Alexandre Stevens
Two destinies for the subject: neurotic identifications and psychotic petrification

Between the psychotic's experience of the lack of the father, and the hysteric's perception of the father's impotence, there may be few differences in phenomena. But the structural difference is drastic. In psychosis, the Name-of-the-Father is foreclosed; there is a failure to inscribe the signifier of the father for the subject. In neurosis the Oedipus complex is nodal. This failure of inscription does not prevent the psychotic from sometimes having a real father who seems an ideal father. Indeed, President Schreber's father was a severe and daunting personage who invented a system of corrective and educative gymnastics for children. He appears all the more ideal in having all the traits of the perfect father.

In the hysteric's case, the signifier of the father has installed the phallic signification lacking in psychosis. From then on, she may consider a father one who is unable to live up to this signification. She may spend her whole life trying to back up an inadequate father, as if she were the nurse. She may set him up as master and the next moment show him he is not. With the same stroke she demonstrates his incapacity to equal the master signifier she has just given him. Furthermore, she may be ready to repair this lack and, thereby, turn out to be the true master of the situation.

The three identifications

Freud established his theory of three identifications in Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego. In The Ego and the Id, he takes up this theory in greater detail, particularly the first identification.

With the primal father

The first identification is a primordial identification with the father.

"[I]t is a direct and immediate identification that takes place earlier than any object-cathexis." Freud calls it primordial identification that occurs by cannibalistic incorporation. His preceding theory of identification, as developed in On Narcissism: An Introduction and in Mourning and Melancholia, had already situated a first narcissistic identification which he also called "the most originary": and "cannibalistic." Eric Laurent has pointed out very clearly in a recent article that this narcissistic identification, like identification with das Ding, is the reverse side of identification with the primal father.

What, in fact, is this primal father? Freud's text is not ambiguous. It can only be the father in his unleashed role, the one preceding the father of Oedipal law. From the moment of the first "identification", two destinies for the subject may be interpreted as a retroaction of the Oedipus complex. On the one hand, this retroaction of a first identification operates to submit the subject of the unconscious to the law of desire. On the other hand, traces of the primal identification remain in the demands of a super-ego which is at times "obscene and ferocious." But
the subject will be able to play his cards in the identification game. In neurosis the first Freudian identification with the father is the result of a dialectic where the primal father *jouisseur*, the one of Totem and Taboo, is barred by the Oedipal father, the one of the law of the pact. The first identification may be regarded in the case of neurosis, as equivalent to the Lacanian concept of the "Name-of-the-Father," the very signifier of this dialectic. This concept may be written with the following matheme (which takes up both Jacques Lacan's formula for the paternal metaphor and a further one given by Jacques-Alain Miller in his seminar that developed Lacan's first formula):

\[
\frac{P}{M} \sim \frac{A}{J}
\]

If the Oedipus does not operate, on the other hand, there is foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father. Then, the subject will be submitted to the forces of an unleashed Super-ego that will designate his petrified signification in the Other to him, at times through voices. This first identification remains bound up with the primal father of unleashed *jouissance* in psychosis. In this respect it is "identification" with *das Ding*. In one of his seminars, Jacques-Alain Miller has given us the matheme for this:

\[
A \cong J
\]

Lacan took up this problem in different terms, with language ever present. For him the first identification involves the human as immediately in language, as a being of language. The Law makes the subject enter speech, entering thus into a certain relation of desire to the Other. This is what the Oedipal operation involves for Lacan.

*With the unary trait*

The second Freudian identification is identification with a trait of the object that the subject of the unconscious takes upon himself as a symptom. The first example of this in Dora's case is her cough. Such a symbolic identification with what Lacan calls the unary stroke--the Freudian *einziger Zug*--requires that the subject be logically empty in order to operate. Moreover, it is necessary that this emptiness be dialectically implemented. Indeed, precisely because there is no signifier providing the subject with a definitive signification, any signifier may be called to this place. The matheme of the second identification can be written as follows:

\[
\frac{1}{S} \rightarrow S_2
\]

An imaginary identification gives the symptom its signifying face by taking a stroke (or a trait) from the loved or desired object, or from the rival; namely the object loved or desired by the other. This is the case with Dora's cough. Its effect of truth for the unconscious subject is revealed in the chain of signifiers that evokes her father's relation to Mrs. K for her: *Vermögen* (fortunate), *Unvermögen* (impotent). With these two signifiers she supposes oral coitus between the two partners. The signifying face of her symptom, thus, relates to the mechanism of the
second identification through the unary stroke. The symptom is not satisfied, however, with this side alone, since on its other face there is fixation of jouissance. Somatic compliance and primary gain are the Freudian

terms for the supplement of jouissance (the Lacanian plus-de-jouir) which fixes the symptom at this point of the chain. Freud adds in a footnote to the Dora case that secondary advantage does not suffice to explain her fixations. As for Dora's cough, he makes this point clear: she was a thumb-sucker.

The Imaginary
The third identification, which Freud calls hysterical, is already explained in The Interpretation of Dreams. It is an imaginary identification from ego to ego. This is the effect of the second identification, whose ornaments are now worn by the ego.

\[ I \rightarrow i(a) \]

This third identification develops most strongly in group psychology where each person identifies with others in reference to the position of the leader. Such identification occurs when the object \((a)\) takes the place of the ego-ideal \((I)\). The obscene effect is a collective hypnosis which can lead to the worst, as history shows. The corollary of such identification is an imaginary identification among "egos":

The ego's identification arises from communal emotion or affect among individuals, confronting an external characteristic or situation.

**Hysterical identification:**

**the witty butcher's wife**

There is a very fine text by Freud on hysterical identification in The Interpretation of Dreams, concerning a dream called "of the butcher's
wife".  Lacan adds the word witty (spirituel).  The text of the dream is very simple: "I wanted to give a supper-party, but I had nothing in the house but a little smoked salmon.  I thought I would go out and buy something, but remembered then that it was Sunday afternoon and all the shops would be shut.  Next I tried to ring up some caterers, but the telephone was out of order.  So I had to abandon my wish to give a supper-party."8  This dream show a wish that cannot be fulfilled.  It seems to go against Freud's theory of the dream as wish fulfillment.

We find out from associations that this woman's husband is a butcher, that he is putting on weight and wants to go on a diet, that he likes women and knows how to handle them, and that she is very much in love with him.  She goes on to add that she likes caviar very much, but she asks her husband not to give her any.  Freud calls this the wish to have an unfulfilled wish.  The wish for caviar is therefore the metaphor for this unfulfilled wish.  She then tells about meeting an old friend the previous evening, of whom she is jealous because her husband is attracted to her.  This is despite the fact that the friend is thin and the husband prefers "more rounded" women.  The butcher's wife's dream fulfills the wish not to invite this friend to dinner.

But in the dream one point remains unclear: she only has a little smoked salmon.  She explains that it is her friend's favorite dish.  Freud knows his patient's friend and opines that her friend feels the same way about smoked salmon as his patient feels about caviar.  At this second level, then, the salmon is a substitute for the caviar; that is, a substitution of one signifier for another.  The dream can clearly be seen as a metaphor for the wish: salmon instead of caviar.  And the wish is re-presented, metaphored, by the caviar as a metonymy of the lack-in-being.  It is a radical form of the unfulfilled wish.  That is, it includes two lacks: the lack in the subject of being and the lack in the Other.

If we follow Freud we learn that "my patient's own wish was that her friend's wish (to put on weight) should not be fulfilled.  But instead of this she dreamt that one of her own wishes was not fulfilled.  Thus the dream will acquire a new interpretation if we suppose that the person indicated in the dream was not herself but her friend, that she had put herself in her friend's place, or, as we might say, that she had 'identified' herself with her friend."9  Freud tells us that this hysterical identification is not to be considered as a sympathy "intensified to the point of reproduction".  In the case of hysteria, the identification most often used is the expression of sexual togetherness and language confirms this.  We say of two lovers, for example, that they are one.  He adds: "my patient put herself in her friend's place in the dream because (my patient) wanted to take her friend's place in her husband's high opinion."10

This leads Lacan to ask the question: "How can another woman be loved . . . by a man who cannot be satisfied by her?"11  We know that this man likes well-rounded women, but he also fancies the friend.  It could be said, and Lacan goes so far in "The direction of treatment and the principles of its power," that the dreamer identifies with this question, rather than with the friend.  An answer to this question would immediately answer another: What is a woman?

**Sexual identification**

But in situating what a woman is, the signifier "The Woman" that would be complementary to the phallus, is lacking.  If it existed, it would be the complement, in the sense of mathematical
sets, under which all women could be put together. A passage from *L’amant (The English Lover)* by Marguerite Duras reflects that: "I am already warned. I know something. I know that it is not clothing which makes women more or less beautiful nor beauty care, nor the price of ointments, nor the rarity, the price of their attire. I know that the problem is elsewhere. I do not know where it is. I only know that it is not where women fancy. I look at women in Saigon streets." This passage has to do with sexed identification insofar as there is no such signifier, nor such stroke or trait under which women could be joined together. There is no choice but to watch them in order to seek that trait all the same.

It is in the retroaction of the Oedipus on primordial identification that inscription of the subject on the sexed side takes place. For that, he always needs to go through the phallic signifier. This is, in fact, the meaning of the logical articulation of the "formulae of sexuation" in Lacan's Seminars . . . ou pire and *Encore*. Let us approach this question by a clinical fragment consisting of two drawings that I offer only as metaphors for these formulae. I have been given the example by someone who came to see me for analytic supervision. This person had worked with two children in an institution, a boy and a girl, a brother and sister a year apart in age. In the interval of approximately one hour they both made a free drawing.

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The boy says: "It's a queen and there's a little boy who is going to lift her skirt to see her panties," while the little girl says: "It's a bride, she's wearing a veil," which you can see beside her head. And then the girl points out in answer to a question. "A bride? It's the wife of a husband."

On both sides something is being sought under the veil. The boy is searching for nothing more than that object which is hidden under the veil and is indeed nothing more than the veil, the "panties." What the little girl is seeking under the bride's veil, on the other hand, is the phallic signifier by which a woman is identified with being married.

These drawings may be re-read with the lower part of the table of the formulae of sexuation which, according to Lacan, is an indication regarding identification. On the left, the gentleman's side, a subject is turning to the other side in order to find there the inexpressible object *(a)*. And on the right, the lady's side, one finds the lack of a term to inscribe the trait by which all women could be brought together. Lacan denotes this form of the barred The (Woman) *(Lά)*. What is called correlative to this lacking term is the phallic signification *(Φ)* whose face of incompleteness is designated by *S (A)*. It might even be added that the church present in the two drawings above establishes some paternal signification, a Name-of-the-Father. The little girl frames her bride within the door to show us that it is within this frame. It is with the phallic signification, that she poses her question.
Neurosis and psychosis

What enables us to oppose neurosis and psychosis in clinical work, is whether the relations of the subject of the unconscious to the signifier that lays it out, thereby giving it its identificatory traits, belong to a dialectic or whether such relations do not belong to dialectical process. Already in Seminar III, Lacan accounts for elementary psychotic phenomena as "stagnant in relation to any dialectic," or further, "closed to any dialectical composition." Hence, psychosis comes under the Super-ego which he also says "is a law without dialectic." The term non dialectisable means that the phenomenon arises from the outside, without any intermediary.

In neurosis there is repression and the return of the repressed. The neurotic's dialectic operates in the interval between these two terms. By making the repressed arise from what constitutes its return, the interpretative operation is possible.

In psychosis there is Verwerfung, the rejection which Lacan translates as "foreclosure." It is a repression without return and, therefore, without dialectic. At the time of the triggering off, the return that occurs in the real, is not the return of a repressed truth for the subject, but designates a point where signification petrifies itself. This term functions, then, in certainty. That is, it may not be submitted to an interpretation that would bring out its point of truth, for it is already in itself interpretation. One may, therefore, oppose neurosis from Jacques Lacan's teaching at that time, inasmuch as truth speaks in neurosis, merely waiting for interpretation to appear in its effects and, insofar as the real speaks in psychosis, with the effects of imaginary decay. The dialectical character of neurosis and the non-dialectical character of psychosis bear on signification and, thus, on the subject who, according to Lacan at that time, is situated as an effect of signification, an effect of the signifier.

A clinical example enables us to throw light on that last statement. In President Schreber's Memoirs, he thinks the interrupted sentences are transmitted to him by voices uttering the first part constituted by the shifters. These interrupted sentences contain no more than the index-terms of the subject. The second part, that which comes after the interruption, gives a signification which, as Eric Laurent quite rightly pointed out in a seminar, always concerns a point of jouissance. This second part of the phrase, supposedly uttered by Schreber himself in answer to the voice in the first part, is always strictly invariable. Here is one such phrase. The voices utter: "As for you, you ought to . . . " and Schreber completes: " . . . be exposed as the negator of God and as given up to dissolute sensuality, not to mention other things." No question and answer game, no possible variation, exists between both fragments of the
sentence. Each time the voice starts the first part, Schreber must complete it with the second one. There are actually two terms involved, but there is no dialectic between them. There is no return from S₁ to S₂. At the very most there is a formula such as S₁ + S₂. The second fragment seems to add some signification, but this is immutable and therefore already fixed. It is petrified as soon as the first fragment is pronounced.

**Petrification of the subject**

After setting forth the double structure of alienation and separation in *Seminar XI*, Lacan comes back to the question of the psychoses. In two pages he gives an indication of structure, and of some elements of a differential clinical practice. The heart of his assertion can be found in the following phrase: "I will go so far as to formulate that, when there is no interval between S₁ and S₂, when the first dyad of signifiers becomes solidified, holophrased, we have the model for a whole series of cases--even though, in each case, the subject does not occupy the same place."18

*When the first dyad of signifiers becomes solidified, holophrased*

This does not mean that the first dyad S₁-S₂ forms a kind of condensation. On the contrary, it means that on the one hand this dyad is reduced to an S₁ alone and, on the other, that the subject does not appear as lack, does not disappear, does not go through aphanisis. In the process of alienation such disappearance of the subject of the unconscious is produced under the second signifier. The subject of psychosis appears as solidified in this S₁, as if petrified by the signifier.

It is easier to grasp the implications of this term holophrase19 if one knows that Lacan used it a few years before in the seminar "Desire and its interpretation."20 At the time this term was evoked, not for psychosis, but with regard to the interjection taken as an example of what happens in the lower part of the graph of desire. The holophrase makes the subject a monolith and gives the structure of his petrification by the signifier: *It designates the subject without representing him.*

Lacan opposes this function of the holophrase to Anna Freud's well-known dream which, he says, proves the necessity of the subject's counting himself in it.21 This child's dream, indeed, begins with the name of the dreamer "Anna F(r)eud".

In holophrastic interjection the subject does not need to count himself, however, as he is already sufficiently designated. One might say that the subject need not count himself in such an interjection because he is not cut off from it since he does not operate as lack. On the contrary he forms a monolith with the holophrased signifier. The face of the subject of the enunciation that the message includes is not cut off from the signifying code. So, for instance, the interjection "Help" shouted out by someone drowning proposes no dialectisation of the relation of the subject to the signifier. This interjection petrifies the subject and designates him completely in this particular situation. On hearing such a cry, absolutely no one would listen to the subject's signifiers and sit down on the bank uttering: "What does that bring to mind?" In that interjection, the subject is not being divided.
Let us come back to Seminar XI now. The function of the holophrase may be formulated from Lacan's schema on alienation as Jacques-Alain Miller has developed it. His commentary shows the logical three-stage development of the function of alienation. First there is a subject who is nothing; that is to say, who is not inscribable. Then, a first signifier ($S_1$) is inevitably inscribed in the field of the Other. And this signifier both designates the subject and petrifies him in the signifying field.

$S_1$

Finally, the inscription of a second signifier ($S_2$) makes the subject appear as a lack constituted by the empty set, empty, that is, of any signifier. This is what barred $S$ ($S$) refers to. Thus, the forced choice of alienation makes the subject appear as lack. And in this choice of meaning (the Other) there is a second loss; that of non-meaning (repression). It is the elementary schema of the advent of the subject as "effect of the signifier."

$S = \emptyset$

$S_1 \cap S_2$

When the signifier is holophrased, the choice of petrification occurs. One does not notice the lack of the subject and the subject does not operate as lack. In other words, the signifier does not represent a subject for another signifier, but forms a monolith with this subject, thereby designating the subject.

$S_1$

This same logic may be found in a passage of Subversion of the subject and dialectic of desire, a text from 1960: "the subject is constituted only by subtracting him self from it [namely the signifying set] and by decompleting it essentially in order, at one and the same time, to have to depend on it [$S_1$] and to make it function as a lack [$S$]." This phrase already gives the formula which will become that of the advent of the subject in alienation of Seminar XI in 1964. A few lines further Lacan adds: "the subject of psychosis, the subject who is satisfied with that previous Other." It is the $S_1$ of the holophrased signifier that is a pure subject of the signifier, a subject "identified," but not re-presented in the Other. This is why it is more correct to refer to him as "petrified" than as "identified".
One could conclude that the first holophrased dyad is (S) S₁, a non-barred subject designated by an S₁ without any S₂. But the S₁ in itself writes the concept adequately. The phrase from Seminar XI that refers to the first dyad of signifiers as holophrased, accounts, therefore, for what becomes the structure of alienation in psychoses.

**When there is no interval between S₁ and S₂**

This fragment is concerned with the process of separation. Jacques-Alain Miller formulates it in 1, 2, 3, 4 as follows:

\[ S = \emptyset \quad a = \emptyset \]

The subject is replying with his lack, that of alienation, to the desire of the Other; namely, to what is apprehended in the lacks of the discourse of the Other. This lack in the Other is in fact what Lacan calls the interval between the signifiers. If there is no interval, as Lacan says in this phrase, then there is a problem at the level of the process of separation. It is another way of saying that the psychotic is out of discourse, since discourse implies locating the desire of the Other; that is, the presence of a lack in the Other.

**The model for a whole series of cases**

Let us now pass on to the series of cases that Lacan proposes to articulate with this structure: the psychosomatic effect, the mentally-deficient child insofar as he is introduced to psychosis, and paranoia. These cases are put in a series by the holophrased functioning of the signifier. But they are distinguished one from the other because the subject does not occupy the same place in the signifier.

We will not comment here on the psychosomatic effect, for it lies outside the scope of this work.

In evoking the psychotic mentally-deficient child in this series, Lacan refers to the book by Maud Mannoni, *L'enfant arriéré et sa mère* which had just come out at the time. He pays homage to the book, but at the same time, Lacan plainly corrects what Maud Mannoni aims at, in one phrase.

Mannoni's thesis is summed up by these two points: all mental deficients, apart from the irrefutably organic character of certain cases, are related to psychosis; the mentally-deficient child and his mother are one single body. In the latter case, a supposedly dual situation with the mother, brings about a refusal of symbolic castration and difficulty in approaching symbols.

Lacan corrects both points here. He does not say that all mental deficients are psychotic, but that inasmuch as they take a certain place in the discourse of the Other, let us say the mother,
they are introduced to psychosis. Moreover, putting them in a series under the term of holophrase means that between the mother and the child there is not one single body, but one single signifier.\textsuperscript{26}

Therefore, what is at issue in this paragraph of \textit{Seminar XI} is less the mentally-deficient child, than the psychotic child. Lacan points out that the psychotic child takes "the place at the bottom right . . . " of the preceding table on the same page. From this, the child is the "support of desire in an obscure term."\textsuperscript{27} To clarify this it is necessary to comment on the matheme slightly modified on page 250 of \textit{Seminar XI}. It brings to mind the formulation of the four discourses, in particular, the discourse of the master.

\begin{center}
\begin{array}{c}
X \\
O. s, s', s'', s''', \ldots \\
S (i (a, a', a'', a''', \ldots )) \\
S_1 \\
O. s, s', s'', s''', \ldots \text{: suite des sens.} \\
i (a, a', a'', a''', \ldots ) \text{: suite des identifications.}
\end{array}
\end{center}

On the left we can see the subject of the signifier as a series of meanings and on the right a non-barred subject, where the series of identifications, the $i(a)$, actually refers to the object ($a$). The $X$ is the first petrification of the subject in the signifier by the inscription of the $S_1$ alone. With a slightly different formula, Lacan also appears to have anticipated his own \textit{Two notes on the child} written for Jenny Aubry in 1973.\textsuperscript{28} These notes can be read in relation to the discourse of the master which is the discourse of the mother's unconscious:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
S_1 \\
\xrightarrow{S} \\
\xrightarrow{S_2}
\end{array}
\]

Here again the child occupies the place at the bottom right as object ($a$) for the mother. Lacan points out that he "realizes the presence ( . . . ) of the object ($a$) in fantasy."\textsuperscript{29}

Thus, in \textit{Seminar XI} Lacan already situates the psychotic child at the same place as in his \textit{Two notes on the child}. But this similarity should not erase the difference of emphasis between the two texts. On the one hand, if the child is reduced to being no more than the support of the mother's desire, that is to say if he realizes the object of it, then in \textit{Seminar XI} the object in question is presented as a small $i(a)$ for the mother. On the other hand, the place taken is that of an obscure term, which, nevertheless, is designated in the schema by $S$, namely a signifier. It is the holophrase, unpronounceable by him, that designates him as an object for the mother. In \textit{Seminar XI} the psychotic child is situated from his relation to the signifier, whereas in other texts, among which we find the one to Jenny Aubry, he is situated in relation to the object. One must point out that for the psychotic child this obscure term turns out to be located in the discourse of the Other, in the discourse of an other, the mother in this instance.
Belief and certainty

Lacan put psychosis in general, and paranoia in particular, in a series under this term of holo-
phrase. The solidity and mass seizure of the subject by the signifier is, Lacan says, "what forbids
the dialectical opening that is manifested in the phenomenon of belief". It is worth noting that
this term "dialectical" is quite relevant here for requiring that there should be at least two signi-
fiers and that the subject should emerge as lack.

Lacan calls attention to a small paradox. Whereas paranoia seems to be completely ani-
mated by belief, at its basis the phenomenon pinpointed by Freud as Unglauben reigns. And
Lacan insists that this cannot be translated by "not believing in it." As a matter of fact "not be-
lieving in it" is one of the two terms of belief itself. Unglauben precisely refers to the absence of
one of the dialectical terms of belief. Here, once again, we find the opposition of the paranoiac's
certainty--involves only one term

\[ S_1 \]

--to the belief which calls for two terms. The consequent effect of two terms produces aphanisis
of the subject:

\[ S_1 \cap S_2 \]

"there is no belief that does not presuppose in its basis that the ultimate dimension that it has to
reveal is strictly correlative with the moment when its meaning is about to fade away."

To conclude this passage, in Seminar XI on the psychoses Lacan refers to a fragment of
Casanova's Memoirs which illustrates the necessity for two dialectical terms in belief. It is a
short passage where Casanova tries to dupe two personages by magic trickery while seeking, as
usual, to seduce a girl. He makes it clear, as if it were necessary, that he does not believe in his
own magic. It may be said that this signifier "not believing in it" but making the other believe in
it, is actually the one under which he represents himself. It is no more than an identification and,
as such, always vacillating. That this identification is not enough to express "the whole subject"
is revealed to Casanova during a storm that erupts at the moment of his magical work. He im-
mediately becomes frightened, afraid of his own work, which now, as a result, he begins to be-
lieve effective. Whereas Casanova's belief had been precisely not believing in it, the subsequent
opening of the skies reveals a second term to him by signaling belief in: "I adored my own
work." We have evidence here of the aphanisis of the subject in an abrupt loss of identification
as the seducer. He was suddenly powerless to bring his work to the sought-after issue/result. Such an example appropriately demonstrates that the appearance of the second signifier, $S_2$--here "believing in it" or admitting his adoration of his own work--makes the subject appear as lack, as pure vacillation appears under the signifier $S_1$, that had represented him up to that point. This demonstrates how neurosis functions in the structure of belief.

Under the term of holophrase, this passage in Seminar XI shows the fundamentally non-dialectisable structure of the relation of the subject to the signifier in psychosis. One has psychosis when there is no more belief, as in the example of Casanova, but certainty which appears at the very moment meaning starts to fade.

**Endnotes**

(*) The last part of this work on petrification was given in October 1987 at the Seminar of Jacques-Alain Miller in Paris.

3. Ibid., pp. 31.

9. Ibid., pp. 149.
10. Ibid., pp. 150-151.
14. Ibid., pp. 73
16. Ibid., pp. 312
17. Ibid., pp. 353
21. This dream begins with the dreamer's name. See *The Interpretation of Dreams*, pp. 130.
22. Jacques-Alain Miller, Course in the Department of Psychoanalysis (University of Paris VIII), 1, 2, 3, 4., Unpublished. I am using here the part concerning alienation from Seminar XI which differs from that of the logic of fantasy.


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