

"Stay with me, Patty," said Schroeder. "It occurs to me that Van Til has Dracula's famous problem with mirrors—only in reverse!"

Peppermint Patty is all ears now.

"Francis Bacon is famous for likening the human mind to a mirror that requires to be cleaned now and then of prejudicial splatter, and Shakespeare referred to the mind as our 'glassy essence.' Well, the analogy of the mind as a mirror, reflecting what is around one, is far from perfect and has even been trounced in recent years as utterly misleading. The philosopher Richard Rorty wrote a book—*Philosophy & the Mirror of Nature* [1979]—which exhibits all of his considerable talent to smash the mirror (the representational mind) once and for all, but Rorty, I think, has had more than seven years of exceptionally bad luck with that thesis. Anyhow, the analogy of the mind as a 'mirror of nature' isn't really that bad as long as we keep in mind that mentally reflecting the environment has fidelity problems. Rorty's problem is with a mind that *represents*—that is re-presents—anything at all. But about the 'mirror,' we also need to keep in mind that mental reflection is very much more than having sensory images or sensory feelings: *language* is a 'reflective' medium too. The strength of the mirror metaphor is that it emphasizes the mind as, among other things, a representational processor of realities *independent* of itself. The mirror is not the same thing as the subject matter that is mirrored.

"And that," intoned Schroeder in his spookiest Transylvanian accent, "brings us to my twisted idea of Count Drrrac-u-l-a. As everyone knows, Dracula casts no reflection in a mirror. Suppose, however, that Dracula's problem were reversed. He is no longer standing before the mirror casting no reflection; he is now, as it were, *inside* the mirror—a mere reflection of his former self, a reflection busily reflecting. He has, in fact, no longer any reality *outside* the mirror. But sad to say, 'he' now reflects absolutely nothing!

"Well, we all know that reflections have their special kind of existence only as reflections *of something*."

"Duh!" smirked Lucy. "Next you'll be breaking the news that water quenches thirst."