



Fig. 1—the gaze subtracted from the role-character Scotty J. in *Boogie Nights* (1997/1977). Mark Wahlberg in the role of Eddie Adams—a porn star with the screen name of Dirk Diggler. The gaze detaches from the beholder (Scott J. below) to inhabit the camera. The same lens before which the name Eddie Adams ( $S_1$ ) shifts to Dirk Diggler ( $S_2$ ).

The *shifter* is a category of sign that reverberates with Lacan's notion of *signifiance* in that it is a floating signifier: the importance of which Lacan seems to concur with Jakobson. However, the discussions I have read on this subject matter, tends to focus on the single instance of a [shifter](#)—in the *linguistic* groove—while in Lacan's *psychoanalytical* practice shifters appear in a *sequences*. Which is why, in the economic expression of his formalisms, he draws our attention to  $S_1$  and  $S_2$ : the *signifier* and the *signifier of the signifier*. On this point he approaches the Peircian *semiosis*.

The trouble I have with Lacan is that his formalism conforms with a *structural* premise from Saussure's linguistics (1916)—which Barthes tightens further in his *Elements of semiology* (1964): that anything of importance, happens in *discourse*. My ventures with the *learning theatre* clearly is critical of this assumption; since the problem of the learning theatre is the *assignment*: that is, how the assumptions (of doxa) are assigned through acts of performance and staging, where defining the subject  $\$$  by its *parcours* (before discours). In the sense that *parcours deconstructs* discours.

It seems to me that this deconstruction of discours is essential, since it brings *clarity* to discours, where it *otherwise* would be opaque: as some would claims is the case with Lacan's at times impenetrable Gobbledygook, along with Deleuze's occasional Balderdash (as two different categories of Gibberish). To the extent that I have a point, it appears that Lacan's Gobbledygook results directly from his idea of language as the *main* theatre: that *language* holds the keys to change. So, unlike Deleuze, his idea is not the philosophically articulate paraphrase, but change.

While Deleuze's paraphrase follows the flow of whatever guides his expert readership, and there appears to be *no* theatre at all. So, While Deleuze enacts the virtue of following the loops of what-



Fig. 2—Philip Seymour Hoffman as Scotty J. ( $\$$ ): *Boogie Nights* (1997) pool party entrance (1977 Hollywood epic). Scotty J. is caught by the je-ne-sais-quoi emanating from Eddie Adams.

ever prompts and guides his interest, Lacan appears to bring on the assumption of therapeutic space—the office, studio or theatre—even as he moves psychoanalysis *from* therapy *to* a kind of anthropology, he surreptitiously brings *along* the office: as though he was doing public sessions on the human psyche. Like an office-box for psychoanalysis hidden in the reels and rungs of a news-bureau.

Because he doesn't appear to have brought this to the table, it remains... well, assumed. We do not get to discuss how the spatial affordances has a shaping impact, and how the constraint of the office can have an enabling impact (which, by association with the truths, adding to bodies and languages [[Badiou](#)], will *mature* through assignment). In effect, there is stuff going on in a space beyond practical access, in which there are sequences of events that impact change, with language as a con/sequence: one that

unfolds as it harvests, plays back and follows what happens next. Like tiny [coracle](#) in a big river.

The sense that language inflated discourse—at some point—contributed to a university-life larger than size for a surprisingly extended period. That is, a subject of study to which higher education *already* had a strong ownership. From a foundation of expanded linguistics it developed from the *extrapolation* of archives from a variety of institutions, with a cogency derived from the empowerment of these institutions (but also from the cogency of the scholars studying the archives [most prominently, M. Foucault]). Is language a channel for libidinal energies empowering knowledge?

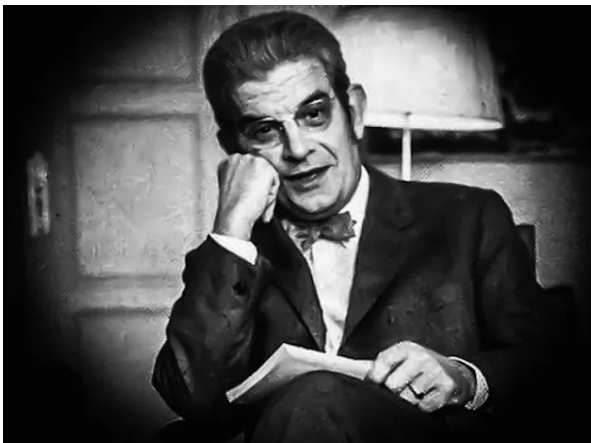
Lacan did raise this question, but also appears to have veiled it (in this sense, he revealed it). My ongoing query takes a different route: perhaps one could say that it proceeds by *interpolation* of archival materials, by following the trail of (a) operative & (b) distributive intelligence—readable in e.g. *procedures* and *layout*—which Lacan creatively links to (a) selective blindness & (b) paralysis, which are not, by *all* accounts, *linguistic*: indeed, the interpolated materials (which a *logocentric* take will readily overshadow) are of a *cartographic* nature. Not occasionally, but ubiquitously!

Which means that archival materials are not woken up from their “slumber” from the mere act of reading—restricted to a floating notion of *text*—but from a cartographic tracking of what is *otherwise* found in the material: at the level of *procedures* and *layout*, which initially appears precisely as *blind* and *paralytic*. However, as soon as the relationship between these is discovered to be makeshift and changing, *sequences* that are readable in an expanded sense (moving within and beyond language). In the wake of playing such archival sequences, language is a *con/sequence*.

Moving from the /blind-and-paralytic/ to the /operative-and-distributive/ is an expanded act of cartographic reading—or, mapping—linked to the *work of reception*: for my part, this mode of approach derived from my work at art school. That is, a situation where seeking a kind of “internal exile” from linguistic expression, is accepted/encouraged up to a point: it is never completely “state-less”, since part of an education, and that some of the protocols of attributing *status* incontrovertibly pass through language. Art may be a *tacit* estate, but it is *not* altogether silent.

This take on desire—and its machines—is tethered to a different sort of sequence: the *parcours* (before the discours). As with language and discourse, the difficult question is not to argue and demonstrate the main point. The tricky problem is how to intercept and identify *shifts* & *stops* in sequences of this kind: it is similar to the history of stops in writing (which we know was not self-evident with writing, developed over time). Intuitively it is related to the relation between truth and impact—in phases of mastery, hysteria, analysis and point-making—in agent-other relations.

The Lacanian formula (1) **truth**—> **[agent—>other]** —> **impact** takes stock of this. What brings us to the question of the *stop*, however, is the **object a/objet petit a**: “Lacan’s concept of the *objet petit a*



**Fig. 3**—Jacques Lacan’s imaginary office operating from within a news bureau (a): the strange mode in which psychoanalysis goes public. In the body-text (right), the logic of this address is understood as resulting from interpolation. Without shifts and stops, it runs the risk of being pointless. But there might be a cure... what is the point of the gaze if remains disconnected (rather than shifting and stopping).

is deeply inspired by the ideas of other psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud’s ‘lost object’, Melanie Klein’s ‘partial object’ and Donald Winnicott’s ‘transitional object.’” ([The Dangerous Maybe](#)). According to the method of interpolation explored here, the **object a**, as it appears in (2) **\$—> [S1—>S2] —> a** transposes unto the **other** in the formula above. Clearly, if (1) is the *sequence* [parcours], then (2) is the *con/sequence* [discours].

There is *no* 1-to-1 correspondence between the two. Rather they relate to each other—*reversibly*—as *container* and *content*. By establishing the focus on the *signifier*, giving *privilege* to the container, Lacan has laid the foundations for when we shift, and also when there is a stop/we are advised to make a stop. In artistic education this highly topical: when to stop the work, and when to stop the talking.