Abstract: If an $n$-dimensional variety $X$ in projective space is projected onto a general linear space of the same dimension, a ramification divisor $R$ appears on $X$. In ongoing work with Anand Deopurkar and Eduard Duryev, we investigate very basic questions concerning the dependence of $R$ on the choice of projection. This investigation unifies several gems of (very) classical algebraic geometry and seems to reveal a strange (to us) connection with the combinatorics of pattern avoidance. My intention in this talk is to describe our project, with the hope that combinatorial algebraic geometers may point us in the right direction.