for our diversion there remains concealed, or overlapping with it, the other plot of unburial and unmourning, the other dead meat.

The disconnection that is at the same time a connection between "Mourning and Melancholia" and Totem and Taboo, one edited out of

the standard reception of Freud's thought, nevertheless returns through two sets of analogy which in turn invite the theories of incorporation and projection to conjoin by plugging away at the dig of archaeology and plugging into the media technologies. Freud's analogies for unconscious processes and psychoanalytic techniques alternate between media technologies and the underworld of archaeology. But Freud als borrows these two sets of analogy from his patients, whose delusional formations and formulations double, always only along these two lines, as endopsychic perceptions, inside views of the dysfunctioning psychic apparatus which anticipate or reproduce Freud's theories of the psychic apparatus. The atmosphere that attends Freud's closing reflections on Daniel Paul Schreber's Memoirs of My Nervous Illness is therefore, at this point of crisis around the endopsychic nature of the paranoid's delusional projections, one of vertiginous indecision whether the psychoanaltyic theory of paranoia is not at the same time the paranoid view of psychoanalysis.

To illustrate to Ratman the meaning of the difference between conscious thought and the unconscious, where the former is being incessantly worn away while the latter remains unchangeable, Freud points to the antiques in his study, commenting to his patient that they were all "only objects found in a tomb, and their burial had been their preservation: the destruction of Pompeii was only beginning now that it had been dug up." But then Freud rushes to reassure Ratman that every effort was underway to preserve Pompeii. [19] When archaeologist or analyst raises unconscious memories out of their vaults, these memorials disintegrate, like the perfectly preserved mummies of ancient Trojans which Schliemann saw -- vanish. The vanishing act belongs to the Oedipal track occupied by the father's death, where corpses can be displayed -- and lost -- among the effects of repression. But the endopsychic character of the inside view of excavation at the same time opens onto mummy's tomb, the one that can't be let go, can't change or vary.

In Hoffmann's "The Mines of Falun," Elis Fr�bom has already suffered three strikes of loss, but he wasn't out, he was in, alone with his mother after two brothers died in battle and father was dead by the same storm from which Elis was rescued. Elis's survival thus murderously holds the place of the father's death, with the double barrel of loss of brothers finishing off the Oedipal fantasy. But Elis continues to live as his father as seaman. In identification with his

father he just goes -- and then, when he returns, he is forever gone to his mother, who has died in his absence. Mother's death doubles the whammy of Oedipal blockage: the undead mother cannot be substituted for -- not by living women. The barmaid hired by his fellow seamen to give Elis cheer receives only the short change that she only has the interest of investment. But, at the same time, he gives her the cloth he had originally brought home for mother. Although she returns the money when she departs to be counted from that moment missing, she takes the cloth with her in the now double wake. After the "other woman" has thus split the scene of parting, Elis only wishes he were already buried beneath the ocean floor. But a voice interrupts him, the disembodied voice of the superego entering from behind, and establishes immediate transferential rapport. Elis talks up a cure; he admits to the old miner, the one who came up upon him from behind, that he was trying to divert himself from deep depression by joining up with the other seamen (which can also be read here as "semen" or sperm) on a leave of the senses. But he is now overwhelmed, buried alive, by sensations of bleeding internally, eternally to death, into the dead. The old miner, Torbern is his name, [20] who will continue to bring up the rear, recommends for now a career switch away from the open sea, the open circulation of semen, down into the underworld passage of mining. Torbern proclaims the reflection of a higher love in the excavated minerals which glow with some image of what otherwise lies hidden up above by cloud cover.

Elis's "ego" is captive audience to Torbern's conjuration of the wonders of the deep, as though he had already gone down below with him, as though he had already identified with this underworld position. Then he has a dream. He can see right through the ocean, now a mineral mass and crystalline floor or block; above is a black shiny stone ceiling sealing off the horizon. Flowers of metal rise out of this ground. You can see the roots of the plants, and further down, beautiful maidens are on display whose hearts break open the roots growing up towards the glassy surface. Burning desire drives him down to the mine maidens. The old miner reappears, monumentalizing all-metallic on the spot. A lightning flash throws its high beam on the stern face of the Queen. Elis's desire, no longer dead, is dread and alive. He sees the stars, the outside world, through a crack in the stone roof. Then he hears his mother's voice. It looks like he can see her up along the crack of sky in the crypt ceiling. But it is a living young woman after all who reaches down for Elis's hand (the hand always given in marriage).

Elis demands to be allowed to join her. He proclaims that he still belongs to the upper realm. But Torbern warns Elis to remain faithful to the Queen. Elis looks again upon her face and feels his ego flow out into the gleaming stone. He wakes up screaming.

Two thoughts now keep double-crossing his mind: on the one hand he just really misses his mother, on the other, which is the hand to be given in marriage, he wishes to run into that barmaid again. Thus he sets the substitution of women going down or out the crack in the crypt lid. But in the mode of "The Sandman," Elis at the same time fears that it will not be the barmaid turning the corner but, in her place, the uncanny trickster, Torbern. He dreads that corner and encounter but at the same time desires only to hear more and more about the underworld. Elis departs, more or less on automatic, for Falun. Like the double who upon closer inspection remains always in some other place, Torbern would appear, like an apparition, to accompany, guide, or shadow Elis's journey. Then he gets his first sight of miners crawling out of their hole in the ground just like worms. He flashes back to the yarn he once heard on the open seas about a feverish dream in which the sea gave the all clear down to where all sorts of monstrous life forms were just lying around frozen in death. The sea-worthy interpretation of such dreams was that the dreamer's own death was coming soon. Elis analogizes that inside viewing, the attendance at one's own funeral, with his own x-ray vision of the mined earth. But then a drop scene interrupts the psychotic breakup of connections: a local celebration surrounds him and in its tow he too enters the home of a father and his daughter, Ulla. Elis recognizes her immediately as the dream maiden who had extended a helping hand to him down there in the crypt. Deja vu helps extend the original substitution series by one, if not the same one. Elis stays put, alternating workdays down in the mine with free time spent with Ulla above ground.

To get Elis to make his move and take his daughter's hand already, the father stages Ulla's engagement to another man, while at the same time asking Elis to continue living with him as his son. Ellis slides from this Oedipal frameup down into his desperate last-ditch effort of auto-recovery along the same lines that get him there, the cracks of psychotic breakdown. He summons Torbern, wants all the magic back, and gets to see the maidens, metallic plants, and the Queen. Father retrieves Elis from this underworld and gives the boy another break by

interpreting the break down into the mine as just his way of shaking on it. Father pronounces Elis and Ulla to be joined in matrimony. But by now Elis just can't shake his underworld thoughts. Ulla's alarm prompts father's reassurance that their wedding night will be all the cureall the doctor ordered for fantasies centering on the under zones of mother earth.

But father, who would appear to hold the movie rights to the Hollywood version of the story, also, it was just a test, drove Elis to make the break which now makes his delusional ties with the queen the strongest they've ever been. Elis cannot but identify his authentic ego as residing with her. But he cannot give away their secret to Ulla. To utter the Queen's name would be to petrify it all as under the gaze and curse of Medusa. The thought alone transforms his beautiful vision into pure hell. Finally, on the morning of the cure, the Big One the father in law has been waiting for, Elis feels compelled to go down just once more to find the prize he saw so clearly in last night's dream vision and bring it back up as wedding present for his bride to be. Or not to be. Only by going down, one last time, will their inner beings coalesce with the wondrous branches growing right from the heart of the queen at earth's center. But then -- one can never be careful enough about what one wishes for -- he gets buried alive.

Fifty years later the corpse is found perfectly preserved, a young man looking like he's only sleeping. An old woman arrives right on schedule. She comes to the mines every Feast of St. John, the day that was to be and was never to be her wedding day. It's Ulla who got this reunion schedule back then from Torbern as consolation prize. And it's Elis who's back, forever young. Old Ulla embraces her undead betrothed, dies on him, their consummation now complete. She is no longer a living woman, no longer the killer substitute. But she was around long enough to mourn for the two of them, for what was bigger than both of them. Now Elis's exquisite corpse can be all it can be, just dust.

Elis's dead siblings were last seen in the prehistory of Hoffmann's story, in the finish line given any rivals for Elis's solo bonding with mother. His doubling of the father's departure would then figure as punishment for the wish for merger with mother and for murder of all rivals, with the father at the front of the line. And then the story proper begins, over the doubling and dividing body of the lost mother. But the double-header Oedipal plot lies between the mother and the

barmaid. Torbern and the Queen, the two underworld figures, come from behind the mother's death by way of another transmission.

In the original record of the Ratman case, Freud attributes to the one who cannot mourn belief in the "omnipotence of thoughts" (a phrase Freud borrowed from Ratman). The early belief that your thought or wish is at the same time a command always finds first application as a death wish. The trajectory of that wish leads Ratman to entertain ideas about survival after death which "are as consistently materialistic as those of the Ancient Egyptians." [21] Although in the case study proper Freud judges endless mourning for the father to be at the bottom of Ratman's obsessional neurosis, in the footnote underworld Freud grants a dead sister "epic" significance in Ratman's fantasies. And yet, Freud concludes, the terms and conditions of analysis had precluded exploration of the sibling's crypt. [22] In the original record, however, the dead sister Katherine rules absolutely: "What is the origin of his idea of his omnipotence?" Freud asks: "I believe it dates back to the first death in his family, that of Katherine." [23] In the corner of every primal scene presided over, according to the public record, by Ratman's dead father, we find, in the original record: Katherine was there. "He had a memory that he first noticed the difference between the sexes when he saw his deceased sister Katherine (five years his senior) sitting on the pot, or something of the sort." [24] Another pot containing two rats which penetrate into or come out of the anus first sends Ratman to Freud. As he listened to the officer recount this potty torturing, Ratman saw the ground heave in front of him as though there were a rat under it. [25] Under the case study a footnote allows that rats are chthonic animals that convey the souls of dead children.[26]

As his transferences attest, on the original record, Ratman allows his dangerous past to emerge only by tapping into Freud's own: Ratman imagines Freud and his wife with a dead child between them. "The dead child can only be his sister Katherine, he must have gained by her death." [27] But Freud, thus charged with proper burial of a dead child, only discerns Ratman gaining -- on him. Freud thus registers this gain on the other side of his own resistance, which emerges spectacularly at the start of the original record: "I have not mentioned from earlier sessions three interrelated memories dating from his fourth year, which he describes as his earliest ones and which refer to the death of his elder sister Katherine. . . . (It is curious that I am not

certain whether these memories are his. . . .)" In the next entry Freud continues: "My uncertainty and forgetfulness . . . seem to be intimately connected. The memories were really his. . . . (They were forgotten owing to complexes of my own.)" [28]

Ratman is the name Freud bestowed on his patient in a case he recast as centering on a patronymic which always reappears only to slip away again like the rat the son saw slip out of his father's grave. But in Ratman's circle of friends and family he's called Leichenvogel, "carrion bird," owing to his regular attendance at funerals, even anticipating or scheduling in deaths ahead of time. He's the life of the funeral party. This is a name-calling Ratman answers to. Ghostbusters take Ratman at this word and call him carrion bird: the part of rat goes to his dead sister. When the sister died, her brother, under the lack of direction of a mother of a repression, consumed the rat he henceforward carried inside. Birds, always on a return trajectory, do not die; their skin and feathers are stuffed by that which they animate and cover over. The rat under cover of carrion bird is at the controls of Ratman's death cult. Those pulled into the crypt -- pot or anus -- by the rat that penetrates them must slave, deep down in the mines, to pay for the rat's every wish, which is their command. The case that begins in the military setting of torture-tale swapping ends in the noman's land of World War One where Leichenvogel dies without ever letting the rat out of the bag.

- Laurence A. Rickels

[intro] [first] [second] [third] [**shaft**] [notes]

Laurence A. Rickels
MINE

[intro] [first] [second] [third] [shaft] [**notes**]

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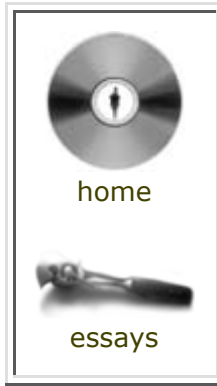
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Notes

1. Georgius Agricola, De Re Metallica, trans. H. C. Hoover and L. H. Hoover (from the first Latin Edition of 1556; reprint of the 1912 translation published by The Mining Magazine, London), New York: Dover Publications, 1950, xxv. This H. C. Hoover is the same Herbert, the one who became president.

2. Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert, Ansichten von der Nachtseite der Naturwissenschaften (Dresden 1809): 215-216.

3. Allan Sekula, "Photography Between Labour and Capital" in Mining Photographs and Other Pictures 1948-1968. A Selection from the Negative Archives of Shedden Studio, Glace Bay, Cape Breton, ed. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and Robert Wilkie (Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983) 193-268.

4. Ibid. 205.

5. Ibid. 209.

6. Ernst Kris, Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art (New York: Schocken Books, 1974): 166.

7. The high-low materials which this phantasmic account of building's incorporation of the underworld draws on can for the most part be found in Wendy Lesser, The Life Below the Ground. A Study of the Subterranean in Literature and History (Boston and London: Faber and Faber, 1987) and in Rosalind Williams, Notes on the Underground. An Essay on Technology, Society, and the Imagination (Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 1990).

8. Richard Wagner, "Die Bergwerke zu Falun. Oper in drei Akten," in Hubert Ermisch, "Ein ungedruckter Entwurf Richard Wagners zu einer

Operndichtung, nebst Briefen," Deutsche Rundschau 73 (1905): 1-14.

9. The Corbusier quotes throughout this paragraph are taken from Thilo Hilpert, Die funktionelle Stadt. Le Corbusiers Stadtvision -- Bedingungen, Motive, Hintergr�nde (Braunschweig: Vieweg, 1978) 17, 19, 20, 121, 122, 132.

10. Eric Estorick, "Morale in Contemporary England," The American Journal of Sociology 47, 3 (November 1941): 462-471. The citation can be found on page 471.

11. Falun. Six Places of Interest Worth a Journey According to the Tourist Guide Michelin, trans. Margaret Hammare (Turism. Falu Kommun) 3.

12. Ibid. 4.

13. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Schwedischer Herbst," in Ach Europa! Wahrnehmungen aus sieben L�ndern. Mit einem Epilog aus dem Jahre 2006 (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp, 1989): 49.

14. Ibid. 57.

15. Friedrich JUrgenson, Sprechfunk mit Verstorbenen. Eine dem Atomzeitalter gem�e Form der praktischen technish-physikalischen Kontaktherstellung mit dem Jenseits (Freiburg: Verlag Hermann Bauer, 1978) 89-90.

16. Marquis de Sade, "Ernestine, A Swedish Tale," in The 120 Days of Sodom and other writings, trans. Austryn Wainhouse and Richard Seaver (New York: Grove Press, 1967) 726.

17. Ibid. 727.

18. Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures, XXIX, in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964) 22: 25.

19. Freud, "Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis" in The Standard Edition (1955) 10, 176-177.

20. Torbern, like the seven dwarf miners, and like the garden figurines of a still current predilection for kitsch in Germany, is heir to the subterranean demons Agricola already referred to, pranksters who

liked to mimic miners and thus cause all kinds of trouble. Mining accidents were often attributed to these gnomes.

21. "Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis" 297.

22. Ibid. 207 n. 1.

23. Ibid. 299.

24. Ibid. 276.

25. Ibid. 297.

26. Ibid. 215 n. 2.

27. Ibid. 284.

28. Ibid. 264.

[intro] [first] [second] [third] [shaft] [**notes**]