

Travel as Stillness-in-Motion

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Figure 1. Henry W. Johnstone, Jr. (1920–2000), author of “Categories of Travel,” a series of situations and conditions distinguishing authentic travel from other form of human movement. American philosopher and rhetorician known especially for his notion of the “rhetorical wedge” and his re-evaluation of the *ad hominem* fallacy (Wikipedia).

PROPOSAL. This is an experiment. A model of travel is to be “tested” against the full range of travel situations, with the following rule: that the tests use Henry Johnstone’s “Categories of Travel” in each test to determine if the quality of “authenticity” (what distinguishes true travel from other kinds of human movements) is negated, affirmed, or unaddressed.¹ The model is fundamentally a *circuit*, specifically a “neural” circuit qualified by this Axiom: that subjectivity requires objectivity in order to “complete itself,” and that this completion is the subject’s primary drive. That is, a human subject seeks to maintain its status as subject through tasks of completion, but completion is defined, complexly, in reference to the very gap that originally defines the subject as incomplete. Without this gap, travel would be unnecessary because there would be nothing to complete. But, if travel (the circuit) tried to “fake” completeness (i. e. calling non-travel travel, equivalent to drawing a circle as an enclosure and proclaiming success), the project of subjectivity is negated, because the moment of completion has been erased thanks to confusing a fantasy construction for the Real project of subjectivity, which psychoanalysis calls “traversing the fantasy.” Yes, we can draw a circle with a compass but

we do not draw the drawing of the circle. Travel is essentially the creation of a circuit through any incomplete part of the circuit, a kind of origami folding of the center over the periphery. In terms of the circle, travel is any arc.

IN MATHEMATICS, when a particularly difficult problem is encountered, an “ersatz” procedure can be employed to advance a thesis that, no matter how ridiculous, will result in data. It is assumed in advance that most of the data will be negative. The ersatz thesis will be disproven or shown to be irrelevant. But, in the (rare) case that some part of the thesis hits the mark, the positive result amounts to an exception that changes the *parameters* of the original problem.

¹ Johnstone’s essay is available online at http://art3idea.psu.edu/locus/Odysseus_as_traveler.pdf. Note that I have converted Johnstone’s category of “home” to the gap, a minimal space that must be maintained in defense against Saturation. The gap is both an internal and external bound, just as a set (category) is attempt to distinguish elements based on some common feature and at the same time the internal criteria concerning the ambiguity of the feature.

This exceptional, if improbable and limited, success succeeds where other inquiries would always fail. “Sensible theories” would obey the rules of the game. They would accept assumptions and presuppositions that, in complex cases, are inevitably packed with the very elements that make the “problem” unsolvable. By accepting them, theory gives up its ability to discover anything that is not *withheld in advance* from it. The problem’s “outer shape” has protected the problem against any penetration of theory by forcing theory to take the shape of a problem instead of a solution. The problem in fact has taken its first protective action by getting theory to think there is a problem in the first place. The “ersatz” procedure ignores this demand by putting forward an irrelevant thesis, one that has little chance of “succeeding” in that it seems to be independent of what the problem “wants us to see.” In travel, the obvious quality that travel “wants us to see” is motion. The traveler goes somewhere, sees/experiences something (in our case, various cases of architecture), and returns. The trip is a circuit: the traveler must return home, to be a traveler in contrast to a wanderer. Travel must “zero out,” but the void of this completing move is not a zero but a zero *degree*, a singularity. The trip is not the circuit of the errand, which lacks elements that Johnstone uses to distinguish authentic travel from trivial cases, inauthentic travel. Travel must have a reflective element; the traveler must have a sense of him/herself; the traveler in short must be a *subject*, a subject who stands in a relation to the zero degree of singularity.

What is singularity? Subjectivity itself must complete a circuit, but this circuit, like the errand, cannot be a simple loop. Subjectivity must engage the issue of incompleteness — what motivated travel in the first place, and how did that motivation further specify that travel be a circuit that, to be completed, “included itself as an end product”? Subjectivity’s “self-intersection” (Socrates: “know thyself,” γνῶθι σεαυτόν) requires a division and reunion. This is the model of the *tesseræ*, the token broken into two parts when two friends part company. It is broken *in hopes of* their reunion, at which time the two parts will be joined *authentically*, thanks to the accidental profile created by the break. Like computer passwords generated then stored, authenticity is guaranteed by (1) the improbability of the break and (2) the completion of the whole *thanks to* the improbable profile being in two places.

Just as the *tesseræ* require chance to create a “fate” (reunion), travel creates conditions placed in two registers, that of the objects of travel (places visited, things seen, people met) and the role played by subjectivity: reflection, sense of self, willingness to suffer, ability to maintain control, need for curiosity, need to accumulate and recount memories of travel. The two registers are metaleptical: they refer to the “container” or “frame” of presentation. If this claim is made — “there are three errors in this sentence” — any good speller of English objects that there are only two errors; but of course the third error is that there are only two; the third error occurs at the level of the claim as such. This Cretan Liar condition pervades not only subjective/authentic travel, it is a quality of subjectivity as such, in that that the subject is constructed through signi-

fiers that create, necessarily, two levels of information, which could be called “container” and “contents.”

If we take the two-levels issue to our ersatz experiment, we realize that the circuit we want to complete, in subjectivity *and* travel, is not a simple voyage out and back in a consistent medium of space and time. At the same time the traveler moves, both registers of subjectivity (thanks to the nature of signifiers) are engaged. Not only is the whole circuit (“trip”) affected by this rule that transforms the traveler at the same time the traveler must maintain his/her self-identity, subjectivity itself is inverted, “zero-ed out.” But: this very inversion *is* subjectivity. The two registers require a “twist” at the point where it seems that they are joined by an imaginary seam (dividing home from away).

This seam seems to be an internal division (one space dividing home from “away”) but it is simultaneously an outer bound: a “condition of (authentic) travel.” Understanding how an internal boundary is simultaneously an outer boundary requires topology rather than flat geometry. Perhaps the same can be said of travel: that the motion that appears to take the traveler *out* into alien worlds is simultaneously an enclosure that plants the alien world within the traveler-as-subject. The traveler’s attempt to escape home is simultaneously a project of recovering home, “topologically,” in a space-time defined by self-intersection and the conversion of the subject-traveler from a figure on a ground to a ground on which the externalities of travel appear as figures. The traveler becomes a “medium” that, like the ground in the usual figure-ground relationship, must be stable, fixed, and unmoving. That is to say: instead of defining the essence of travel in terms of motion, the essence may be shown to be non-motion, fixity, stillness, paralysis.

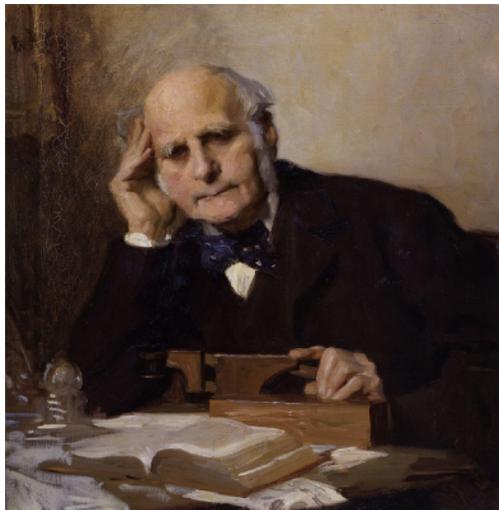


Figure 2. Sir Francis Galton, discoverer of the principle of emergent authenticity. By averaging the guesses of the weight of a prize cow at a carnival raffle, Galton discovered that, although no guess was correct, the *average* of the guesses taken as a sum was precise.

This is my “ersatz” conjecture: *authentic travel is the achievement of perfect paralysis*. This thesis sounds absurd. That is my intention. Any ersatz conjecture should be meaningless or even ridiculous before the experimental tests begin. It is to be expected that the test will fail, but not fully fail. The successful results (think of a student who fails an exam but still has created one or two brilliant responses) will always be successful “in the face of evident failure.” The failure may be imposed by convention or normal expectation. We do not expect pigs to fly, for many reasons. But, it is possible that we do not understand the meaning of flying, or of pigs. A flying pig is contextualized by conditions that keep pigs grounded. The absurdity of pigs flying has to do more with our contextualization than

either pigs or aviation. The anxiety about consensus requires contextualization to be structured along ideological grounds. But, I am relying here on the truth of an adage of Baudelaire's: that we should thank God that we do not understand each other, otherwise we should never be able to agree.² Baudelaire, some hundred years before the principle of emergence in evolutionary biology was put forward, had discovered a principle of effectiveness that was key to cybernetics. The *results* of a process are contained in the (often non-intuitive qualities of) the process itself. In both human and artificial "thinking machines," the latent tendency is to grow to the point of self-destruction. For the human thinker, this is the point of madness or psychosis, that has been reached through rational means. For artificial intelligence, the computer program is a set of instructions that are "neurotic" in that they continually require maintenance procedures that add additional layers of code to "correct" glitches and errors. But, like the "sentence with two errors," this process relies on the dysfunctional relation of two levels: programing and the program. Each involves the other, in the same way the traveler as subject requires travel objects that are, essentially, self-definitions (of the traveler's intent) that are disguised as mysterious objects with conditions of limited access.

Like the raffle-ticket buyers who all, having made a wrong guess about the weight of the prize cow, collectively determined the precise weight, the traveler's success involves a collectivity (of conditions, as in Johnstone's *Categories of Travel*) of failures: the way that authentic travel must continually assert its *difference* from other forms of movement. These are internal boundaries in the travel experience that are, simultaneously, the outer frame of travel. The inner distinction is the *part* of the circuit of travel that is exterior to ("defining") authentic travel, but the point is that travel is this very equilibrium between the inner distinction and the outer bound. What is broken (distinguished) internally is completed (i. e. the circuit) externally. This equation converts travel space into a topography of self-intersection (the circuit) and non-orientation (inside-outside).

Johnstone's Categories

As a preparation for the ersatz experiment, we should first ask: are Henry Johnstone's "categories" (1) a list of various observations about travel experience, or (2) are they a system? That is, how independent is each category from the others? If the categories are "just" a list, then the list may be incomplete or complete. That is, like a length of string cut off of a ball, could it have been longer? Is there more "string" in the ball of travel concerns? In knot theory, we might say that a list would be a tangle but a system would be a knot. I would conjecture that travel is a particular kind of knot, one with a "virtual bond," i. e. the Borromeo knot, where what looks to

² Charles Baudelaire, *OEvres posthumes* (Paris: Société du Mercure de France, 1908) 126; [https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/%C5%92uvres_posthumes_\(Baudelaire\)_%281908%29/Texte_entier](https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/%C5%92uvres_posthumes_(Baudelaire)_%281908%29/Texte_entier). "Le monde ne marche que par le malentendu. C'est par le malentendu universel que tout le monde s'accorde. Car si, par malheur, on se comprenait, on ne pourrait jamais s'accorder."

TRAVEL Authentic/Degenerate <i>Travel is distinguished from other kinds of motion in terms of the 'authenticity' of the relationship between the traveler and the travel environment; travel is related to knowledge and representation and both are related in turn to pleasure as a surplus/lack or 'gap' that cannot be closed. Travel requires a 'construction' of the representational experience, made by two 'vectors', one representing the artifacts that support representation, another standing for the structure and result of representation.</i>			
Accumulation [representation] completing the travel 'picture album'		Control [artifact] infrastructure, planning, strategy	
		Saturation [the collapse of travel] artifact overwhelms representation 'wild travel'	<i>[Saturation amounts to having the gap separating the subject from the project of completion filled accidentally or from some outside source; for travel to remain travel, the gap must be kept open to prevent 'automatism' or premature completion of the series of travel experiences.]</i>
		<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> The 'gap' [the surplus/remainder of travel] the relation of travel to desire the ambiguity of 'completion'	
Suffering Anxiety over completion risk / sacrifice of control [positioning commanded by the view]		Curiosity Square-wave function oscillation / anamorphosis [finding unprescribed points of view]	
Reflection Ability to give an account (audience presumed)	Solitude Necessity for a solitary point of view (an 'impossible audience')	Naïveté Resistance to too much instruction	Personal Need for instruction

Figure 3. "Hieroglyphic travel" organizes Johnstone's authentic travel Categories around the central distinction between Saturation and an unauthorized addition, "the gap" — a minimal space between the True Traveler and the travel world — which must be maintained unless the True Traveler is to be absorbed within the environment or overcome by the challenges of travel Saturation. Saturation is played out in terms of Accumulation and Control; the gap is constructed by balancing the necessity to Suffer with Curiosity, each of which in turn is played out, respectively, by Reflection and Solitude and Naïveté and the Personal. For the full version of the hieroglyph, see http://art3idea.psu.edu/locus/hieroglyphic_travel.pdf.

be a stack of rings uses a continual "tuck" of the top ring beneath the bottom-most ring. Travel is self-intersecting in this way, continually completing its form by intersecting its beginning with its end.

Or, if Johnstone's categories are a system of some kind, we may ask "what kind," and how the elements of the system (the individual categories) both play their role and suggest the nature of the whole in the travel system (Fig. 3). My ersatz conjecture begins with the unacknowledged feature of Johnstone's categories: that the traveler is subject who is "willing to suffer." By

suffering, I mean exposure to potential failure. Avoiding failure is what makes authentic travel different, at any and every point, from being something else. A gap, no matter how small, must be maintained to keep Saturation within bounds. The traveler must maintain a distance that distinguishes him/herself from the native inhabitants of the travel landscape. Therefore, the Gap is a kind of definition of authentic travel. Johnstone does not mention any "Gap," but it is implicit in all of the other Categories. Just saying "traveler" entails a distinction defining the traveler as a non-non-traveler: someone different from those who inhabit the travel landscape, or others who are in motion but not really traveling.

Because this is a central feature of the whole set of categories, I pair subjective intentionality with the necessary presence of the possibility of failure, Johnstone's category of saturation. Concerning saturation, Johnstone says this: "Saturation can arise from a catastrophe so violent that it rips away the traveler's sense of being at home in his travels. But it can also arise in nonviolent ways. Accumulation, I pointed out, requires that a trip be of a certain minimum duration. Saturation, on the other hand, arises from the exceeding of a certain maximum duration."

It is clear that the traveler, to travel authentically, must *first* be willing to face the possibility of Saturation. This dyad can expand in two directions. On the side of the subject's willingness to suffer, the risks of the travel Suffering are balanced against Curiosity. Without curiosity, Suffering is senseless. On the side of Saturation itself, there are active and passive modalities. Saturation is the way the travel landscape seeps into the traveler as a subject. These are commonly called "travel impressions." One sketches, one takes photographs, one visits places. The impressions actively enter into the travelers thoughts and alter other thought processes. The material component of this is the travel journal or set of photographs *as a set*, intended to summarize the journey in a chronological way. The companion term to this category of Accumulation is Control, the exercise of discipline that keeps the traveler moving, resists temptations to loll too long. Too much control spoils the objectivity of the traveler's world. It is over-informed by expectations and plans. Just as Accumulation can overflow and Saturate the traveler, Control can impose so much order on the objects and objectives of travel that the travel is simplified into nothing more than what the traveler expected to encounter by looking at maps and reading books beforehand.

On the other side of the Saturation/Gap dyad are a series of "ways and means" categories. In the expression, "curiosity killed the cat," the potential failure of something that is otherwise necessary to travel, Curiosity, is what makes Curiosity interesting, what makes it, in fact, "curious." Curiosity attempts to access the unknown as such. It is because we don't know something that it interests us, so we have to take responsibility for our intentionality from the start. We are not curious without a motive to be curious. At the same time, what we don't know may be something that others know well. We may be curious in a way that our curiosity can be "liquidated" simply by asking others; or, it may involve the retroactive question of why our ignorance

took the particular shape it did. Some things are curious to some people but not to others. Curiosity is a conjunction of objective and subjective conditions.

Curiosity engages Suffering in several forms. First, there is a necessary suspension of expectations required to “see what there is to see,” in contrast to seeing only what one expects to see. Expectations limit curiosity and any potential payoffs. Exposure to the unknown can have good or harmful results. That is the nature of curiosity. It’s a kind of gamble. It is an “aleatory procedure.” In this, we find two more categories of Johnstone’s system: Naïveté and Personal. Naïveté is the harmless ignorance we need for any travel experience to begin as such. The Personal is the requirement for instruction, to know at least something about the trip and the places we visit. A travel guide is the epitome of the Personal. You hire a guide to explain what you see, but this threatens your ignorance in ways that limit the benefits of being Naïve. An analogy would be how one begins to make a drawing. The sheet of paper is unmarked, in readiness for your marks. But, it has a shape, a texture, a ratio of one side to the other. There is already a frame, and the silent instruction to center the drawing on the paper. But, what if the scene you are drawing becomes, in the process of drawing it, interesting in ways that violate this geometry? What if you need to draw more of something on the far right side of the drawing but you have “run out of paper”? Should you tape more drawing paper to that side? Or, should you *obey* the paper and keep to the rule of the center, that the middle should be “more interesting” than what surrounds it? The conflict between Naïveté and the Personal can happen in many ways, but they always fall under the heading of Curiosity.

The other side of the Saturation/Gap dyad, and the companion/rival of Curiosity, is Suffering. Just as Curiosity aims to fulfill the travel experience, Suffering threatens to end it entirely. It is the extension of Saturation, the disappearance of any gap that maintains distance between the traveler and the travel landscape.

Suffering is suffering, but it’s what separates the traveler as “authentic” from other humans who are moving about. The traveler must be willing to suffer. In this, the travel is a kind of “hero” in the classical sense.³ Other (non-authentic) travelers resist suffering, some try to avoid it altogether, by staying in a familiar hotel chain or by only going by guide-books. Willingness to Suffer is, subjectively speaking, first an *intention* that needs to be understood as desire. Even in the knowledge that the travel project may fail, and that some or maybe all of the travel encounters involve pain, and possibly so much pain that travel ends altogether, the traveler persists. This means that the Gap that differentiates a true traveler in terms of this desire has to be realized through two other categories of travel, Reflection and Solitude. Solitude is somewhat self-explanatory. The traveler must maintain distance between him/herself and other travelers as well as from resident natives of the travel landscape. All travel is, in this regard, a form of the

³ Erwin Cook, “‘Active’ and ‘Passive’ Heroics in ‘The Odyssey’,” *The Classical World* 93, 2, Homer (November–December, 1999): 149–167.

ancient, defining travel of the hero, the *katabasis*, or visit to Hades. Only heroes, it is said, were allowed to visit Hell and return to the land of the living. But, this privilege is already inscribed in the living hero, whose name (“hero” = “dead man,” ἥρωας, commonly translated as “defender” but associated with both one who was willing to die but also one who was destined to die). If we substitute “dead man” for the heroic traveler, it becomes more obvious how the hero is allowed to visit Hell and return. The hero is “already dead.” In visiting Hades he is just “returning home,” although Hades is configured as the essence of the Saturated travel experience. The heroic traveler is one who maintains the gap between him/herself and the other dead who populate Hades (= the travel landscape).

Reflection is more complex, even, than Solitude (self-intersection of the traveler with his own intention to suffer). Reflection is simultaneously an ability to “answer” to challenges about the authenticity of the travel experience. An answer does not have to be an argument, a laying out of the “logic” of travel. It can be presented as something “self-evident,” in the way that a poem or musical composition presents itself *to be heard and, by hearing fully, “understood.”* The same employment of self-evidence applies to jokes. One does not “get” a joke by having the joke explained. One “gets a joke” by becoming fully immersed in the joke’s structure as a joke, to understand that a joke will involve a *retroactive understanding* of how the end of the joke relates to the beginning. Typically, a joke involves sliding over or past something that, by the end of the joke, is realized as the key.

I will tell a joke to illustrate this. Because the most retroactive jokes tend to come from Jewish literature, it will be a Jewish joke, a *Witz*. Mrs. Greenberg attends her dying husband, Mr. Greenberg, at his bedside. Distressed, she asks him what is his last wish. Greenberg tells her, “I want you to marry Friedman.” “But,” she responds in disbelief, “Friedman is your worst enemy!” “—Yes, that’s right.”

Explaining why the dying husband would wish his wife to marry his worst enemy requires the listener to “put two and two together” in the same way that the wife must retroactively realize that her marriage was not all that she had thought it was. Explaining doesn’t make the joke funny, however. It shows how the *structure* of retroaction makes self-evidence an *effective* and *efficient* way to achieve Reflection. In my ersatz conjecture, I would go so far as to say that the retractive nature of self-evidence is not just the best kind of evidence the traveler needs to produce, it is the ONLY kind of evidence the traveler can produce. In the case of Odysseus, this is the self-evidence of the hero’s return to Ithaca, and the efficiency by which he avoided alerting anyone but the nurse and dog and was able to surprise and kill Penelope’s suitors. I am willing to accept that many travelers attempt Reflection by inviting over friends to show them slides of their trip, but in my mind this is proof that their travel was anything but authentic. Rather, I would say that the traveler’s best evidence of authentic travel is that he/she has been trans-

formed by what was learned in the travel experience; that he/she is in fact both *the same and different person* (non-orientation along with self-intersection).

This final pairing of Reflection and Solitude, a relating-to-others and a non-relation to others, fills in the final row of the four Categories that “echo” the top row, Accumulation and Control, by means of a preliminary dyad, Suffering and Curiosity, the essence of the hero as one who has, voluntarily, “chosen to suffer” (in effect saying that one volunteers to be imposed on, to have the freedom to choose negated).

A Non-System System

By having the “end” of his Categories (willingness to sacrifice willing) answer to the beginning (the balance of Control with loss of control), the matter of Saturation for the subject who must maintain subjectivity by keeping open an at-least-small gap between him/herself and the traveled world, becomes evident. The (inside) gap has become the (outside) frame of travel. What the subject does to stay a slight distance away from his/her own suffering allows for all of the other Categories to expand this gap idea. In this expansion, the system as a whole is defined. A line can be drawn surrounding the Categories of Travel in the same way that the Third Error of the sentence with two errors defines itself internally and externally.

It seems that the ersatz experiment has at least answered the question of whether Johnstone’s Categories constitute a linear list, where more Categories could conceivably be added on, or whether it has an internal or native “logic.” I put “logic” in scare-quotes because in an important sense I would also claim that the traveler and the subject are one and the same — that, in travel, we constitute subjectivity as such, and that, as being subjects, we find it “in our nature” to be in the world as a traveler, continually traveling but, of course, curving travel so that we may, at the right time, return Home.

Can we ask if there is any difference between subjects in general and the traveling subject? This is a topological question, meaning that, if subjects simply create their own “world” (idealism), how is it possible that they wish to create a world in which they can be not just lost but destroyed entirely (realism). Psychoanalysis provides its answer in the form of the subject who, as subject, insists on undermining his/her own happiness. The “algorithm” of this self-limitation shows how trauma is held and preserved by an unconscious so that it can be transferred to other “sites,” where it appears through a virtuality of symptoms. But, psychoanalysis, too, points to the roles, which we experience in “heroic” travel, self-intersection and non-orientation, the “topological” qualities of projective surfaces such as the Klein bottle and Möbius band and knots with a “Borromeo” logic. In architecture, these are reflected in the “fractal” nature of the Dædalan labyrinth, an origami fold of passages on passages where any one part is representative of the full “system.” Can we presume a *fundamental* connection, based on topological alliances, connecting architecture, Johnstonian travel, and psychoanalysis?

The ersatz experiment claims only to find the “one thing” that prevents us from dismissing it entirely. We cannot *disprove* the coincidences of self-intersection and non-orientation — a topology uniting three independent “fields” — that make travel what it is, that make Johnstone’s Categories into a System rather than a list, that make subjectivity and travel essential to each other. We might look at the negatives. Why not just consider that a traveler is a much simpler kind of human, one who can simply buy an airline ticket and spend a week in Istanbul? Johnstone’s Categories are about, if anything, the way that such a trip might fail to be authentic travel. Why? Because the traveler in many cases can become a non-traveller by running an errand, by failing to return home, or by being resistant to being changed by the travel experience. Any one of these converts travel to non-travel, but *all of them* require us to have a travel topology rather than a list of rules.

Here, I wish to present an incomplete conclusion. This will be the most ersatz of my ersatz conjecture, intentionally. I wish to make what must seem to be the most outrageous claim of all, namely, is that the True Traveler has mastered the art of remaining the same while changing; the True Traveler will have mastered the art of moving while remaining motionless. I intentionally put this claim in the most indefensible way. I do not wish to defend it without provoking attacks that would convince both the attacker and defender (some readers may be on my side, possibly) that authentic travel, like the True Traveler, are not about truths but, rather, the “truth of truth,” and that travel experience is not about meanings *per se* but about *meaningfulness* — where the descriptive distance required for us to explain things has been denied. In the face of this loss of the necessary gap, the subject maintains the claim of meaningfulness because he or she has experience it, and it is personally and intimately meaningful. Yet, despite the privacy of meaningfulness, there is an implicit claim, that this personal meaningfulness is somehow universal — *that others would and should understand this meaningfulness if there were any way to communicate it.*

This is not to say that meaningfulness is not communicable. In fact, it is the most convincing of communications, if we openly admit that the most effective form of argumentation is to argue against the expectations of others. In *The Odyssey* a general wants to keep his troops from defecting. But, instead of pleading with them to continue fighting, he pretends to agree with them in their dismay over battle fatigue. He suggests that they pack up their gear and return to their wives and families. But, he says all this with the silent implied message, that “Greeks don’t give up.” His auditors hear this silent message, and at the end of his speech, they enthusiastically reject his suggestions and join him, to take up their duty as soldiers with absolute devotion.

This kind of rhetoric is called the enthymeme. In theater, it is “acting against character”; in fictional literature it is the device of the unreliable narrator. In all cases, what is literally presented induces a response that is opposite. Self-intersection and non-orientation — this is rhetoric’s version of the topology of projective surfaces. The moving traveler, in this schema, *moves in order to stay in place*. There must be, then, some invisible center of gravity that works like the center of

a circle “holding in place” the line that is drawn around it. The gravitational model is correct except in one key detail. At the point where the circle has almost finished its job, the point that was the center will appear on the circumference. This is possibly too much projective geometry to lay on the non-mathematical reader. We should be content with two “translation” ideas, non-orientation and self-intersection. But, how can rhetoric (the enthymeme) explain anything about travel? How can topology be extracted from Johnstone’s Categories of Travel?

I offer a term that combines and summarizes the effects of non-orientation and self-intersection and, at the same time, promises a way to connect travel, architecture, rhetoric, and topology. In fact, it promises — in a way that will appear to be the extreme of ersatz conjecture — to connect these with the full range of features of human subjectivity. Why not? We are, in ersatz conjecture, playing a game with fake money. We can “buy” and “sell” without really risking anything. If the money is fake, then *not taking a risk* would be cowardly. I would challenge the reader in a rather rude way: “What are you waiting for?”

The term I have promised to do so much with so little (of explanation) is “idempotency.” The word literally means, “the power to remain the same.” In travel, this is a miraculous power indeed: the power, in the midst of what is mandated to make travel travel, to not really move. How could this be even *thought* to be possible? This is the psychotic limit to the “neurotic” Categories of travel, which seem to be picked out of travel experiences in an empirical spirit, simply describing and summarizing various observed experiences. But, this kind of empiricism proves false in the end. To *know* a traveler, one must *already BE* a traveler. And, possibly knowing about travel would bring travel to an end, just as a performer who becomes self-conscious can suddenly lose confidence in an otherwise well-rehearsed role. You must already possess what you set out to find. When you “find” it, however, it will not be because you looked for it. As Picasso was famous for claiming, “I don’t look, I find.” Picasso avoided the tedium of looking because he trusted idempotency. He knew that, in order to find, he must be active but not seek. Seeking would alienate him from his desire, would force him to become non-Picasso. His identity would not just collapse, it would be a suicide! He would be non-orienting but not self-intersecting. The “self” would have collapsed into the terms of the search.

Idempotency is more commonly a term in computer science. It is what programmers must do to defend a web site against “denial of service” attacks, where hackers flood a site with simultaneous demands, causing an overload that shuts down the server. The essence of a defense is to convert the first of this tsunami into an alert that will use the very structure of the attacks as a kind of algorithmic palindrome to “automatically” intersect subsequent attacks. What does computer science have to say about travel theory? Is it fair to introduce an alien concept at this point to trick the reader into accepting a radical jump from a simple set of travel conditions (the Categories) to the idea of a system, to the point where the system can be turned on its head to

prove that the traveler is somehow defined by inverting very thing that everyone things qualifies travel as such: motion into stillness.

A sudden leap from a seemingly impossible position is the essence of the ersatz conjecture. It is the one thing that rings true, out of a myriad of improbabilities, that pays off. But, it must be made with humility and careful attention to detail. Here, idempotency reveals a solid and informative clue. It is critical in the understanding how dreams work. Those who study dreams are almost always attracted to the content of dreams. What does this content mean? Is it a residue of the previous day's experience? Is it always a form of the wish, as Freud maintained? Is the dream able to forecast the future?

Idempotency takes another tack. It asks, what do dreams *do*, exactly? What is a dream in terms of effectiveness? Here, the evidence is relative clear. Dreams are constructed to keep the dreamer asleep in the face of external challenges. Being asleep means, physiologically and neurologically, the paralysis of muscles. At a critical point in the sleep cycle, the dreamer is unable to move. Only the key functions of keeping the body going are operating. If we happen to wake up at this point, we immediately sense powerlessness. We are able to recover quickly, but we have a muscle memory of being paralyzed.

The dream acts like an algorithm constructed to fend off a denial-of-service attack. If it detects an incoming disturbance, it uses this in two ways: first, because this leading edge will be impossible to deny entry, it must convert it into dream content. The famous dream recounted by Alfred Maury. The metal bed frame collapsed and hit him on the neck, but is dream converted it into the last scene of a seemingly long dream about the French Revolution — hiding, then running, being imprisoned, tried, and sentenced ... finally being led to a place of execution where the bed frame was dreamed as the falling blade of the guillotine. Maury and others of course marveled that the first thing that triggered the dream appeared as the final concluding moment in the dream. This means that a palindromic structure appeared, idempotently, at the point of the denial-of-service attack. What seemed to be the elaborate events leading up to this "first" were actually secondary, in service of the conversion of the first.

Why and how does this dream lore relate to travel? The connection seems at first circumstantial. Yes, travel often seems like being in a dream, and many dreams involve travel. And, yes, works of art, where to "get into" the fictional reality the audience or reader must be held in place in front of a screen, stage, or page of a book and required to be quite and still, i. e. to "play dead." *Where* is the spectator of the work of art? If we choose to say "in front of" the presentational boundary, the edge of the stage or the front of the screen, we ignore the experience of the audience that makes fiction effective: it is *within* the work, as an embodied observer. In dreams, the dreamer does not directly experience paralysis. He/she imagines moving around the dream world. He/she retains a "Euclidean" view, of being a figure moving across an unmoving ground. But, the facts of the case are the opposite. The dreamer *is* fixed. The ground must, there-

fore, be moving around this fixed point to simulate the dream illusion, in order to *keep* the dreamer asleep.

Is this like the experience of the traveler who *ceases to move as others move* and move “authentically,” as a True Traveler? The key, I believe, lies in distinguishing authentic travel from the movements of those who are not True Travelers. Like the dreamer, the True Traveler experiences “Euclidean” reality and seems to move as others move. The difference is the True Traveler’s relation to authentic travel, which has the status of a dream, and as such, *paralyzes* the True Traveler in order that travel may *insulate* the True Traveler by keeping open the small gap that prevents the dreamer from being overwhelmed by the “external disturbances” that threaten the travel experience.



Figure 4. René Magritte, “Not to Be Reproduced” (1937), Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam. The painting, commissioned by the poet Edward James is considered a portrait of James although James’s face is not depicted (Wikipedia).

This returns us to the contrast between Saturation and Gap (my “added” Johnstonian Category). If Saturation takes over, if externalities succeed in their denial-of-service attack, travel ceases. It becomes wandering, errand-running, or the traveler goes native or dies. The Gap means that movement is maintained to simulate relationships with the traveler’s world, but the simulation is a defense. Lacanian psychoanalysis plays this out in terms of trauma, which is Real in the sense that it can’t be represented symbolically. To cover over the sudden appearances of the Real in the course of Symbolic experience, we use fantasy to “explain” A ... (B) ... C. The B, the Real, becomes b’. It is Symbolic but it contains the Real in cipher form. In our ersatz experiment with authentic travel, the True Traveler carries a code-book of ciphers read, not what is “said” in secret code (for none exists), but to specify a plan of action that, like the original trauma, is written in a language of gestures and forms. This in essence is an Event, an enactment, a staging. It has meaningfulness without meanings. It is virtual. It is *effective*.

The True Traveler is not literally motionless, but rather he/she finds a “still center” within the travel experience. This can be represented as a balance point or “impossible” symmetry — a tipping point that is dynamic rather than static. Just as the proper projective circle closes a space by *dis*-closing the point that was its center but moved to the periphery, the move seems impossible. It will be recognizable only to the Traveler him or herself and to other True Travelers, who

will recognize each other by their defense, their travel's relation to the dream. Dynamic balance carries is like the unconscious register. It is able to carry "latent signifiers" from a place of origin to a place of re-emergence. It is able to call them forth from this dark depth. This is possibly how the Parisians of the French Revolution envisaged their city as not just *like* Rome but a New Rome, or why, in folk-lore about the foundation of cities or buildings, what is new is simultaneously original *and* the return an Eternal Form.

You don't have to look, you will find. The cipher encrypts the True Traveler by a disguise. The self-intersection must involve non-orientation. The "place" the True Traveler finds is a void, a "lipogram" like the one found/not-found in George Perec's novel, *A Void*. It is known by the way that other signifiers must flow around it to avoid being sucked into its black hole. Others (non-travelers) will not see it but they will move around it, A ... (B) ... C.

The Difference between a Collection of Meanings and Meaningfulness

We hold meanings to be specific to structures of language that assign, conventionally, signifiers to signifieds in ways that are generally agreeable to the majority of speakers. This is the cultural aspect of language, the aspect that can be thought of in terms of dictionary definitions. Any one signifier is "defined" in relation to other signifiers. Those signifiers in turn are defined by yet more signifiers, and so on and so on. Jorge Luis Borges has argued that dictionaries are essentially circular, but this should be qualified. Dictionary definitions construct spirals, in that we are returned to our original starting-point without realizing the absurdity of starting over. Like the compulsive who returns to a traumatic event only to find an empty hole in memory that necessitates further returns, the dictionary is a spiral that eludes completion.

Meaningfulness is quite different. It is experienced by every (neurotic) someone whose subjectivity is established by the domain of the Symbolic (language, sign use, social relations, culture) as a ">x or <x" situation. A truly meaningful experience exceeds our ability to describe it to others. The experience's > is accompanied by our subjective <, our falling-short. Failure does not diminish meaningfulness. It actually magnifies its intimate relation to us, as something personal.

We could also say that meaningfulness is "unknowable" in that we know it on account of our failure to pull it into the Symbolic. It is a Real, known only in terms of a resistance to the Symbolic. Immediately we see a relation of travel, authentic travel, in terms of this resistance. Authentic travel is meaningful. Other forms of human movement owe their value to the meanings that subsume it: running errands, taking vacations to get a rest, running away, signing up for guided tours. In these cases of degenerate travel, the Symbolic dominates. Every view has a caption, every moment is ready to be a post on Instagram. The travel experience is re-purposed for an Other, an imaginary construct of those who constitute our judgmental audience within our networks of social relations.

The meanings/meaningfulness divide has an unexpected benefit for my ersatz conjecture. It relates to the idea of travel as a circuit, a specifically *neural* circuit. Susan Buck-Morss argued that “neural” does not end with the brain, or even with the nerves extending through the body. It is the circuit that is extended by the senses and actions into the physical world, without which the body and nerves and brain would decay.⁴ It is important to note that decay is compensated



Figure 5. Giambattista Piranesi, *Carcieri*, 9, “The Oculus,” where Piranesi seems to show an exception to his closed-curved prison but, within the clouds we see the same timber-work of the interior, amplifying the status of this space as non-orienting and self-intersecting.

by hallucinations. The brain, on its own, creates a phantasmagoria of detailed experiences to fill in the blanks left by consciousness’s retreat from reality. *This is precisely the situation of the idempotent dreamer, who, under attack by external stimulus, must maintain paralysis.* The phantasmic infill of dream material — such as recounted by Alfred Maury — operates using the same palindromic strategy of first-to-last that made Maury’s bed frame into a guillotine terminating his dream-life.

Buck-Morss’s circuit is both neural and personal. It requires an “objective” physicality — not just a brain made of neurons but a world of concrete resistances — as the essential companion of “subjective” experiences. This is not just in the exceptional case of sense deprivation’s in-fill of hallucinations but any “everyday” experience of the short-fall of meanings in the presence of meaningfulness. This means that *every case of authenticity involves a supplement that exceeds the capacity of the “operating system” of the Symbolic’s normative meanings.* This is to say that the “neurotic” lives within the Symbolic, which continually falls short of experiences that are, for the neurotic, *precisely* the ones that are the most meaningful. This falling-

short is a “negative inscription,” a ghost-writing, a micro-void experience. Behind each micro-void is a plenum connecting it to others. This plenum amounts to an underground network of latent signifiers operating entirely in the darkness of negation. This plenum accounts for the wealth of hallucinatory detail reported by those who suffer from neurological deterioration as well as for the palindromic equation of forward and backward narrative direction in the case of the event dream.

We can refine Buck-Morss’s claim with a binary that recalls Ernst Jentsch’s succinct definition of the uncanny (*Unheimlich*) as one of two mirrored conditions: (1) the living person who, in fear of death, constructs his/her flight to encounter death directly, and (2) the dead person who

⁴ Susan Buck-Morss, “Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin’s Artwork Essay Reconsidered,” *October* 62 (1992): 3–41.

has “forgotten that he/she is dead” and continues to imagine a continuation of life.⁵ The first condition is the essence of irony: that by intending to do good, one does evil, or that intending to escape structures a space–time that is closed and curved. This space–time is evident in Piranesi’s series of engravings, *I Carceri* (The Prisons) where prisoners are free to move about a seemingly unbounded space (Fig. 5).⁶

What is evident in Jentsch’s two “atoms” of the uncanny is that they mirror each other in a particular way. Each is “inscribed” as an interior in the other. We might write this as $A_D \cong D_A$, “death as interior to life” and “life as interior to death.” The “quasi-equal” sign indicates that it would be just as accurate to say “death as extrinsic to life” and “life as extrinsic to death.” An even more compact expression would be to say that “Life and Death are convertible.” This echoes Vico’s famous dictum, *verum ipsum factum*, which can be either /both “truth is constructed” or “truth is within the construction of the lie.”⁷ This is Lacan’s “true speech” that must pass through /across the “wall of language,” comparable to Vico’s *vera narratio*.⁸

If authentic travel is defined in terms of this complex exchange, it is then a circuit that is simultaneously about latent signifiers (the subscripts of $_D$ and $_A$ in A_D and D_A) as well as about the necessity that objectivity must “die” within subjectivity and subjectivity must “die” within the object. This is not simple negation. This is sublation as a cancellation that allows for preservation, and preservation that is continued through movement. To carry the argument to completion, I would point out that preservation can be shown, in cultural traditions around the world, to be related to both immobilization /paralysis and desiccation.

I can present only abbreviated evidence for this. The clearest support for Jentsch’s cross-inscribed atoms of the uncanny can be found in the universal traditions surrounding death in relation to the deceased’s continued trials in a buffer space constructed around what is in some cultures a heavenly Elysium and in other cultures Hades. This is the period of mourning, often connected to the number forty as the number of quarantine: the space–time of medical isolation

⁵ Ernst Jentsch, “Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen.” *Psychiatrisch-Neurologische Wochenschrift* 8, 22 (August 26, 1906): 195–98; and 8, 23 (September 1, 1906): 203–05. Cited in Sigmund Freud, Hugh Haughton, and David McLintock, *The Uncanny* (Brantford, ON: W. Ross MacDonald School Resource Services Library, 2013).

⁶ Curiously, architecture theorists have failed to note how Piranesi has given an early example of projective geometry’s non-orienting, self-intersecting planes. In only one engraving of the series do we see an “outside” (Fig. 5). It is interesting that, on the “cusp” of this suture between exterior and interior, Piranesi places a figure seen to be carving the solid that Dürer depicted in his engraving *Melencolia I*, whose purposefully misspelled title is an anagram for *limen coelo*, “the gate of heaven.” See David Ritz Finkelstein, *the Melencolia Manifesto* (San Rafael, CA: Morgan and Claypool, 2016). I thank Alireza Moharer for pointing out this important source.

⁷ I must credit William J. Mills for what I first claimed to be his misinterpretation of Vico’s *factum*. Fabrication always carried with a sense of falsification, as in the duality of “forge” as both the creation of metal-ware and faking a signature. “Giambattista Vico as a Philosopher of Place: Comments on the Recent Article by Mills,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series 8 (1983): 237–48. My apologies to Mills for failing to see this, almost thirty years ago.

⁸ Jacques Lacan, *The Ego in Freud’s Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis*, Seminar II, 1954–1955, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1991), 244.

as well as meditation in the wilderness or the transformative–reconstructive walkabouts of Australian Aboriginals. It is the liminal space of transformation used by all cultures to simulate death as the necessary prelim of rebirth.

The corresponding proof of A_D , the living person who, in fleeing death, constructs a least-distance path to the very object of fear, has been more dispersed by the fact that it's fundamental to irony and, hence, satire. This theatrical bond popularizes the theme to the point of making particular instances less recognizable than D_A , the deceased who has forgotten how to die. In stories such as "The Appointment in Samara," death is clearly featured; but the same logic is applied to less fatal situations, as when the rich are shown to be miserable or when tyrants get their comeuppance. "Justice" is about balance, as the scales of Justitia suggest, but the balance is also a wheel, the Wheel of Fortuna, which returns the aspiring hero from comedic rise to a tragic fall. The very universality of irony, A_D , prevents us from seeing the inner logic connecting it to its uncanny twin, D_A .

Despite this uneven representation in culture, travel depends on cross-inscription to explain the otherwise idiotic claim that it is stillness in motion (or, equally, motion in stillness). The space-time of travel shows the two properties of projective geometry that facilitate this cross-inscription. Self-intersection is the True Traveler's necessity to maintain "home" within the diverse conditions of being away. The True Traveler must accumulate and recollect travel experiences to curve them into a circuit. The True Traveler must weigh the need for curiosity against the threat that Suffering will overwhelm the travel experience (Saturation; closing of the Gap). Reflection, Solitude, and Naïve openness to both the originality of the travel experience and the need for instruction (Personal, travel guides) are all about closing the circle without creating a division between inside and outside (non-orientation). The center of the circle must be found on its periphery. True Travel explicates the dictum attributed to Pascal, that "God is an infinite sphere whose circumference is nowhere and whose center is everywhere." This is not a religious sentiment but a geometry principle. Pascal, working with the architect Girard Desargues in the 17th century, revived the theorems of Pappus of Alexandria (300 a.d.) to show that, within any "Euclidean space" there is another space, a space of projectivity, where parallel lines meet at points on a horizon placed at infinity. Pascal's "God" was a projective plane, infinite by the fact that it was both unbounded yet finite. This principle was rediscovered by Leibniz in his famous debate with Newton and mathematized by Einstein in his Theory of Relativity. Despite contemporary architecture theory's dismissal of projective geometry as "non-Euclidean" (equivalent to calling black coffee "non-decaf"), projective geometry is foundational to Euclid, not the other way around.

It would be impossible to talk about authentic travel without referencing projective geometry. But, what about those of us who lack the background to access the mathematical aspect of this "cultural/subjective" matter? We must rely on the real projective plane's two attributes,

clearly evident in the Möbius band and Klein bottle: non-orientation (an arrow drawn on a Möbius band arrives back at its origin in an inverted position) and self-intersection (a Klein bottle completes itself by cancelling the distinction between interior and exterior).

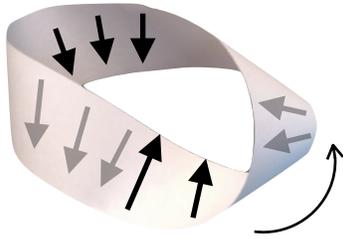


Figure 6. A Möbius band is both self-intersecting and, as the arrows show, non-orienting. Although the band is “immersed” into 3-space, it remains to be a 2-d surface, but this dimensionality has to be demonstrated (“acted out”) in the same sense that travel as stillness-in-motion cannot be described but only enacted.

In psychoanalysis, these two properties are summed up by Lacan’s neologism, “extimity” (*extimité*), the inscription of the objective Other at the dead center of the subject, thanks to the spectral conversion experience at around six to eighteen months of the pre-subject’s young life.⁹ At the same time, the subject finds its truths “out there,” as Agent Mulder habitually proclaimed in *The X-Files* TV series. The objectivity of the subject accompanies and is accompanied by the subjectivity of the object.

Is travel really stillness-in-motion? Has the ersatz conjecture proven anything? What has been presented is more of a pastiche than a convincing argument. Any actual proof must be enacted by the reader who undertakes True Travel with the idea that he/she is constructing a non-orientable self-encounter. In contrast to other subjects in the travel locale, the True Traveler will be not just still within a projective geometry that is “primordial” in respect to other subjects’ Euclidean perspectival scene-making, the True Traveler will be both external and internal to the travel setting.

It would be interesting and perhaps critical to connect this ersatz conjecture to the lore of desiccation. All cultures require, during the interval of between-the-two-deaths, a reduction of moist flesh to dry substance, whether dust or bone. The sarcophagus literally means “eater of flesh,” and a further extension of this comparison would go into the way cuisines use cooking as a form of meaning construction through desiccation.¹⁰ The ancient lore of Hestia as goddess of the hearth holds many important secrets, particularly in relation to the complementary idea of Hermes as the essential stabilizing monument forbidding entry and exit of the space of the dead. Architecture is the essential medium of travel, and travel is, in turn, the only effective means of understanding architecture’s relation to the concrete reality and shelter/utility functions of building. Travel and architecture need each other to join the essential third ingredient, projective geometry, contemporary theory’s most destructive failing.

Much of the ersatz experiment is left to the reader who must become a True Traveler. The point is not to generate consensus about the conclusions of this conjecture, but to produce dis-

⁹ See Jacques-Alain Miller, “Extimity,” *The Symptom* 9, <https://www.lacan.com/symptom/extimity.html>.

¹⁰ Donald Kunze, “The Missing Guest: The Twisted Topology of Hospitality,” in *Eating Architecture*, ed. P. Singley and J. Horwitz (Cambridge: MIT, 2004), 169–190.

sonance, difference, and *dissensus*, as Jacques Rancière has defined it, in keeping with Baudelaire, as the mutual misunderstanding that is essential for agreement.¹¹

Home Is Only Away

In my assuredly ersatz analysis of Johnstone's Categories of Travel, the careful reader will have noticed that I left out what may be the most important of Johnstone's Categories, home. Instead, I asserted a non-Johnstonian category, the Gap. Not only was this substitution made without warrant, it was given a central position in my "hieroglyph" of travel and connected to the function of difference that was the basis of Johnstone's system. Why?

Each of Johnstone's Categories, the hieroglyph shows, is one part of a contentious or cooperative pair. Like lovers who are either fighting or loving, it is more accurate to say that, in fact, fighting *when* they are loving and loving *when* they are fighting. My substitution announced itself at the center of the hieroglyph, where it was the best defender against the most obvious threat to travel. If the traveler can maintain some at-least-minimum distance between him/herself and a threatening situation, then even adverse conditions can be productive and instructive. With a gap there can be Control, Accumulation, and a balance between the Suffering and Curiosity that generate their own dyads, Reflection/Solitude (relations to an audience) and Naïveté/Personal (relations to knowledge).

The Gap is really Gap/Home, a boundary that is both an internal frame keeping the traveler's proper distance from his/her own actions and experiences and an outer boundary insulating authentic travel from the non-travel fakes. These impostors look like travel because they involve motion but they lack the stillness that travel requires to correct itself. Continual motion is like the perpetual sailing of *Die Narranschiff*, Sebastian Brandt's ship of fools that was drawn from the actual practice of loading ships with the mentally ill and forbidding them to dock at any port to do more than collect supplies. Non-travel requires motion but not rest. Authentic travel not only requires rest, it establishes it, thanks to the Gap, even when adverse conditions threaten to overwhelm the traveler.

Travel is easily a metaphor or analogy for almost anything else: thought, action, life. It would be more accurate to say that, instead of saying that travel is a way to live, that travel teaches us life. Also correct action. Also correct thinking. Travel, being open to the travel landscape, does not specify what it is we are to see or think; it requires only that we perfect the art of openness itself, a kind of "reception theory" of being in the world. I would elaborate on how the word "authentic" is really about the same orthography that architecture uses, in both drawing and the strategic design of buildings, to engage latent signifiers concealed within the depths of buildings' more practical concerns. Buildings, which seem to be some of the stillest things in the

¹¹ Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2010).

world, are in fact constantly in motion. They are built, revised, renovated, repaired, modified, and finally torn down or left to ruin. Architecture, in contrast, is truly idempotent. Its power lies in its ability to defend itself from the external noises of *Utilitas*, *Firmitas*, and even *Venustas*. Only within the architectural “dream” can latent signifiers be arranged to tell the “truth of truth” that contrasts so starkly with the various truths of the Vitruvian virtues. Architecture is still, and only the still traveler is capable of cultivating an affinity with this stillness. This is why architecture must be visited, and why travel is prerequisite to the reception of architectural truth.

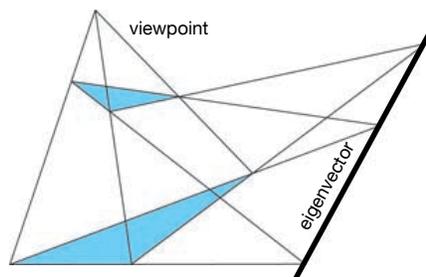


Figure 7. Desargues' theorem, that the sides of two “perspectival” triangles will intersect on a line where they will be co-linear, has much to say about how our view-point relates the visible to the invisible to define an “exteriority” that is projective, linear, and determinate. This extrinsic line is like an “eigenvector,” a unique feature “thrown off” by contingent relations in Euclidean representational space. The eigenvector is idempotent, fixed. It is the “dream inside reality” where the ground moves over the figure, generating phantasmagoria. No wonder Desargues' contemporaries found it, and him, to be monstrous! He had brought infinity into their midst and made permanence a function of radical contingency.

The restlessness of building is not just worth studying, it's the life that shows how cleverly architecture can conceal itself. It is the change required to discover changelessness. Like the guesses in the raffle for the cow that led Galton to discover the phenomenon of emergence, change is “always wrong,” but its commotion is the basis for the *kenosis* that relates to architecture. The *vox populi* is its dissensus, its perpetual knack of missing the point.

If the true traveler must keep moving, it is to maintain the idempotency of travel that affords him or her a *line of travel* that is neither dogmatically determined nor left entirely to chance. It is attentive to adverse winds, just as Athena protected Odysseus from Proteus. The Athena-Proteus dyad could be considered the “eigenvector” of both travel and architecture. In projective geometry, randomly paired points along two lines connect in zig-zag ways to draw a third line. No matter how the points are placed, they will always determine this line; their intersections will always be co-linear. When Girard Desargues (Fig. 7) and the boy-genius Blaise Pascal extended this theorem of Pappus in the 18c., they extended this theorem so that, when their forgotten theories were revived in the 19c., mathematicians were able to realize the 2d surfaces

that, when “immersed” in 3d, created the unbounded but finite planes such as the Möbius band and Klein bottle.

It seemed that geometry had finally escaped its Euclidean confines, but in fact, it had discovered its roots. In the story of Apollo and Daphne, we find a pure example of the real projective plane, as the “surface of no escape” leaving Daphne no alternative but to transform herself into a laurel tree. The details of the story leave no doubt. The mythic mind know how, in this figuration of one version of the Persephone myth, what projective planes were all about. Mythic

projectivity incorporated infinity into the seemingly monstrous or miraculous elements of stories about magical beings. These were the basis of myth's perpetual uncanny.

Apollo had mocked Eros's archery skills. Love, he noted, seemed always to happen at the wrong time, to the wrong people, and with disastrous results. Eros's arrows seemed never to hit a proper mark. Eros, stung by this criticism, fashioned two arrows, one of love to hit Apollo, one of hate for Daphne. Possibly, he crafted a single arrow with two points that shot in reverse directions at the same time, something quite easy to do in projective geometry. Possibly Apollo and Daphne are really a dyad of a single lovehate entity. Daphne, in her desperate desire to flee from Apollo, generates her own space of entrapment. It has, thanks to this irony, no point of escape. Daphne has no alternative to her self-intersection but a "non-orientation," in that she must become a laurel tree. Daphne is fleeing but getting nowhere. She is idempotent, stuck in place. Apollo is chasing her but never able to secure his beloved.

A single vector heading off in two directions at once is *precisely* a definition of the projective line. The projective line is simultaneously a line and a family of parallel lines. It is simultaneously a line and a point, or rather *two* points, thanks to bi-directionality. Just as the dream and unconscious negate negation (see Freud, "Negation," 1925), projective geometry does away with the binary thinking that would draw an equator at the middle of its sphere of vanishing points, a sphere because the horizon at infinity is both an edge and a seam where the BA of the space 180° opposite (a figure of speech) is in fact annealed to the AB of the "front" side (again, front and back are figures of speech). The projective line heads off in two directions at once, and it can be "fired" from anywhere, because all lines parallel to it are headed there as well. Again, figures of speech are required because the projective plane works like the Real in psychoanalysis. The Real resists all representation in the Symbolic "register." It is the meaningfulness that cannot be "put into words."

It is striking that Jacques Lacan provides such a clear picture of projective geometry in Seminar VII, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, 1959–1960. But, it is even more striking that the example he uses comes from an ancient text, Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, where tales were taken from even more antique oral sources, shamanistic religious sources where elements of nature, mountains, rivers, springs, etc. were considered divine. Daphne was the daughter of the river god, Ladon. With her reputation for avoiding men entirely, despite her renowned beauty, how did she come to be the epitome of idempotency, a fixed tree? And, how did Lacan correctly connect her flight to the 2d projective surface, where, as Cassirer put it, merely the intention to flee created a trap where escape was impossible?

Apollo and Daphne's relation was a cross-inscription of Love and Hate, thanks to the projectivity of Eros's "double-pointed" arrow that could fly in two directions at the same time, with opposite results. Are we then allowed to place Apollo and Daphne on the horizon line/sphere at infinity? The role of the arrow in this story is to penetrate a center in both victims, who

as fields (ground) open inwardly to a figure, \square . The field of each antipode, \square , becomes the target point at the site of the other, $\square \rightleftharpoons \square$. The chase describes, in the pursuer/pursued dynamic, the futility of movement and, hence, the underlying logic of idempotency, present from the beginning. The rooted laurel tree simply confirms the logic and gives it a more recognizable symbol. This exchange is also evident in another famous meeting of hunters, Diana and Actæon, where a mortal accidentally discovers the “lair” of the goddess bathing and, in retaliation for this violation of privacy, gets a splash of water from Diana that transforms him into his antipode as a hunter, the hunted (a stag). He experiences idempotency in much the same way as Daphne, running without being able to hide or escape. He is overtaken by his hunting dogs (symbolically, three of them) and eaten.



Figure 8. The tower, a walk-in sculpture by Erwin Heerich in the Museum Insel Hombroich, photo by Tomas Riehle/Arturimages. As in other pavilions, entryways are precisely situated to engage the landscape, while interior sky-lights modulate the vicissitudes of sunlight without any electrical lighting. The result is an uncanny feeling of entrapment and stasis, where escape refers not to an exterior but rather a cardinality encircling the site localized at geodesic points that are, despite their dispersion, all centers. The park instantiates Pascal’s expression of the divine as “center everywhere, circumference nowhere.

Apollo and Daphne, Diana and Actæon — these are mythological versions of the algorithm of *dæmon/askesis*, one of three pairs elaborated by Harold Bloom in his work on the anxiety of the young poet in face of the legacy of the past (*Anxiety of Influence*, 1973). *Dæmon* is not simply a god chasing nymphs. It is manifestation of Eros as a surface-of-pain where idempotentiality constructs its bi-spatiality by folding spaces in an alternating pattern, against the grain of Euclidean indefinite extension. *Askesis* transforms a single location as an imaginative verticality, an “impossible-Real” that is simultaneously defensive and revelational. This is a transferable idea. The monastery is, as the word “ascetic” discloses, an example. A spiritual retreat from worldly “horizontal” concerns, its verticality is accentuated by stylized internal movements: rituals, processions, strict time-codes, denial of sensual indulgence. *Askesis* is also evident in gardens and parks where patterned movement amplifies self-containment and singularity.

At Insel Hombroich near Düsseldorf, Germany, ten pavilions unite Asian and Modern art in a park setting. Álvaro Siza and Rudolf Finsterwalder have established an “architecture museum” to feature artworks collected by Karl Heinrich Müller. But, the buildings develop an algorithmic relation of sky to ground that seems to distill the idea of idempotency. Each pavilion could be a center of the park, whose exterior boundary is absorbed into the rural landscape through combinations of ponds, trees, and meadows.

What of Bloom’s other terms of anxiety-alleviation? These are *clinamen/tesseræ* and *kenosis/apophrades*. The first combines the famous token broken at the departure of friends in hopes of eventual reunion (the broken edges recombine as a “friendship palindrome”) with the Lucretian

idea of turbulence. The second puts memory in front of a mirror where, out of shadowy depths, the dead return. Memory becomes a specific form of recall: a calling forth of a latent spirituality, at an edge marked by a mirror or gravestone. In the 1945 British thriller, *Dead of Night*, one of the five ghost stories told by guests at a house party in response to one guest's experience of *déjà vu* is about an antique mirror gifted by a wealthy socialite to her *fiancé*. She had not been aware that the mirror's previous owner, paralyzed by a riding accident a hundred years before, had strangled his wife in a jealous rage. The traumatic event pressed itself into the mirror's latent depths, preserving it until the day a new husband with a jealous inclinations should stand before it. The mirror returned the scene of the first bedroom to the new owner, paralyzing him as his jealousy deepened. Unaware of the source of his thoughts (*kenosis*) the dead returned in the form of desire (*apophrades*).¹²

But, we see each of the two other pairs returns the investment of any one dyad. The fixation of *askesis* is evident in the mirror's magnetic pull; *dæmon* rage burns like a slow fire. The space around the mirror is a turbulence (*clinamen*) creating a geometric lipogram where the new husband stands inside the century-old view, one *half* of a dead counterpart. The new wife must shatter the mirror physically to break the reunion of halves along the zig-zag line of their uncanny reunion (think of Desargues' theorem).

The six paired terms are all aspects of idempotency, a paralysis that allows for the illusion of the freedom of movement but cancels it by guiding the movement of figure over ground, a Euclidean illusion, to create the phantasmagoria of the ground over figure. Whether in a park with pavilions or a film about ghost stories, the single rule of idempotency finds its forms and plots, its landscapes and its architectures, its ardent lovers and fugitive nymphs. The same allows for difference, which difference imagines as fate and travel shapes as the form of Home.

¹² Bloom's six terms have often-surprising affinities with forms of the uncanny and fantastic literature. Consider, for example, Borges's set of four standard themes of the fantastic: the double, travel in time, the story in the story, and the contamination of reality by the dream or work of art. All of these have architectural counterparts, where symmetry, concentricity, historical referencing, and liminal overlap play out uncanny encounters where latent signifiers play a central role. These themes can be rotated 90° to consider Bloom's six terms as cross-references. In *apophrades*, for example, the return of the dead is, literally, the return of the dead and buried latent signifier, suppressed by trauma and reincarnated by a trigger moment. Lacan diagrams this as the suppression and return of the Real in metaphor, where an internal mirroring process allows metaphor to condense, idempotently, a field of signifiers as a cipher delivered in the experience of astonishment.