

The second session of the metalepsis seminar (7pm Thursday) begins with the illuminations sparked at the first session — Nabokov’s *Pale Fire*, Francis Alÿss as a model for the idiot’s perfect project, aphasia lore, scaling giant redwoods, and the lonely horse in Mongolia. The unexpected prominence of the three-fold negations of Hegel (*Verneinung*, denial; *Verleugnung*, renunciation; *Verwerfung*, foreclosure) are a good introduction to the “logic of threes” that constitute ideology’s lock-hold on space. What can create “loft” within the layers that are clamped together (Lacan: *points de capiton*; interpolation vs. interpellation) by appropriating this 3-fold lock? *Pale Fire* suggests a metaleptic answer. Clues clues clues! This second session includes a show-and-tell for members’ “found metalepses.” Short accounts are fine; illustrations or evidence even better. Better still: metaleptic jokes.



Vladimir Nabokov

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Vladimir Nabokov’s masterpiece, *Pale Fire*, is an encyclopedia of metalepsis, with the theme of “stolen light.” The main character’s name, “Kinbote,” is an anagram of the “botkin” or bot-fly, the insect that, within minutes of death, finds the corpse and deposits eggs. Ugh! ... but all this connects to the main emblem of the novel, the sun, the moon, the sea, and excrement — a cosmic metalepsis that only Shakespeare could put so well, in the “disgust” of Timon in *Timon of Athens*, act 4, scene 3. Timon is the “misanthrope” (like Kinbote) who is talking to “three marauders.” Hmmm.

*I’ll example you with thievery.*

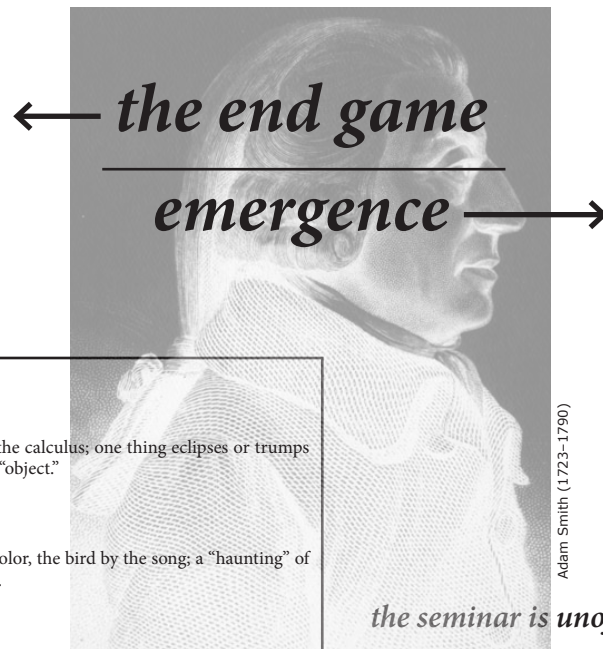
*The sun’s a thief, and with his great attraction  
 Robs the vast sea: the moon’s an arrant thief,  
 And her pale fire she snatches from the sun:  
 The sea’s a thief, whose liquid surge resolves  
 The moon into salt tears: the earth’s a thief,  
 That feeds and breeds by a composture stolen  
 From general excrement: each thing’s a thief:  
 The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power  
 Have unchequed theft. Love not yourselves: away,  
 Rob one another.*

—*Timon of Athens*, iv, iii

**“Architecture theory for idiots” personalizes and insulates research from appropriation and false attribution through the techniques of “stereognosis” (the creation of dimensions of reception through parallax) and “propriocept” (re-assignment of ideas of the body).**

Kinbote’s extemporaneous translation from Zemblan:  
 “The sun is a thief: she lures the sea and robs it. The moon is a thief: he steals his silvery light from the sun. The sea is a thief: it dissolves the moon.”

The hopefulness generated by sustainability projects, especially in the fields of architecture and landscape architecture mask the links connecting development with global climate change. In a famous critique, Paul Treanor, “Why Sustainability Is Wrong,” <http://web.inter.nl.net/users/Paul.Treanor/sustainability.html>, the point is made that fantasy is engaged at the level of ideology. Dispelling these “symptoms” amounts to a psychoanalysis at the level of the disciplines.



Adam Smith (1723-1790)

Emergence theory comes from Adam Smith’s discovery of the uncanny “intelligence” of collated interaction data, such as market transactions. Smith witnessed a lottery based on guessing the weight of a prize bull; while no single entry succeeded in specifying the exact poundage, the average of all the entries was accurate to a fraction of a pound. Emergent intelligence applies especially to ants and other communal insects, who uncannily adopt to complex situations without any “individual” awareness. Here, the concept of automaton is indispensable, both in the primary Aristotelian coupling of chance and necessity as well as the Lacanian idea of the unconscious as a source of “signaling” that concludes with the famous Lacanian slogan, “the letter always arrives at its destination.”

**Verneinung, denial**

the first step of the negative; the first “predication” in the calculus; one thing eclipses or trumps another; a quality is attributed (subordinated) to some “object.”

**Verleugnung, renunciation**

Reversed predication; possession of the object by the color, the bird by the song; a “haunting” of the living subject by the dead or absent object of desire.

**Verwerfung, foreclosure**

The gap, the Real, the “impossible” joint linking the incompatible opposites; the movement from the fragment/detail to the idea of the whole. Completely idiotic.

*the seminar is unofficially open to casual visitors*

<http://art3idea.psu.edu/metalepsis>

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# Menu

(main ideas of the seminar, check list)

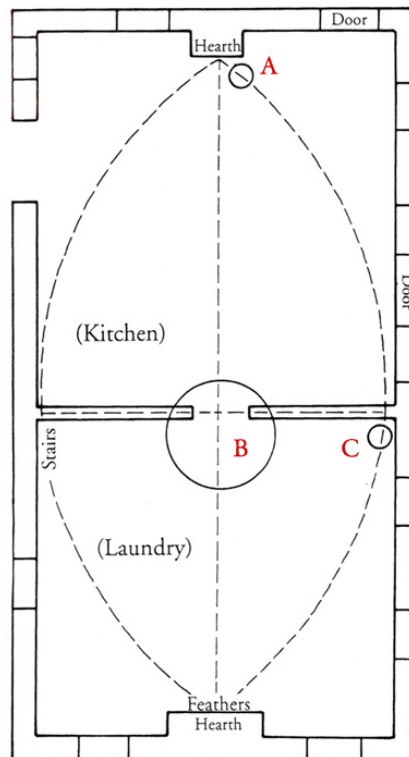
- **reversed predication**
- double inscription
- **the uncanny**
- obversion/extimity
- **diegesis/mimesis**
- the goldfish paradox
- liminality, margins, Janus
- emergence
- lamella, “flesh of the world”
- partial objects
- death drive from Freud to Lacan
- four forms of discourse
- **thinker as idiot**
- horizontal atlas
- **irony of the master-slave**
- signification through absence
- stochastic resonance
- the acousmatic voice
- chiasitic ciphers
- *venustas vs. utilitas/firmitas*
- dissensus vs. consensus
- sites of exception
- the causal chain
- Lucretian flow space
- detached virtuality
- forms of the fantastic
- Tower of Babel, Garden of Eden
- memory theaters, various
- **procédé (Roussel)**
- the Zairja (آزرياز)
- Lacanian Ouija board
- the gaze, magic, body loading
- toilet designs, various
- Surrealist gardens, various
- sexuation of space
- civic space as exception
- sustainability and ideology
- calculus of form, variants
- sorites, puzzles, mystery stories
- the Aleph (آلف, אלף)
- travel dysfunctions
- *objets petit a*
- pleasure vs enjoyment
- **the ideological subject**
- interpellation/interpolation
- **love, daemon, eros**
- apophrades
- kenosis
- tessera
- askesis
- cosmogram
- propriocept
- stereognosis



Image: “Seeking Liberty” website developed by Ms. Jessica Mundt for the Annapolis Office of the Mayor and the Banneker-Douglass Museum and Archaeology. [http://www.aia.umd.edu/seeking\\_liberty/home.htm](http://www.aia.umd.edu/seeking_liberty/home.htm). Original research by Jessica Neuwirth and James C. Harmon.



MORE ABOUT THE GRIMOIRE IDEA. In the considerable complexity of Yoruba medical lore, “the body” is not limited to the standard Positivist definition of corporeal presence. Rather, it extends into and intermingles with spaces, objects, and events in the distance, compelling treatment to address both a temporal and spatial instability that, introduced from afar, may be cured in the same manner. Yoruba physiology, and subsequently the physiologies of Voodoo, Candomblé, and other syncretic practices, gives evidence of considerable acknowledgement of the efficacy of shadows and reflections, which, once detached from their “parent objects,” may operate as “partial objects” (“organs without bodies”), animate and autonomous. Semblance fragments of the subject as well as detached physical materials (hair, fingernails, clothing, personal objects) can act and be acted on, to good or evil ends. Hence, the interpenetration of subjective and objective spaces require the idea of a “cosmogram” able to coordinate cures, curses, blessings, and other adjustments to health and well being. Following a principle of stochastic resonance, the cosmogram creates a field within which small movements and gestures may interact with “acousmatic” curses or blessings. The setting is typically a stable architecture that affords concealment of tokens, amulets, scripts, and medicinal substances to secure the geometry of the field.



## Tonight's Presentation

september 5, 2013

### the death drive

how Freud shifted and what it means; relation to aesthetic theory (cf. sublime), the tradition of the uncanny; Vidler's catastrophe reviewed — why Jentsch matters (double inscription).

### negation / forced choice

Verneinung (denial), Verleugnung (renunciation), Verwerfung (foreclosure); double negatives; stories in stories etc.; framing issues; McGowan's vision of ideology as paranoia; why paranoia and nostalgia are counterparts. Nostalgia (Tarkovsky) as home-sickness.

### extimité

Lacan's visualization of the death drive: partial objects, partiality, extimity, the lamella, between-the-two-deaths, etc. The inside-out and the final “foreclosure” of realization, as Hegel's renunciation of the Absolute as positive content. Retroaction as a possible mirror-prism action.

*The second seminar session opens up the potential of negation as an introduction to the “calculus” of predications. The unanticipated early introduction of Pale Fire suggests a hopscotch movement to the key element of EMERGENCE.*

*In addition to the personal project (theory for idiots), our emergent goal is the synthesis of a new agenda based on a subjectivity of extimity. How is extimity related to emergence? If we could answer this question, the riddle of “sense of place” could possibly be cracked. This is a real life problem — the inability to quantify or even adequately describe the attachments people collectively have for specific places — cities, neighborhoods, homes, wild spots. Arguing for legal and other protections for these is nearly impossible; what is needed is some credible arguments for how human value of space is tangible but fragile yet incredibly significant.*



*Vico's other famous image in the NEW SCIENCE, known as the ‘impresa’, is also a document of ‘kenosis’ — knowing without knowing. The seated figure of Metaphisica leans on a plinth bearing the inscription, IGNOTA LATEBAT — “She lay hidden.” In her right hand is a carpenter's square, in her left is a mirror with which she views the square.*