

Metalepsis Seminar • Virtual Session 11

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SINTHOME AND COMMUNICATIONS THEORY

METALEPSIS SEMINARIANS, 9-ERS, AND AUXILIARY MEMBERS

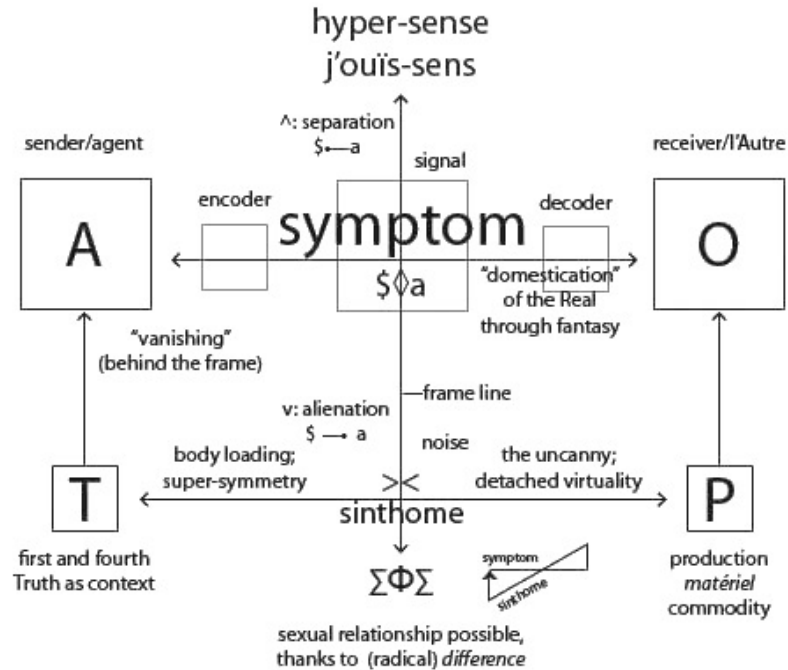


Fig. 1. The familiar Shannon-Weaver communications model already reveals elements suggesting the "calculus of metalepsis" — a framed message whose externalities (noise, framing) mix and mingle, often unpredictably, to "invade" the content with ambiguous \emptyset/\emptyset anamorphs that fold the frame into the framed. BEWARE — this is a speculative diagram hastily cobbled together to see how one might draw up the symptom/synthome relationship in terms of the Lacanian quadrangle of discursive fields (agent, other, production, truth). This must be adjusted, corrected, and eventually thrown out in favor of something better! GET TO WORK!

* from symptom to synthome

Thanks to the perceptive essay by Youngjin Park, PhD candidate in the Comparative Literature Program at the University of Toronto, we have two kinds of good news for the metalepsis seminar. The first is that, if Youngjin Park and we can be arriving at the same point at the same time, given that Youngjin is competent, well-informed, and downright brilliant, makes us feel lucky. And grateful. Because: the second good news is that pre-doctor Park has **saved us a lot of time in thinking through the last tricky bit of Lacan that we needed to think our way from the "symptom," the driving force behind the cathexis of the inventory field, to the synthome-dominated unconscious/Real.** Park's insight involves seeing the Real's relation to the Symbolic as defective. The Real, as we know, resists symbolization. It is present within the chain of signifiers only as a void, an absence. This non-presence is covered by fantasy, which papers over the "reality of the Real," so to speak. It makes the over-presence of the Real somehow bearable.

But, this is not enough. Fantasy supports, among other things, the ideological structure of the

cathected field. It is the means by which conditions of dissatisfaction are maintained and made "sustainable." We should not accept this as the final word on the matter. We can move beyond fantasy, not by *interpreting* it or giving it an alibi but by finding a means of *relating it to the problem of sexualization* and the "difference" that is required for there to be a sexual *relation*.

Frankly, I don't think we could have done this on our own! [Read the \(slightly re-formatted\) Park text](#) — I hop you can get rid of the highlights I made or ignore them. Clean copy is coming.

* the challenge

It is interesting that, as Park notes, the sinthome constitutes a barrier to psychoanalysis. The analysand can come to terms with symptoms, can clarify his/her relation to the hole of the Real in the middle of the Symbolic; but the sinthome seems to suggest that more can be done. If our surmise is correct — if, that is to say, art depends on precisely this see-saw from symptom to sinthome — then this "more" has to do with the constructive experiences only to be found in art and architecture.

AND, wouldn't it be exciting if this theoretical excursion into the Land Past Psychoanalysis, this discovery of "toroid" subjectivity as Lacan called it in his later years, had also to do with our own interesting clue-words:

Stereognosis
Chirality
Body Loading
Reverse Predication
Metalepsis
(emergence in relation to the above)

... and don't forget Bloom's terms (dæmon, askesis, kenosis, apophrades, tesseræ, clinamen! We have been neglecting these.

AND, even more exciting if we might relate Park's final formula, $\sum \emptyset \sum$ (\emptyset is the hole in the Symbolic), to the project for a radical feminism, as ground for a truly radical critical theory? It seems as if Nicole Loraux's very good book on Athenian society may have put the matter already in some useable form. Let's replace the symptom with the sinthome and "end segregation now."

At the upcoming *Confabulations* conference in Alexandria (March 28–29) you will have many opportunities to pose questions related to subjectivity. The most striking instance of a "battle line" will be between the position described as humanist, where the human develops *from* the animal, to the Lacanian position, where the animal remains within the human, as a void, an enigma, an automaton. The kicker behind the humanist model is that it actually supports the positivist "core and periphery" model, where one is forced to define a center of "the normal" and relate deviations as points located at varying distances from this (imaginary/ideological) center. Whenever you here "normal," run! That's how ideology starts out, by sounding so reasonable. Next they'll be measuring your ear-lobes (or tracking your keystrokes).

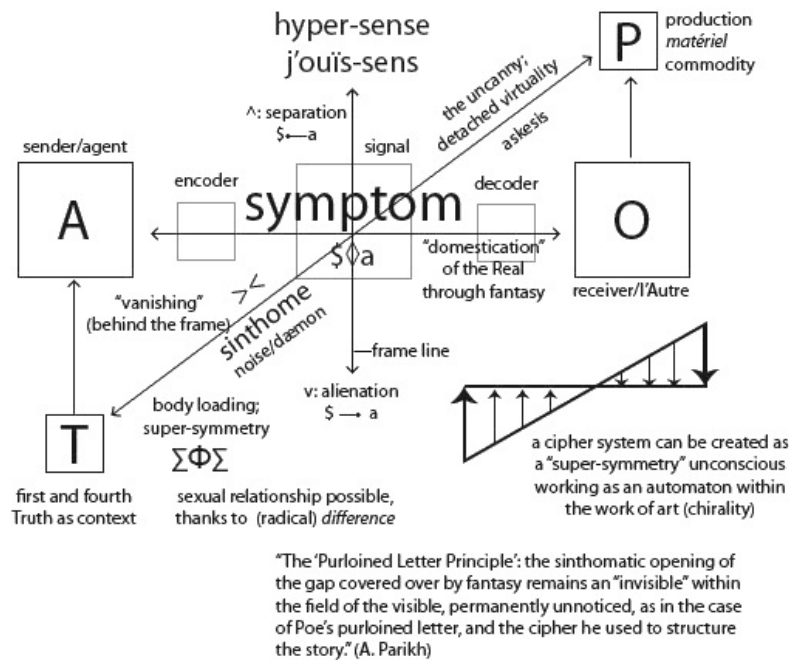
* hold the presses

Sometimes delays, as in the case of this morning's delay in publishing newsletter # 10, can be critical. At the morning meeting of the Friday Critical Theory Club, Aparna Parikh reviewed the Park adaptation of the Shannon-Weaver model and made some key suggestions — actually earth-shaking when you get down to it. First, like Lacan's L-scheme, the rectangle formed by the standard view of the Lacanian fields of discourse could do with a twist, putting Production in an upper right position to counter Truth's lower left position, connecting with diagonal running

through the VOID created within the Symbolic, between the Agent/Sender and the Other/Receiver. This does wonders for incorporating the idea of sinthome as something that directly opens up the void that the symptom had tried desperately to paper over.

Another Parikh observation was that the newly created **triangular spaces** between the diagonal connecting Production with Truth are ... er, um ... a lot like the triangular cipher space Poe created in "The Purloined Letter." Here, Poe, too, was creating a "super-symmetry" where something visible remains invisible, no matter how much it is put out in the open. Returning the themes of chirality, body-loading, and super-symmetry to the discursive field is going to make finding a next step for Mr. Pre-doctor Park a whole (hole, Ø) lot easier. Thank you Aparna!

dig it, cats and kittens!



Aparna actually discovered THREE important things, the third being that the subaltern discourse has to do with ... lo, and behold! ... the idea of the sinthome, operating within "symptomatic" capitalism. Radical feminism, we are *in your neighborhood now!*

* lacan's "unpublished" seminars

Park, as a translator, is working from primary texts — a big advantage. For those of us depending on Grigg's and Fink's able translations, there is still a lot missing. However, a reading group in Ireland has been making their study translations available, and you can get some of the important but not-yet-published texts at Lacan in Ireland, [translations by Cormac Gallagher](#). The quality is variable but this is a good chance to sneak a peak at such essential topics as *Formations of the Unconscious* (V), *Desire and Its Interpretation* (VI), *Transference* (VIII), *Identification* (IX), *Anxiety*, revised (X), *Critical Problems for Psychoanalysis* (XII), *The Object of Psychoanalysis* (XIII), *The Logic of Phantasy* (XIV), *The Psychoanalytic Act* (XV), *From an Other to the Other* (XVI), *On a Discourse that Might Not Be a Semblance* (XVIII), *Ou Pire, Or Worse* (XIX), *Encore* (XX), *Les Non Dupes Errent* (XXI), *RSI* (XXII), *Joyce and the Sinthome* (XXIII), *L'insu que sait* (XXIV). Don't fail to take advantage of these hard-working Irish Lacanians!