

holes in walls, walls in holes



preamble notes

1. The unconscious can't or maybe just refuses to recognize negations or inversions, which is why things like contronyms (words that combine opposite meanings) proliferate in things that are close to the unconscious, such as dreams, ancient languages, jokes, games, love, poetry, etc. If we want to take the unconscious into account (which seems unavoidable in cases of imagination, dreaming, liminality, the uncanny, etc.), then we simply have to address the issue of negation, and the contronym is one way of doing that. "Detached virtuality" is another. The question of holes, especially the ones that let out dead souls in ceilings and those that connect unseen lovers in the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, is yet another.
2. Things that appear as pairs or couples or binaries have a debt to this unconscious "don't-care" attitude, but they strive to create an alternative "solution," which is a compromise or middle term. This binary thinking dominates our current theory climate, but by resisting the "origins" of the problem — the relation to the unconscious — the interesting conditions of inversion, inside-out, doubles, etc. get psychologized and historicized. In other words, they are turned into "art history problems."
3. As Claudio Sgarbi said about his film seminar's response to *Vertigo*, "they think that Jimmy Stewart should just take a pill." ... So, if we go back a bit, we realize that there are two dominant "psychopathologies" that bear on theory discourse, but only one of them has made it to the front, the one about metaphor and metonymy coming out of aphasia's "either/or" of semblance dysfunctions or contiguity dysfunctions. The other psychopathology is about subjectivity as "inherently neurotic" (and potentially psychotic or perverse), but because this comes from Freud, our dear friend Paul Ricoeur has recommended that we not employ it, and our other dear friend Joseph Rykwert has advised us, after hearing how Freud described hysteria with the example of a man crying in front of the monument at Charing Cross, to think of the good city instead as the "healthy" one, not the sick one where people are crying and other people are rushing around.¹
4. Restoring the rejected psychopathology of the subject helps to repair the now-accepted idea of neural psychopathology which, as it stands, favors "metaphor" as creative and poetic over "metonymy" as

¹ Mainstream phenomenology has opted in favor of H.-G. Gadamer's idea of hermeneutics as aligned with a project of restoring subjectivity as a whole to a "healthy" norm, but in the process of doing this Gadamer has endorsed the Positivists' idea of a norm as central, pathologies as distant from the center (*The Enigma of Health*, New York, NY John Wiley & Sons, 2015); also available on the Internet. This is the "natural attitude" that forever marginalizes Freud and Lacan as "death obsessed" rather than "life-affirming." In our discipline, dominated by "sustainability" and other ideas that avoid the question of death and decline at all costs, death, despite an alliance of phenomenology with Heidegger, has sought models of a normative, productive, sexually satisfying resolution of antagonisms at all levels. The pathologizing of topics such as the uncanny (Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny*) has held liminality "accountable" for its own "deviant behavior" by contrasting it with "normal phenomena." Because Freud and Lacan put the liminal at the center of their accounts of subjectivity at the individual and collective levels, they can never be accepted by the mainstream. The favored alternative is a "problem/solution" view of things.



Josef Sudek, *Glass Labyrinths*, 1968–

reductive and instrumental. The binary of this misinterpretation of the original studies of aphasia comes from Roman Jakobson and is hard to reverse. The Lacanian/Freudian “correction” focuses on the role of metonymy as the creation of forces and objects “at a distance” where distance in terms of time and space are constructed as a result. It is impossible to conceive of architecture without these constructions, done by all cultures in very similar ways because of the relationship to subjectivity in general. Metaphor begins its thinking at a point “too late,” the construction has already happened, metaphor benefits but it does not construct. Metonymy invents the frame and the framed condition, after that everything else can happen.

5. The Freudian-Lacanian field is a clinical laboratory. It is evidence on the basis of the individual, which it interprets through “symptoms.” We can extrapolate from this individual basis to the collectives of art, architecture, history, and ethnography, however; but we must carry the idea of symptom from this individual scale to a collective situation, where groups and cultures seem to have, like individuals, symptoms relating to their psychopathological fantasies and behaviors. Critical theory takes advantage of this and goes between the clinic and cultural fields, where it uses ethnography to cross-check the findings of the clinic. This is what Lacan did when he created the discourses as the “public aspect” of four canonical “positions” of symptoms: the Master, the Hysteric, the University, and Analysis. Possibly because of André Kojève’s lectures on Hegel, which Lacan and other Paris intellectuals attended, Lacan himself saw symptoms as both personal and cultural, individual and species-based. This means that, as in the title of one of Žižek’s books, we find out everything we want to know about Lacan by looking at Hitchcock. This is the “ethnographical method,” one invented actually by Giambattista Vico, who called it the “philosophical–philological method.”
6. The rejection of Freud and, with him, metonymy as elaborated by Lacan, is too bad, despite all of Freud’s many sins, because we have missed the chance to see how the unconscious is active in DISCOURSE, and how the structure of discourse has architecture as its key “ethnographical” component. It is the visible constructed world we see as both the consequence of *and resistance to* language. Claudio Sgarbi has put it so well in his idea of occultation that it makes me think that if we had only one word to describe what architecture does, it would be “occult.” It makes interiors, places to hide things. Hiding and discovering are like left hand and right hand; they are “chiralistic.” Lacan: there is nothing that one hand can hide that the other hand cannot discover (essay on “The Purloined Letter,” in *Écrits*). Chirality and occultation are two names for the same thing, and the contronym shows how the opposite idea can be concealed in either of two paired terms. The section drawing and reflected ceiling drawing show this directly! The inside of an outside and the outside of an inside — these are architecture’s “permanently poetic moments.”
7. Michael Rifaterre once conjectured that the reason why the French word *soupirail* (cellar window) was “poetic” no matter where or how it appeared, was that it was the “high element of a low space” and the “low element in a high space.” The *soupirail* contronym is typical of transactions across complicated thresholds. Every threshold, every opening, every hole in a wall is potentially if not fundamentally contronymic; hence thresholds are the architectural nexus for the unconscious. Finding contronyms in architecture and other modes of expression reveals that the imagination thrives on the inside-out flip, and we like such expressions as saying there is no home that is not just a little bit spooky and no remote locale so foreign that we don’t find a way to feel at home. The binaries like to penetrate each other, they don’t like to compromise at some middle position! Architecture — an occultation device in

essence — allows for this doubled penetration, that's its talent.

8. If the project is to restore this useful “second psychopathology” to architecture theory, it would be necessary to require some overlapping methodologies and sets of terms. I use three or maybe three and a half sets. The first is drawn from the language of psychoanalysis, which I correlate through a few favorite sources, the main one being Todd McGowan. The second uses the six terms Harold Bloom drew from various sources to combine into a theory about poetic anxiety. Bloom meant “the anxiety of specific poets,” but I see symmetries in the terms (*clinamen, tesseract, askesis, daemon, apophrades, kenosis*) that Bloom apparently did not see, and I apply them to anxiety generally, emphasizing the ethnographic or *poetic* aspect of anxiety. Lacan relates anxiety to an over-proximity of threat that is structured into the spaces of a stage and auditorium, and this clear reference to architecture offers a distinct head start. Florensky notes that perspectivalism starts with theater design and contrasts *mnimoie* space as non-perspectival and related to the unconscious, another valuable free clue that we can't afford to ignore.
9. The third set of terms comes from Giambattista Vico's works, where contronyms abound. There is not just the famous *verum-factum* convertibility principle, there is his pairing of the Stoics and Epicureans and his insistence on a “philosophic/philological” methodology. Even his most famous discovery, the imaginative universal, involves a contronym that reproduces Lacan's two-mirror analogy, a body-here exchange for a mind-there. Every step of Vico's theory corresponds to something in Lacan's clinical approach that makes Vico/Lacan like a Rosetta stone for corroborating psychoanalysis with ethnography.
10. The fourth “half-set” combines the “categories of travel” that Henry Johnstone used in his analysis of Homer's *Odyssey*, which correlate with Bloom's six terms as well as James Joyce's own *Ulysses*. Travel is an analog of Lacan's discourse theory, and Johnstone helps normalize this by showing how easy it is to find ethnographic situations, such as the Cyclops' cave, to explain relations to the unconscious. I am tempted to add the calculus of George Spencer-Brown to this 3.5 list, but I have not been able to understand let alone explain this system apart from its basic principle of regarding distinctions as equivalent to indications. Although the calculus helps solve many problems about spatiality and temporality as media related to thought and in particular helps assimilate some of the more complicated ideas from Florensky about the irrational space of icons and dreams, I will let it sit at the point where Form and Content are said to merge in conditions of self-reference. Louis Kauffman explains this very well and I refer all questions to him.
11. My LIMITED hopes involve (1) bringing back parts of Marco Frascari's theories that have been overlooked, but which contribute to BOTH kinds of psychopathologies, Krazy Kat being the best example; (2) working the Lacan side of the street to use more and more architecture in revealing new issues about subjectivity as such; and (3) trying to work with a few themes close to the “unconscious” issue, such as dream theory, to find something acceptable to architecture theory teaching and writing. I have less hope for #3 than #2, actually, but I think #1 is support for both. Recent work with Jodi on Florensky has been very productive.
12. The main opportunity for a merger of Lacan with Spencer-Brown (something that is already happening, at least on the Internet) is on the subject of “thirdness.” This goes back to Peirce's definition of the term as well as, even, Plato's references to some world that lies beyond the binary of appearance and reality. Thirdness is what the unconscious “does all the time,” and when we seek it in our theoretical projects, we will inevitably run into issues involving the unconscious. Thirdness = unconscious = neutralization of binary negation. The complicated way of saying this (as if we needed something *more* complicated!) is to say that the temporal back-and-forth of dialog, where balance is only an ideal abstracted from the reality of either/or conditions, is not the only option; there is a *palintonos harmoniē*

that is in fact closely related, etymologically and in other ways, to the architectural joint. This is the a-temporal and a-spatial — and, hence, a-*pictorial* — non-binary and hence contronymic condition where $J = \sim J$. It's a very Hegelian point, and architecture theory will just have to forget about its allergies to Hegel to benefit.

13. In addition to being a relationship to building, architecture is both a manner of thinking and theorizing as well as an ethnographic resource. If something happens in subjectivity, it can be seen in architecture practices, usually as a universal attitude or employment. We forget that architects are those not who build but who communicate to builders, through words or pictures. This detachment is significant, and we should not try to collapse it. We are architects *in that we speak to builders*, and this makes us subjects in Lacan's strictest sense of the term. That we theorize about this speaking is a corollary. Subjects reflect, and their reflection creates "projects" through which they aspire to self-understanding, which is mainly about how they use their speaking-aspect in relation to material realities. We cannot over-identify with builders, or with the objects they make, without taking responsibility for what we say and think, that means that architecture is always "in a theoretical stance."
14. Given this unavoidable situation, of being speaking subjects as architects, we have to accept that the key to our speaking in this way is held by the nature of the unconscious and its "occulting" features. When we see occultation in architecture (liminality, virtuality, foundation rituals, burial and resurrection — the mystery of the section drawing) we know we are already close to closing the gap between the ethnographic aspect of architecture and its psychopathological symptoms. We simply must accept the conditions imposed by the unconscious to use terms that do not falsify or overlook its role. Once we take care about this, theory is free to roam. I plan to be free, as free as possible, and to make freedom available. In dreams of flying, the most commonly reported impression is that the dreamer wonders why flying seemed so impossible before.

the death drive and hysteria; what happens at the picture plane

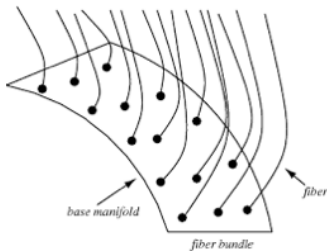
The fourth wall is the invisible boundary between the production apparatus (director, camera, lights, etc.) of a film and the scene that is being filmed. The wall is invisible, it is the transparency required for the scene to be filmed. The fourth wall becomes the screen in the movie theater, and the audience occupies the space formerly occupied by the production apparatus. They are *synchronized*. Also, the camera mechanism that has recorded twenty-four still photos on a strip of film is synchronized to the projector mechanism that will move the strip at the same speed past a lamp that, in reversing the direction of light, will create the optical contronym necessary to convert recording with playing back.

Like the architectural section drawing, the fourth wall makes special use of the shape, flatness, and imaginary optical receptivity of the plane of representation. In the section, the dark interior of a building's material structure is "brought to light" in an order that suits the picture plane. The plane's flatness becomes the logic of the material "array." Things at the plane are "simultaneous" to each other, relational. Their individual identity apart from this organizational schema is suppressed in favor of the flat plane, which allows the elements to be *counted as a group*, like sheep whose individual characteristics are overlooked in favor of their resemblance to each other as a herd. The picture plane, which is completely imagined by the draftsman and inserted into the normally unseen interior of the building, is aligned with the objective logic of the structure. The insertion is a question, the alignment is the answer. The section's contronym, a kind

of call and response, cannot be far off from the contronymic light that moves in one direction to record, the other to display.

Synchronization and reversal are the two rules of the gap that make the section and the fourth wall work. They are functions whose proper alignment and tuning make them invisible. It is only when lips are out of synch do we notice the mechanical complications of switching from recording to projecting, and when the film is artificially accelerated or slowed from the standard 24 frames per second rate we are amused or annoyed, but clearly the direct is “signalizing” to us, creating a dimension of self-consciousness about the work of art’s artificiality. *Synchronization* and reversal are outside of time, and the result is that they are also outside of space — that is, *transparent* — and are cases where there is a light that travels faster than light, a time outside of time.

Simultaneity is impossible to imagine using our “palintropic” (alternating) consciousness, which requires the slowness of space-time to play out first this position and then another. Our alternating current way of perceiving requires forces and oppositions to forces, fears and objects of fears, love and love-gone-wrong. Simultaneity is the mystery of the contronym, and we are advised “not to allow” two opposites to appear at the same time, in the same way that ancient cultures regarded twins as a sacrilege. Our temporality “forbids” what is already for it impossible. It rules out something but then holds the door open a bit to suggest that it may be possible, but that we *shouldn’t try it*. Privation becomes prohibition.



So, when we see the Möbius band, we allow ourselves to regard it as a comedy because it acts against expectations by appearing to be two surfaces but then revealing itself as one. The prohibition comes from a revealing source. Behind any point on the band’s surface, we have imagined a depth, a possible line. We see the surface as a two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional space. Any point can be a line that we see “end-on,” a vector directly facing us which, if we rotated it 90°, would be a line. At the same time we have temporalized the idea of the drawing surface, if only to admit that any drawing we see has “already” been put there in the past by the draftsman, and that we are viewing it in an “afterwards.” We couldn’t see it *now* if it wasn’t put there *first*. Two points on the same page are “simultaneous” because the page is a time construct at the same time it is a visual frame. By existing in the “same time” they refer to a temporality we have constructed along with the three-dimensionality of the representational surface. So, each point is actually three-dimensional: two dimensions required to rotate the vector from its original end-on position to be viewed from the side, and the dimension of time. When the Möbius band twists, the real problem is that every point on the band twists, and the band is the visible part of a bigger puzzle — a twist of the three dimensions of every point, a twist of space itself.²

Note that *we* have invested the picture plane with the fantasy capabilities of depth and temporality. This investment is initial or originary, to make ordinary use of the picture plane we restrict this investment with conventions. No one thinks, for example, about the fourth wall’s transparency conversions, its syn-

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² There is yet another kind of dimensionality of the point, that of presence or absence. Even though the point has no physical extent, except a possible depth if we are looking at a line end-on, we see that a point is either there or not. This 1/0 of presence/absence is the *act* of the point, the point as *act*. When we twist the Möbius strip, what happens to these acts? Like the hole, it is *pure passage*, it is an *act of opening*, from not being there to being there. On time.

chronizations. No one thinks about the section's idealization of the interior structure of architectural mass. But, thanks to this “no one thinks” aspect, we are allowed to let the fourth wall and the section to function as a *cinematic unconscious* and an *architectural unconscious*. We don't have to think, the fourth wall and section activate a machine that complements and makes possible our “thoughts,” our consciousness *about*. The fourth wall and section drawing are *automata*. Only when they lose their synchronicity do they fall back into the conventional space-time that their invisibility, silence, and stillness have afforded.

synesthesia, motor response, action

I have given up. I have given up thinking about doing things. Instead, my fingers take over my writing because, being assigned the mechanical job of typing, they have worked out some “ideas of their own” about not just how things should be spelled or misspelled, but how words should *flow* and *follow*. They prefer alliteration (saves time) and take breaths with the space bar and return, ↵. If they get pissed they head for the power button, ⏻, and are laughing now at how we missed the resemblance of this to the death drive's picture of compulsive return to the Real, the gapped circle.

We give up because our consciousness needs time to think, also it needs space. It allows the servants to have their way in the kitchen, to sing, whistle, and even dance a bit, to tell jokes about us and to save parts of our lavish dinners for their own meals.³ This is the point of the Master's discourse as it is played out over the body of the individual. The “servants” — the muscles, veins, organs, and so on — do all the acting while the Master, the consciousness, is allowed to *think* it is in charge. Of course the truth of the matter is



in subject-ion of the servants, the /\$.⁴ By technically giving over their official right to decide to the brain's executive functions, they are “barred” (they must show up for work) but this is their key to survival. The Master pays for mastery with a life-or-death exposure to other Masters. On behalf of an “ideal” that has not existed before this situation arose, the Master is *willing to die*, to fight to the death. The servant of course thinks this is really stupid, and has made secret arrangements to only appear to die with the Master in the case of a bad encounter with a rival Master. The servant will go to work for the new Master; it will have to fake death of course, but that won't be a problem. There is a “plenum agreement” among servants, that they will “work for anyone,” and that their Real is their zombie nature.

³ The Roman holiday of Saturnalia specifically targeted such enjoyment as a way of expiating the evil eye of the servants by having masters serve their slaves. See Macrobius, *Saturnalia*.

⁴ The shorthand system Lacan employed to define the four major forms of discourse involved a fixed sequence of symbols: \$ was the “barred subject,” or subjectivity in general that was “obliged” or “bound” in some way; S2 is any chain of signifiers, from language-in-general to the idea of causality, to the idea of space and time in relation to signification and causality. S1 is a “master signifier” or Master, an enigmatic decoder who holds the secret to the meaning of the various configurations of S2, but which itself contains no knowledge or “answers.” The wild card is the “object-cause of desire,” *a*, which figures as enjoyment, a loss, or a (usually impossible) desire. The sequence, \$, S1, S2, *a*, rotates across a quadrated field labelled Agent/Truth across from which lies Other/Production. The four positions of the sequence of elements across the field produce the four discourses: the Master, Hysteria, University, and (psycho-)Analysis. Don't worry about it. I use this system to label the connections between various “ethnographical/pop-cultural conditions” and the discursive/political conditions that are their usual historical contexts.

They only affect a consciousness to please the Master, to fool him/her into thinking that they have souls. They don't. They are pure automata, that's their secret to eternal life, and switching from one Master to another is not a problem. It's a political formality.

Literalists will have a hard time thinking that the body survives the death of the executive brain; usually it's the other way around, that consciousness is given some hope of surviving death, as a soul or ghost, while the body's flesh is consigned to worms. But, in fact, it's the other way around, and paintings of the Day of Judgment (Signorelli, above) affirm this: it's flesh that survives, flesh that's immortal. Souls are really one soul (religions affirm this) so let's not quibble. Flesh is not the material protein and other goop, it's the muscle that acts, and action is an *inter*-action where the binary of intention *versus* resistance are overcome with the acquisition of a skilled movement. Playing the piano for example overcomes the resistance of the keys and their linear separation to create the *palintropos harmoniē* of music. The skill, like Mozart's imagination of music as a solid crystal, is *palintonos harmoniē* — outside of time and space. It is pure "readiness." Once in motion, of course, it becomes palintropic. But: flesh, as flesh, is this readiness, and as we know because skill is teachable, transmittable, it is not dependent on this or that body (although not all bodies are suited to be, for example, ballerinas or fencing masters) but by a process requiring discipline and repetition — i. e. the death drive as a compulsive return to a Real where a certain kind of switch is found, a switch that works whether the input is positive or negative, it *accumulates value*. Practice, practice, practice! Learn how to dance, how to play the piano, how to ride a horse properly. That's how you get to Carnegie Hall. The space-time problem of where Carnegie Hall is turns out to be the *automaton* of the circuit regulated by the "inverter gate" using *jouissance* gasoline. Practice automates that which must be made unconscious so that it works (/ \$) without the consciousness. It is a servant even when the Master is dead and gone, not simply out of house for a few days. ☺.

The body as flesh is the "practice practice practice" occultation of conscious desire into the unconscious of the *automaton*. Flesh is *unconsciousness*. This sheds new light on the *jouissance* that flesh regards as food and seeks with or without the permission of consciousness, the Master. Lacan gives us a formula for this search; it is the discourse of the Hysteric. This discourse tells the story of Eros and Psyche, which tells us that Love, as Love, is like a darkness or death for the desiring, but once in Hades, if one keeps to the rule of invisibility (where blindness and invisibility are contronymic) everything goes well. The desire to see (= bring Eros into consciousness) results in alienation and trials, but possibly this "strife of love" is the real point, that Eros and Strife are themselves contronyms.

The Hysteric's questions, a form of strife, provide a possible solution. The Hysteric reverses the University's (ideological) position. The external demand to Enjoy! (/a) becomes the Truth of the Hysteric, /a. The subject occulted by the Master and the University, /\$, is the agent. This is not the agent "who makes things happen," but rather the one who is caught up in agency, who is pulled into the event of agency. This is Mary at the point of Annunciation before the lectern, \$/a is the literal picture. The hysteric's questions to the Master are questions about mastery in general. What does authority have to say about love, /a, when we know for sure that the knowledge of love is itself occulted, /\$2, *kenosis*, the "knowing without knowing" that is the specification for how the unconscious works as *automaton*. Our flesh knows what to do. It works on its own, it is eternal. We may die but our love lives forever, as *kenosis*. Its practice has been practiced for countless millennia. Lovers throughout the ages have worked out the details and passed them on. A lover touching a beloved just yesterday or just tomorrow is re-enacting the dance of the flesh as it was

danced in 2017 BCE. In love touching we realize a god, an undying eternal being, Eros. We have to shut our eyes when we kiss. The Hysteric's questions form a strife that is a strife of love, Eros in commotion.

ersatz options

If the automatons are working well, on a good day we should get some bonus insights. After all, we worked hard to see the section drawing in its variants. Back into the depths of ancient history, we found the foundation ritual's sacrifice and internment of a victim whose would was to energize the *firmitas* of the building. This spirit persisted through various displacements, to the point that whenever a time capsule is buried in a modern building's foundations, we call wherever it is buried the corner stone. That works like the London Stone or, its competitor, the Charing Cross monument, from which distances to and from London are measured. In surveying, fixed points are called monuments, but this is an informative borrowing. The point's dimensionality (we counted the depth of the representational field, time, and appearance as act as dimensions) means that the measurement of the the local changes the non-local. Freud's hysterical man weeping before the marker commemorating Queen Eleanor is acknowledging the fact that the monument is a hole in both space and time, that she died just yesterday, the sound of her coffin hitting the ground is still echoing. Freud's point was that the consciousness's drive to connect A to B misses this hole, tries to erase it or commend it to a geometric flatness that denies that the point might have a depth or a temporal $1/0$, the planner's flatness. We know that the *act's* temporality is dangerous from the planning point of view. It is what police ask planners to control or avoid entirely. The parade is potentially revolutionary, as is any music in the street. The point of A. M. Klein's essay on Joyce's use of Vico in *Ulysses*, "A Shout in the Street," refers to the omnipresence of the act at every level and scale, in the form of Vico's ideal eternal history (gods, heroes, men).

Vico's gods/heroes/men means that every happening is a speech act, divided into *énoncé* (Content) and *enonciation* (Form). The form is not a spatial form, except in the sense that a musical score is a spatial way of notating what happens in time. The act of enunciation as Form is a dynamic, a movement across a barrier, such as the subject's perception of the ideal ego in the mirror. The content is always held back, made enigmatic, something you get without the instructions manual. This is the "little I" of the super-ego, what is outside but goes to the heart where its enigma creates a void. The hollowness of this void is what is exploited by the section drawing. Without the hollow in the void, and without a void that's "central" in that it defines the nature of the material situated around it, there would be no way to draw it, which means that the draftsman creates distance where there isn't any to be found.

Our *ersatz* options can be listed as questions worth stating, worth the trouble they cause. (1) The section is a causal result of the same forces that require builders to bury a sacrifice in the foundation walls. (2) The orthography of the representational space — literally, the paper page — is also the "orthography," the need to pay one's bills, in the interval following literal death. (3) The $\$ \Rightarrow S1$ of the twist of the Hysteric at the inverter gate is the the position of the viewer in front of an Icon. (4) The $/a \Rightarrow S2$ is the Aleph, the a-temporal Eye of Allah that opens up to eternity although it can float around in Euclidean space — note that *floating* is a key component! Borges' time machine Aleph shows how holes in space make that space a "space of representation," and that as such everything we see has the status of being a surface, to which there is an obverse, and whose obverse is identical to the point always specified *outside* of that surface of representation, the viewer's POV. These are our *ersatz* "shots in the dark." Now we wait for *Ansatz*, for luck to happen. Waiting is the key, how we wait, how we prepare, how we enter a state of readiness.

the fourth wall can be a ceiling

In *The Truman Show*, the production apparatus is micro-engineered, portable, ubiquitous. It enables the director of a television show to record the daily activities of an unaware subject, surrounded by extras who wear hidden earphones and move to the directors instructions. All events and contexts are engineered to set the non-actor dupe up to allow the audience a voyeuristic enjoyment of his naïveté. Notice how *The Truman Show* fits and explains the precise dynamics of the University discourse *matheme*. The *a/* element, “Enjoy!”, is metaphorically and literally above Truman, the dupe, /\$, as he wanders around unconscious that the full moon is filled with computers, editing equipment, and a team of technicians responsible for all of the events he takes to be contingent accidents in the island town of Seahaven, Florida. When a piece of equipment accidentally comes lose, it falls from the sky like a meteor hitting earth.

The director, Christof, runs the apparatus, S2, as good an Agency as you will find in this *matheme*, and he does so by claiming that there is a hidden principle involved, /S1. Truman’s ignorance of his condition is the source of pleasure for millions of audience members who directly and literally benefit from the Enjoy! condition. Like all true sons and daughters of *jouissance*, they are pleased with Truman’s downturns as well as his jubilations. Pain and pleasure are equal for them. Without the suppression/occultation of the master signifier, S1, this enjoyment could not accumulate, and accumulation is the argument Christof makes to Truman when he discovers his plight and tries to escape. Yet, it is this escape the pleases the audience the most, and there is jubilation across the international network of viewers when he discovers the secret exit door. It turns out that, to the audience, escape always seemed “so easy, so within reach.” But, the /S1 is on the same side as /\$, both are gratuitous.

Where S2, production, and the injunction to Enjoy! are both “on top of things,” they radiate their authority downward through the glass ceiling, the fourth wall set vertical. Like any section, we learn from the fact that the transparent plane is like the drawing surface that introduces the “drawing ideal” to the “ideal drawing” by involving an “inside of an outside” — identification of an interiority that has production value for the audience of the TV Truman Show — and the “outside of an inside,” the picture of that interiority broadcast to that audience. The inside of the outside, IO, indicates what is valuable, Content. The outside of the inside, OI, produces the inside view by a Formal distinction framing and exporting it as the Content of the show. Indication and distinction, Content and Form, crisscross to make the University discourse *matheme* lock in place as ideology. Given Form, we also have Content. And, as soon as Content is specified, its Form is locked into place.



The University discourse is the prison that traps the dupe, Truman. To escape, Truman can’t just discover the hidden exit, he has to invert the discourse of the University *literally* by adopting the discourse of the Hysteric, the *matheme* that is the mirror obverse of the University. Truman is not an Agent; rather he is caught up in Agency — he is swept along in the *action*. He addresses an imaginary Other, obliquely present as he draws an astronaut’s helmet over his head while looking in the mirror, S1. The ideal Other conceals an /S2, his spooky feeling that he remembers something from his

childhood that has to do with his future. His memory goes backward and forward, a contronymic property of /S2 as *kenosis*. His enjoyment is capped, /a, love will be yanked away as soon as it appears, as with the girl in the library.

Truman is the comedy version of the Panopticon, the ideal prison design invented by Jeremy Bentham to use contronymics to cut down on prison costs. Prisoners *not knowing* whether guards are occupying the tower at any particular time (*kenosis*, /S2) “answer their own questions” about good and evil and correct themselves without institutional input. Suppressing their personal indulgences thanks to the loss of privacy, \$/a, they achieve a “self-release” from the circular prison. The circular section drawing that cuts all cells in half have *indicated* a Content (interrogation of the inner soul) and *framed/externalized* this Content — the act by which Content is actualized! Framing (Form) simultaneously achieves Content. The binary that had divided Form and Content is transcended in favor of a “hysteric” self-liberation of the criminal from him/herself. We move from the “secondness” that alternates between Form and Content to a “thirdness” that finds one inside the other, and the other inside the one.

Possibly, Lacan’s *mathemes* are too much for most people interested in the architectural section and its variants in popular culture and ethnography. But, the crisscross function of the plane that divides representing from the represented, the stage from the audience, the Content from the Form insures that the ideological state the University discourse formalizes in its *matheme*, and the escape routes from this ideology, which Lacan counter-poses as Hysteria discourse, will always be the case. We do not need Lacan to tell us what the section idea in all its variations is or does; but we will need the idea of ideology and hysteria to predict and test the *in situ* realities of these variants to demonstrate their relation to the unconscious. Where there is a contronym, the unconscious is close by, in the form of a dream, a fantasy, a deception, a con, a gig, game, or gimmick.

The idea of a con can cover all of these, in the sense that the “mark” of a con must always be a *willing participant*. In a dream we are alone and allowed, presumably, to dream in a wishful way, our own wishes. But, even in the work of art, our volunteerism is an active element. We must *be willing* to suspend our doubt. In the long con, the mark is pulled in because he, like the cons who engage him, is greedy. Without his desire, the con cannot work. This is the University discourse — the subject is barred/entrapped not by forceful restriction but with participation in enjoyment: a/\$. To escape, the mark must perceive the con as a whole, must find an external viewpoint that encompasses the trap and his/her role inside it: \$/a. This comes with the mark’s realization that he/she had “known all along” but not realized what was happening: /S2.

why mathemes?

So, what’s all this messing about with Lacanian *mathemes*? Is it an escape into obscurity of a language of false precision? Here’s my defense. We look at the world and we see Content, that is, things that have *substance* that means something but we don’t know what. Our prism is Form. We are not limited by our point of view, of who we are or our limitations, mental or physical. We can look at Content and, with a little twist of our Form prism, change what we see. This is our “subjective freedom,” the essence of our subjectivity, but when we exercise it we are advised to limit our freedom by the various mandates of culture, which we assimilate voluntarily, silently, and mostly secretly, so that even we are unaware of our self-limitation. If we really want to use this crystal of Form, we have to follow the example of the Hysteric. This mode of thinking, seeing, and speaking resists the ideological pressure of the Symbolic, which is the container of our



Subjectivity. Subjectivity promises social support but it cannot promise collectivity. That is available only to those who have taken the Hysterical option, and in this list are musicians in jam sessions, people who cry or laugh together in audiences, dancers who discover inner moves, and readers who see what other readers have missed, that writers forgot they said. The Hysteric is never alone, except from the perspective of those trapped inside University discourse, who would want to cure her.

The forms of discourse are a part of Form in the artistic, musical, and architectural sense. They are like sea-shells you pick up on the beach and put to your ear. They make whatever else you hear into the ocean, so the seashell doesn't offer sounds except by shaping other sounds. This acoustic example has to be understood *acousmatically*, in that the question "what does this mean" is acoustic because of its focus on translation into something *other*, the acousmatic always stays where it lives. It is the stage that comes with its own auditorium, the painting that paints the painter. Self-inclusion, recursion, and so on is the Form of Form, we go past the Form/Content problem when we understand it.

The *mathemes* help articulate the matter of how many places and in how many conditions we can find the fourth wall, and how its status as a contronym connects it to the architectural section drawing. Without such comparisons, we can't really know what the section drawing or the fourth wall or any other type of contronymic inspection are. We know that they all involve something close to dreaming, because in the dream we are close to the unconscious because the linearity of time and space has been abolished because we can no longer sustain the negation that keeps subjects and objects apart. This is the essence of the autoerotic; it has "not yet learned" how to be subjective; it has not yet decided to give up to the Symbolic. When the Symbolic assesses it, the review is about failures and excesses. But, in truth, the Symbolic is jealous of the autoerotic. Like the angry parent dressing down the prodigal son or daughter, it "had to work hard for a living!" The Symbolic deserves to be tired, angry, and disappointed; it deserves to think that Form always falls short of explaining Content; it has to be unhappy because it's asked to find solutions to the binary problems of life. The autoerotic says, basically, fuck this! It just doesn't care about the binary, although when we study the problem we have to care, minimally, to see the point of the autoerotic and find how Form, as Form, can still offer a Subject the chance to lose its bar, \$ to S.

The key to this? Possibly it can be found in some meditative erasure of mental obligations, but the benefit of looking at Form in a disciplined way is that discipline itself taps into the logic of the flesh, the flesh of the world. Thus, when we experience something intimate, such as touch, we are actually experiencing something universal, *the most universal*, to be exact. The degree to which sight is also touch, and thought is touch — a manual feeling of moving things about, of fearing then desiring them. Realizing that the private is universal and public opens up feeling to a Flesh of the World that is also the Form of the World, and here Eros rules, in darkness and stillness. You can travel very fast, because time is simply not there to count your steps. It's not even there to keep the dead dead; it is truly the Flesh of resurrection, eternal life.

Writing or thinking about Form obliges writers and thinkers to keep one foot in Subjectivity, “to use the library,” so to speak. Writing and thinking can be used to connect to other zombie-vampires through a signaling code, easy to learn because it simply is not understood by interpellated Subjects who cannot break out of the ideological mandate to “understand what things mean.” They just don’t get the joke, and the joke always takes the form of “If you can’t do something, you shouldn’t do it.” Then of course you do it and get a double pleasure out of knowing you’ve sinned, you’ve broken a rule. This connects Wittgenstein’s “you should remain silent about those things that are impossible to say” with God’s First Commandment, “thou shall have no other gods before Me.” God, right off the bat, is into Jewish jokes, and the *Witz* is the form of joke that Hegel identified as the key to the Absolute, so at least God is a good Comedian. “I’m the one and only god, so forget about those other gods over there!” This is the Marx Brothers at their best. It’s the super-ego, the *Ich-Ideal*, the tyrant of the Subjective. Lacan shows us that the *Ich-Ideal* has a twin brother, the *ideal Ich*, the ideal substitute, presented in the mode of the Imaginary and, hence, able to fund all the fantasy construction projects that sustain the buffer between the subject and the traumatic-Real. We need Lacan if only to say how this relates to Form, to Form experienced by *speaking* subjects. Form, even when it’s not literally discourse, uses discourse’s four standard costumes: Master (comes with a crown), Hysteria (comes with a cap with bells and a fool’s scepter), University (academic dress), and Analysis (whatever you wear to confession).

The parts of the *mathemes*, /\$, *a/*, and the like, are simply *agents provocateurs*. They are *ersatz* terms used to provoke a comparison or a shift in the standard point of view. They derive what they can from the disciplined thinking of Lacan and his best commentators, but the point is not to distill the precise settled meaning of the terms but to see what they have shaken loose from the Symbolic, what loose change falls from its pockets. In the case of Hysteria, the move from *a/* to */a* is significant in that *jouissance*, “enjoyment” (?), has moved from belonging to the Other and being employed as a demand (“Enjoy!”) to being a secret concealed by the barred subject, *\$/*. The */* tells us who’s on top of things and what’s occulted, and the implication of its presence is that discourse is there not to reveal but to conceal, and also to tie meaning to the concealing of meaning rather than any overt presentational message. What’s behind the curtain? “Other gods,” says God. “Who’s on first?” asks Costello. “Hu,” answers Abbot. Ask a question with a question, the standard method of the Jewish joke. But, note the presence of the contronym, the privation turned into prohibition: don’t do what you can’t do, so when you do it you will break My rule, to make the point that religion is about breaking rules. Now you know why Cathars were into breaking all the rules!

The fourth wall and the section drawing break the rules of projection by being contronymic, by going to an “inside of the outside” and making an “outside of the inside.” In the process, they equate Content with the Form, the *manner* of drawing or fourth-walling that substitutes the palindrome for the cone of vision’s perspectival one-way street from subject to object. Even Freud’s grandson discovered this, when he played the game of *Fort!* (“gone!”) and *Da!* (“there!”) playing with the spool on a string that allowed him to rehearse his mother’s absence.

Freud discovered the death drive watching this game, so it’s not far-fetched to say that he realized inadvertently how Hysteria was a way out of the Symbolic’s mandate of one-way streets, perspectivalism included. The loss and recovery palindrome the grandson allowed him to revisit trauma, but in a hysterical way, substitute pleasure for pain. This “inverter gate” function gave the autoerotic circuit energy for another spin, just as in the operation of the uncanny, it is thrill not horror that drives the servant to his ap-

pointment in Samara or the soul of the deceased past the point of literal death. What looks bad from the Symbolic's point of view is ecstasy from the Hysteric's ec-static⁵ point of view, her occupancy of the metonymically constructed remote position in perfect tune with the gap in the Symbolic, the Big Other's inability to answer the question.

Asking any reader to understand the autoerotic as a *circuit*, or even more ambitiously to see that the circuit is "powered" by an inverter gate that comes in the forms of the contronym, the palindrome, the self-referencing equation, an automaton, the *Witz*, the Hegelian dialectic, the fourth wall, or the section drawing — all this is "too much" for a critical field dominated by projects of interpretation. The drive to explain things, in particular *cultural* things, focuses on political structures and issues of entrapment and emancipation. I have no problem with this, because if the political *per se* leads to the question of entrapment v. emancipation, then we are truly on the same page, because the Symbolic's University modality and Hysteria's relation to autoerotics is a simple shift in vocabulary and examples.

The circuit with a break in it is consistent with Freud's and Lacan's pictures of the death drive (unfortunate name for marketing purposes!) as a return to an impasse constructed by an absence associated with *jouissance*, particularly in *jouissance*'s either/or binomic abolition of negation (pleasure=pain, or rather "not[pleasure = not-pain], the double negation format). The advantage of this model is that it offers the option of being understood mathematically through conditions of "irrational" numbers representing recursive structures, such as those producing the \emptyset of the golden rectangle. The *mnimosti* that Florensky brings up to talk about icons and event dreams is very useful. It is the non-space space and non-time time that invites us to see the dream as a crystal that daytime memory must string out in a narrative in order to recall it. The narrative isn't there, except it *is* there, but in inverted form, as the order of events going into the unconscious, reversed when they are pulled out. This is Palindromics 101, or Contronymics 101. The fourth dimension is not something added to reality, it is reality *in light of* reversal or cancellation of the one-way streets reality commands us to construct.

How does Truman find a way out of his fourth-wall prison?⁶ The answer is that he simply realizes the prismatic function of his POV, that where there was a wall there is an opening — the definition of the fourth wall and also the section drawing. Truman's lesson for all of us is that contronymics is not theory, it's theory *for* theory, the thinking you need to do before you start to think theoretically. The difficulty of communicating this pre-theory should be a sufficient warning. Discourse is at best difficult at this level, and should be undertaken only by those who get the point of such things as "eternity of the flesh" right away without any long explanations. If one doesn't get the point immediately, then, as the joke says, "the half-life of missing the point is forever."

DK / Boalsburg, Pennsylvania / March 19, 2017

⁵ Lacan's terminology for impossible situations, where you can't have existence but you can ex-sist, as in the example of Woman, who "doesn't exist" (~~Woman~~) but ex-sists.

⁶ This is related to Tom Baxter, the actor who steps out of cinema screen in Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, and the character who steps off the page of Filipe Alfau's *Cromos*. We laugh because we object to this breaking the rule, that the contents *belong* to the form, the frame that fictionalizes whatever happens "inside." But, breaking the rule exploits the corollary, that the willing suspension of disbelief *required* by the frame has forced us to regard the form as negated by content, the characters must *seem real*. We must cry and laugh for them. We must become hysterics standing in front of the Charing Cross column, crying while all others rush past us on the way to work.