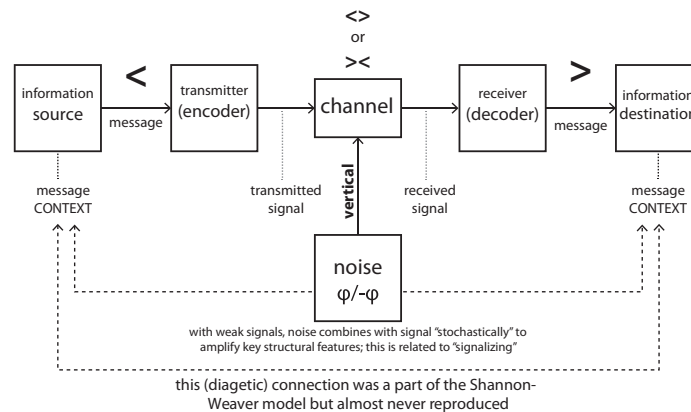


newsletter • september 26 • seminar metalepsis

The fourth session of the metalepsis seminar (7pm Thursday) takes up the burden of representation, interpretation, and meaning in general — a heavy load for any seminar! Metalepsis offers a useful escape, however. It concerns itself with signification in any form, but considers it as the “mimetic content” within a diegetic frame. What is this frame? It can be anything that exceeds the range of signifiers, without itself being subject to signification except when, in the process of metalepsis, the frame is imported to the center of mimesis, typically with the production of game-changing turbulence. This “extimacy” is also characterized by *chirality* — the impossibility of superimposing mirror images and thus the space/gap in the middle of the two alternating predicates of anamorphosis. In brief, the result is “everything” (the aleph, the small opening which opens a flood-gate of signifiers) and/or “nothing” (pure Hegelian negation, the collapse of dimensionality, the Absolute night of reflection).



It would be hard to have been in any schoolroom in the past fifty years without encountering some version of this “positivist” model of communications. But, what has made this the hallmark of reductionistic thinking about information has not been the original model but the elements typically left off the chalk-board rendition: context and noise, important parts of Shannon and Weaver’s 1950s revolutionary thesis. When we replace these elements we find that the “positivist” model bears a striking resemblance to the metalepsis calculus: $S < \dots \text{channel} \dots > D$, with noise appearing as a case of φ and $-\varphi$.

Take these two statements for what you will — single quotes from two quite different texts, two texts from two authors, etc. But, if you got anything from Mulholland Drive you will be led to see the “tell” in both quotes and push yourself into an “analeptic” (restorative) trance long enough to propose the fiction that the two texts may come from the (impossible, but) same author, that one author is the incarnation of the other, or that the three “persons” involved in the quotes (how is this number determined) may involve the reader in its count but also reveal something quite traumatic.

That they are the same text is easily proved. You, the reader, have framed them in a single sitting; they exist in your imagination as a part of an experience where you have, to correlate your consciousness with a reality, allowed the “naturalistic” division to stand. Borges and Lacan are two completely different people. But, your reading is one reading; your subjectivity is, as Lacan shows, “sinthomatic.”

Can you deny that the “no one” in these texts might also refer to you, in the eclipse of the reader necessitated by reading, akin to the darkness of the auditorium during the theater performance? In reading, does your predication turn to the left or right? The more interesting answer is the “chiralistic” not the “realistic” one.

History adds that before or after he died, he discovered himself standing before God, and said to him: I, who have been so many men in vain, wish to be one, to be myself. God’s voice answered him out of a whirlwind: I, too, am not I; I dreamed the world as you, Shakespeare, dreamed your own work, and among the forms of my dream are you, who like me are many, yet no one.

— Jorge Luis Borges, “Everything and Nothing” (trans. Andrew Hurley)



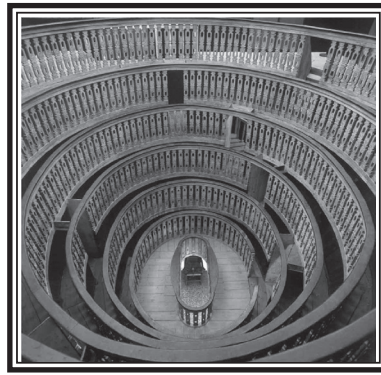
In 1963 Lacan goes on to state that the symptom, unlike acting out, does not call for interpretation; in itself, it is not a call to the Other but a pure *jouissance* addressed to no one.

Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire. Livre X. L’angoisse*, 1962–1963, unpublished.

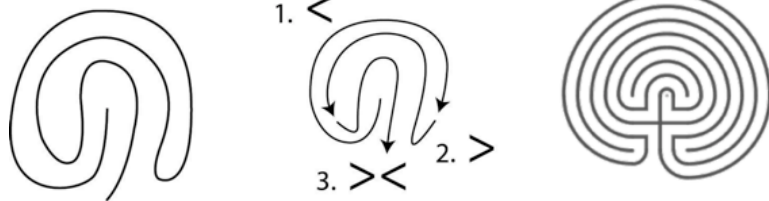
Menu

(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**
- **chiastic 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 (ذرياز)
- 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**
- **ekphrasis**
- **chirality**



THE CIRCLE-IN-THE-SQUARE OF THE WEEK prize this week goes to the anatomical theater in Padua, Italy, possibly the first of its kind. The dissection table was fitted with a removable panel so that, during unannounced raids from the Inquisition, the human corpse could be quickly removed and an animal corpse substituted. The theater form is architecture's own meta-predication. When the stage is active the auditorium must be silent; when the curtain goes down, however, conditions reverse. Any "half-way" condition (stage-whispers, actors defecting from the play, audience members jumping onto the stage) constitute a potential metalepsis in action: not an exercise in "truth shattering the illusion of fiction" but rather a kind of hyperfiction that brings both the auditorium and stage into question. The true of a true says nothing, but the false of a false opens up a new, cosmic territory. With the anatomical theater, the single occupant of the stage is metaphorically or actually dead. When Giulio Camillo adapted this reversal for his own 7x7 auditorium idea, the idea was that the user of the memory device would be "mortified" by the process of having "other people's memories." But, this was not so bad. Camillo's extensive knowledge of the Kabbala meant that he subscribed to the necessity of mortification for kenosis: a knowing without knowing. The ideal of artificial memory for knuckleheads meant that you could remember the names of your relatives or the words to a speech. But, for idiots, this was a knowledge of everything and nothing.



Where sigma mathematics meets fractal design, the figure of mortification, the Thesean labyrinth shows how seven and three relate. There are two "three's," an inner and outer component of the fractal design, <, >, and ><. Two threes written in sigma form are 33, and out of this we relate the other number of completion, 11. Completion equals mortification equals dogs equals the boundary conditions mediating life and death. In this space (which as the painting shows us is also a "space of reception"), we are in a condition of "knowing without knowing" — precisely the terms Camillo described to explain the enlightenment due to the user of his Theatro del Mundo. This is, formally, "kenosis" (κένωσις), the "emptying of the self and subjection to God's will" in Christian tradition. The idea appears in multiple religions, however. Self-emptying is credited to God himself in the Zohar, the Medieval Jewish mystic document. In order to "make room for creation," God contracts, in an action known as zimzum (note how this word itself suggests reversed predication). [From the essay, "Emergence(y) Manifesto."



Image of the week: Charlie Chaplin's recognition of the Flower Girl's retroactive recognition of the truth of predication, delayed, reversed, banged up, falsified, over-extended, etc. but, nonetheless uncannily (A_b) brought to closure with a single remembered touch.

Tonight's Presentation

september 26, 2013

Mulholland Drive / Rear Window

Who is Mr. Roque and what is the Club Silencio? Is Diana Selwyn dead from the start, and was the assassination of ... ("I don't know who I am!") successful or, as Betty conceives it, foiled by the car crash? These and many other questions make this film an encyclopedia of detached virtuality and the themes of the fantastic that govern its physics. The jump to Hitchcock's *Rear Window* takes only the calculus with it to make fantastic comparisons.

stochastic resonance

This theme was neglected in the last session but it deserves to be heard out. Read the essay "Emergence(y) Manifesto" to situate this idea within other themes of the seminar. The main idea is that resonance is related to though that "thinks for itself." What better kind to have when you are facing writing deadlines?

polythetic thinking

Another neglected topic: "Polythetic" thinking opposes "monothetic" or linear rationale, in the same way that exception works counter to ideology. The essay on emergence(y) plays this up as the foundational logic (a.k.a. sorites) allowing the user of metalepsis unlimited access to idea formation through the activity of dissensus.

From the essay ...

Chirality, chiasmus, and polythetics yield curious harvests from sites that have been plowed over and over again by standard analysis, but the biggest payoff comes when these ideas allow us to collate anecdotes (stories in stories) that initially seem unrelated and have no history of common themes, authors, techniques, or intentions. In short, we are freed of the blight of intended meanings because we have in effect constructed a "resonance machine" able to produce a new, emergent dimensionality.



the seminar is unofficially open to casual visitors

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

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