

The Perfect City

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Utopias have famously been green, and in this color of emergence we find confirmation of that which is eternally new, always fresh. There is nothing to remember in the verdant utopia because plant life continues to supply all we need, and if it dies back at the end of the season, it is only so that it can return the next. Urban utopias are harder to imagine, even when Augustine is the city planner.

Symmetry helps, and in the case of the Emerald City, the principles and even color of growth can transfer the glory of the garden to streets and pulsing life. Buildings have the advantage of lapidary perfection and interior light, so that the crystal can be the “perfect plant” offering openness of its light-transmitting lattice structure along with structural support. We can’t walk *on* a garden, just in it; but a crystal city gives us both freedom and function. Like the grocery story where foods appear in abundance without a whiff of reminders of the labors and perils involved in growing, harvesting, and transporting them, the crystal utopia brings things to the point where they are desired, magically. We don’t worry about labor costs or pesticides.

The perfect city involves geometry, such that we realize that the perfect city doesn’t or can’t exist, at least not as a static symmetrical plan. The stars, circles, or squares attempt to thematize human use or enjoyment, but the necessary interrelations quickly exhaust the two dimensions of display. If our desire were three dimensional, it might be possible to arrange a two-dimensional distribution of resources and access lines, in the same way that a cube can be cumulatively described by a plan, elevations, and ceiling diagram. But, once time is involved, once we realize that desire is dynamic, not static, we require more than two dimensions to hold this n-dimensional complex.

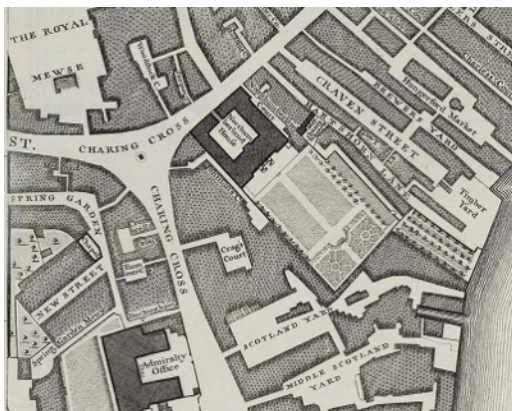
Thus, time is usually the first dimension to go in any utopia, but especially an urban one. To think of how this might be done, we would have to make every solid thing permanent and reduce every moving thing to something circular and repetitive. In fact, we might cite ordinary spaces we now live in as having a utopian dimension that aspires to this kind of on-going perfection through cycles that maintain, renew, and commemorate in cyclic ways. Whole cities in fact place monuments in the role of surveyors pins to align the city in its annual festivals. The cycles of transformation between secular everyday architecture to a festival architecture state, where festoons, lights, and ceremonies re-charge the energy circuits of the city to maintain a kind of “rolling utopia.” Even inside a private house, back and forth motions constitute rituals: getting ready for dinner, bathing, piddling in the workshop, taking coffee or a glass of wine to the garden. We routinize pathways to establish a sense of order that, while not exactly a religious processional,

repetition constitutes a certain meditative relationship to one's personal space. The return to a space or an act is like a mantra that makes change proof of stability and even endurance.

Utopia is a fully imaginary construct if we insist on the actualities of space and time. The composite nature of the word coined by Thomas More, a good place, *eu-*, that to be good can't exist, *ou-*, but it turns out the *eu-* was added by a readership more hopeful than More had intended. The ideality of Utopia always seems axiomatic, so if one wants to describe a dystopia it has to go an extra distance to be evil and perverse. It is natural to specify a Promised Land as the answer to all ills, natural to add circles and squares to city plans, natural to draw up projections of city views as they will appear "if we only do the right thing." While reality teaches us that the ideal will never happen, the idea of it persists, and even sophisticated theorists argue that doing the right thing in terms of building and planning will eventually create a livable city, as if the life in current cities, less than livable, was an infection in need of a good antibiotic. Critiques of current building and planning practices presume a common utopian impulse: why wouldn't the goal of the livable city be preferred to traffic jams, food deserts, sub-standard housing, etc.? And, when we point nostalgically to the evidence that a livable city can and must exist in the future, aren't the views typically monuments illuminated at night, when traffic is minimal and the radiant perfection of restored historical sites gives us a momentary joy, as in the case of *Paris, Je t'aime* and *The Great Beauty*?

Night sets the stage for the *son et lumiere* idea of the city as a "better than nothing" proof of the utopian city. In the plenum of darkness, all of those $n+1$ dimensions that defy Euclid can be left to tie their Borromeo knots or twist their Möbius bands. Night and light allow for what Sigmund Freud imagined would be required if the perfect city took the model of the unconscious and preserved every change by somehow superimposing spaces on top of spaces. Night would however have to invert itself, from being an enclosing phenomenon (night always "falls" like a blanket and "covers," like a snow-fall) to an internal seed-like conversion device. It would not be a period of time but, rather, a switch for converting to different periods of time. We could twist a dial on the night device to pull up a different reality without changing our point of view. The city would be, in this case, a real crystal, where every small turn would pivot on a completely different but totally solid reality. An ideal city in Freud's terms would be filled with such crystals. Or, rather, the crystal would be portable; it would appear on command or float around to wherever it was called or desired.

The problem for most critics of Freud has been that this "ideal city" is not ideal at all, in the sense that it is the city of the pathological subject, not the perfectly healthy and happy urban dweller. In his Clarke



University lecture (his first foray into the optimism of American psychology as well as his first visit to the U. S.), Freud aptly compared his influence to a plague. He was bringing to the American view, that national goodness could be predicated on the idea of health, wealth, and continual growth, the realism of the body that, as soon as it's born, begins to die. Worse, his view of pathology was universal. To be human was to be neurotic, psychotic, or perverse — no other options! While psychoanalysis offered relief from symptoms through a gradual process of self-awareness about their relations to past experience, the

analyst never promised recovery. The only cure was death, hardly a message Freud expected to be embraced by the ever-optimistic citizens of an ongoing Golden Age.

Freud's example in that 1909 lecture was of a Londoner who, passing by the Charing Cross column at the junction of Strand, Whitehall and Cockspur Street suddenly realized the "Real" of the monument's purpose, the sad geographical notation of the points where the beloved Queen Eleanor's coffin had been set down to allow the procession to rest during its journey from the place of her death to her entombment. Popular etymology specified that this *chère reine*, beloved queen, be remembered through her journey, and the geodetic function was preserved, since the monument is still used as a marker representing London in relation to distant points. What if, Freud suggested, the Londoner suddenly wept copiously, to the likely puzzlement of passersby on their way to work, running errands, or on shopping trips? The point was that the sudden self-assigned mourner of Eleanor's tragic would illustrate, simultaneously, the mechanism of hysteria and the multi-scenic utopian kaleidoscope quality that could "dial up" different realities on demand, the crystal "decoder ring."

Despite the fact that Freud was using the weeping Londoner to describe hysteria rather than putting forward an urban critique, his example has been turned against him. "It's almost as if Freud was advocating an indifference to one's environment," and that the structure of urban monuments is like a specimen of diseased tissue beneath the pathologist's microscope. Poor Freud! The point was to describe hysteria, not the dystopian city, just as the example in *Civilization and Its Discontents* of the "layered metropolis" was to define a subjective not an objective condition? Rykwert's Freud bashing seems to be gratuitous, in that it makes no effort to understand anything about hysteria that was the original justification of the example. It simply takes offense at Freud's reference to monuments in relation to a moment of human pathology. But, the terms of the rift are set by Rykwert's response. Freud is "in favor" of a model of the city as pathological, while those who "celebrate" the glory of cities connect it to health and, if not eternal life, at least happy civic livability. Just as More's No-City became a hybrid, a Good+Not-yet-existing city, pathology was put on the side of everything cities should avoid. Freud's idea that there is no subject who is not pathological could not be tolerated in the transfer of single subjects to collective subjects represented by cities. Good cities should *cure*. They should not identify with pathology. Just as health and happiness aim to be free of sickness, any city, to whatever degree possible, should actively fight against the corruption of decay, the indifference of greedy development, and the terrors of overcrowding. Who could be against that?

If it is possible even though unlikely that "missing the point" can be corrected rationally, can we return to the issue of hysteria? My aim is not to disconnect hysteria from pathology, or to rely on what Freud would argue is a "false ideal" of human health, mental or physical. I would like to connect hysteria to the idea of utopia, using the quality of negation, the original *ou-* prefix, the No-City that is within every city, as a "utopian" entity that only a "hysterical stance" can unlock. This would mean that I aim to see hysteria not as limited to clinically identifiable hysterics but to generalize it as "available" in some way to any subject. What I advocate as a goal is what Jacques Lacan already accomplished by re-defining hysteria as a form of discourse and not just a clinical diagnosis. What Lacan saw in this historical malady — it is the oldest psychological symptom in recorded history, predating melancholy — was that it had a *structure* that revealed something important about subjectivity in general. What? Namely, that the subject became a subject not at birth but gradually, through a prolonged period of development. Unlike animals, who

achieve adulthood in a relatively short period of time, humans are acculturated. The defining factor here is family life coupled with language acquisition, and it is important to distinguish human language from the myriad systems of animal communication, which are themselves possibly more complex and effective than human language. For Lacan, pathology could be considered as an “open structure” of subjective positions in light of defects in this acculturation process and, especially, gaps and inconsistencies in the Symbolic, gaps that did not exist in animal systems of communication.

Lacan used a standard template to look at these gaps and their structure, a template that resembles nothing more than the standard Shannon-Weaver model of communications, with its left-to-right flow of messages from a sender to a receiver *via* an encoded signal that is assembled at one end and disassembled at the other, with the possibility of distortion (noise) in between and presumed mutual ownership, by the sender and receiver, of a common dictionary. We know about the two main fictions of the Shannon-Weaver model. The first is that the dictionaries of the sender and receiver are never identical. In fact, each transmitted message changes the dictionaries as they are being used as authorities. The situation is more of a cross-switched guessing game. “If you say ‘you love me’ then I’m guessing that you mean, by ‘love,’ something I — not me but the ‘I’ you think I am or hope I am — will do what you think ‘love’ should require.” As Freud said parenthetically, there are at least four subjects involved in a couple’s every act of love.” The other fiction is that noise is meaningless subtraction from an ideal 1:1 transmission. In human speech, noise is forever a throw of the dice, a potential significance of the frame or form invading the meaning of Content. A small pause between two words, a readable erased term in a palimpsest, a breath, even a hiccup ... noise is always *something* rather than nothing and in most cases it is allowed the status of a “tell,” a secret half-message that decodes the reality behind the appearance of the main message.

Noise acts as a kind of counter-signal, a half-speech, a “voice from nowhere” that undermines the acoustic/phonetic function of language by introducing an *acousmatic* function. This term is drawn from Michel Chion’s analysis of the off-stage voice in film, but most of what Chion says about this disembodied marginal voice is true about Lacan’s voice as the fifth in his series of drives. Like the gaze, the acousmatic voice is related to the complex economy of desire, and so the matter of noise cannot be reduced to an engineering problem of how to determine the optimum diameter of copper wires to carry voice messages over the phone. Noise, even in the Shannon-Weaver context, goes to the heart of how languages live through and by their limits, whispers, and silences. The password phenomenon demonstrates just how central acousmatic effects are; in effect the password *is* the acousmatic component of a word, chosen to be innocuous and unremarkable, that opens the door or conveys the secret order, and the acousmatic function is in essence a kind of password.¹

Lacan’s left-to-right transposition of the Shannon-Weaver model provides two “noise chambers” for concealing the two kinds of reality *behind* operations that, being more or less “public,” take place in the open. The closet of agency is labelled “truth,” for reasons that will become apparent. The backstage of the Other is Production, in the same way that the theatrical stage where life is packaged as a fiction distinct from reality, has zones on three sides for devices, prop storage, and places for actors to wait until their cues. For the Master’s discourse, the subject (“bound” or “barred” by the condition of Mastery) is subordinated to a Master that is more a principle than a person. The master *signifier* for example is the idea that desire (for mastery) exceeds the instinct for sheer animal preservation. The (literal) master is one who

¹ See Mladen Dolar’s classic study, *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006).

is willing to die to maintain his honor. The “truth” of this principle is that the servant who opts out of this dilemma by ceding his will to a master has, in exchange for servitude, gained a freedom that the master can never attain. The servant’s exit on history’s stage right (where the stage symbolizes a battlefield where

$$\frac{\text{agent}}{\text{truth}} \rightarrow \frac{\text{Other}}{\text{production}}$$

$$\frac{S_1}{\$} \rightarrow \frac{S_2}{a}$$

\$ — barred subject
 S₁ — master/master signifier
 S₂ — knowledge/signifying chain
 a — object-cause of desire

Master’s discourse

masters fight it out to the bitter end) becomes a surprising entry on stage left as the Age of the Masters wears thin, giving way to a culture of servants — the Industrial Revolution. The Truth is always something expelled in the beginning that returns in the end, Lacan’s slogan that “the letter always reaches its destination.” The right/left of expulsion/return is, on the right side of the discourse equation, mirrored by Production, or “/Production.”

The servant is the “noise” or wild card in the discursive system of mastery, just as the element of enjoyment (*a*) plays an unpredictable role in the Other who is the addressee of the messages of mastery. Production is a half-speech if there ever was one. In the Products the servants create for their masters, the marks of work/labor are concealed beneath the polished vernier of the final product. The automated materials and techniques of *techne* are traditionally protected, as in the case of guild secrets. Behind the Other (this includes the products as well as the audience intended to admire such products) is an enjoyment known only by the workers, which the masters’ suspect and envy, as they hear singing in the kitchens or cotton fields, so to speak. The /*a* is the pleasure taken in the Othering of the Other, the dimension of freedom enjoyed by the servant that the master, as master, can never access.²

Lacan specifies the existence of three other “main” discourses based on the tetraology of four places and four elements that are rotated in fixed sequence “around” the quadrated space of agent, Other, production, and truth. Mastery is the discourse form belonging to the Symbolic, and subjectivity proper. It is not a *fait accompli* with the origins of humanity or the birth of the individual human. In both the collective and individual cases, a period of gradual development evolves from the stage of total dependency to fully independence — never fully established — afforded by a transfer of bodily relationships to Symbolic ones. Lacan capitalizes “the Symbolic” because it works as a “regime” of interlinking systems maintained mainly by language and symbolic social/cultural relationships. It is a “way of thinking,” different for different cultures, that combines ideas about causality, subject-object relations, social hierarchies, duties, and desires. The essence of the Symbolic involves *chains* of signifiers progressing in orderly sequence. But, with every signifying chain, there are significant gaps and anomalies that require the invention of some external “corrective position” to re-set the system, so to speak. Whether this

² See Alexandre Kojève, Raymond Queneau, Allan Bloom, and James H. Nichols, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012).

corrective position is the north star or God, its externality and, hence, exemption from the rules of the signifying chain is essential. Its independence affords it power and freedom. It is in mathematical terms an “eigenform” or “eigenvector” in that it is imagined to be prior to and generative of the Symbolic within which the subject is defined.

This externality is particularly significant in relation to the period of development where the subject is only partly formed, where the “human” enjoys a certain degree of freedom outside the restrictive mandates of the Symbolic, that will be a part of full subjectivity. The loss of the human in the face of the subjective produces symptoms that are, by definition, a semiotics of the neurosis of adaptation for those subjects who accept the mandate of subjectivity. Not all humans accept this mandate. Psychotics do not, and their symptoms refer to an independent and more problematic semiotics. Perverts, who identify with their symptoms at a highly proficient cognitive level, maintain their own independent etiology. But, for those who accept the conditions of life within the Symbolic in exchange for the protections and advantages of language and culture, neurotics will constitute the “healthy choice,” at least from the point of view of culture and society. Neurosis is the “price we must all pay” to be “sane.” There is no sanity outside of neurosis, although almost all religions specify states of enlightenment where subjects come to terms with their symptoms as such and may achieve a state of truce.

If we were to revise Rykwert’s antagonistic rejection of Freud on account of Freud’s insistence on the universality of pathology, we would be able to recognize the essential utopian aspect of city life. Here, we restore More’s original *oû-* or negational component. Utopias exist because they don’t exist. In Lacan’s terms, the *ex-sist* — they are Real because they cannot be a part of (Symbolic) reality. They continually locate themselves at the remote antipodes, the externalities required by the Symbolic as counterbalances to the Symbolic’s internal gaps and flaws. The theme of negation, for Freud, was key to the relation of the human to the subject, and we should expand our coverage of this *oû-* issue.

In his study, *On the Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words* (1910), Freud cited the work of Carl Abel, a philologist who claimed that contronyms, words with opposite meanings, proliferated in ancient languages. Although Abel was later discredited by linguists such as Émile Benveniste who for the most part rejected even the idea of historical stages of languages and thus had no place for any evolutionary trending, Freud’s main point had a certain truth to it. The unconscious’s inability to differentiate binary states (death/life, good/bad, real/unreal, etc.) was also a characteristic of the language and thought of both primitives and children, who seemed to freely mix, switch, and interchange the roles of cause and effect, subjects and objects, remote and proximate, animate and inanimate. Observing children’s megalomania — their belief in the power of the word over the thing, the wish over normal cause, the magical action with a distant result — Freud could easily correlate childhood of the individual with the “childhood” of subjects within their pre-subjective “human” condition. Where primitive cultures (for “primitive” read: cultures not yet modernized by ideas of mechanical causation, mortality, or linear temporality) advocated rituals, prayers, and avoidances to bring about fortune or avert disaster, children did much the same thing in play and casual magic.

If Utopia exists, it “*ex-sists*” because, in the Symbolic where it is framed as an ideal, the pre-subject human will have already been lost. It will exist only as a correlative imaginary point distant from the realm of signifying chains that forbid magic, megalomania, and autoerotic exchanges between subjects and objects, causes and effects. To model this directly, one imagines the Symbolic as a map with consistent

measurable geometries that appear to be consistent at a local scale but, when viewed from further out, confess to fundamental inaccuracies at the level of initial drawing, where the curved surface is transferred to a flat representational field. Because of this transfer, it is impossible to say what *level* can mean. It must refer to either a flat surface or a curved surface, but it must alternate between these choices, it cannot embrace both at the same time. The drawing surface is level when it is on paper and level when it is a globe, but the sphere is closed, while the paper extends indefinitely, so this problem extends to as fundamental an issue as infinity. The Symbolic is like the flat map that always aspires to represent the curved reality, but which must cover over its irregularities with alibis and falsehoods. Or, it can specify a remote but Symbolically antipodal reference point, exempt from the Symbolic, as an unquestionable Ground. Ethnographic evidence suggests that whenever this is done, the autoerotic is recalled into service. Utopias, Paradises, Heavens, etc. promise a “return” to an ideal state of harmony held to exist before subjects became subjects, “before the fall” into Subjectivity that came with a literal use of signs in designation functions.

If on a map of a contemporary city we could signify gaps and inconsistencies in the Symbolic directly, we would have a system of Monuments, functionally operating as *holes* in the representational field. These holes would not lead to another map or even another space enclosing the space of representation, but to a zone of the Other, a radical Other, concentrically organized around a single pivotal point. This point would be at an “infinite distance” were it not for the fact that, outside of the representational field, there is no space or time to make distances distant. Infinitely far would be the same, autoerotically, as infinitely close. The thing lost in the remote mists of the past would be the same as the immanent miracle just about to happen. This future moment would never be a *now*, however. It would forever be close but unreachable.

This condition is more understandable as a function of hysteria, the pathology Freud explained with the reference to the Londoner weeping in front of the Charing Cross monument. Lacan’s “map” of the hysteric’s discourse looks like this:

$$\frac{\text{agent}}{\text{truth}} \rightarrow \frac{\text{Other}}{\text{production}}$$

$$\frac{\$}{a} \rightarrow \frac{S_1}{S_2}$$

\$ — barred subject
 S₁ — master/master signifier
 S₂ — knowledge/signifying chain
 a — object-cause of desire

Hysteric’s discourse

We should read elements as a dynamic communications system, generally from left to right, but we should also consider elements in relation to the bar function, /, that in the Hysteric’s discourse points to the special role played by the object-cause of desire, *a*, and knowledge, S₂. As /*a*, pleasure has lost its “locale,” so to speak. The point of hysterical desire/enjoyment can “show up anywhere,” which is what happens with the Londoner. The Charing Cross monument is not a place prescribed for this kind of behavior, there are no lines of visitors preparing to weep copiously, no one to hand out folders or tissues. The hysterical point of view is anywhere and everywhere. It is a pop-up phenomenon. The /S₂ refers most generally to *kenosis*, the state where we know something but don’t know that we know. This is the

unconscious as an “accumulator device,” storing things for later use, “until the moment is ripe.” In evolution theory, this is known as exaptation, the presence of traits that have no particular survival value but which remain ready to spring into action once environmental conditions call on them. / S_2 as kenosis here undermines the “official” or mastery-related view of the city. It is the paranormal, the spooky, in relation to the “master’s viewpoint.” It uses holes and inconsistencies in the official version of things to set up its traps, to establish portals where kenosis can inform and radically revise the normative order.

The Hysteric’s discourse is a useful interpretive template for Charlie Chaplin’s film *City Lights*. Applying it makes us aware of just how perceptive Chaplin was in following the contours of ideology (relating to the Master’s discourse) in the micro-histories of city life, as he tells the story of a tramp mistaken by a blind flower girl, / S_2 , to be a wealthy patron. The tramp accepts this misidentification, even to the point of miraculously finding money for the flower girl’s eye operation, but at the expense of his arrest, conviction, and imprisonment, /\$. On his release (/ \$ → \$ /) the tramp returns to the city and passes by the successful shop now run by the girl, whose sight has been restored (/ S_2 → S_2). Seeing the tramp but not recognizing him as her benefactor, the girl comes out of her shop to give the tramp a coin, mirroring the initial coin the tramp had used to pay for his *boutonniere* at the beginning of the film, / a , in the place of *PRODUCTION*. Now this object-cause of desire is in the place of TRUTH, held by the tramp who had been “barred” by his commitment to the blind girl throughout the film. He has had to “play the part” of the master, while concealing his status as “just a tramp”: S_1/S_2 . The coin, a , shows that he has been the agent, the benefactor, all along.

The Master’s discourse is the official map in that it specifies an ordering *system*, S_1 , for all subjectivities, \$ — all points of view. The city, a system of signifiers geographically arrayed and ideologically defined, is the cover that occults the locations of enjoyment, / a . When the hysteric finds a gap in this system, / a , the gap is “rotated” into the position of Truth, and the subject who was positioned ideologically is — momentarily at least — cast out, like the weeping Londoner.

The single clockwise rotation of the four elements of discourse, S_1 , S_2 , a , and \$, moves the Master’s discourse to the Hysteric’s; but the temporal effect is to take a step back in time, to an autoerotic domain. As Freud points out, the master cannot help but see the hysteric as deviant, as “acting childish.” Indeed, every colonial master has tended to characterize native populations as “childish” and “primitive.” Hysteria is the argument for the civilizing benefits of colonization, but the POV of the master is informative. It shows how the autoerotic looks “in negative,” and we have only to reverse the negative to see the positive form. The lineaments, the profiles, will be the same.³

Where the Master’s discourse initiates Subjectivity within the Symbolic, its system cannot be sustained. The suppression of /\$ works like a holding tank, an accumulator device that, once triggered, will quickly establish a new order based on a market-defined equality of /\$. The new order can be effectively operationalized only within University discourse, where knowledge, S_2 , dominates as agent and enjoyment, a /, as posed as the command to Enjoy!, an ideological mandate to a subject, /\$, subordinated not by the principle of honor but rather of knowledge or, rather, information. Mastery remains in the background as

³ This was precisely the “methodology” of the Albigensian heresy, popular in Southern France before the Crusade against the Cathars in 1209–1229 led by Philip the Fair, among others. The heresy was related to gnosticism but believed in exorcizing bodily sins by committing them, in order to create a more definitive divide between the spiritual and the physical. Marital sex was discouraged, but extra-marital sex was encouraged, for example.

the truth of the system, S_1 , the “wizard behind the curtain,” so to speak. Where Hysteria “dials back” the condition of the Master, the University “dials forward” by moving counter-clockwise. The University discourse is the condition of the modern mentality, with knowledge aligned with the power to get things done and to validate behaviors and subjective identities — personal status. Hysteria’s most accurate profile comes from the Master’s discourse, not just because it is closest to it in the rotational sequence Lacan specified in his *mathemes*, but because Hysteria is directed specifically at the issue and person of the Master — i. e. it is a *challenge* of and from the Master’s point of view; but, from the Hysteric’s point of view it is simply a resistance to colonization of the Symbolic, a resistance to being assimilated as an ideological Subject. While hysteria is a perfect picture of what came before Mastery, its resistance creates a profile that can be used to back-project the autoerotic precursor of subjectivity. This profile defines autoeroticism by showing how it “pushes back” against the Symbolic, and as such tells “primitives” and children nothing they do not already know. But, for the third domain of the autoerotic, the arts, the profile is nothing less than a road map.

Lacan’s *matheme* has limited meaning for non-Lacanian who do not buy the idea that pathology defines subjectivity from its beginnings to its ends. Yet, the majority of non-Freudian theories of culture depend on a pathology related to the Freudian series of neurosis, psychosis, and perversion — the system of metaphor derived from studies of brain-damaged soldiers in World War I, whose disabilities formed a clear binary pattern of contiguity *versus* semblance functions. The pioneering work of Gelb and Goldstein fed directly into the synthetic critique of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. And, although it directly echoed the theories of Giambattista Vico, in his explicitly “Hegelian” aspect of creating, between semblance and contiguity a dynamic, ongoing interchange nearly identical to Lacan’s theory of discourse, the binary was reported as a categorical historicism, leading in three steps from a “metaphoric” ancient mentality to a “metonymic” modern mentality. Metaphor was aligned with Vico’s “imaginative universality,” assigned to the birth of culture initiated within clearings in the primeval forest, places for marriage and burial, altars where sacrifices established the basis for a science of divination that was secularized into other, less metaphoric, forms of knowledge.

The metaphor/metonymy binary was not regarded as a pathology; rather, the accidents of war were framed as contingencies that happened to reveal the independent working of the mind’s component parts. Where Vico had extolled the mythic power of metaphor and assigned it to the origins of culture, nearly no one paid attention to the negatively framed prior period, the mentality of the feral “giants” who were dominated by emotion and as easily attributed their feelings to objects as they internalized violent beastialities of nature into their own identities. Nearly no one paid attention to the curious fact that the giants in the forest employed elaborate systems of signs, not just vocal systems but gestural, object-based, and choreographic semiotics linking phenomena at all levels. Such complex practices would have had to be in place — energized by the free transfers of energy and imagination across ephemeral boundaries, set up then reversed or removed, between subjects and objects, viewers and the viewed, causes and effects — before the “subjective revolution” would streamline and polarize these practices on behalf of a religion centralized around single altars dominated by social hierarchies made permanent by the very symbolic practices they usurped.

The psychopathology of semblance and contiguity was imagined as human beliefs and practices that unconsciously regarded semblance and contiguity in “megalomaniac” ways: as (1) magic based on the

resemblance, where actions taken on an effigy could effect the original though performed in secret at a distance; and (2) magic effects based on the relation of the part to the whole, such as requiring the weapon that made a wound as the agent for healing the wound. While the first religions of Vico's mythic subjects employed aspects of sympathetic and contagious magic (as James Frazer and Marcel Mauss later characterized semblance and contiguity practices), the autoeroticism that provided a cosmic paradigm within which magic could operate was streamlined into a culture that, dominated by structured families and the notion of asylum, created fixed relations to the landscape. Vico's mythic age begins not with the giants but with the "fathers" authorized by the auspices of sacrifices at the ceremonial altars that became the central *templa* of cities. Despite the fact that many cultures have persisted through the millennia as "feral," and despite the fact that wandering has remained as a motif in art and literature for an autoerotic relationship blurring the distinction between humans and environment, metaphor has been made as a marker separating giants replaced by the "humans" of fixed locales.

To calibrate and correct Vico's theory of four-fold metaphor in a way that allows it to be compared to Lacan's own quadrations, we have to look at the "line" separating the autoerotic from the Subjective. For Vico, this line is drawn between the giants and the humans. For Freud, primitives and children (and possibly artists) are all within an autoerotic domain of "magical transfers" that take place in what, from the perspective of the more streamlined and codified system of civilized life, seem to be anarchic. Lacan found the most precise definition of the difference between humans and subjects in the optical conditions of the Mirror Stage. The fact that this dramatic transfer of identity took place within the Imaginary of visual semblance allowed him to extrapolate general principles to the situations where, instead of young human subjects, whole cultures were involved; and where, instead of a mirror, a theatrical stage was involved; and where, instead of social identity, collective anxieties were involved.

Lacan's "subject" was Vico's "human." Freud and Lacan's "autoerotic" described Vico's wandering giants. But, as for Vico, Lacan and Freud saw that the banishment of the autoerotic's magical effects by the Symbolic created hybrid subjects who, through discourse and thought, retained access to the autoerotic, access channeled primarily by Hysteria and visible in the obverse, as if in the form of a photographic negative, through the resistances to the Symbolic that Freud formalized as neurosis, psychosis, and perversion and Lacan called the Real. The Real aligned trauma with the autoerotic's immediacy and ephemerality. Fantasy, in contrast, belonged to the Symbolic. It was a way the Symbolic subject had of accounting for the continued presence, at the unconscious level for the individual and at the "collective" level for societies, autoerotic emotions, beliefs, and practices.

The Lacanian-Freudian field depended on this "fundamentally Vichian" model of acculturation, even though it pathologized the survival of autoerotics through clinical symptoms. Freud attempted to universalize this clinical view in his broadly speculative work, *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Lacan's theory of the four discourses however tends to correct clinical favoritism with greater precision and more focus on the structure of the autoerotic in relation to the Symbolic. One could say that, in the "wild card" element of the object-cause of desire, *a* (*objet petit a*), the autoerotic is "given a place at the table" of discourse where, in the position of Truth, */a*, as it finds itself in the *matheme* of Hysteria, it tells a Joycean story of the origins, evolution, and collapse of the Symbolic, but it tells this story from the perspective of the loser, the hysteric who pulls Mastery as well as Masters into question and replaces the phallic *locale* and organization of pleasure with a matrix, such as the forest that conceals Diana's grotto from Actæon.

