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You Have Followed Me Here ...

by

Steven Maynard

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

Master of Architecture

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE:

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HOUSTON, TEXAS
MAY, 2002
You have followed me here so that I can show you this picture.

How does this phrase read in the context of this thesis? On the one hand it's simply a quote, from *Last Year at Marienbad*. Yet, I am leading you through another narrative of sorts and showing you picture after picture. In this sense, the picture is the one that I have created but also that of Alan Weiss, Robbe-Grillet, Lacan, Foucault, Derrida, or perhaps it was someone else, then.

*Perhaps it was somewhere else then, Karlsruhe, Marienbad, or Baden Salsa. Or even here...*

at the tree-lined path of Entrance One, perhaps resembling the gardens of *Marienbad*, which are actually the gardens of four villas in Munich filmed to read as one. Here the history of the project and that of my own history collapse as this is the point where my entrance into the university occurred in 1998. I have entered through this path many times only to have both my entrance and exit delayed as well as redirected, the way that the path of Entrance One is redirected into Hermann Park, which is reflected across Main Street from Rice. Here we are led through a series of paths, of pictures, of lines of sight that continually shift, as our desires shift and our ability to grasp the real of the project always is unattainable. Rice is re-inscribed on Hermann Park, which is in turn re-inscribed on Rice, and reflects across, through, under and along Main and Fannin streets (which mirror each other). As well, the conditions of the other authors and participants, including myself and the project itself reflect upon this process.
Like any project, this thesis couldn’t exist without the help of many people. I would like to express my gratitude to these people (as well as many others not mentioned here):

Nana Last, Doug Oliver, Fares el-Dahdah, Robert Mangurian, Mary-Ann Ray, Kathleen Roberts, Janelle Gunther, Michael Powell, David Sisson, Itohan Osayimwese, Kristin Schuster, Jeff Geisinger, Kathy Williams, Emily Estes, David Stockwell, John Montag, Mira Rosenthal, Diedrich’s Coffee...

Mary, Gary and Katherine Maynard, John Davison, Ryan Giblin, Gunnar Hartmann, Charles Barnett, Diane Wardell...

Like Memoirs, the Self-Portrait always appears in the reverberation of several voices. And the voice of the other orders or commands, makes the portrait resound, calls it without symmetry or consonance

—Jacques Derrida
YOU HAVE FOLLOWED ME HERE ...
You have followed me here so that I can show you this picture.

How does this phrase read in the context of this thesis? On the one hand it's simply a quote, from Last Year at Marienbad. Yet, I have led you through another narrative of sorts and shown you picture after picture. In this sense, the picture is the one that I have created but also that of Weiss, Robbe-Grillet, Foucault, to repeat a few. Perhaps this operates like the self-portrait in Derrida's Memoirs of the Blind:

"Like Memoirs, the Self-Portrait always appears in the reverberation of several voices. And the voice of the other orders or commands, makes the portrait resound, calls it without symmetry or consonance." (Derrida, p. 60)

So not only does the work consist of several voices, but it relies upon the other, the spectator or viewer to facilitate this. And this is Leo Steinberg's reading of Las Meninas:
Diego Velazquez,
Las Meninas, 1656

"Reality, illusion and replication by art conspire in a ceaseless recirculation. But none of this works unless one agrees to participate (Steinberg, p. 52)."

In a sense my thesis relies upon "my" willingness to participate in the material in order for it to continue these "recirculations", but it also relies upon the reader for it to take place. Again, although there appear to be obvious starting points and conclusions, the work exists without clear limits, with many players to facilitate its operations.
Aerial Photograph of Rice University, 1921

Well, maybe it was somewhere else then, Karlstadt, Marienbad, or Baden Salsa. Or even here...

Let's take for example a photograph, taken very near where I am typing these words. The photo is from 1921 and shows the Rice University campus in its early stages. What is constructed is the entrance to the University and Lovett Hall, which marks the entrance to the present day main quad. The rest of the campus is at this point in time unbuilt except for the physics building, a dormitory building on the left of the quad and the central plant, which exists to the right of the picture. Amazingly, what is constructed is the boulevard of Main Street with sidewalks and planted trees on both sides. The main portion of the loop road is constructed, only most of the buildings that surround it are nonexistent. Another important omission from this photograph is any path along the main axis extending in the distance from Lovett Hall. Even the early schemes of the campus rely on this main access as means of orientation. This line is nonetheless implied. Still, by not inscribing that line, i.e. not actualizing it in physical space, that line is left for the future of Rice and how it could develop. This line is such a powerful means of organization that the campus today is still
being designed according to its prescription. From the renovation of the library at the end of the quad, which will soon contain an axial atrium/entrance to the building which will lie on this path, to the recently constructed Baker building and the new Business School which are placed to either side, while the line continues between the two. The Shepard School of Music seeks to terminate this line with its symmetrical design again centered on the axis.

But let’s return to the early photo again because perhaps the line is stronger in an uninscribed state. Here the line continues into infinity or at least its implication. This is furthered by the blurry quality of the photograph, so that what extends from the top dissolves into the distance uninterrupted. Perhaps this reminds us of Weiss’ reading of Vaux-le-Vicomte. The Villa exists in the foreground while the garden extends outward into the distance. The first approved plan of Rice resembles this condition in that there is an apparent terminus to the main axis, a greek amphitheater, that functions similarly to Weiss’ vertugadin (keep in mind that the theater in Weiss’ garden also occurred from the vertugadin into the salon, the initial vantage point of the garden). Nonetheless, even at Vaux, the axis continues to extend past the vertugadin, up the sloping lawn and further yet into the distance, which is nonetheless blocked from the villa because of this slope. So, in plan, that line continues further although our initial vanishing point does not. In the case of Rice, the construction does not take place at one time, but allows for further development. Plans are made, but the intentions of the original designers changes with the perception of the future of the university. Rice, an institution, is constructed in the image of a garden, with rows of trees, linear paths and large
green areas. This, however, is a garden that is constructed over time and thus the vanishing point of the institution itself remains unfixed. From the photograph, we are given a privileged, comprehensive view of the campus, but what remains hidden is the development of the institution in time. So this line, perhaps has its terminus somewhere in the future (although I would argue that the implied terminus of the photograph is stronger than any that have been constructed since).

The impression of Rice as an institution is clearly implied, but only built enough to suggest that. Perhaps this was the intrigue of the initial photographers or my intrigue in reading this image. But what exists in the hazy distance? Zizek, in the essay “From Reality to the Real” from Looking Awry relates the story of the Thirteenth Floor (looking awry is akin to anamorphosis, where reading something not straight on leads to a truth not revealed in more typical forms of analysis. “Looking awry is precisely what prevents us from sliding into psychosis. Such is the effect of the symbolic order of the gaze (Zizek, p. 13)).” In the story, the characters learn that their universe is fabricated. While they drive through what seems to be the desert and they roll their windows down, they are confronted with a “grey and formless mist.” Zizek likens this world to the Lacanian real, which exists in this case as “another mode of reality, not immediately continuous with the reality inside the car.”

“But what is crucial for us here is the place from which this real erupts: the very borderline separating the outside from the inside, materialized in this case by the windowpane. (Zizek, p. 15).”
In the case of the early photo of Rice the real emerges at the edge of the campus, an edge that is nonetheless blurred by this very haze. But this image also represents the potential of any architectural project and extends the myth of Rice, its prestige, and its history as an institution, for we are on the one hand confronted with an image of infinite possibility, but we cannot separate this from the campus in its current state. As Koolhaas remarks, “Where there’s nothing, anything is possible. Where there’s architecture, nothing (else) is possible (Lucan, p. 156).” Or as Derrida claims: “One is on the lookout, one reflects upon what one sees, reflects what one sees by delaying the moment of conclusion (Derrida, p. 1).”
A similar image occurs in the popular Wedding Photo on the Rice campus. Here the backdrop of Lovett hall, which exists as it did in the first photograph, merges the continued myth of Rice with that of the institution of marriage. I always found it interesting that in most cases the brides alone were photographed here, as if the other, the husband, was yet to be determined or else the prospect of marriage itself and the bride’s image in relation to it were more important than who her mate turned out to be. (Of course, this could also be due to the myth that the bride must not see the groom before the wedding). Here the romanticism of the fairy-tale, cliché narrative of marriage (which perhaps mimics the fairy-tale romance, which Robbe-Grillet plays off of), operates in the same way as the early impression of the campus, inscribed on the image of the campus as background. The institution of marriage, like the institution of Rice, remains uncertain, but exists in a state of naive optimism. This naive optimism will continue to last as long as the photograph does, as it continues to perpetuate the myth in the way the aerial photo of 1921 does. It’s also interesting to note that the representations continue to have their effect as long as someone is willing to participate in their image.
This myth of Rice is used to sell it as an institution for prospective students, which I, like many students, walked into unquestioningly. What impressed me the most about this place where I was to do my master's degree, to write a thesis, were its seemingly infinite options, the flexibility inherent in the program. Yet unlike most students, this impression was extended longer than just the time of acceptance to the beginning of school the following fall. Before I began to work toward my degree I contracted a case of encephalitis, which postponed my entry for two years (Rice was kind enough to allow me to do this, further contributing to the institution as an ideal place). During this time I had no idea how long the recovery process would take. I suffered from extreme fatigue, which led especially in the beginning to bed rest. Among my neurological symptoms was a type of double vision, a monocular diplopia, which occurred in both eyes. I would see two images in each eye. This image, depending on my condition at the time, would be more or less apparent in terms of intensity. The two images (or four images, because the offset and intensity were more apparent in one eye than the other) were also more or less offset depending on my condition. The

"Aspectus is at once gaze, sight, and that which meets the eyes: on one side, the spectator, and on the other, the aspecor, in other words the spectacle. In English, spectacles are glasses." (Derrida, p.44). In 1997, my doctor told me of a special type of lens that would correct my double vision. A parabolic lens would make the two images converge to one. So I went to an ophthalmologist, with the intention of finally
better I felt, the closer my vision would be to normal. This naturally impeded my ability to see, especially read, where I would see the same line of text above every line of text. Two versions of the same narrative were inscribed on the same text, from the same vantage point. This works similarly to Derrida's "eye graft." One viewpoint is grafted onto the other. Only in my case it was the same viewpoint. This is akin to The Ambassadors and its anamorphosis, where another viewpoint is grafted on the same painting.

The story is already over

The disease itself, once diagnosed, presented a more or less certain outcome without a definitive time frame for recovery. The results of the MRI showed no visible scarring from the initial infection. This suggested to my physicians that I would recover more or less completely and would theoretically pick up my life where it left off. The narrative of the illness thus was complete at least in its conclusion, but the real question was when. By some accounts, I could recover in a few months, by the start of school in September. The trouble came in the recovery process that did not take the linear path as proscribed in the prognosis, but one with rises and falls, times of recovery and times of relapse. Because of my reduced immune system, which was still trying to recover from my initial trauma, I was susceptible to relapsing when I contracted any cold or infection. So at times I appeared to be getting stronger and closer to normal, only to wake up the next day in a state very close to how the disease started. The process of regaining my strength would usually take several months. Only when my strength had been regained could my immune system get back to healing the trauma from the encephalitis, leaving small windows for recovery in a sea of relapse. Still, being able to see one image. I tried the lenses that seemed to help correct the effect. There were two problems with these lenses. One, the double vision varied from day to day. Some days it would be clearly more pronounced than others. In addition to this, everytime I focused on a new point in space, the effect would immediately worsen and then correct itself to some degree as my mind worked to converge the two images. To correct the
during these times my primary motivating factor was this image of my life as something that would be complete upon being well and attending Rice. Thus the myth of Rice was inscribed upon the myth of the rest of my life, and the image of a healthy me. Perhaps it was someone else then...

“If what is called a self-portrait depends on the fact that it is called a “self-portrait,” an act of naming should allow or entitle me to call just about anything a self-portrait, not only any drawing (“portrait or not”) but anything that happens to me, anything by which I can be affected or let myself be affected (Derrida, p.65).”

Inscribed in Derrida’s work is the relation of the author to the work itself. But it is a relation that is always a step removed, one that is never fully connected. In the case of the self-portrait the author never actually meets his/her own gaze. Derrida relates a story about having a case of frigore, which resulted in a temporary paralysis of the left side of his face; his eye was transfixed and was unable to shut normally. This, nonetheless, coincided with the beginning of his work on an exhibit at the Louvre, where he examines the drawings of the blind, of the self-portrait. In his work he describes the eye of the draftsman, the author of the drawings, as being blind:

condition would require a constantly changing parabola to match the shifts in my perception. The second problem was the lens so deeply distorted my field of vision in the attempt to merge the two images that it became more difficult to see with the parabolic lens than without it. My brain again had to take a distorted image and try to make sense of it. This nonetheless is a brain trying to recover from a trauma that had no extra resources to
"The staring eye always resembles an eye of the blind, sometimes the eye of the dead, at the precise moment when mourning begins: it is still open, a pious hand should soon come to close it; it would recall a portrait of the dying. Looking at itself seeing, it also sees itself disappear right at the moment when the drawing tries desperately to recapture it... Seeing the seeing and not the visible, it sees nothing. The seeing eye sees itself blind (Derrida, p. 57)."

You have followed me here so I can show you this picture ...

exert trying to correct the distorted vision. Still, going to the optometrist was not in vain. I discovered for the first time that I was nearsighted and I needed glasses to correct my sight. This indeed was helpful to my vision as my brain no longer had to strain to make out a long distance image. My headaches and double vision decreased as a result. I've worn spectacles ever since.
The artist in Greenaway's, *The Draughtsman's Contract* demonstrates this blindness. In this case the draftsman draws not a self-portrait, but a series of drawings of an estate and grounds. Let's take a depiction from one scene, that is perhaps reminiscent of the scene from *Marienbad* with the reversal of viewpoints. The scene begins with a shot of a perspectival view of a garden along an axis that terminates in the distance at an obelisk. This path is lined with manicured trees, not unlike the French formal gardens previously discussed. In the foreground of this shot is a gridded, Cartesian frame that the draftsman uses to construct his perspectives. This frame again references the frame of the apparatus of the camera as well as the representation about to be produced. The female character, Mrs. Talman, enters the scene toward the end of the path emerging from the manicured trees that eclipse our vision of the sides of the garden. The scene describes the movement of this character from the far end of the path to the front of the frame, where her gaze meets the camera. At this moment she announces: "It's time Mr. Neville."
This recalls X, in *Marienbad*, looking into the camera, which is the picture frame from we examined in the previous shot. In *The Draftsman’s Contract*, Mrs. Talman looks at the camera through the gridded frame, which is what we are seeing, but we are also in the location of Mr. Neville, who also gazes through this frames as he reproduces it on a drawing.

The woman moves through the garden not along the path, but moves back and forth across the path and behind the trees, thus weaving herself in and out of our vision and the frame of the photo. As she does this she places a piece of her clothing (that she removes off-screen) on these trees. So the process of this movement is one of masking and revealing. We never actually see her take off any item of clothing, but she arrives back on-screen slightly more naked each time, leaving these layers behind. During the scene, the camera briefly switches viewpoints to show the draftsman through the same frame that he sees the garden, thus reversing his position in relation to the representation. It then shows the drawing as it exists before she walks through. Each tree lacks the clothing that she has just draped on them. The dialogue of the
scene, which overlaps the seduction reads as follows:

*From Eleven O'clock in the morning until One: The Ewe Tree walk in the center of the lower garden will be kept completely clear of all members of Mr. Herbert's family, members of his household staff and animals.*

A member of Mr. Herbert's family (Mrs. Talman) and an animal (her dog) traverse the screen as these words are spoken. The draftsman's reason for keeping these areas clean is simple: he draws "exactly" what he sees in the picture frame. Therefore a *trace* within the picture, say an article of clothing, gets recorded in the picture.
This process of revealing, of seduction, is also a way of leaving clues and a way to make the renderings *impure*. This is shown when we see the final rendering which depicts all of the articles of clothing that were left behind in this scene. In this way the draftsman is blind to what exists in the frame. He draws only what is in the frame, but he does not see what is there, for otherwise he would simply omit them from the representations. We have a garden littered with the evidence of infidelity, which thus *reveals* another truth to the rendering that the author did not intend to depict (and revealing implies one did not see to begin with, a blindness... also akin to our frontal perspectives at Vaux-le-Vicomte and *The Ambassadors*). In this way the female character is the author of these drawings because she determines the content of them, and thus makes them valuable beyond just a representation of a garden lined with ewe trees.
A drive lined with Live Oaks.
(Perhaps it was somewhere else, then.)

So it is precisely this point, in this photograph that left us with our initial impressions of Rice and the possibilities as to where those could lead. When I saw Rice for the first time, it left me for two and half years with an idea about an institution that somehow represented academic freedom as well as the prospect of health itself. But the story does not end as simply as that. I arrived at Rice again through that very entrance, ready to claim my life once more. But I soon learned that I was being evaluated, as I was giving a first impression as well. Whereas, my impression of Rice had been suspended for two years, perhaps its impression of me was not static. I had already earned a reputation before I even started school; many people had already heard of me before I arrived, and I could only imagine what they thought. Here I was confronted with a situation, where I didn't look sick, didn't have any symptoms that an untrained eye could pick up on, and I had to describe a medical condition that was not only difficult to describe, but one that was simultaneously restricting, although perhaps not evident. In essence my external image did not match my internal one. I found my work to be challenging
as I had to be concerned with my health more than other students. I could not stay up late as it would effect my neurological symptoms, causing me at first not to perform well and risking yet another relapse (this is something that I still have to be careful of), leaving me where I started from, at a drive lined with Live Oaks.

This drive of Live Oaks enters off South Main Street. In the photograph from 1921, Main appears virtually as it exists now, except the trees have been recently planted and the median strip is slightly wider. One must ask where this monumental boulevard leads. It in fact leads to nothing. Essentially none of the city that exists along South Main in that direction had been built then. This is a case where the infrastructure anticipated the growth of the city. But perhaps, we can see it again as simply a line, a line that was drawn at some point from downtown, extending out into the distance indefinitely.

This line is akin to the main axis at Rice as it was a vision, yet to be completed, one that embodied an entire set of possibilities for the growth of a grand city, which Houston had not yet become. The line both embodies the past and future of Houston. It is interesting to note what is in fact constructed upon this line is a series of microcosms, of institutions that nonetheless maintain an internal character that remains outside of the city itself: Rice University, Hermann Park, The Texas Medical Center, The Astrodome,
and AstroWorld. The building of these microcosms require an amount of land that would not have been available closer to the city when the were conceived. Main Street perhaps provided the perfect vehicle to access a series of institutions that extend out into the prairie of the State of Texas itself. Here Houston had a connection from its center and origin along a major road, which would be built before the institutions, thus allowing a perfect location for them to be constructed in the first place.

Despite an apparent collapse of the naïve optimism of the growth of the city with the move of the Astros to Downtown this line continues to be extended and reinforced today. The new football arena as well as the construction of the only public rail transportation in the city continue to tell the narrative of this line. The determining factor behind these projects is the Olympic bid, which again can be seen as a desire to create a condition that will give the city of Houston a status it does not have now. The whole project of Houston, of Rice, and of my thesis seems to embody Lacan's circular structure of desire, for even upon the "completion" of a building, a campus, or a chapter of a thesis, it only serves to recreate that desire in yet another form.
The project can always be more complete, more prestigious, more thorough.

My health continued to embody this circular structure as well. About two thirds of the way into my first term at Rice, I had a fairly severe relapse. I was not only unable to complete my work on time, but I was also prevented from taking a full term in the spring. I was thus forced to take another year off from school to regain my strength. It took me virtually the entire year to finish up my work from the first semester.

So I returned to the drive of live oaks once more for a second first impression, where I was to again take a stab at returning to the life that had already been prescribed for me by my physician. With a slightly lower degree of optimism, I entered my second semester at Rice a year and a half after my first. About three weeks into the term I had yet another relapse, and it troubled me because I really didn't know what I would do next. Would I return to Rice again the following year through the entrance on Main Street, through the row of Live Oaks, through the sallyport which frames the entrance to the library at the other end of the quad?—Continuing a line of study I had begun two and half years earlier and would still have two and half years before completing my degree?

Would I continue along the line of the main axis of Rice? Along the live oaks that flank the entrance? Along the live oaks that flank the boulevard of Main Street that separate it from Fannin? Fannin runs parallel to Main from Downtown, but as it passes along the edge of Hermann Park it gets very close to Main, so close that there is virtually no room for any building to occur. It is in a sense a linear park, flanked by two major streets, flanked by two rows of live oaks, live oaks like the ones at the entrance to Rice.
Here Rice is reflected in Hermann Park, which is reflected in Rice, reflected across these boulevards that are reflected between a linear park, with rows of live oaks.

I returned through these rows of live oaks much sooner than I had anticipated. Within a couple of weeks, I was close to my full strength. I was able to finish the semester and the two that followed. To this day I still struggle with my health. I have to watch my eating, sleeping, and exercise habits. I still have relapses, returns to previous states of illness, reminders of times past. In these relapses I still have severe fatigue and double vision. So it is true that I would recover, that I have recovered, but this vision of my health is grafted upon another vision of my health, one in which I can always be healthier.
Impurities of an ideal order? Or merely a revealing, another reading? One that perhaps shows us what is behind a

By returning to these tree-lined paths, I attempt to bring the narrative back on top of itself. So my first proposal, a test, an initial impression, will occur along the tree-lined oaks in the space between Rice, (an institution in the image of a garden) and its reflected counterpart Hermann Park, a garden attached to an institution, the Texas Medical Center. This is a site embedded already within the operations I've been discussing: mirroring, viewpoints, vanishing points, substitutions, and translations. It is also depicted in the location of the production of the thesis itself. But where will the piece go when it moves from an ideal state, a proposal, an idea, to a design, a further stage of proposal? What if it were built? How would it be inscribed, represented, reflected? Would it become the imperfect representation like the clothing along the walk in the center of the lower garden? The garbage bin on the Rice campus? Will it resemble the imperfect self-portraits I began during the course of my illness or the self-portrait I continue along this line? Derrida asks: "What happens when one writes without seeing?" What happens when one designs without knowing the outcome?
Facade, like the one at Lovett Hall, the entrance to the main quad of the Rice campus. The front of this very thin building acts as a screen, where the image of an institution and its values are projected or perhaps reflected. Here this articulated surface becomes an ideal spot for photographs, which explains its popularity among brides. This is the first image of Rice that one sees after passing through an

Analogous to the way that Lovett Hall was constructed before the rest of campus, it also becomes a place for the design to begin, as future elements will be constructed in relationship to this initial starting point. In this way, the many schemes and histories of Rice are explicitly linked with my own, further linking my history to that of the institution itself. But rather than moving through this image into the university, our quest starts by reflecting this image outward. Like any labyrinth, our quest is either to find the truth, or the real of the project or the exit of the maze itself. What happens when we traverse the tree-lined path outward from Lovett Hall, a facade used as a backdrop for photographs of Saturday afternoon brides, out to the so-called real world? Will this in fact be my exit from the university?
allée, which is more than just a path. Here it becomes the walls of the labyrinth, a tunnel of trees. One enters blindly, without knowing what is on the other side. The allée is simultaneously a place of anticipation and mystery, but also one of direct, linear, movement. What is on the other side? Perhaps we find a

We follow this path lined with live oaks to find that the entrance is not the same as when we had entered. Or perhaps this is a different tree-lined path? The one we traverse now contains a subtle slope, a slope that conceals the road that crosses in front of us. This is a perspectival trick used at Vaux-le-Vicomte. In both cases, the plan is revealed to us as we move through it, rather than revealing itself from our initial vantage point. As we move toward the end of this allée, we can make out at the end of our metaphorical tunnel, a traffic circle. Has Mecom Fountain shifted to a new location along the tree-lined boulevards of Main and Fannin?
traffic circle, that, in turn, re-directs us. Here we find several divergent paths. But the traffic circle can also operate as a

From here we traverse the intersections of two major tree-lined avenues, Main and Fannin. On the other side, we are confronted with another allée, strangely similar to the one we just left. Where does this path lead us? Toward the end of the path, we can make out a sloping lawn, the *vertugadin* of Hermann Park, the Miller Outdoor Theater, on the horizon. Only as we move closer a whole new element is revealed to us: a transversal pool, similar to that created by the River Anquel at Vaux-le-Vicomte. To proceed to the theater, we must move around this pool along the major axis of Hermann Park also lined with live oaks. It is here that we realize our pool is also a reflecting pool between the obelisk and the Sam Houston Statue. On the other side of the pool we continue up the slope of the hill. The hill is constructed from the dirt of Rice Stadium, a reflection or an inversion between the two places. At the theater, our stage is set. The bride poses in front of the Backdrop of Lovett Hall. The curtain falls.
monument, a focal point, and landmark at the end of an allée. These are points that generally give us a sense of direction on an urban scale. (But how do they work in this project? What happens when these get displaced or duplciated? Perhaps then they have the opposite effect. We can no longer count on them to distinguish one place from another). In the case of Mecom

But our drama continues. We shift our axis slightly and cross once again over the reflecting pool. Here we see the geometry of this shift inscribed in a zone of crushed gravel, like the original paths of Rice Campus and Hermann Park. At the center of our way is the obelisk, now in the middle of the reflecting pool. To traverse this we can travel along a carved path that divides the reflecting pool in two. Upon reconnecting with our axis, we find ourselves in yet another allée. Through this allée we end up at a small pond, once part of the Japanese Garden? We notice that our path has sloped downward gradually to the lake. From here we are immersed in another tunnel of trees that leads uphill further along our line of travel. At the end of this corridor we arrive once again at Mecom Fountain, or is it perhaps a different fountain? Here we find another allée, another axis, slightly shifted from the previous one.
fountain, we have a monument which places us relative to the city and creates a focal point where many paths diverge. (But this is also a place where an underground and hidden network of water lines exerts itself.) And this is also the case on a smaller scale at the Sam Houston

But this allée is slightly different from the ones we have traversed before. This one is a bit wider, and as we learn, takes the traffic from Main Street and directs its southbound lane into the Rice Campus. This path rises slightly and then declines slightly toward the conclusion. In this way, our allée parallels the displacement of earth used in creating Rice Stadium and Miller Theater. Here, the earth is removed in a subtle slope up and down to Main Street which is again at grade. This earth is then replaced on the Rice side in the opposite manner. It slopes up and then down to the quad, which is at grade. At the end of this path we end up once again at Lovett Hall. Now a pool reflects the image of the facade into the ground surface. Upon closer inspection we find that Lovett Hall is now only a facade, an "empty surface" with no building behind it. Beyond this is a sunken movie theater, faced by the buildings of the Rice Quad. But we find that these are facades as well, ones that face inward to the theater. The building footprints have become voided reflecting pools.
statue, where we are confronted with a marker, which defines the place spatially, but also describes its history as it depicts figures responsible for its development. (But again, what happens if this referent is displaced? Can William Marsh Rice exist in Hermann Park, and what does that mean for the definition of the institution?). The arch of the Sam Houston Sculpture can be a

Here at the theater, we find our groom, but without his date, the bride who perhaps is late or has mistaken the location where they are to meet. We follow the groom, or perhaps it is me looking for my exit to the university again. This time we follow one of the paths that flanks the allée to Entrance One. This path continues to descend further beneath the surface of the ground into a tunnel. Perhaps it goes beneath Main and Fannin Streets? What are we to find at the end of this tunnel? Of course, a short row of trees. At the clearing we expect to find the Sam Houston Sculpture. But no—instead we find the Statue of William Marsh Rice, which should have been at the center of the Rice University Quadrangle. Instead of the pointing figure of Sam, William simply sits and faces our next direction of travel.


From the statue we follow the gaze of William along what seems to be the main axis of Hermann Park. The reflecting pool is still here, but carved into paths. These are perhaps reminders of our previous trip here. At the border of these areas of overlapping lines are windows to the layer below. Here we catch a glimpse of utility pipes as they pass beneath us. Nonetheless, these are distanced from us by a sheet of glass flush with the surrounding concrete and gravel. In the center of the pool we find not the obelisk, but the statue of Sam Houston, who points us onward to another allée, which we enter without knowing what is on the other side. There at the end of our axis is again the Rice Quadrangle, with one major deletion, Lovett Hall. The bride is not here. Perhaps she went to look for a better place to be photographed? The rest of the buildings are constructed in full, not as facades. At the center of the quad is not William Marsh Rice, who we just saw, but Mecom Fountain, this time without its traffic circle.
markers, monuments at the end of an allée, inscribing the order of the plan, where it has been and where it will go from there, but in this case also revealing an order that exists beneath the surface of the

So we are off again in search of a bride, or an exit to the university, or simply a way out of this maze. We turn our direction into yet another allée, but this time there are two to choose from. One is a major traffic artery through the park and the other, a pedestrian path. We follow the latter through another similar row of live oaks to find ourselves at another traffic circle with a fountain at its center. In this zone, which we have perhaps passed once before, we find another utility window which traces its glass edge across the surface of the roadway and onto the stone surface of the center of the circle. From here we can see three more allées, two of which we have seen before. We continue our way forward to find yet another traffic circle, another iteration of Mecom Fountain, to redirect us once more. As we look down what we believe to be Main and Fannin streets, we see another allée open up between the two in the small sliver of land that separates them.
simulacrum, but beneath this do we find the real? Or is it merely a metaphor for something that is just out of reach, one step from being attained? As we continue to move beneath the surface, into tunnel after

It is here that we find the destination to our quest. Ascending another sloping path, we arrive at a flat clearing. The bride stands in the middle of what seems to be the Quad, only there is a wedding chapel at the end of this path in place of Fondren Library. It seems as if our story has a happy ending.
tunnel, we find our answer is again delayed, the way that we enter the row of Live Oaks, not knowing for certain what is on the other side. So where do we find

But alas, upon arriving at the quad, which is merely a simulacrum at a slightly smaller scale. We find it contains but a statue of our bride. Moving toward the wedding chapel we realize that it too is only a facade, with a reflecting pool behind. To our surprise, it is behind this facade, that we do find our bride, posing for a photo before an image of Lovett Hall. The bride and groom have at last joined, but their wedding chapel is no longer here. They must, therefore, search for a place to be wed. They follow once again an allée, a path that slowly descends into the ground. They pass underneath a layer of utilities which is revealed to them from above. Where does this tunnel lead? Do the credits roll now?
the end? The project terminates at a point, but one that implies that the labyrinth continues, that the next path is not spelled out, that the choice becomes open for further investigation or in the case of movement through the site that the participant begins to choose his/her path. Here we see that the scheme is layered enough on its own to function without my narrative, to act as a

The story of our bride and groom left off with at least a search, a fulfilling of one desire replaced with another. Where does this leave us? For me, the project at this point is something I have completed, that I presented on January 18, 2002. But it also leaves me with issues unresolved. I intended the plan to operate without the narrative of the bride and groom, for the occupant to choose his/her own path in the scheme and for that the number of choices and iterations to be great enough to provide interest and mystery on the scale of the university, the park and the city. However, I also feel that the proposal, the narrative I’ve chosen to tell, could have been different, that the thesis could be closer to an actual proposal of a park that marries Rice, Hermann Park and the City of Houston, but that also takes the idea of narrative and makes it more believable as a construct. In this way, fantasy and proposal as well as the fantasy of the proposal, can be interchangeable and confused in and of themselves, analogous to the way that the elements of the plan interchange and repeat themselves.
mirror for the multiple narratives that could exist. The narrative I have shown is thus the one used to construct the project and its phases (as well as the document itself), but also another history for the site. The characters, the bride and the groom, while interchangeable with other brides and grooms photographed in front of the

The model, which measures 6x8x12 feet of elevated surface, surrounded by a floor of drawing, perhaps tells a different story than the narrative that has been constructed so far. Or perhaps it is simply another iteration of the same story. This parallels the male character X in *Last Year at Marienbad*. At times we are led to believe that he retells the story over and over until he gets it right. But does this mean the story is accurate, or only that the woman is finally convinced by it? So here I continue to retell this story, of the project that is my thesis, its many layers, narratives and representations. In photographs which are merely a representation of a representation, we see that the model contains these perspectives of facades, with collages we have seen before in the previous narrative.
facade of Lovett Hall daily can also be interchangeable with the institutions themselves. In this way, Rice University, Hermann Park, the City of Houston are inexplicitly linked in their history and with the project itself, which confuses the distinctions between the spaces, facades and monuments. The projects phases are structured as

What happens when one traverses the tree-lined path outward from Lovett Hall, out to the so-called real world? Will this in fact be my exit to the university? Is this the path of the bridal photograph as the bride moves from Lovett Hall for another photo opportunity? And where is the groom?

We follow this path lined with live oaks to find that the entrance is not the same. Perhaps the narrative is not the same either. In fact, which narrative are we following? Rice has given me a model to exist in this reality, perhaps to create a new one or alter the one that already exists. However, this model has shifted from its idealized state of when I entered through its tree-lined path. In turn, it has shifted who I thought I would become upon exiting as well. So it is here that I entered the narrative of Rice and that it entered mine as well, but our impressions of each other have ended up somewhere else. These competing visions and realities are nonetheless inscribed on the same location. Perhaps they are all a part of the same picture that you have followed me here to show you...
View toward Miller
Outdoor Theater
mirror operations. Each stage of the project begins at a facade, with a projected image. Each image is contracted and re-projected, reflected into the next phase. Phase One, for example, begins at Lovett Hall and reflects that image to Miller Outdoor Theater. These graphs resemble Lacan's mirror diagram (lower right). The difference here is that each projection is diverted, no image ends up being projected in the exactly the same way or location. In this way, each image is constantly shifting in content and location, together with our desire to find the real. At the point of contraction of the image, traffic circles are presented to redirect the
The image. These are accompanied by markers, like an obelisk, fountain, or statue. The project marks the territories affected through ground shifts, surface changes, underground passages and redistribution of elements from the previous image (this is also the case with the underground network of utility lines). The plan, therefore, becomes a generator of facades, but also shows the process of these moves inscribed across Rice University, Hermann Park and its mirror the Main/ Fannin corridor. Where these operations overlap, is where the utility windows occur. Here, the overlap of the plan inscribes, while revealing the order beneath the surface. The final iteration, which exists in a long underground passage, underneath the utilities mentioned. At points of overlap, there are connections to the surface, which serve as physical connections between the horizontal layers of the project. The
model shows how it generates yet another narrative. Here the scheme terminates not at a point as it does in the drawings, nor does it suggest a continued narrative of the bride and groom. Here the video screen reveals a truth about the model and its construction itself. Its five planes collapse into a single plan from a privileged vantage point. But this vantage point is still idealized and not quite attained for the video, although taken from above is not aligned to collapse the plan entirely. In this sense we are still allowed to see the depth of the plan, which is the model. Of course this also begins to show us the narrative of the presentation of the thesis. In the video we can see Steven Maynard presenting the project with the jury and spectators closing in. The
presentation began in a dark hallway. The two sliding doors of the jury room revealed the model, with me standing in front of it. I recited a narrative similar, but more condensed to what I have stated here, turned on the video screen which showed not what I have recorded on the previous page, but an image of myself moving around the model from above, presenting a narrative with which to engage the construction. After turning on the video screen, I continued with my narrative, reiterating it, and concluding it simultaneously. As I spoke I moved toward the drawings, which gave another kind of clarity to the proposal. As I traversed the space in a counterclockwise manner, the spectators followed me, the way you have followed me here to see the
proposal for the model began in much the same way as the one for the project at large, and proposals in general for that matter. The plan of the city was merely projected on the floor of the jury room, one with panels that extruded out of the floor. In the case of the proposal, the model was conceived of from a single viewpoint and projected its vision into the form of the initial diagram. While much of the structure of that drawing stayed, many things also changed, the shape, size and location of panels. The light source that projected the plan transformed into sheets of drawing adhered onto carefully sized panels that accounted for the change in
perspective. For example the closer the panels were to the camera lens the smaller they became. But the privileged viewpoint changed as well, from the eye level of someone standing on the balcony above the space, to a higher, unattainable viewpoint. This viewpoint became a mounted camera for the purposes of constructing the model rather than a light source for the projected image. A means of structuring the panels also had to be invented and the content of the model had to be realized in further detail. This work also required many helpers under my direction. The process of this work of many voices turns a drawing conceived of from a single viewpoint into a richer, more complex, less pure construction, and this is exactly the way Rice and Hermann Park were developed relative to their initial schemes.

The many layers of the construction: “Grafted onto a single eye?”
A bird's eye view of the construction
A bird's eye view of the site
Site plan of Phase I
Utility plan of Phase I
Site plan of Phase II
Utility plan of Phase II
Site plan of Phase III
Utility plan of Phase IV
Site plan of Phase V
Utility plan revealed
Diagrams of a scene from *Last Year at Marienbad*

Allow me,
I can explain the statue.
You have followed me here to enter this picture, this frame. But perhaps it is not an entry, but a way out, or maybe an entry into yet another place.

Let’s enter into a scene from Last Year at Marienbad… This is shown in flip book format in the upper right corner of the document. This scene can be related through various lenses. The lens of the eye, for example.
Here we follow the gaze of the characters. In the previous scene the gaze of the two main characters A and X meet. A continues to look at X, while his gaze shifts off-screen, connecting to the next shot where X describes the statues. What do the statues see? The female perhaps sees something different than the male. Her gaze is perhaps akin to A's in this shot where the two characters look past each other as if they are existing in two different realities. Perhaps they live as Deleuze suggests in coexisting sheets of past or in simultaneous presents. He links the female character to the author Robbe-Grillet. Where does her gaze lead?

But to the next shot, the reversal of our original vantage point and to the gaze of the third character, M. Does this line stop here or does it continue to another place, outside the walls of the villa to the garden, where she views the statue in question, or maybe it is a different statue? The statues in turn meet the gaze of the camera, as well as our gaze. But suppose instead, that we follow the male figure's vision. This gaze, which is akin to X who according to Deleuze is more closely related to the director Resnais. He notices that A is looking
in the opposite direction. He then turns around to see M, who's gaze meets that of the apparatus, as well as our gaze.

This may remind us of another work, *Las Meninas*. Here the author gazes off-screen like the royal couple in the mirror, who perhaps are the same royal couple depicted in the statues.
Perspective Diagram

Theses statues that gaze within a representation of the garden, a bird's eye view, a perspective. Is this what Weiss would call an oblique perspective, like what we see upon looking back at the villa at Vaux-le-Vicomte? Or is it the villa at Marienbad, or at Baden-Salsa that we see upon the final shot of the film? The other end of the garden, the view from the back of the villa in this case gives us a frontal perspective, not the oblique one that we find upon moving through the plan. Here, a seemingly clear understanding of the garden is brought into question through movement and time. How does that relate to the first shot of Marienbad that begins askew? In this scene, the labyrinth has already begun. Weiss relates Vaux-le-Vicomte as a form of anamorphosis, like the famous painting the Ambassadors, which has both a frontal and oblique perspective. The two perspectives, readings, require a different vantage point.

Or is it the villa at Marinebad, or one of the four Munich villas where it was filmed? Or is the villa at Marienbad, or the villa Schleissheim depicted in the perspective that the characters of the film examine, which is not after all a true perspective because the vanishing points do not converge. Nor is this depiction a plan
because an askew vantage point is implied. Here, the film differs from Weiss' perspective as well as the trompe-l'oeil painting in the following shot, the one seen here behind these two men playing checkers amidst a checkered environment. Where else does this frame lead?
Frame Diagram

The villa frames many spaces, mirrors, paintings, theaters, gardens, theaters with gardens, like the garden in Marienbad where we encounter the characters X and A. Do we follow them into the villa and back out? Or do we go back into the scene in question, to see the picture, to see the couple examining the picture. You can see M gaze into the camera, looking at the very picture that we saw in the reverse shot.

How is this picture framed? Who are its authors? Is it framed within the architecture like the play Rosmer, which uses the garden as its set? But in that garden exists another play, another picture, another narrative.
We follow this narrative of the male and female characters. Does she slip away while X is telling his story? Where does she go? To the garden perhaps, but maybe she meets up with X once again to hear the story one more time. Or else the story is continued into yet another space. And where the narrative of X lead? Into the garden, perhaps, where people stand frozen as if statues, much like the character M. Or maybe some other statue? Or some other character?

*Perhaps it was somewhere else then. Or even here in this document. Where you were already getting lost, forever, in the calm night, alone with me.*
CAST – In Alphabetical Order:


Mary Ann Doane, “Film and Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator” in *Film: Psychology, Society, and Ideology*, p. 758-772.


Jean-Louis Leutrat, *L’Année Dernière à Marienbad*, translated by

Charles-Joseph de Ligne, *Coup d’Oeil at Beloeil and a Great
Number of European Gardens*, Translated and Edited by
Basil Grey, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of


Christian Metz, “The Imaginary Signifier,” in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Reader*, p. 244-278.

Steven Maynard, et al, “Marienbad Abscondita,”

A filmic text. An architectural/theoretical text. *Last Year at Marienbad*, (directed by Alain Resnais and written by Alain Robbe-Grillet, 1961). *Anamorphosis Abscondita* by Alan Weiss. Both texts appropriate comparable architectural examples to initiate a similar dialogue. The Weiss article analyzes Le Notre's *Vaux-le-Vicomte*, a seventeenth century French formal garden. The Resnais/Robbe-Grillet film is set within an 18th century *maison de plaisir*, which is an architectural example that borrows the formal attributes of the 17th Century Villas and Gardens that Vaux-le-Vicomte and Versailles are a part. The dialogue between the film and the article, however, goes beyond a similar architectural/landscape typology. This can be seen through a particular scene that I believe exemplifies the relationship between these texts.

First, however, I will describe a section of the Weiss text that creates a relevant condition to the scene in question. The view from the chateau at Vaux-le-Vicomte to the garden begins with a *frontal perspective*. From here, the garden appears straightforward; it is arranged symmetrically along a central axis, with rows of vegetation. This vantage point seems to offer a comprehensive view of the garden. The vanishing point of this perspective is the *vertugadin*, the sloping lawn at the end of the central axis. Yet, upon

Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" from *Visual and Other Pleasures*, pp. 198-209.


moving through the garden, one begins to notice discrepancies and slight asymmetries in its organization. Parts of the garden are revealed that could not be seen from the villa. Elevation changes are introduced, making elements that appeared to be at the same level at significantly different heights. Major components of the garden, such as a transversal canal are completely hidden from the initial vantage point. In essence, the frontal perspective collapses the garden, creating a framed view and only by moving through the garden are the actual spatial relationships of the garden revealed. Upon reaching the *vertugadin*, which is the vanishing point of the pictorial perspective, one looks back at the villa, where a mirroring, a reversal of viewpoint occurs. Viewpoint and vanishing point have switched, enabling a reflection of the initial condition. This viewpoint, however, is slightly elevated, creating what Weiss calls an *oblique perspective*. Thus, the two viewpoints have a relationship, but are not the same. He relates these two views to the ideas of consciousness and self-reflection of Merleau-Ponty. The frontal perspective is associated with the former and the oblique with the latter. As in the case of anamorphosis, the frontal perspective appears to give us the entire understanding of the garden. The second view gives an alternate reading, which reveals truths that the first view did not contain. Wiess notes that there is a time lapse between the two readings, which as in the case of Merleau-Ponty is never reconciled. In fact, the

**Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet, Last Year at Marienbad, 1961** (Scene shown in flipbook format in upper right corner).


The scene from *Last Year at Marienbad* mentioned above begins with a shot of a plan of the villa and then cuts out to show the two major characters, X (a male) and A (a female) looking at this image. The characters themselves are unnamed in the movie and are referred to by these letters only in the screenplay. The image is actually not a true plan, but a bird's eye view, or an oblique perspective of the grounds. The foreground of this view is a statue of a couple overlooking the garden. Characters X and A discuss the two characters in the picture:

\[ X: \text{You can see the man and the young woman's gesture, but you would have to be on the other side to see that he is stopping her. He has noticed something, a danger and has raised his arm to stop her...} \]

Here the female character A begins to turn her head toward the direction of the camera. At this moment, there is a cut and the camera changes its viewpoint to the other side of the couple, looking back at where the eye of the camera was previously. The antagonist, M, then enters the picture. He gazes at A and X and speaks:

\[ M: \text{Allow me, I can explain the statue.} \]


D.N. Rodowick, “Gilles Deleuze’s Time Machine” in *A Short History of Cinema*, pp. 2-17.

He turns his head and then looks directly at the gaze of the camera. We realize at this moment that he is looking at the picture on the wall, which is the vantage point from which we are looking.

*M: It represents Charles III and his wife... It is the oath before the Diet, at the treason trial... But it isn’t contemporary, of course. The classical costume is simply a convention.*

As with the Weiss text, this scene involves a switching of viewpoints. The first is looking at the plan, which later is revealed to be the position of the third character, M. The second gives us the viewpoint from the plan. The initial vantage point gives us what we perceive to be a straightforward view of the estate, with its symmetrical organization and distinct paths. The explanation of the plan by X appears to be from an objective point of view. Upon the switching of viewpoint, we discover the true meaning of the statues through the dialogue of M. It is interesting to note that, while M is speaking, our vantage point is from the picture and we cannot see the statues to which he is referring. In this sense, the oscillation of seeing the plan in a straightforward way and to the revealing of the true meaning of the picture do not occur at the same time. This relates again back to Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the gap between consciousness and self-reflection.

My proposal is that my thesis emerges from this discussion to become another text (or

Leo Steinberg, "Velazquez' Las Meninas," in October, no. 19, Winter 1981, pp. 45-54.

Diego Velazquez, Las Meninas, 1656.


perhaps simply a part of a larger project already started). The text of the thesis consists of several texts. These include: writing, drawings, diagrams, models, and other traditional means of architectural representation, as well as through the media of digital video. These texts begin to oscillate between each other in the way that the examples above demonstrate; the form of the thesis, the text, is developed simultaneously to the content that it contains.

Anamorphosis Abscondita and Last Year at Marienbad have a relationship to a 17th and 18th century model. Nonetheless these texts are 20th century constructions and that has to be considered. Maybe the project deals with the relationship between an older architectural model and its 20th Century appropriation (or in this case a 21st Century appropriation). In this sense the project would be an intervention in an existing model rather than a simply a new variation. Thus, the project would have to continue to fold back upon itself in order to perpetuate these relationships and foster new ones.

* * *

Although a discussion clearly relates between Last Year at Marienbad and Anamorphosis Abscondita, these examples are not identical. In the garden at Vaux-le-Vicomte, as Weiss describes, the view from the vertugadin is possible only by


moving through the garden to discover its discrepancies first hand. In this sense, the gap between consciousness and self-consciousness is a spatial relation, in which the occupant must physically move from one end of the garden to the other. This is a thorough depiction of Merleau-Ponty’s ideas as his critique of Cartesian and scientific thought begins through bodily experience, rather than isolating the world as objects that are disconnected from human experience. (Hence, “Anamorphosis Abscondita.”) It is the movement through the garden that reveals the anamorphosis, which is hidden from the initial vantage point. In the painting *The Ambassadors*, both images appear simultaneously, even if one has to shift his/her position to see read the perspectives.) The reversal of viewpoints in the Marienbad example however is immediate. A simple cut is all that is necessary to pull this off. The time delay in understanding merely comes in the time it takes M to look back at the plan view that the camera was directed toward in the previous shot, and the time to relay information through dialogue. This may only be a result of differences in media, i.e. film versus garden architecture. Film has the option to expose a relationship much more immediately than the garden can. Still, film also has the option to extend a sequence, i.e. to lead us through a narrative before arriving at its terminus.

*Marienbad* makes use of these extended sequences throughout the film. In fact the
overall structure of the film can be seen to embody this type of structure: take for example the opening sequence. The camera scans the columns, the walls, mirrors and ceilings of the villa. The vantage points of these shots are in fact the opposite of the frontal perspective presented at Vaux. These viewpoints are not meant to give an overall understanding of the construction of the villa, but merely to begin the movie immersed in the details of the villa. Resnais does not frame these shots frontally, but askew to suggest that the passage through this labyrinth has already begun. The final shot of the film looks at the back of the villa from the garden. This shot bears striking resemblance to the view of the chateau from the vertugadin at Vaux. Again there is a clarity reached with the final shot, one of self-consciousness that is not visible in the first. Also, the camera moves in the opening scene, whereas it is still in the final shot. The movie that takes place between these two vantage points is the reconciliation between these two moments. The film also oscillates between an idea of clarity, one of understanding the movie, the sequence, and the characters in their entirety and one of uncertainty and puzzlement. The opening shot merely replaces the example of consciousness to a dream-like state through the subjective shot of the camera. Thus, the oscillation occurs between the viewpoint of subconsciousness and self-reflection. It is important to note that in this reading, the body of the film serves the same purpose as moving through the garden at Vaux, traversing one’s way between the two vantage points. Thus, both the scene of the analysis of the plan as well as the entire film itself can be seen as a form of anamorphosis.

The scene with the plan and the reversal of viewpoints, however, does take a more immediate approach. Let’s isolate that scene for a moment to investigate it in more depth. The first shot is of the rendering, a bird’s eye view of the garden. In the next shot, we see the two main characters standing to either side observing it, thus locating the image within the context of the villa and relationship and the narrative. It is here that the frame of the picture itself is revealed. That frame parallels that of the
movie screen itself as well as the apparatus itself. Here, the screen itself acts like a mirror creating an oscillation of relationships between camera and director, projector and projectionist, screen, image and actor, and auditorium and spectator. Deleuze suggests there is also an oscillation between the two auteurs, that of the director Alain Resnais, and Alain Robbe-Grillet, who scripted the film. There are essentially two competing visions of this film as well. Robbe-Grillet becomes more than just a screenwriter; he serves more the role of the director as he outlines the film shot by shot. Thus, when the notion of the director is implied through the oscillating relationships between the screen/frame, there is yet another layer of mirroring as the director is no longer a single entity.

This discourse is embedded within the theories of Lacan, and in particular that of the mirror-stage. In a similar way to the example of Merleau-Ponty, Lacan's notion of desire is also irreconcilable. Both models refer to states of consciousness, the real versus the imaginary, but Lacan uses a circular rather than oscillating model to describe desire. Desire is generated through the concept of lack, which begins as the infant enters the second of Lacan's phases. These phases—the real, the imaginary, and the symbolic order—form the basis for his psychoanalytic understanding of human development. It is important to note that the key issues that arise from each phase continue to occur throughout an individual's life. The real is the first stage of development and refers to a point at which there is no distinction between the infant and his mother (or the world, for that matter); a separate identity has not yet been established. In the mirror-stage, the infant (upon seeing her/himself in the mirror) thus recognizes him/herself and then begins to distinguish him/herself from others. The mirror-stage is the point at which this circular structure of desire begins, for lack represents the loss of the real. That which you lack is that which is perceived to make you whole. In this sense there is a difference between the drive's goal, which is complete fulfillment, and its aim, which is to recreate itself as a drive.
The scene in question shows a mirroring through the gazes of the characters themselves, which also coincide with our own and that of the apparatus itself. At first we view the plan and then the two main characters examining the plan (while we are still allowed to see it). Then the gaze of the female character A shifts off-screen. That gaze is linked with the cut, the switching of viewpoints. The third character M enters the scene at precisely the point of A's gaze. As he moves to a more central location within the frame, his eyes meet A's and then X's. Finally the gaze of M meets our gaze, or the gaze of the apparatus, which is also the plan that we were looking at to start the scene. Again, Lacan is relevant. Lacan mentions a split between the eye and the gaze (which perhaps relates to another splitting, that of consciousness and self-reflection, and thus to the previous texts and to the structure of the thesis itself). Mulvey notes the cinematic gaze is gendered, taking Lacan's notion of the gaze and applying it to feminist discourse. The female gaze of A is the link between the two male gazes, as she is the object of both men's desire.

Another example of a 20th century analysis of a 17th century work of art bears a resemblance to this discussion as well. Michel Foucault discusses mirroring and the gaze within the context of the Velazquez painting, Las Meninas. He begins his analysis discussing the painter within the painting and how he “rules of the threshold of ...two incompatible visibilities (Foucault, p. 4).” The painter is positioned at the point before he becomes hidden by the painting itself and becomes immersed within that space. Here, he can see both the painting as well as gaze outward toward his subject (and also the viewer who occupies the same space in front of the painting). He stares at a point that is invisible, but also identifiable by the viewer because we meet it with our own gaze. This is akin to where M stares directly at the space of the audience and this is doubled as well because that also happens to be the space of the image of the plan on the wall. The gaze of the painter links the subject to the painting in much the same way that the audience is linked to the plan of the garden.
"In appearance, this locus is a simple one; a matter of pure reciprocity: we are looking at a picture in which the painter is in turn looking out at us. A mere confrontation, eyes catching one another's glance, direct looks superimposing themselves upon one another as they cross. And yet this slender line of reciprocal visibility embraces a whole complex network of uncertainties, exchanges, and feints (Foucault, p.4)."

In this image there is an oscillation between gazes, the painter (both actual and represented), the viewer, Philip IV and his wife, the princess and her entourage, the figure in the background, as well as the painting within the painting. As Foucault suggests,

"No gaze is stable, or rather, in the neutral furrow of the gaze piercing at a right angle through the canvas, subject and object, the spectator and the model, reverse their roles to infinity (Foucault, p.5)."

Notice again Lacan's notion of the unstable gaze is embedded within this discussion. This is also true within the film as one gaze continually shifts from one pose to the next. In a sense the film itself is a moving version of the same phenomenon, the changes of shots merely accentuate the differences between the still image and that of the moving one. It's also important to note that Foucault discusses both a circular and oscillating model of this painting. Remember, the oscillating models of Merleau-Ponty and Lacan's unstable gaze as well as Lacan's circular model of the concept of lack, produced by entrance into the mirror stage. As mentioned above, the structure of the film, as well as that of Weiss' Vaux-le-Vicomte, employ these models as well.

*Last Year at Marienbad* itself begins to disrupt the notion of time and space. The structure of the film is non-linear; event, memory, fantasy, and narrative all become intertwined and at times indistinguishable. The film is an example of what Deleuze calls the *time-image*, which differs from the *movement-image*, which is a more traditional implementation of time in cinema. The time image is a less linear...
approach to time. Deleuze claims that the two authors of *Marienbad*, while creating a single product actually approached the problem through two opposing time-images. Robbe-Grillet's conception is in *peaks of present* (accents), while Resnais works in *sheets of past* (aspects).

“In [Robbe-Grillet’s] work there is never a succession of passing presents, but a simultaneity of a present of past, a present of present and a present of future which make time frightening and inexplicable. The encounter in *Marienbad*...the three implicated presents are constantly revived, contradicted, obliterated, substituted, re-created, fork and return. This is a powerful time-image.

“This does not mean to say, however, that it suppresses all narration. But, much more importantly it gives narration a new value because it abstracts it from all successive action, as far as it replaces the movement-image with a genuine time-image. Thus narration will consist of the distribution of different present to different characters so that each forms a combination that is plausible and possible in itself, but where all of them together are ‘incompossible’ and where the inexplicable is thereby maintained and created (Deleuze, p. 101).”

So in the case of Robbe-Grillet, the present tense must be maintained so that we can be shocked when the present doesn’t coincide with itself. Here the narrative, however distorted, is precisely what keeps time in the present and allows for discrepancies to exist within different presents.

Resnais on the other hand relies upon the simultaneous existence of past to achieve his effects. Here the actual coordinates of time maintain their reality. Basically what we get here are two readings of the same film. In Robbe-Grillet’s case the characters exist in three presents: a present of past, a present of present and a present of future. Each present belongs to a different character. “While X lives in a present of past, A lives in a present of future, so that the difference exudes or assumes a present of present (the third, the husband), all implicated in each other (Deleuze, p. 103).”
Since each character has a different version of present, their stories don't coincide.

What happens in the second reading, that of Resnais, is that the characters live on different sheets of the past. This comes from a Bergsonian reading of time, where time exists in a series of sheets, which nonetheless contain time as a whole. Each sheet is “more or less contracted” in order to reveal a particular region. The present itself is the most contracted state of the past. Thus for Resnais, all the scenarios in Marienbad exist, they are just on different sheets of the past (Deleuze again suggests that each character lives on a different sheet). This is in contrast to Robbe-Grillet where each scenario exists internally to each character. With Resnais, characters address each other from one plane to another, a 17th century phenomenon, mirrored in the painting Las Meninas.

Deleuze puts a strong emphasis on the role of the two authors. Resnais works in continuums, whereas Robbe-Grillet relies on shocks or discontinuities. Resnais generates an “architecture of time”, while Robbe-Grillet “represents a structure stripped from time”. While one searches for a complete biography of characters, the other makes the past as vague and cliché as possible. He even suggests that the main characters resemble the authors.

“... the man X might be said to be closer to Resnais and the woman A closer to Robbe-Grillet. The man basically tries to envelop the woman with continuous sheets of which the present is the narrowest, like the advance of a wave, whilst the woman, at times wary, at times stiff, at times almost convinced, jumps from one bloc to another, continually crossing an abyss between two points, two simultaneous presents (Deleuze, p. 104).”

Robbe-Grillet even acknowledges the importance of the collaboration with Resnais, noting their primary difference was in the realm of time. But to what extent are the two authors, “les deux Alains”, responsible for these readings? Robbe-Grillet mentions the importance of Resnais, for he actually did the shooting of the film without him. Still, what Robbe-Grillet wrote was
not merely a screenplay, but a shooting script with shots, camera movements, and directions for the apparatus as well as the actors. He also contributed suggestions for the soundtrack. Robbe-Grillet published his 'screenplay' separately from the film. Therefore it contains only what he wrote, but not the collaboration that took place in the making of the film. Within this, Resnais' influence is diminished as there are few differences between the shooting script and the actual film. What Deleuze often attributes to Resnais existed in the screenplay to begin with. The continuity of editing and pans for the large part are already within the text before Resnais even picks up the camera. In fact, most of the cuts in the film, which give a minimal presence of discontinuity, are listed as fades in the screenplay. Could it be that the shocks that are attributed to Robbe-Grillet were actually inserted by Resnais? Deleuze even credits one of the famous shots of the film to Resnais, where frozen figures occupy the main path of the garden each with long shadows, while no other object in the shot has a shadow. This idea was, however, introduced by Robbe-Grillet.

Robbe-Grillet, was however familiar with the work of Resnais before the start of the project. Resnais had just finished his first full-length feature Hiroshima Mon Amour, which was written by Marguerite Duras. Resnais sought another established author to write his next film, preferably female. When Robbe-Grillet was suggested, Resnais was skeptical, but nonetheless read a brief proposal, which he liked. Robbe-Grillet not only wrote the film for Resnais, but also had to take Resnais into account in order to get the commission to begin with. Could it be possible that Robbe-Grillet incorporated some Resnais into his own work before Resnais began filming? This question would be difficult to affirm, but what I am trying to suggest is that the separation between Robbe-Grillet and Resnais at times may not be distinct.

Looking at the screenplay can perhaps reveal some of the intentions behind the scenes that we already examined. Let's take for example the reversal of viewpoints. Here, the scene is for the most part as
Let's examine a single shot from the film, *Last Year at Marienbad*, where human figures in the garden, stand still as if statues. Their shadows are very long, but strangely, the other objects in the scene, like the rows of trees that flank the path that they stand upon, have no shadow at all. This shot bears a specific resemblance to the ground plans for Vaux-le-Vicomte that

scripted. One difference that exists is on the sound track. Robbe-Grillet wanted some disturbance in X's speech as he continued with his explanation of the statues, so that toward the primary cut, his words become indistinguishable. (Many of the differences between the screenplay and the film relate to notes on the soundtrack.) The timing and positioning of the switch of viewpoints have changed as well; these simply make the cut more fluid in terms of the motion of the characters. M's presence is delayed in the actual film as he moves in from off-screen. In the screenplay, he is still. More importantly, though are the directions of the character's gazes.

"...A turns toward the camera...Seeing that she is no longer listening to him (sensing this, rather), X stops talking and turns around too, but all in one movement, his entire body executing the rotation so that he is facing the camera."

Although these instructions don't specify that these characters meet the gaze of the camera, it could be implied particularly in the movement of X. Nonetheless, what is missing in instruction is what the gaze of M is doing in this scene. The script describes his gesture and his manner, but doesn't mention who or what he is to look toward while he is speaking. In the film, M looks at A then at X (and pauses), finally looking directly into the camera. The gaze into the camera is necessary for the completion of the scene, making the viewpoints truly reversed. Also reserving the gaze for this particular moment increases the importance of it. There are many instructions similar to the above, where someone is to turn and face the camera. Still, this is the only moment in the film, where the gaze actually meets. If this is the case then what does that say about Resnais, for it was surely his idea, if it did not exist in the screenplay and Robbe-Grillet was not present during the filming?

There are scenes in *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*, directed by Resnais just before *Marienbad*, that are reminiscent of Lacan's theories. The internal conflict of the female character occurs during her adolescence as she has an affair with a German soldier, for whom
Weiss discusses. These plans are executed in an aerial perspective, but the objects themselves (among them rows of trees) are presented in an oblique perspective. In *Marienbad*, the shot is a frontal perspective looking out at the garden, which resembles the initial viewpoint from the rear of the chateau at Vaux. Here instead of rendering the figures in a different

she has an intense love for. One day she finds him shot and she spends the rest of the day and night with him as he dies. At this moment, she claims she could not separate where her head ended and his began. In this sense, the character is caught in sort of a pre-mirror stage moment. This of course leads to her development of a mental illness (this seems to happen to most women in French cinema), which she seemed to overcome only upon leaving the setting of the occurrence and suppressing it, and "forgetting". Her male lover in Hiroshima is the first to bring this out, and immediately the distinction between him and the German lover become blurred. As he tries to uncover her story, the Japanese man assumes the role of the German soldier in dialogue. Resnais also weaves images of Nevers and Hiroshima together as if the two were coexisting sheets of time. The love scenes between the French woman and the Japanese man simply show the two bodies interlaced, skin against skin as if there were no separation between them. Nevertheless, the conflict of the film is in fact their separation, so that the two are simultaneously always together as well as parting. So in this sense, the film begins to oscillate in between the first two of Lacan's stages.

Another scene of interest happens when the female character gazes into a mirror. This scene occurs after the truth about her past has been revealed and "remembered". The woman's voice out loud and the one inside her head carry a dialogue with each other. One of the voices talks to her lover, the German soldier, or perhaps it is the Japanese architect (this distinction is somewhat blurred). So in a sense, the character has not only separated parts of herself in a sort of schizophrenia, she has still managed to collapse her lover within the image of herself, thus maintaining the inability to distinguish between herself and another. So here the moment of realization of the other begins, but at the same time it is negated in a more complex relationship.

(The director of photography Sacha Vierny worked on both *Last Year at Marienbad* and *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*. Shots of the mirror scenes in both films are very well framed and reveal a mastery of craft that
only heightens these concepts.

There are other discrepancies between script and film of Last Year at Marienbad, notably in the beginning and ending sequences. The beginning sequence was not shot as scripted except for the narrative that exists. First, Robbe-Grillet calls for a changing of the credits over time from flat text to ones with a trompe-l’œil effect. Then the credits would become framed pictures, along a hallway in the villa. The aforementioned plan would be visible among these. Then the camera would move through the corridor frontally. After this sequence, the script calls for a moving through the villa, much the same way as we see in the film. The end of the film on the other hand, does call for a shot of the facade of the villa, only Robbe-Grillet specifies a technique that perhaps is not possible. He calls for a pan backward away from the villa, except that while the pan moves backward, the villa actually gets closer or fills more of the screen. (In this case two different lenses would be required on a single image). In scenarios, the filming did the pragmatic, it made very difficult and complicated shots to be executed more efficiently, while still maintaining the general mood. In both cases, the dialogue is identical to the script.

Robbe-Grillet’s problems with the film were not in these two scenes. Still, these discrepancies may have consequences for the way the screenplay can be read. First, in the screenplay, the opening shot is not askew, the way that it is in the film (although it still isn’t a traditional establishing shot). Instead it fluidly transforms text and images into images framed within the villa. It also begins the movement of the film in the credits themselves. In the film, the credits are merely a gray back ground with letters that have a fine relief. There is no movement until the cut is made into the villa. Also, the film begins these wondrous, dream-like scans not scripted by the author. Can the beginning scene then be viewed as a moment of unconsciousness like I suggested before? It seems, yes, if one only looks at the film as a text. Even if the screenplay were executed as planned, however, maybe it would have been enough to have a slow scan down the

perspective, they are rendered at a different time, the heavy shadows suggesting a moment later in the day than the surrounding garden. In both cases two layers are represented on the same drawing, which relates to the painting technique of anamorphosis.
empty corridor to introduce us to the dreamlike state. There is something already unmistakably out of place about the scenes that are written. The final scene, though, might challenge our previous notions. The movement of the camera, takes away the direct analogy with Vaux where looking back at the villa is one of a reversal of viewpoints within the villa. At Vaux, there is a fixed vanishing point, which then serves as the viewpoint. With the camera pulling back this changes at least the perspective of the shot to a moving vanishing/viewing point. The shot is also scripted for the front of the Villa whereas the garden at Vaux is in the rear. Thus, the facade shown in the final scene would be that which you would see upon entering the estate. Still, within this the film does reverse the traditional establishing shot until the end of the film. Establishing shots generally give the same impression as the initial viewpoint at Vaux, that of clarity and understanding of a scene as a whole. To put this shot at the end has much, thus has an interesting effect. Since we have not seen the front of the Villa at the beginning of the film, and it has never been a fixed point of reference from which we form our understanding, it therefore functions the same as a shot of the rear of the Villa would. This film starts already immersed within the walls of the mansion, so upon exiting we are looking back upon the estate, and never introduced to it that way. So in the scenario of the screenplay the major difference is that of a moving vanishing/viewpoint, one that simultaneously gets further away and closer. In that sense that point must always be associated with either the characters or the apparatus itself and is not a symbolic location like it is at Vaux. This foreshadows Bryson's differences between a Sartrean and Lacanian notion of the other.

Within the actual film, the narration often doesn't match the image that corresponds to it. This again was a major distinction between Robbe-Grillet and Resnais. Robbe-Grillet felt that Resnais was too timid in his use of the soundtrack as a separate layer. He wanted at times the soundtrack to carry the sound of footsteps on carpet when someone was on gravel, which would explain why A twisted her heal in the garden
for example. Other discrepancies are often subtle. The narration describes a room similar to the one we are seeing, but not that one, or simply the narration moves on to describe other parts of the villa (this narration is more or less repeated as well, diminishing the importance of its specificity to that scene). It is this effect that allows the final scene to have the reading that it does, which makes more sense given what we have seen of the film so far. The fact that the labyrinth would simply be unraveled seems a bit convenient, but to think that it is merely an imagination or one possible outcome then makes it an acceptable end to the film. The shadow of doubt left by the narrative, draws the whole thing so inconclusive as to say that the story continues to be told and re-told and that there are many more iterations. It would not be appropriate, possible or even interesting to create a film that would continue on forever. Therefore, the film, like all film, like all architecture, is framed. In this case a set amount of time, in the case of Vaux a set amount of space.

The frame, I would argue is necessary for all of these readings to take place. The suggestion of something larger only comes through the fact that the frame suggests that there is more there than what it is framing. The labyrinthine structure of the film depends on close shots and scans and limiting the point of view to generate impossible connections in space and time. It depends on the construct of these limitations that in the common language of film suggest a spatio-temporal continuity to in fact disrupt it. Frames also exist in architecture and in landscape. The notion of labyrinth itself is a framed maze, one that is limited in space, but seemingly endless and escapable. Vaux is framed by the trees that define the site as well as by the central path that frames the axis of vanishing point. These don't place a rectangular frame around our horizon like the frame of the camera apparatus, but it nonetheless prefers a certain view or sequence.

Frames exist within the Villa at Vaux-le-Vicomte as well. The Villa is framed by a moat that separates it from the grounds. It's interesting to note that in this case
the viewpoint out the back of the villa, is precisely where the frame is destroyed. The stair from the ballroom is seen as a sort of continuous surface that connects that room to the garden itself. Of course this sets up other frames, the framed view looking toward the vertugadin, as well as the framed view of the ballroom itself on the back of the villa. Weiss likens this to a stage set, which is a common connector between villa and garden throughout this type of architecture. These Villas often have theaters (as shown in fig.), the backgrounds of the plays themselves were often of the gardens. One of these exists in Marienbad as well; the play toward the beginning of the film uses the garden as a backdrop, and the one at the end of the film uses the villa as a backdrop (see figs). This has more significance in an actual Villa, because it can't rely on the editing techniques of the two authors to create seamless connections between inside and out. So with its fixed walls and heavy stone masonry construction, that which makes the connection to the outside is a virtual space. In fact the Villa at Vaux-le-Vicomte is filled with different types of these virtual spaces, all framed surfaces on the interior of the Villa. From the King's bedroom which resembles the stage set, where a garden of sorts, a play, a place of love can be transformed from a banal interior. The extraordinary use of mirrors in this type of Architecture dematerializes these spaces as well as producing a space of the other in the Lacanian sense. Weiss adds:

"the inversive characteristic of the mirror, its chiastic function manifests the ultimate self-reflexive moment in the artwork and effects the placement of the spectator within the scene, within the work of art (Weiss, p. 85)."

Of course the murals themselves, framed as the mirrors also produce these effects. In this way the multiple frames of the Villa always suggest more than mere surfaces.

The frame in Marienbad is nonetheless a mobile frame, one that gradually reveals more space while it pans. The narrow framing and then scanning allows for things to be revealed over time in the same way that the garden at Vaux is revealed only by
moving through it. However, in *Marienbad*, that which is revealed does not shed light on the conception of the space of the villa as a whole. One is constantly introduced to elements that contradict what was previously understood. So when one sees the film, we have to give up on trying to understand any particular scenario, scene or object other than as one of many iterations of the narrative.

In Norman Bryson’s essay *The Gaze in the Expanded Field*, the frame itself is what is critiqued in the Sartrean and Lacanian conceptions of the other. In the Sartrean example, from which the Lacanian conception of the gaze of the other was based, the viewpoint of the other in the field disestablishes the self as the center of the universe. Both of these concepts of the other are critiques of a Cartesian notion of the world where the self is the center. With Sartre the seer is now seen and therefore becomes a vanishing point and not a viewing point. In Lacan, this is abstracted to the replacement of the actual other with a symbolic one. In a sense any vanishing point implies the other. So the example of Vaux-le-Vicomte could be said to be closer to Lacan and *Marienbad* to Sartre.

Bryson relates the critique of Japanese philosopher Nishitani, a student of Nishida. In this critique, the Sartrean *je* is seen to put everything into doubt in a field of nihility. Still the one thing that is not cast into doubt is “the *je* which does the doubting (Foster, 95).” Here, the self simply retreats from the other and reinforces itself as the center, which is what is set out to disestablish in the first place. “Though menaced by the other, neither is fundamentally challenged (Foster, 96).” To place the subject on a true field of nihility, known as *sunya*ta, what is necessary is “the expanded field.”

As Bryson states:

“The concept of entity can be preserved only by an optic that casts around each entity a perceptual frame that makes a cut from the field and immobilizes the cut within the static framework. But as soon as that frame is withdrawn, the object is found to exists a part of a mobile continuum that cannot be cut anywhere (Foster, 97).”
Thus, a frame or cut around the object is what establishes it as an entity, but when that frame around the object is removed, it can no longer be separated from the space around it. This conception nonetheless calls for almost a Merleau-Pontian revealing of space. Merleau-Ponty believed no object was fixed from a particular viewpoint. The object in this case is still separated from it environment, but in a multi-dimensional way, so that the environment as well as time plays a role in understand the object itself. In both cases, however, no single viewpoint can "be made to represent the totality of the viewer's being."

Bryson struggles with how this conception of sunyata could be represented. "Only a technique which undermines the frame can stand in for the invisible which the frame excludes." He shows an example of Japanese thrown ink drawings as one such representation. The process alludes to a moment outside of the frame where the ink is being thrown, yet also depicts a lack of control of the subject as to what product would result. So in this sense, this process alludes to what is beyond the frame and in essence represents it on the picture itself. It is interesting to note that the painting is still framed in a traditional sense. So if we follow Bryson's lead, then something that is framed necessarily by the medium may imply the nihilistic space that exists beyond. I have already mentioned how the frame already alludes to that which is outside of it. Film by necessity projects light from a projector which is outside the screen itself. Of course the mirroring of cinema has long been associated with Lacan and his mirror-stage as well. If all of these allusions to the outside of the frame are based on this discourse, how then can cinema be made represent the concept of sunyata, or the garden itself?

What the structure of the film serves to do is to create a spatio-temporal labyrinth. (Note that this is similar to another labyrinth, Borges' The Garden of the Forking Paths. "...your ancestor did not believe in a uniform, absolute time. He believed in an infinite series of times, in a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent and parallel times (Borges, p. 28))." This labyrinth begins with the opening scene of the film. The repetitive narrative that gradually increases to an
audible level is introduced with the moving, askew shots of the Villa described above. The camera scans repetitive elements and makes cuts with close-ups of these objects. Are you in the same room or a different room, only with the same chandelier? Still, the regularized element is necessary for these illusions to occur. With identical rooms, corridors and architectural elements this type of confusion of space and time begins through careful camera movements and editing. Similar examples of this also occur in the garden; repeating trees, statues and fountains all disguise our ability to discern where we are in space as well as time.

"The grounds of that mansion were rather in the French style without trees, flowers or any plants at all. Gravel, stone, marble, rectilinear, formal... devoid of mystery. At first glance it seemed impossible to get lost in them, along the straight paths, between the immutable statues, granite slabs, where you were, even now... losing yourself forever in the still night, alone with me."

This quote is from the last scene of the film, where we see a still, centrally framed shot of the back of the villa at night. The quote suggests as I mentioned earlier that the labyrinth relies upon the regular elements and straightforward organization to play with our ability to discern where in time and space the film occurs. The same situation happens at Vaux-le Vicomte: the view from the rear of the villa reveals a straightforward and formally organized garden. Only upon moving through the garden does one notice the discrepancies in space. Of course, then the question is what is actually the labyrinth at Vaux? Is it the hidden space that one must move through or is it the oscillation of viewpoints that continues to infinity? This suggests two labyrinths, one that has a solution and one that continues. The film works the same way, for at first glance, the end of the film reveals the mystery, the character A, finally leaves with X, leaving M sad and lonely in the villa. Still the narrative would suggest otherwise. Because our notions of past, present, future and fantasy are so distorted, we have no way of knowing which of these the final scene is. The quote begins to suggest how the structure of the
labyrinth is hidden within the regularity of the garden and the villa, but at the same time alludes to infinite endings. The final words of the film, "where you were, even now...losing yourself forever in the still night, alone with me," only perpetuate this notion. So at first glance the labyrinth ends with the film, but on another level it continues.

*Marienbad* complicates matters by suggesting a labyrinth that exists not only within a particular villa/garden itself, but within many.

"A: I tell you it's impossible I've never been to Frederiksbad.
X: Well then, it was somewhere else, maybe, at Karlstadt, at Marienbad, or at Baden-Salsa, or even here, in this salon."

This is furthered by the fact that *Marienbad* was actually filmed at four different villas in Munich, all by the same architect. These 18th century spas are four of many that occur throughout Europe. Therefore, the similarities of these *maisons de plaisir* forge relationships at the scale of a continent. These villas, are derived from their 17th century predecessors, palaces such as Vaux-le-Vicomte. Within each villa and garden there exists a relationship between the specific element and the general typology. The garden at Vaux, according to Weiss, exhibits the "congruence of particularity and universality." These two conditions oscillate like consciousness and self-reflection, and the instability of the gaze.

The concept of labyrinth relies on a frame, whereas according to Weiss, the vanishing point into the horizon suggests infinity. Even with the multiplicity of glances, Vaux-le-Vicomte is a closed system. So in a sense we have two competing models. On the one hand, the infinite, which must be symbolized since it can never be actualized. On the other we have a labyrinthine system that is closed, but nonetheless has an infinite or seemingly infinite number of iterations or possibilities. So perhaps the two models actually do the same thing, that of suggesting infinity within a closed system. In that way this is similar to Bryson's suggestion of sunyata even though it would always be impossible to fully depict.
As noted above, the notion of labyrinth relies upon repetitive elements. In Robbe-Grillet's work these elements are often clichés, from the photograph that X took of A, to the ring which he gave her. The setting, and the characters exist the same way, for this villa is like any other villa that we've seen. We've watched a struggle between lovers a million times. In fact these conditions are not introduced any more than what they are. We have no first hand account of the actual feelings of love the characters feel, they are merely presented as postcards, as idealized moments. So it is perhaps here that the cliché relationship between X and A is best suited. Given this tendency in Robbe-Grillet's work, the gender roles are traditionally assigned. The story and the narrative are more or less controlled from the viewpoint of X. A's interactions are merely to confirm or deny his narrative and continue them to be told. A is clearly the object of the male gaze in the film. Still, she is not fragmented and fetishized as a sexual object the way Mulvey discusses. Mulvey's work, of course, relies heavily on Lacan's gaze, taken to the point that it becomes gendered. In this case it is the Villa that is fragmented. Mulvey's discussion of fragmentation still seems to apply:

"Fragmentation destroys the renaissance space, the illusion of depth demanded by the narrative; it gives flatness, the quality of a cut-out or icon, rather than verisimilitude on the screen. (Mulvey, p.20)."

Because of this fragmentation, we get no overall view or perspective of the Villa and therefore the narrative is necessarily thrown off. What's also of note is that Robbe-Grillet scripted the association of A with the Villa, whereas the garden was to be akin to X, which is why the soundtrack calls for A's footsteps to be on carpet even when she is in the garden. (This of course is another cliché association of the female with the place of domesticity). So what happens here is that rather than the female being fragmented, it is the symbol of the female, the space of her that gets this treatment.

In Last Year at Marienbad, however, this is
a moving fragmentation, not just a series of snapshots. In this sense the camera, is always roving, the symbolic eye of the viewer also possesses qualities of a body, movement in time. For cinema, this is how the body moves, which is somewhat ironic given that the viewer is stationary in the time and space of the viewing. So although the viewer is in actuality immobile, he/she experiences time and space in a virtual manner and this creates an interesting condition. This still is more akin to Merleau-Ponty, because the viewer still imagines him/herself to be in a body, to be moving in space and time, so that the fragmentation doesn’t become simply a Cartesian or even a voyeuristic device for scanning “the goods” of the villa. In fact it envelops the viewer into the present or many presents of the film.

So then we end up back to Merleau-Ponty, which is where the project begins. (But where did it actually begin, with a film and a text, with two villas, or the beginning of the analysis itself?) Still, this is not a true circle for the thesis is to move forward to continue to produce, compare, and reflect from its sources. Here, like any thesis are similarities, discussions, comparisons between texts and notions of how to design. So how does this thesis begin to appropriate this material to emphasize these relationships? It is important for the body of the thesis to continue to use the circular and oscillating structures, the nature of the labyrinth to incorporate ideas, and to begin to make the process and project of the thesis non-linear. Where actually is the beginning of the thesis and its end? Can it continue to mirror itself to infinity like Weiss’ gardens, Robbe-Grillet’s films, Foucault’s paintings?
FIN
(see page 33)

You thought it would last for ever; now its over.
–Lars Lerup, Final Presentation, You Have Followed Me Here ...

The story is already over.
–X, Last Year at Marienbad