

# Can the RSI Be Mapped?

*notes for Francesco Proto*

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## Mapping Is both Imaginary and Symbolic, but Its Gaps are the Real

When it comes to thinking of how it might be possible to make a “topological” map of the city or a locale, it must be remembered that a map is a graphic representation, *but of what?* It presents an image and so is in that sense in the Lacanian domain of the Imaginary, it leads to imaginative projections of what spaces “must be like,” but it also is selective and therefore also in the Symbolic domain: a map represents ideas of order that place the (neurotic) subject within a regulated space. Even though I like very much your idea of “psychotic” and “pervert” spaces, it is more the *use* of space (or inability to use space consistently) that is clear in these non-neurotic spaces. Maybe they can be located but are themselves un-mappable. Maps are mainly for neurotics, made by them and about them and their sense of orderliness. However, the idea of showing the effects or places of psychosis on a map is more exciting than describing how neurotics map their worlds, and it should be addressed. Just as the Symbolic has gaps, inconsistencies, and inexplicable contradictions, these “Reals” are present directly as artifacts of the graphic map.

A useful analogy would be to orthographic drawings in architecture, the plan, elevation, and section, where it is possible to transfer measurements relating to the surface of the drawing to the actual scale dimensions of the building. Although some have tried to explain orthographics as a projection, the requirement of having a point of view at infinity is a bit ridiculous, it's more correct to say that the point of view is synonymous with the picture plane, just as the satellites gather data for GIS fly in parallel with the earth's surface (so “it can be done”). The planes of observation and representation are in direct contact, what in math is called bijection and what Lacan would say in linguistic terms is bi-univocal concordance. This means that cartography on a global scale or orthographic drawing is comparable to “criticism by the cut,” but in a psychotic mode, which means the examination of the pure distinction. The cut corresponds to the element of non-orientation, while the other kind of criticism (“punctuation”) is about self-intersection. In cartography as well as psychoanalysis, the cut and punctuation go together. The “problem of the map” comes when you ask of the individual map what the *atlas* is like (i.e. how do the maps all fit together), because this problem of closure bears on each individual map, just as the square frame of a map will never quite match the curved lines of latitude and longitude.<sup>1</sup>

Topology relates in a curious way to *topography*, a point-by-point description of the geographical surface, and for a fascinating demonstration of this, you should read Edgar Allan Poe's *The Gold Bug*. To give you an idea of the difference between a map and topography is to point to Dennis Wood's book, *Everything Sings*, as a topography or, rather, a “superficial inventory” that defies projection in favor of a logic of touch (as a case of criticism by the cut). Cartography in the field of geography is so caught up with

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<sup>1</sup> The issue of the atlas is nicely summarized by J. J. Callahan, “The Curvature of Space in a Finite Universe,” *Scientific American*.

GIS that these issues have been obscured and you probably won't find anything much there. The job of cartography criticism is left to others.

### **Topology and Lacan**

Topology is not "optional" in the study of Lacan's theories. It was indispensable for his development; he was in touch with qualified mathematicians who "checked his work"; he was consistent in his involvement of topology and knot theory. In some seminars, Seminar IX on *Identity*, for example, topology plays a central and critical role.

For Lacan, topology means specifically the phenomenon of the 2-d surface that is *not mappable* in 3-space. Projectivity begins with the theorems of Pappus of Alexandria in 300 a.d. His work was rediscovered and developed by Girard Desargues and Blaise Pascal in the 17c. Their work was ignored and obscured until the 1800s, when it became the basis of a nearly full century of mathematical advances, all based on the idea of projectivity grounded in the theorems of Pappus and Desargues. Gauss, Plucker, Riemann, and many others developed, in turn, the basis for quantum mechanics in the 20c.

Projective geometry is logically *prior* to Euclid, not a sub-division of it. Lacan asked the question of what projective geometry was before it was projective geometry discovered by Pappus in 300 a.c. indirectly when he asked what anamorphosis was before it sprang forth fully developed in the 1500s. My view is that this unnamed predecessor is, or is related directly to, the uncanny, where anamorphosis employs a different kind of virtuality than that used by Euclidean geometry to define spatial absence/invisibility. Again in my view, both anamorphosis and virtuality are, in projective terms, *co*-anamorphosis and *co*-virtuality. This means that these are formative and constitutive properties, not qualities or aspects secondarily related to any "primary" phenomena. In other words, anamorphosis and this projective form of virtuality are foundational, and the only way we can deal with them theoretically is by means of topology. Although Lacan pressed forward examples such as the Möbius band, Klein bottle, cross-cap, and Borromean knot, we can distill the principles of projective geometry to two features: (1) self-intersection and (2) non-orientation. Projective shapes can give us examples of this, the simplest of which is the Möbius band's twist, which forces us to make two trips around the band to complete the circuit, i. e. to arrive back at a mark made on the surface of the physical paper. The general idea of  $x = x + x$  (one circuit is completed by two "apparent" turns around the band) is mathematically named "idempotency," and the idea of *idem* figures prominently in Seminar IX. In the experience of the subject, it is the way that different experiences may change our ideas of who we are and how we relate to the world, but the "I" remains the same "I," and not just in terms of the ego. The "I" is sustained by the force of a Real that operates to maintain identity in the face of change,  $x = x + x$ .

Žižek also argues that the principles of non-orientation and self-intersection are more theoretically flexible than geometry theorems about projective surfaces. However, I found it instructive to watch video lectures about the subject, to learn the basic ideas. Recommendations can be found on <https://sites.psu.edu/boundarylanguage/links>. Look for the link to Wildberger's lectures. Žižek also has an [interesting video on YouTube](#) about a "secondary virtuality" related to the Real, what you could call a "virtuality of effectiveness." His explanations treat a Real of the Imaginary, a Real of the Symbolic, and a Real of the ... yes ... Real. This video will make your situation much more workable than having to "digest" the mathematics behind topology and projective geometry. Although you should know what



From Dennis Wood, *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas*, Sigla Press, 2010.

“immersion” means in psychoanalytical terms, you can use non-orientation/self-orientation and Žižek’s idea of a secondary virtuality to do most theorizing.

### Dennis Wood

In his iconoclastic study of neighborhood mapping, *Everything Sings*, Dennis Wood demonstrated that, if anything, a “topology” of a lived space is “polythetic” — an incongruent collection of features, practices, beliefs, and recollections that do not resolve into any simplification of dimensions based on “objective” spatial dimensions. Actually, to be true to the meaning of “objective,” a standard map is anything but objective; it is a stratified ideological construct. As such, this was the template used by Kevin Lynch,

David Stea, Roger Downs, Peter Gould, and others who developed the idea of “mental maps.” The argument was that “objective” space could be “stretched” by “subjective interactions,” as if on a rubber sheet allowing the stretching or shrinking of “actual” distances. This had the effect of valorizing the geographic map as the only truly legitimate measure, and de-valuing subjective maps as well as subjects themselves, pushed to an imaginary periphery the more their mental maps deviated from the imaginary objective center.

The (objective) core and (subjective) periphery model put control of subjectivity’s dimensionality issues in the hands of those whose diagnostic tools more sympathetic to the DSM, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, a disaggregated collection of aphorisms and studies lacking any consistent theoretical basis. In contrast, Lacanian psychoanalysis’s idea of topology relates directly to a subjectivity that engages the environment *topologically*.

Where “mental mappers” employed topology as a way of transforming sampled data into composite graphic representations, Lacanians would claim that topology is something that subjects employ to establish their own personal objectivity, their “Real,” in relation to (also incommensurable) Imaginary and Symbolic relations. Psychologists, who reject the RSI distinctions generally and specifically, deny objectivity to subjective views of the environment and even to themselves, grounding it through statistical measures such as correlation scores (R), variance (R<sup>2</sup>), and sampling strength measures, such as sample size, pre-test and post-test validation, independent corroboration, and means of neutralizing “cultural factors.” In short, psychology, in rejecting topology for the subject while retaining it in support of the “objective scientific representation” reverses the actual processes by which subjects establish their environmental relations, a congeries of Real, Symbolic, and Imaginary relations that cannot be *projected* to produce territorial maps resembling geographical maps.

A critique of attempts to project such “mental maps” returns to the issue of what projection is. A variety of projective strategies for converting the (fundamentally) curved surface of the earth to a flat graphic. The protocol used has more to do with map use than any objective reality. Military, transportation, political, agricultural, mining, weather, etc. interests each require their own kind of map projections. A projection is *fundamentally topological*, in the sense that either shape or distance must be favored, abstract assumptions about the point of view and measurement mechanisms must be made, and the spectrums of what is measured and represented on each map type is grounded in ideology as much as

pretended science. Thus, each map is a “mental map,” a subjective representation; there is no single “objective template” to identify as a center able to de-center subjects with actual engagements with their locales.

Dennis Wood attempted to restore the interests and pre-eminence of topology of subjective engagement with a combination of “unobtrusive measures” (a concept popular in the 60s as a way of studying human activities and beliefs) and “polythetic” combinations of a variety of “dimensions of livability” Wood claims to be self-evident good of neighborhood practices. While this selectivity could be arguably his method’s main weakness, the effect of each map in *Everything Sings* is to open up new frames of reference, new ways of conceptualizing what the neighborhood is and what constitutes a good or bad for successful neighboring. In comparison to Freud’s emphasis on the contradictory nature of the neighbor, Wood may seem to be uncritical in his acceptance of an innate “neighborly good.”

If anything, Wood’s quirky maps force this conclusion: *there can be no single “objective” map if only because objectivity belongs to subjects, who are themselves polythetic in their ambivalent relations to their environments.* A subject him/herself employs projection and strategies of objectivity to validate their actions on and in the world. This objectivity differs from psychologists employment of it. Any scientific project forces a consistency in the selection and application of projection protocols that erase any “subject’s procedural objectivity.” Topology belongs to subjects, not those who, as “scientific investigators,” use it to portray different subjects as different *in relation to a construct they claim to be an objective ideal.*

### **Multidimensional Scaling**

A ground-breaking work of the 1960s, Warren Torgeson’s *Theory and Methods of Scaling*, argued that scales emerge from data and do not exist “existentially” prior to what is measured. Mathematically, he demonstrated that any overt attempt to measure a “variable” is an approximation of another unknown variable that exists “within” a data set. The linearity (curvature) or variability (stretch) of a variable is not directly knowable. A set of even such seemingly objective accounts of, say, “temperature,” “air pressure,” and “wind direction” are directly related to the instruments invented to measure them and the choices based on assumptions of variability, scale, sensitivity, and material relations. It is technically and theoretically impossible to filter out the effects of material instrumental artifacts, and even harder to control for assumptions and pre-conceptions. In effect, any “objective” measure is a hybrid construct involving conceptions about what there is to be measured, the material-mechanical means invented to measure, and the understanding of how results are to be symbolized. It is necessary to go beyond Torgeson’s conclusions to the broader arguments of critics of scientific practices such as made by Imre Lakatos and Paul Feyerabend, namely that “data” as *the given* is refashioned into constrictive abstractions that present existing beliefs in the form of “fresh observations,” making empirical science fundamentally an exercise in justificationalism, which it officially denies. To live up to the Gettier classification of science as “000” (radically skeptical, thanks to Popper’s *modus tolens* principle; radically non-belief; and critically opposed to justificationalism), the given of data must be its Real, and statistical “mappings” of data must be Symbolic. What is the role of the Imaginary — in Lacanian terms?

The statistical procedure of Multidimensional Scaling is conceptually uncomplicated. “Difference values” are based on the idea that the “=” is interpretable as “is not distinguished from.” This could arise from confusion or acceptance of some fundamental or innate relation. In interrogation theory, a liar is consistent and non-contradictory. In contrast, someone telling the truth who is more emotionally invested

with a situation has ambiguous beliefs that lead to inconsistent reports. Under questioning, a liar will be consistent, a truth-teller will be inconsistent. A scalable dimension, to reflect the “truth” of any data set, must be able to address this issue of inconsistency. Torgeson validates this view generally and offers some mathematical alternatives to linear measures. Multidimensional scaling, by directly addressing the issue of ambiguity, makes few assumptions about linearity or non-linearity. By grounding its protocols on the inability to distinguish two issues, elements, objects, or other features of a study, allows dimensions to emerge through a process that assigns dimensions to all possible relations. A set of 50 variables are assigned, for example, a maximum of 49 possible dimensions. It then attempts to simplify the dimensionality of the data set in a series of iterative procedures that measure the ability of “spaces” of decreasing dimensions to “represent” variability. Perfect representability is minimally interpretable. No one can, for example, imagine a 49-dimensional space. In the reduction process aiming to end with “Euclidean dimensions” that can be represented in 2-space, there may be “plateaus” where, as dimensions are removed, representability may be generally stable. These steps indicate that there may be conceptual plateaus as well as mathematical ones, where ambiguity itself is “surrounded” by mental concepts and behavioral practices. In other words, there are certain “domains of ambiguity” that are culturally and individually supported.

MDS presents these plateaus as 2-d arrays whose geometric features may lend themselves to interpretations. It is not the aim to “get a clear picture” of what is, fundamentally, a cultural domain of ambiguity. Rather, it is to see how the plateaus contrast with each other, how their simplifications may correspond to patterns of communications, equalization or differentiation of ideas, or structured interactions. While there are no conclusions one can claim on the graphic results, MDS can suggest the focus of further study.

### **Zairja**

If you know Julio Cortázar’s novel *Hopscotch*, then you will already be convinced that the “zairja,” a computational device invented in the 11c., has relevance today and in fact has been converted to a variety of uses. It was described by Ibn Kaldhun and elaborated by Ramón Llull, “major league” figures. The zairja was originally a “reverse computer” intended to deconstruct astrology charts down to the level of everyday activities. Cortázar employed the idea to make a novel that “maps” Paris according to an aleatory program, part of which is turned over to the reader. This is “criticism by the cut” in a radical degree: the novel *is* the cut between reading and writing, a kind of orthography that has to be established in the act of reading.

The zairja principle can be made into something portable and understandable, and I recently used it to demonstrate to a grad student friend of mine how she should “let her dissertation write itself.” There are two components of every “fact of attention” in a dissertation. They are drawn from the distinction Lacan makes between act and content in language, the *énonciation* and *énoncé*. When we say that we mean something literally, we suppress the factors related to the act of communication (the circumstances) and focus on the “intended meaning.” But, in zairja, the two components are equalized. The act is taken as a *coup de dés* and allowed to lead the study in directions that supplement or even cancel the content component. My student wanted to use a painting by Claude Lorraine to “illustrate” the value of the landscape as a place of renewal and wholeness but this painting, Lorraine’s last, happened to include Ascanius shooting a stag. The stag was not wild but rather a domesticated pet belonging to Sylvia, the King’s game-keeper’s daughter, and eventually the trouble over shooting the stag led to Ascanius becoming

the progenitor of the Julian clan, changing his name from Ascanius (“tentless”) to Iulo. So, what the student thought was a projection of an obvious value turned out to involve turbulence, vindictiveness (a Fury, directed by Juno, had set up this clash), turned out to be a mystery story involving all kinds of optional ways of proceeding.

Every other object she had selected in her two-page outline opened up to the same “aleatory” features that took the dissertation in a variety of directions, but she had been trained to suppress these details in favor of a main thesis conceived *before* she began, something that I find pedagogically unethical. As I went from element to element, I allowed “zairja thinking” to include the *énonciation* component along with the purported content value assigned by her thesis and it elaborated an entirely different “shadow thesis” that, according to the complementary strategy of “criticism by punctuation” turned out to be “self-closing.” In a sense I had used the non-orientation of *énonciation* and *énoncé* (the suppression of the manner of communicating from the content) to achieve a “secondary” surprise ending to her dissertation. This zairja composition style is how I write in general, so I am used to the way a “blahblahblah” has to be used for the sake of continuity. It introduces an element of parody that can turn serious or be ironic at any point, which is quite an advantage when you’re writing. This is the technique of *fou littéraire*, I found out. I should have noticed when I skimmed through *Au rebours* once, how des Esseintes (really Joris-Karl Huysmans) wrote so that you couldn’t tell if he was speaking “tongue in cheek” or not. Being able to move without being noticed between frame and content is key to the zairja method of letting your writing do your work for you. If you want to see more, go to <https://sites.psu.edu/boundarylanguage/the-zairja-a-device-a-methodology-a-force-field/> I can send you the “alternative chapter” that I used the zairja to develop. It was too much for my student. She didn’t believe that you could develop a thesis without a thesis.

### **The RSI and Mapping: Lipograms**

I totally buy into your idea of trying out a “mapping” of the RSI onto city space. The trick will be to retain the RSI’s Borromeo logic, where the relation of any two rings is due to the “presence/non-presence” of a third ring. I have tried to use Gauss encoding to show that the symmetry of this third-ring phenomenon is palindromic. At first glance, it seems that it is simply the way of designating each ring by itself, but this is the function of the third ring as the “glue” holding the knot together. What the third ring is, is a kind of Schrödinger cat situation. The ring is both there and (k)not there, without the third ring as “detached,” the whole knot falls apart. The adhesion is the “reality of the virtual” that Žižek talks about in his video that I mentioned. It is the “Real of the Real.” If you think of Aristotle’s four causes, this is a fifth, a cause that is “an effect without a cause,” a gap in the normal causal order of signifiers. Again, “criticism by the cut”!

Let me zoom directly into the idea of a gap or void. This plays a key role in Seminar VII, *Ethics*, where Lacan mentions architecture directly. In Perec’s novel, *La disparition* (*A Void* in English), the lack of the letter “e” creates a kind of force field, since conventional ways of saying things must be diverted into a slightly stylized way of writing. There was the same effect in Jeff Bridges version of *True Grit*, where the dialog was intentionally late 19c. formal English, used even by “rough characters” but especially by the little girl seeking revenge for her parents’ murder. It is easy to adopt to new dialog styles, but the effect remains in the background. In *A Void*, the text swerves around the holes (lipograms) left by the letter “e” as a missing presence. Thus, in the RSI system, the relation between any two elements “swerves” (*clinamen*) wherever the third element is exerting a force, as in the case where fantasy covers over the gaps in the Symbolic that are in effect a “mapping” of the traumatic Real.

Any map of the RSI must address the issue of the lipogram, and Lacan's description of Apollo and Daphne (Ovid) in Seminar VII is critical. Daphne creates a "surface of no escape" as soon as she decides to take flight, so we see how her motion is a case of idempotency:  $x = x + x + x + x + x \dots$  etc.) As with dreams where we are trying to run but don't seem to be moving, idempotency is the switch that has converted intentionality into a buffer *against* response, like the elevator button. You "call" for an elevator but pushing the button has insulated the switch from any further pushes. This by the way is related to the event dream, where (as in the famous case of Maury) a disturbance has been incorporated into the dream itself, but in a palindromic order, where the event that *has tried to wake you up* (and is "first") has initiated a dream where it appears as the *last* element. This is the temporal effect of the *après coup*, *Nachträglichkeit*. Retroaction. Just as the event dream is constructed to preserve sleep, the lipogram is there to preserve something by buffering it from further interruption. What does this mean for mapping the city? I think that the "dream" of the city might be the neighborhood or "quarter" that has a distinctive sense of isolation, where you suddenly find yourself lost and unable to get back to the main central square. The best account of this in fiction I know of is the Polish-Jewish novelist Bruno Schulz's *Street of Crocodiles*, or *The Chocolate Shop*. It is the feature of the city that allows for "getting lost." Since maps are about way-finding, it will be a challenge to create a map of getting lost, but that is what you have to do.

I'm saying that there is no 1:1 "mapping" of the Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic onto a surface that is not 2-d and projective, i.e. self-intersecting and non-orienting. There will be no contiguous zones where "things are Imaginary," next to "things that are Real," next to "things Symbolic." But, the problem of this (the lack of bijective indexing, 1:1) is more interesting. In effect, the map has the same problem as the Borromean knot. By the way, the best book on this is Will Greenshields. If you click on the image on the front page of the iPSA site you can learn all about it, and get the reference. I have a digital copy of Greenshields' book if you can't get one through your library.

How to draw a map where the effective element is absence? This is your problem!

### **The Blahblahblah**

The L-schema appears early in Lacan's work and sets up an effective template for the process of clinical analysis. In "the talking cure," the Analyst and Analysand sit in a room together where the Analysand *as ego* practices free-association. This is the "blahblahblah" of the speech of the Other (the *a* in the L-schema), addressed to the other other, *a'*, the Analyst in the form of a (transference-ready) Other. The two egos are the "poles" maintaining the flow of current between speaker and listener in everyday discourse. We think the other has something to say, or we have something to say to them; this is energized by anxiety about our need for recognition from the Other, and the alienation we experience within the Symbolic. Speech is blahblahblah in that it can always be "other-ized" — attributed to the other's otherness, their foibles, obsessions, lacks — the basis of the idea of the *S(A)*, the signifier of the *lack* of the Other.

The literary form of this is nonsense, blahblahblah pushed to its limits, where it becomes a positive creativity, as in the novels of Lewis Carroll, who labeled it "litterature." Litter is Freud's idea of the Unconscious, of course: things *discarded* as value-less or, rather, ambiguous, where the equals sign, =, means "is often confused for." The idea that the interrogated subject tells the truth only when he/she is inconsistent is the same as this idea of = as ambiguating, confused. The Unconscious's relation to this is the Truth of the *objet petit a* and the lower left quadrant of the discourse *mathemes*. So, we must pay attention to the blahblahblah!

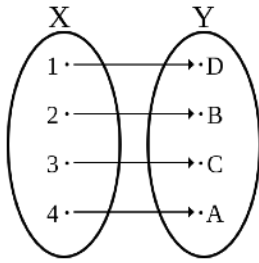
Analysis is precisely this “paying of attention to the blahblahblah.” The Analyst has two options, according to Bruce Fink. He/she can “come in late” with a cough or rustling motion,  $>$ , or “come in early” with a suggestion about something previously said, a  $<$ . These comprise a  $<>$  opening for the Unconscious to notice, a lipogram that is an opening for the Other of the Unconscious, the Real of the Unconscious, to see its chance to “make a run for it.” It can also be written  $><$  or  $\wedge/\vee$ . It is an “extimate” formation, the *poinçon* that is simultaneously a negation (a punch, like the conductor’s cancellation of a train or bus ticket) and an indication of a combination of opposites, such as the “too early” or “too late” of the Analyst. Architecturally it is the portal or hidden trap-door, at the civic level it is the portal to a quarter of town where we get lost, like the elaborate “gateways to Chinatown.” Ideally the other side of the gateway blends into the cityscape anonymously, so we never find it again. Scarpa knew about this because he reverses the colors of tiles in his famous *vesica pisces* at the Bryon Cemetery.

The blahblahblah is related to a famous (although mostly in France) category of fiction, the *fou littéraire*. One imagines that Lewis Carroll would add a “t.” There is an interesting connection to German “romantic irony,” the popularity of writing fairy tales and other crazy stuff in the late 19c. See Winfried Menninghaus’s *In Praise of Nonsense: Kant and Bluebeard*, a book Andrew Payne recommended to me. This places blahblahblah into a literary and philosophical history, *via* Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*. Of course there is Deleuze’s book on nonsense, and Lacan’s own employment of *mi-dire*. This idea connects to how the Analyst understands/hears the Analysand. The blahblahblah is *only half* of what’s being said, and it’s key to know how the cut, in topology is *always in the middle*. If you read Callahan’s *Scientific American* article, you will know how to argue that, in a curved closed universe, every point is surrounded by an equal amount of the universe. It is simultaneously a center of this surround at the *single vanishing point* of the spaces that surround it. What we see as a horizon lying at infinity, with an infinity of vanishing points, is (in an Einsteinian universe), actually a *single point*, BOTH a cut and a punctuation. This is where the two styles of psychoanalytic critique are revealed to be the same. This is embedded within the unary trait, and why the unary trait is “unary” and not “unified.”

Where the cut (division) and the reunion turn out to be the same “place,” there is the absurdity. The map of nothing. Carroll: “The captain brought forth a map of the sea, / with nary a vestige of land; / and the crew were much pleased to find it to be / a thing they could all understand.” This point is an *idem* that works *idempotently*, as both a buffer and a circuit-breaker. It is the point where the dream is remembered (immersed into consciousness) but backwards. The key is the palindrome, just as there is, in the Fibonacci number series, a “silent middle,” a cut that allows the numbers to slide across each other ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{2}{3}$ ,  $\frac{3}{5}$ ,  $\frac{5}{8}$ , etc. a series that becomes an ever-more accurate approximation of  $\emptyset$ ). The origin of this series of course is  $1/1$ , the “one of one,” the unary trait. This cut allows the graphic mapping, the “immersion,” of the Fibonacci series to show a square,  $1 \times 1$ , that stands in the same relation to what is larger,  $<$ , to be the same, *idem*, as it stand to what is smaller,  $>$ . This is Corbu’s *modular*, an “orthographic” representation of the human figure, made to “stand erect” in order to *face* the world. The face is a cut between the self and other. No one has explored this meaning of the modular, but the modular as a face is critical, since it brings in the issue of the immersion of a 2-d geometric form (the Real) into the Symbolic (or Imaginary? I don’t know). The 2-d form is in any event the (fifth) Effective Cause, the secondary virtuality that Žižek talks about.



## Bijection and Mapping



An injective surjective function (bijection)

Idea aim of maps as accurate accounts of “reality” is typically *billed* as bijection, the 1:1 relationship of observed “fact” with its graphic representation, but in reality mapping is *surjective* not bijective. There are elements in reality that can never be included on a map and graphic conventions of a map that can never be attributed to reality. The technical term for this is non-injective non-surjective function (also not a bijection). In the standard diagram of bijection, the difference between indexicality and human language is clear. Each element of X is “mapped” to Y, and there are no unpaired elements. Even where bijection is only an ideal that is imperfectly achieved, mapping is *defined by this principle of considering any unpaired elements as “error.”* For human language (and other systems of the Symbolic), we know that it is necessary for there to be an exception “to prove the rule.” To understand “cat” we must distinguish it from “bat,” and this phonemic differentiation becomes “hard wired” into the brain.

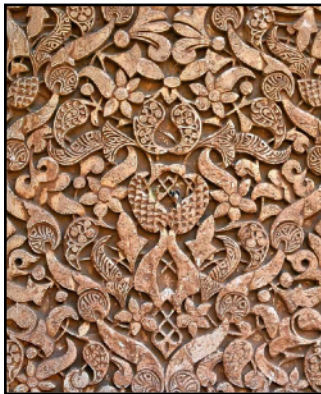
Lacan’s *matheme* for sexuation generalizes this principle:  $\forall x\phi x, \exists x\neg\phi x$  (“All who wish to call themselves ‘men’ obey the phallic law,  $\phi$ , as long as there is one,  $\exists x$ , who does not,  $\neg\phi x$ ”). The exception, “he who does not obey the phallic law,” gives the law its teeth. The rule (of castration, of prohibition) has power only because we can imagine a space *outside* the prison made for all those who must suffer the power of the law. In architecture, this virtuality of an outside that is exceptional to the inside is critical. In terms of bijection/surjection, the set of elements Y would contain a fifth element, an “E,” to represent this condition. If Y were a map, the “E” would be considered to be a graphic embellishment, a superfluous element of style or convention, such as the north–arrow or scale. Andy Payne connects this, interestingly and accurately, to the arabesque, an embellishment associated with the materiality of the page, somewhere between the literal materiality of the paper and the structural function of a rectangular surface “ready for presentation.” As book decoration, the arabesque could be compared to the horticultural espalier, a framework fixed to a wall, forcing the growth of a tree or vine to parallel and duplicate the wall’s function. Indeed, most arabesques imitate plant growth in a stylized way to accentuate the text as a “figure” against the “ground” of white paper. Like the underpainting of a canvas, the arabesque replaces the “raw surface” with a constructed one that “does not count” as figural material but rather as “a replacement ground.” The point is to indicate that the ground has been treated, considered, *maintained as such, as a ground*, and not just left to accident.

Without this “intention to be unintentional,” the missing element, the lipogram, the  $\exists x\neg\phi x$ , could not function as a unary trait — “the *one* whose absence allows all else to be ordered.” Think of this in terms of two examples, Perec’s novel *A Void* and the art of the pickpocket. In both cases, theft is involved. Perec’s text, as a normal text written in the French language, would normally possess all the letters of the alphabet. In particular, it would regard the letter “e” among its most treasured possessions. Not only, however, has the “e” been “removed by stealth” (the definition of stealing), but the crime has been covered up, so successfully in fact that some readers have made it through the entire novel without realizing the lack of the “e.” Think about this in terms of bijection/surjection and castration: “We all have to use the letter ‘e’ but

there is *one* — the author — who has not!” The E of the lipogram is the void, the place where the “e” should have been but was not. This puts a tension on the rest of the text, a tension related to what Lucretius called the swerve, the *clinamen*.

Notice that there are *two* actions that we can compare to the arabesque as an ambiguous lamination of the surface of the page. The first is the stealthy removal of the “e.” The second is the cover-up. Had the crime been reported, the “holes” in the text would have been marked off by tape, so to speak. The arabesque would be referenced by the text and the espalier function would be cancelled. The cover-up silences this middle term. Thanks to this *suppression*, the arabesque of the lipogram extends, as a force-field, *along the entire “surface” of the text*. The result is that every chapter, paragraph, sentence, word, and even letter of the text is charged with the same negational energy as that described by Jean-Paul Sartre in *Being and Nothingness*, in the incident of the friend who does not show up for an appointment. The entire café becomes “the place where Pierre has failed to (yet) arrive.” The Sartre example is instructive. The distinction between the temporal before and after is erased. Pierre has *already* failed because he has *not yet* arrived. Is this the famous Lacanian future perfect? It is written, appropriately, in a negative form, since Pierre is accomplishing his absence by not doing something, which he continues to do. In the process of this accomplishment, he has cemented a foundational relationship to a past, the moment when he had promised to arrive. The espalier function achieves its “spread” in the way its entirely artificial extension along the full extent of the wall is seen to be the Real of the “natural tendency” of tendrils to spread along a

surface, as if left on its own, without restraining wires and cleats, a tree might grow entirely within a 2-d space.



This improbable tree gets at the most famous employment of the arabesque, namely in the mathematical–geometrical designs of tiles and other decorative elements in Arabic architecture. To avoid being classed as representations of nature (forbidden by the Holy Koran), plant forms demonstrated formal principles, as if to say that the divine had quadrated a flat space to present itself in the form of numerical paradoxes. The fractal quality of tendrils accentuated this 2-d mystique. The impulse of plants to grow in this improbable way is connected to the invisible rule that requires the text of *A Void* to “flow around” the lipograms of the absent letter “e.”

The commonly accepted arabesques of the standard map, the border, the scale, the north-arrow, refer thematically to the Ur-arabesque of mythic space, *Okeanos*, the circulatory river<sup>2</sup> of negation that bounded

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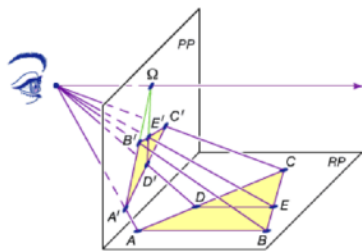
<sup>2</sup> Although Okeanos was thought of as the sea, it was, in map conventions, regarded as a river, i. e. endowed with directionality — a *vector*. A line in projective geometry is a “one-dimensional subspace” that, when it emerges into 3-space, presents a contradictory directionality, like Okeanos. This is the basis of the phenomenon of non-orientation. In the story of Apollo and Daphne, referenced in Lacan’s Seminar VII, bi-directionality is represented in Eros’s shooting of Apollo with an arrow of love and Daphne with an arrow of hate. Projectively, this is a single arrow with two points, and its “shot” *simultaneously* infects Apollo and Daphne, though with opposite feelings. In other words, to imagine what projective space is like, we would have to think that Eros could fashion an arrow that could do this, and that Apollo’s chase and Daphne’s flight were the non-orientable results of the immersion of this vectorial event into 3-space. This is the only way to make sense of Daphne’s conversion into a laurel tree, confirmed as *ever-green*, whose boughs were used to “immortalize” the heroes of the Olympics.

known/knowable terrestrial space of the living. The “nothing” that was outside this enclosing element was “nothing-less-than” *Hades*, originally “the unseen.” This primal circle of water could be seen as an elaboration of an outer spatial edge, but its river aspect referred to travel, specifically the liminal travel of the soul after death to a state of permanent rest. Like most rivers, travel was one-way. Only heroes (whose original meaning was simply “a dead person”) could return to the land of the living. A circular river signals the “lie-flat rule” affecting all arabesques and espaliers. It is a manifestation of the surface of representation, with an emphasis on the function of negation.

The three arabesques of the map show that they, too, are attentive to the “Okeanos principle”: (1) the frame requires us to “respect the page, the space of representation”; (2) the scale insures that measurement will be correct at all points, that the transfer will be parallel and orthographic; and (3) the north-arrow orients the map so that every map is by definition a metonymy of the atlas, despite the fact that the atlas as a set of maps will be contradictory, in that the set will be flat and non-intersecting. The atlas must instead be regarded as “the problem of the edge,” which is in turn the problem of the arabesque. The arabesque, which *decorates* the page, obscures the theft, the removal by stealth/art, of the lipogram.

### Bi-Univocal Concordance

... This is another name for bijection (a term which Lacan does not use). While bijection doesn't work for the Symbolic, it seems to be the basis for the Imaginary, *as long as* there is a middle term. In Seminar IX, Lacan writes: “It is a very conceivable formula, and one which can be applied just as much to the effect that I have just mentioned, for example, as to that of the formation of an image, even a virtual one, in nature through the mediation of a plane surface, whether it be that of a mirror or of the one that I have for a long time evoked, of the surface of the lake which reflects the mountain.” What is wrong with the Shannon-Weaver model of communications is that it is based on the idea of a code with the implicit demand of bi-univocal concordance. In this relation, noise is antithetical, and two identical code-books are required for correct transmission. Ambiguity and uncertainty can only have a negative position within this algorithm; whereas we know, thanks to our unconscious, that they play central, key roles. However, Lacan suggests several things by seeming to admit bijection in the case of the Imaginary. First, it is good both for direct perception (our “perspectival immersion” into a seemingly Euclidean 3-space) as well as the virtuality appended to this space (the unseen other sides of solid objects; the view behind our backs; the spaces beyond the horizons of visibility).



*the surface of a lake*, which is a possible reference to projective geometry, in that the lake and mountain lie in Euclidean 3-space but the inverted image of the mountain is, mapped to the surface of the lake, geometrically projective. That is, if we mapped the image we perceive across the surface, the map reduces the role of the vanishing point at infinity to a mappable presence. One of Desargues' theorems in fact uses a similar analogy to explain the origins of projective space.

If S/s, Signifier over signified replaced Saussure's signified over Signifier, it was to illustrate directly the role by which the Being of the signified becomes a suppressed content in the presence of the Signifier, giving precedence and metaphorical power to the Signifier, which operates under

the principle that “it can be replaced.” There would be a limit to this replacement process if meaning were restricted to dictionary-style definitions. A series of replacements would eventually, tautologically, circle back around to the original question of meaning. However, metaphor extends the project of meaning thanks to the lack of bi-univocal concordance and the existence of the cut between *énoncé*, content, and *énonciation*, the act of speaking, represented graphically by the frame and visually by the picture and its cone of vision. Here, the arabesque takes up a position of ambiguity. It is inseparable from the act, as in the case, the *printing* of a book on whose pages it serves as a supplemental decoration. Or, in music, as the extemporary invention of the performer, to refer more to the virtuosity of the incarnate individual than to the genius of the composer. But, the music example provides us with a model of how the ornament, seemingly “*ad hoc*,” speaks to a tradition of such bravado performing and establishes a continuity independent of the work being performed. In jazz, where ornament dominates, the “how” of performance



is in the spotlight; the composition is little more than the framework for extending the signature of the *auteur*. Thus, *énonciation* becomes a “literature” in its own right, a regal domain across which anarchy is presumed but orderliness — albeit in a secondary or shadow way — nonetheless prevails, and more often as not with a more detailed, more canonical way, in the same fashion that Mardi Gras Krewes involved elaborate social stratifications, encoding, and ritual interactions woven throughout by performative music, marching, costumes, floats, and parades. These play

out the idea of the Kingdom of Cockaigne, where a hypothetical land/holiday of misrule actually is more rule-bound than the normal reality it purports to mock.

Here, ethnography comes close to offering direct and litter-al examples of projective geometry in the fool (non-orientation of folly and wisdom) and self-intersection (the traditional association of the fool with the mirror). Places of transgression, such as Joyce’s Nighttown in *Ulysses*, offer up topologies that are, well, *topological* in a projective sense. Cities transformed during annual observances reveal a *Festarchitektur* (cf. studies by Werner Öchslin) whose motifs and practices directly present the idea of 2-d surfaces’ immersion into 3-space, producing paradox in the form of stunts, parodies, travesties, and impostures (servants playing masters). The official formula is given in Macrobius’s *Saturnalia*, the weeks-long winter period of social reversal where Roman masters waited on their slaves and spent long evenings drinking and recounting traditional stories. Not only was the social order inverted or turned inside-out, one of the customary tales was about the reputed extromission of the Emperor Augustus, whose eyes were said to glow in the dark on account of his wisdom.



The City of Dreams was a common theme in the Middle Ages, if only in part due to the argot-induced hallucinations that increased during times of famine. We cannot ignore the spatial dimension of dreams and other visions; as soon as there is a room or house, there is also a neighborhood, a cityscape, a

countryside. Here we return to the question of whether or not the RSI can be mapped. With the consideration of the arabesque and its cartographic cousins, the question has new dimensions. Cities under condition of war, plague, famine, or carnival are the same but different from themselves. They produce doubles and shadows. The city is forced to confess that it contains antipodes and, connecting them, bi-directional subspaces that are projective and, thus, both circular bounds and center-points that are cuts (of these subspaces — *always precisely in half*) as well as frames. If you throw in the idea of the musical arabesque and the laminar graphic arabesque, you have an entirely new Theory of Mapping, which is to say that you adopt cartography to the principle of non-univocal concordance, the obverse of the principle of bijection and, thus, the opposite of the Euclidean projective map.

### **The Gettier RSI**

What is the definition of knowledge? Since Plato's *Theaetetus*, the model of "Justified True Belief" has been advanced but rejected. Why? If something is simultaneously true, believed/believable, and justifiable, why isn't it countable as knowledge? What we believe correlates with "that which we could, in theory, see." We may not see it from a particular point of view at a given instant in time, but we could *theoretically* change our point of view to gain access to what was previously invisible. The visible and invisible are separated by an imaginary horizon, a "profile" or "edge" that marks the dividing line between what we see and what the visible conceals behind it, proving that visibility and invisibility are, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty argued, correlated. The line we might draw at the visible edge of a solid object is an analogy for the way our personal sight divides between a face and a back. We see what's in front of us, almost 180° if our peripheral vision is good. The halving of the visible by our own head suggests a general model: the visible and invisible are a "zero sum game." As we see more, the more of the world slips into invisibility. What we gain is balanced by what we lose. As we turn around to see what's behind us, we create an equal and opposite, and *new*, behind. This exchange of  $\Leftrightarrow$  is visibility's "non-orientation."

Given that the visible re-stages this invisibility within it, by the horizons and vanishing points it places *in front of the viewer*, we hypothesize an equal and opposite vanishing point that rules over invisibility. Just as all space seems to be sucked in at this distant point for the visible world — in such a durable way that even when we move or turn the vanishing point is *directly in front of us, at a correlated point of infinity* — it would be difficult to deny this same universal feature to the dark space behind our back, regulating all that we don't see. Our front and back embodies the principle of visibility/invisibility. In turn, it is the model we project on to objective space, The 1:1 bijection (bi-univocality) of visibility/invisibility becomes the bijection of presence/absence, knowledge/ignorance. The indexicality of visibility/invisibility becomes the zero-sum relation *in relation to the principle of freedom of movement*. Only by attaching mobility to the idea of the point of view does the 1:1 become the  $X/Y=1$ , so that a subtraction from X is simultaneously an increase in Y and *vice versa*.

Thus, the prisoners in Plato's Cave are chained to their positions, and the "world" is moved before their fixed gazes. The figure-ground relation that allows the figure to move while the ground remains relatively unmoving is reversed. To sustain the illusion of the Cave, the projection on the wall must simulate movement as much as possible. This  $X/Y=1$  ratio, the zero-sum, must be maintained for the restrained viewer to accept the illusion as "justified true belief." But, we find it can be done. In fact, the Cave

simulation is the same as that of the sleeper, who thought paralyzed while dreaming does not experience paralysis but instead imagines him/herself able to look in all directions, move freely, and enjoy the same access to the visible as when awake, *erasing the consciousness of being asleep*. This figure-ground reversal in fact constructs a buffer insulating the sleeper from the fact of being asleep, giving the dreamer confidence in the “reality” of the dream.

The buffer function of the figure-ground reversal allowing the sleeper to be paralyzed and in fact maintaining and extending sleep is a kind of idempotency “switch.” Any stimulus that threatens to disturb sleep is quickly incorporated into the dream, a case of “sleep extimity,” “bringing the outside inside in order to give the inside the realism of the outside.” In the famous case of the dream of Alfred Maury, a piece of the bed-frame falls on the neck of the sleeper but is converted into the event of execution that actually does terminate the dream, but only *after* the dreamer has experienced an elaborate and seemingly time-consuming series of elaborate encounters. The fact of this “dream palindrome,” where the first stimulus is converted into the *last event*, reveals the temporality of the idempotent figure-ground reversing buffer. To insulate the dreamer is a matter as simple as non-orientation: the  $\Leftrightarrow$  is embodied in the temporal palindrome.

Because *motility* is the guarantee of the  $X/Y=1$  solid basis of reality in the viewer’s relation to invisibility, both the restraints and strategic advantages of movement are consolidated in the idea of authentic travel. Henry Johnstone has provided a catalogue of conditions in his essay based on Homer’s *The Odyssey*. It is possible to reduce these to a system. In my “ersatz travel *matheme*,” authentic travel is related to a “perfect paralysis” where the traveler takes on the rule of the cut, by which the traveler identifies with a discontinuity in a space that is divided precisely in two. This “two” begins as the apparent halves that are in fact one. In a closed, curved universe, where every point is a center (given that an equal amount of space surrounds it “on all sides”), the idea of a “side” is destabilized. If the traveler is in the center of all space, the standard divisions of space must also be “cuts” between an X and Y that are balanced by a zero-sum relation,  $X/Y=1$ . The *cardus* and *decumanus* of the north-south line and east-west line (the foundational geometry of the Roman *agoramentor*), the profile marking the edge of the visible and invisible, and the ultimate horizon lying at the limit of Euclidean-perspectival space are all cases of the “limited good,” the zero-sum of space, the  $X/Y=1$ , Space’s  $\Leftrightarrow$  non-orientation is simultaneously its self-intersection. The question of visibility/invisibility leads directly to the conclusion that the Real of space is — *precisely* — its topological projectivity.

This is what makes the Gettier formula, “justifiable true belief,” unable to stand for knowledge. As long as truth, which after all “belongs to the Real,” cannot be assimilated by experience (what can be believed, using the model of freedom of travel — “belief”), then justifications are by definition “scams” that can be believed only under specific restrictions. The axiom must “suspend disbelief,” the preconception must first establish a frame that *suppresses*. Suspension and suppression work the other side, the dark side, of visibility, of our freedom to change our point of view, to travel, to inspect, to establish as “social basis” of reality. The point of view is a *dividing line*, a cut. Because the cut divides space “perfectly” in half (the algorithm of visible/invisible becomes the principle of the closed-curved universe “splitting” space into equally distant infinities), the number 2 becomes an issue in what I would call “the Gettier Field.” It

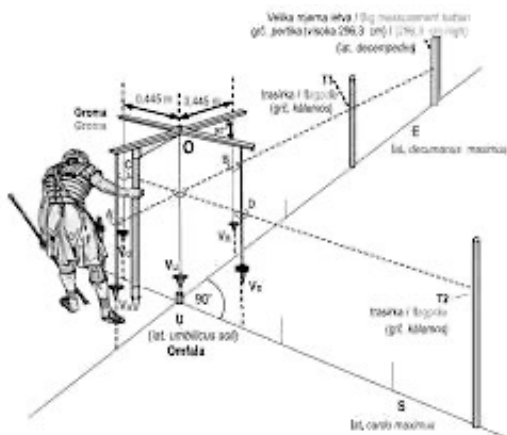
belongs to belief (= experience) as a capacity to *turn* but also *divide* and *cut*. On one side of this Imaginary is the Symbolic, where demonstrations take place, where justifications may be made. On the other side is the Truth.

In Dan Collins brilliant exposition on the Gettier, he notes that the most important aspect of the “justified true belief” theory of knowledge (JTB) is that it has been shown, over and over again, *to fail*. Against the three positive scores for justified true belief, indicated by 111, are combinations that “fall” to the 000 of science, in its Popperian principle of *modus tolens* (nothing can be “science” that is not falsifiable). In the course of this declension of 111, we have “faith” (110, what is true and believed but not provable), “resistance” (101, what is demonstrable and true but not believed), “ignorance” (100, true but

knowledge	1 1 1
faith	1 1 0
resistance	1 0 1
ignorance	1 0 0
error	0 1 1
rumor	0 1 0
rationalization	0 0 1
science	0 0 0

neither believed nor demonstrated), “error” (011, demonstrated and believed but not actually true), “rumor” (010, neither true nor demonstrable but nonetheless believed), and “rationalization” (001, false and not believed but possible to demonstrate). Thanks to stacking these conditions from 111 to 000 as binary numbers, we see that the count from zero to 7 (as translated by the decimal system) is *invertible*. The palindrome that is already present in the relation of knowledge to science, 111 to 000, the “Being (of the True) *versus* Speaking (of Justification)” of the Gettier Field, shows that there is a vertigo lodged within speaking and being that is palindromic.

The central pivot of the palindrome of the Gettier Field is Ignorance, 100, and Error, 011. Reversing 1’s for 0’s and *vice versa* reveals meaningful pairings: Rumor (010) is maintained, typically, by those who actively Resist knowledge (101), Faith (110) is preached in (mostly Evangelical) churches by Rationalizations (001). This inner palindromic quality is revealed thanks to the cut made by Belief, the pivotal conversion component of the Gettier system, the 01/10 that reduces to the “/” of the cut. With this feature, the Real’s two faces, 1111/0000 meet with the conditions of 1010 and 0101 of justification (the Symbolic). Within the fundamental conditions set by the Cretan Liar Paradox, where TF>FT>TF ... thanks to (according to Lacan) the global opposition between *énoncé* (content) and *énonciation* (the act), the subject’s “I think” (1010/0101) is spun away from the 1111/0000 of the Real, thanks to the “forced choice” of the Liar’s Paradox.



**Conjecture:** “If the Gettier Field is innately palindromic, as Collins seems to be showing, then the RSI system is also palindromic; it *evenly distributes* the conditions of knowing and being evenly, X/Y=1-ishly, around each ring, which has the power of the cut, the *idempotent division*.”

There is an interesting new question here. If the RSI system is palindromic, as the Borromeo knot representation of it seems also to show, then do we not have something akin to the agrimensor’s “gnomon,” a “portable viewpoint” able to transport a “cut” that relocates the center across a field of “anywhere” to establish the “everywhere” claim of a point that

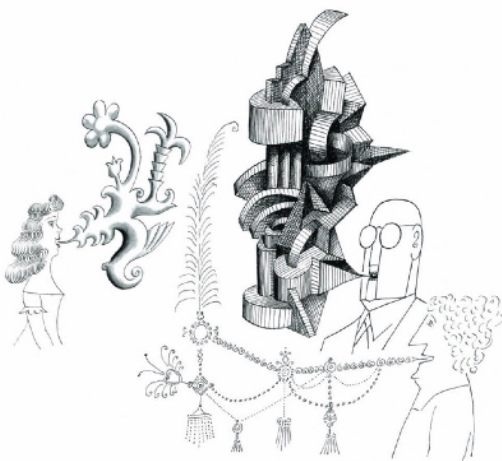


is simultaneously a line (or, more accurately, *two* lines). Don't we have a re-appearance of the number 2 as the rule of visibility/invisibility?

How should we pursue this question? At first there seem to be two obligations: (1) to consider 2 “numerically,” as literally the number 2, as the second in the counting sequence, or third, if zero is used as the first — there are good “Lacanian reasons” to do this; and (2) to see two as the *act* of division, the logic of “criticism by the cut,” in a way that relates in projective geometry to the way a mark on a Möbius band divides the band into 360° and 720° simultaneously; or the way that a dimensionless point “anywhere” in a closed-curved Einsteinian universe can be said to “divide” space, to be in the center.

What is clear, at least, is that the Gettier Field demonstrates what the Borromeo knot demonstrates: that the RSI system is palindromic and, hence, obliged to connect itself to a “criticism of the cut” and a “criticism by punctuation (completion)” simultaneously. The convergence of these critical strategies point to the common ground: projective geometry, a kind of “anti-mapping” (non-bijective) recentering of space around a *void*, a spatial-temporal version of the *lipogram*.

How to develop and employ this new kind of cartography? As might be expected, the cut (an inner mark) and punctuation (completion as an “outer” reconnection of extremities) constitutes an extimity. As Jacques-Alain Miller claimed, the concept of extimity can be extended to the full range of Lacanian theoretics. What the Gettier Field does, by relating the Imaginary to Belief, a pivotal element connecting the True (Real) to the Symbolic of Justification, is also to introduce a new concept of virtuality, an anamorphosis that must, to relate to the extimity of the RSI, be a “co-anamorphosis,” a “co-virtuality.” Unlike perspectivalism’s virtuality of presence/absence, this virtuality is co-present within the cut that is visual and other kinds of sense experience. It is the blindness *within* visibility and the sight within blindness. It is a way of saying that the (non-oriented, self-intersecting) 2-d forms of projective geometry are not only present but immanent within the experience of the subject: immanent in establishing, with every instance of sense certainty, an Unconscious.



### Literature

If a “lipogrammatical cartography” exists, it is not as the abstract invention necessitated by a theoretical impasse but, rather, something that has been employed “from the beginning.” The beginning of what? The beginning of subjectivity; human culture at the pre-historical period whose surviving features and practices are, in contrast with evolved historical culture, *uncanny*. As such, it has been too easy to dismiss lipogrammatical practices as simply uncanny. Although standard cartography has its own official history, beginning anecdotally with ancient Egyptian measurement of land allotments following seasonal flooding of the Nile, although examples of more ancient Chinese maps prove a



**All statements within this frame are false.**

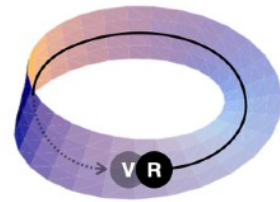
**All statements within this frame are true.**

The classic Cretan Liar claim, that all Cretans are Liars, is not structurally different from the claim that a Liar would also make if “truly” a Liar. The combination of these focuses on the Imaginary Gettier role of frame, whose distinction of an outside and inside is *structurally* convertible.

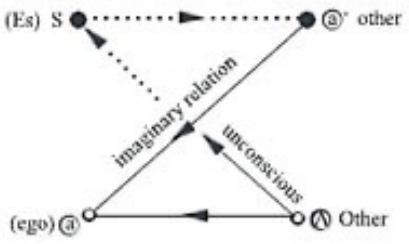
greater antiquity, maps are subjected to a generalized pragmatic standard: to show things “as they are, objectively,” without taking into account the constructed nature of objectivity.

If the RSI can be said to be co-extensive with human subjectivity, then its claim to relate to this original cartography can be made and used to establish its legitimacy *as* cartography. Although maps may be linked to Euclidean projection, they are not mono-functional. Although mapmakers would wish us to regard the results of their graphic labors as veridical, maps are among the most ideological and the least disinterested of human artifacts. If anything, the practicality of maps has linked them with human motive, desire, dissimulation, etc., to the point that maps can claim almost anything *but* objectivity. Maps, like statistics, are made to lie; the issue is, how is the truth concealed within the presentation of “facts” designed to mislead?

The Cretan who says that all Cretans are Liars presents his subterfuge immediately. We laugh as soon as we realize that, in referring to himself, he has put his claim into jeopardy, which has nonetheless seemingly proved his point; we may even have understood that a truth-telling Cretan was using the same logic, but with one more step required to spot the circularity of self-reference. The robber who demands “Your money or your life” has presented us with a forced choice. We really are not able to choose freely, since to lose one’s life is also to lose one’s money. Lacan has made it clear that *énonciation* is always at odds with *énoncé*, the content is always undermined by the act of presentation. A map is, like the Cretan Liar, saying “all statements inside this box are true,” which makes the same “error” or rather “scam” of self-reference. This convertibility focuses us on two things: (1) the convertibility of the frame function, and (2) the existence of what Lacan called “the truth of the truth,” which is precisely this convertibility. The truth of truth is its projectivity, its self-intersection and non-orientation. The lying Cretan is accompanied by his twin brother.



**Möbius strip**



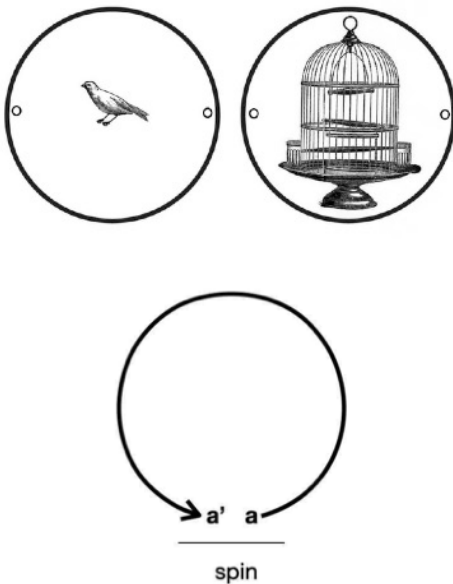
The King is accompanied by the court fool, who tells us that the King is really the fool and he, the fool, is the King, and he has the days to prove it (Saturnalia, Twelfth Night, Carnival, etc.).

If the fool has his “days,” then space must have its spaces where the time of ordinary duties fails to show up, and the time of exception takes its place, as a Real that breaks through the fantasy that had covered it like camouflage. The L-schema that Lacan developed presented ordinary time-

space as the  $\$ \diamond a$  of fantasy that sustains the blahblahblah *mixage* of discourse, along the axis of the  $a - a'$ , the two ego presences of, in this case, Analysis. The Analyst and other,  $a$ , presents to the Analyst other,  $a'$ . They are two vanishing points, two antipodes, on a horizon that pretends to be a 360° circle guaranteeing them maximum separation. But, of course, Lacan has, even at this early point in his thinking, the Möbius

band in mind, where the idea of a cut to maximize distance from its other is the same as the cut that places the other on top of itself. Is the mark at the join the point at which a cycle around the band completes itself? Or, is it just the half-way point of a circuit that must go on extra round? The same question should be asked about the Cretan frame, reduced to its Gettier condition. When Lacan says, in Seminar XIV, that “there is nothing that contains everything” (November 16, 1966, 11) we can read it as a limit to the project of containment or the success enjoyed by Nothing, that it in fact “contains everything.” We know where the court jester might stand on this issue.

The blahblahblah and the discourse of  $a-a'$ , the two egos in the examining room, are the same. The black letters on this white page and the blahblahblah of this text depend on the *poinçon* that sustains the idea of the essay, its discursive aims, and the struts and repairs that must be made by the reader to “hold things together.” The *poinçon* is many things for Lacan. It is a negating punch-hole, like that made by the conductor on the bus or train, to simultaneously validate and cancel the ticket. It is the  $<$  and  $>$  of the “too soon” and “too late” strategy of Analysis, the limitation of the Analyst’s intervention to either (1) marking a stumble in the Analysand’s blahblahblah with a cough or fidget or (2) suggesting a return to an earlier account, where the pattern of botched explanations or slips of the tongue had been particularly prominent.



At some point the  $<>$  widens —  $< \dots >$  — and the Unconscious breaks forth. Its structure is Symbolic, if only because that is the manner in which and by which it was originally suppressed. But, *what* was suppressed was the Real, the “truth of the truth” that fantasy did its best to cover over,  $\$ \diamond a$ , the *objet petit a* in this case standing for the “cause of desire” as *casuistry*, the attempt to disguise, dissemble, scam, fool. The  $a-a'$  of the L-schema turns the axis into a circuit, so that  $a/a'$  are, as on the Möbius band, superimposed on a *recto* and *verso* that technically cannot exist. Their newfound superimposition retains the circle in the form of a spinning (imagine  $a/a'$  as a “thaumatrope,” the popular 19c. toy disk suspended on a wound chord, spun to combine the thematically opposed images printed on opposite sides).

Graphically, we can show that the axis bent into a gapped circle has the same properties as the Möbius band, but the benefit of this demonstration is to find a “cinematic” element in the spin of  $a/a'$ .

As the two “images” of the thaumatrope combine in the famous  $\emptyset$ -phenomenon of cinema’s virtual motion between static frames, the blahblahblah reveals itself to be the same virtual travel back and forth between the egos of the Analyst and Analysand. The line is double, as in all discourse; the two lines are parallel; they point to two vanishing points, two antipodes, opposite on the horizon of discourse. But, this  $360^\circ$  is spun into  $720^\circ$  with a  $\emptyset$  in between, a “cinematic force” that animates every scene, every neighborhood, every public square. The blahblahblah is “the shout in the street” that Joyce played out in the Dalkey episode of *Ulysses*. A. M. Klein ruthlessly analyzed this chapter to show how Joyce had used Giambattista Vico’s schema of the ideal eternal history (history as a succession of gods, heroes, then

“ordinary” men without the exceptionalism of divine or heroic powers) to structure not just the chapter as a whole but each exchange. Appearing to be at first a blahblahblah conversation between Stephen Dedalus and the schoolmaster Garrett Deasy, the  $\diamond$  began to open up,  $\langle \dots \rangle$ , allowing Vico’s “repressed” Symbolic to give back what it had covered over with fantasy: the Real of history, its Providence, putting forward its *visibility*, its Real as ani-mation.

For Vico, the *animus* played the part of a wedge inserted into the passive *anima* of (Lucretian) reality. It was a *coelum*, a wedge or burin, but simultaneously the word in Latin for heaven. The same *coelum* is present in the story of the birth of Athena, where an axe breaks the firmament of heaven (Jove’s skull) to create the citadel-placement of the protective goddess of Athens on the Acropolis.

The spin of *a—’* thaumatropes the egos into the cause of desire, the  $\langle \rangle$  or  $\wedge \vee$  (Lacan indicated both by writing  $\diamond$  as overlain with a large cross,  $+$ , really a horizontal and vertical divide), as if to indicate that the void required for the escape of the Unconscious Real needed a rim, a frame, lips, a proper edge or escutcheon — something to grab on to, just as the Analyst used the Analysand’s bumble to prompt,  $\langle$ , or mark  $\rangle$ . We recognize these: they are the wings of the stage, and in the city they are the profiles of



blahblahblah buildings opening on to the more formal symmetries of plazas and parades, spaces waiting to be transformed on certain days when costumes are not only allowed but *de rigueur*. Cancellation and preservation: how often is it that we see these spaces marked by the statue of a hero?

If there is a literature of these voids, to correspond to the urban lipograms of such “heroic” voids, brought into focus on certain exceptional days, it is a literature with an extra “t,” “litterature” littered

with the blahblahblah of nonsense. The text must spin, commemorating the German derogatory insult, *du spinnst!* (You’re crazy!). IF the city was formed by the rule of a king, it was simultaneously de-formed by the blahblahblah of the fool assigned to remind the king of the frame around his truth claims. The frame of “all statements within this frame are false” is both the same and different from the one around “all statements within this frame are true.” The frame itself is a thaumatrope spinning one presentation with its *Doppelgänger*. The frame frames itself (cf. Saul Steinberg’s self-constructing artist).



Litterature about litter is, technically and historically speaking, psychoanalysis. This was what Freud took away from Giovanni Morelli (Ivan Lermontiev)’s method of authenticating paintings by comparing the ignored details: techniques of painting ear-lobes, aureoles, finger-nails, etc. — those objects at the frame-edge of the painting’s main subjects; things that would cause alarm if absent but, as present, exert no force over the questions of who’s who. These bits of graphic litter were the frame within the official main frame of the

painting, giving Freud the idea of the inside frame of the Unconscious, the rim where a  $\langle$  and  $\rangle$  condition



could spin fast enough to hasten the eye onward in its quest from something identifiable. Which is the blahblahblah in this example? The  $a-a'$  axis is certainly the blahblahblah, but it begins as the content framed by the Analysand as “what I have to say to the Analyst, the  $a'$ , the other ego in the room.” It is blahblahblah only thanks to the Analyst’s refusal to be the  $a'$  who is the target of this speech. Analysis converts the Analysand’s intentional essay into blahblahblah. The figure is made into a ground, a flat field *against which* a new figure will appear framed within the  $\langle \rangle$  of the *poinçon*. Formerly a cover-up (fantasy, as  $\$ \diamond a$ ), the negation of  $\diamond$  negates itself to spin. Just as the blades of a prop airplane’s propeller disappear



into a gauzy disk, the thaumatropic  $\diamond$  converts from cover to void. The veil reveals more than the face behind it. The body beneath the shroud is more Real than the exposed corpse.

Like the Shroud of Turin, the cover’s direct contact with the body beneath it does not, thanks to that direct transfer method, simply become veridical. It is a restorative cover. What is beneath is immortalized at the same time the cover magically records the identity of what it covers. In this way, the immortalization of Daphne, when she finds the midpoint of the “surface of no escape” that she has generated simply by her desire to escape, is a spin

between an insulating cover (the tree “covers” the virginal nymph). The thinness of the veil is simultaneously its thickness, its insulation value, its “idempotency” (power to sustain the same, as in the dream’s power to sustain sleep). Death is the physical midpoint of spiritual immortality. *Cælum* is heaven and a wedge.

As an engineer, you will be excited about the fact that no one has ever written about Daphne’s tree being an insulator before. The insulation that protects Daphne from Apollo’s advances has allowed us to compare her immortality (made evident by the associations of the laurel tree as “ever-green”) to idempotency, and idempotency with the conversion of the *external* stimulus into the *internal* element of the dream, in a *palindromic* order. This means that no one before this comparison has been able to talk about the dream as a figure-ground reversal, because the sleeper must be paralyzed in sleep, and the animations of the active dream must be *moved before their eyes*, like the images in Plato’s cave. In fact, the theory of idempotency suggests that we re-visit Plato’s analogy to do a figure-ground re-assessment. *Even if we make many mistakes in our re-structuring of this story*, we will open up “error data” that will be instructive, if only for the reason that *it will be the first time this error data has appeared*.

The first instance of anything raises a question with the following structural benefit. It allows us to ask the “unary trait” question. When Lacan, in Seminar VII (*The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*) asked “What was anamorphosis before it was anamorphosis?” he was suggesting that, before the 1600s, when Holbein and other artists began to construct distorted images to be seen correctly (“orthographically”) from a single viewpoint or using a cylindrical or spherical mirror, there was *something else that used the same logic*.

Because anamorphosis involves a specific kind of virtuality, he was suggesting that there was a virtuality that had gone unnoticed until the 16c.! We must ask ourselves, first, how this second kind of virtuality, one that works *in opposition to* or at least independently of the first, Euclidean virtuality, can be described *specifically/locally* using anamorphic art but then requires a *general theory* that does NOT rely on this “literal” presentation. The answer to what anamorphosis was before it was anamorphosis points to this secondary virtuality, but we find out very quickly that this “secondary” was actually a “primary.” That is to say, perspectival virtuality is *logically secondary* to the virtuality associated with (pre-)anamorphosis.

This is like the joke reputedly told by Oscar Levant, that he “knew Doris Day before she was a virgin.” By itself, the joke is the logic of the unary trait. The trait is the discovery, in something that must be, by definition, “a second instance,” a sign of something prior. Yet, it is the first time it has appeared in this way, as a trait, a symptom. What is the symptom a symptom *of*? The symptom is always accompanied by prepositions: first *what*, then *for whom*, then *when*. Before the unary trait there was something that came first, a little piece of the Real. We return to this retroactively, and the return is called (psycho-)Analysis. We cannot “remember” this little piece of the Real because the Real resists capture by the Symbolic. In fact, it is a mark of a hole in the Symbolic, a place where the Symbolic has failed, where fantasy has failed.

Fantasy has in fact this “structure of ‘being about to fail’” built into it, thanks to the *matheme*  $\$ \diamond a$ , where the object-cause of desire is a logical cause that involves deception, *casuistry*. If to cause means to deceive, the causal chain is a diagram of a scam. The fantasy obscures “the truth of the Real,” but the “truth of the truth” is that the scam *is* the truth that has structured “truths” to trap the Mark with a Con. Here, the role of the Shill, the agent of the Con who appears in a binary way, first as sympathetic with the Mark but second as the effective agency of the Con, is critically connected to the Imaginary. Alfred Hitchcock’s film *Vertigo*, involves an actress who plays the role of the wife of the rich industrialist who wants to kill his real wife, and to demonstrate to the court that his wife has died of suicide, he hires a retired police detective with acrophobia to follow “Madeleine” and fall in love with her so that his guilt will “prove,” to himself and everyone, that his evidence is authentic. The shill is the Imaginary, but in a specific way that we can generalize to the function of the Imaginary universally. Appearance, in short — *all appearance* — involves the spin of *a* (cause) to *a'* (casuistry), the apparent logical (and thus demonstrable) cause to the imposture of a scam engineered by a Con, a “cause of cause.” This is a theological cause if agency is allowed super-human capability, heroic cause if agency maintains a continuity with that capability, and mechanical cause if the continuity is insufficient to achieve its stated goals.<sup>3</sup> Because the detective is *unable* to follow Madeleine to the top of the tower where she will be replaced by the real Madeleine whose neck has been snapped just before throwing her off the tower, the Con remains “a god” of the plan and Scottie “authenticates” his tertiary status thanks to his guilt, his “minus condition” that required a heroic continuity (“I can do this!”) in order to have that continuity broken and brought to a sub-zero condition.

The Imaginary as a turning binary, makes the principle of cinema, the  $\emptyset$  function (actually a  $\beta$ -function), central. If this is not technically the product of image-latency, it is a matter of an inner latency of

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<sup>3</sup> This in short is Vico’s theory of agency, a “declension” of power with human capability as the set point. The + of divine power, the 0 of the heroic, and the – of the human (defined by limit or failure) is Vico’s system of gods, heroes, and humans.



the signifier, a *primary* and *primal* metaphorical nature. “To signify” is “to conceal,” and to conceal is to deploy latency in a way that creates both an anamorphic and a (secondary) virtual condition. In a previous study, Anahita Shadkam and I discovered that thaumatropes were found in Magdalenian caves in France, where they served as kinds of shamanistic prayer-devices. By painting a living animal on one side of a bone or stone disk and the same animal shown dead on the other, the spin of the disk would enact and “capture” the moment of death of the kill. The hole of these thaumatropes was in the middle, rather than on the edges, so the twisted chord anticipated the exact location of the spear as a vector of death. The spin of this ancient thaumatrope rehearsed the success of the hunt and “cosmized” death as present through the  $\emptyset$  (or  $\beta$ ) of perception, an actual *neural* state and thus a meditative/hypnotic reality of the hunter. This is the principle of the “qi” or relational state of mind developed by martial arts experts, a readiness in



Hercules, on the “night-sea journey” between life and death, the heroic *katabasis*.

relation to the point of balance/imbalance of the opponent. The thaumatrope carried the hunter’s “qi” to the pray, where it was located precisely at the balance between life and death.

In geographic terms, the balance is the boundary, graphically represented as a circular stream — that is, a flow that is paradoxically flowing in two directions at the same time. This is a “ $\emptyset$  river,” a true *clinamen*, a thaumatropic river that depicts the vectorial nature of the secondary virtuality that is “anamorphosis before it was anamorphosis.” It is a hydrological truth that rivers actually do flow in two directions at the same time. A principle of kayaking is to find reverse currents at the edges of a stream where the water has, in contact with the river bank, develops eddies and reverse flows. Although it is still true that, as Heraclitus advised, “you can’t step into the same river twice,” the principle of circularity makes every river a

thaumatropic binary, a model of the Lacanian Imaginary.

This seems to be anecdotal evidence, an extension of psychoanalytical theory to the ethnography of primitive prayer-disks and stories of visits to Hades. But, I propose that these offer an evidentiary basis for refining the idea of the Imaginary as a “Gettier Imaginary.” As such, the Imaginary would be redefined as *primarily* an anamorphic function within the RSI system. At the same time, this anamorphosis must be considered in light of its “skill” capabilities. It is a figure-ground reversal machine. It is a buffer/insulator. It is *idempotent*. It is the very means by which the signifier *as such* is both latent and “latency as such.”

Because the Gettier Field is, thanks to Dan Collins, demonstrably reversible (the field between the 111 of JTB knowledge “declines” to science’s skepticism of 000 in binary combinatorial relations defining faith, resistance, ignorance, error, rumor, and rationalization — as well as their own internal binary-fold relations). The agency of this reversal is the “imaginary” component, belief. We are “able to believe” if we are able to construct something as a possible, even if fantastic, sense experience. We cannot fly without mechanical assistance but we can *imagine* flying and in fact this is one of the more spectacular varieties of dream experiences. Fairy tales push the limits of what can be imagined, but this range is quite extensive. Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* could be considered as a similar kind of push. Daphne becomes a tree, Actæon

becomes a stag, a man (Tiresias) becomes a woman. Finally a mortal (Julius Caesar) becomes a god. We can imagine all of these transgressive conversions because we can conceptualize the boundary as simultaneously thaumatropic and idempotent. We can invert figure-ground, reincarnate the dead, and immortalize simple-minded nymphs because the *boundary* between all of these is simultaneously anamorphic and virtual, but in a spinning way that more precisely defines them as *co*-anamorphic and *co*-virtual. What is this “co-“? This is the way in which the object of a process is able to convert its passivity in



a reverse and active way. The ring, as a token of marriage, can become the cause of love; the king’s crown, if lost, deposes the king more effectively than a battle or assassin’s blade. The postman who brings the letter with bad news must be shot. “Reverse predication” is the name I have given to this inversion of causality, but this missed the point, the need to bring in anamorphosis and virtuality as logically prior to their famous entries onto the stages of the visual arts and literature. The *co*- of reversed predication means that the frame frames itself before it is able to frame an “other-ized” content. Language “speaks itself” (and us) before we are able to use it in everyday conversation. Doris Day was quite a girl “before she was a virgin.”

Shouldn’t we also ask what Daphne was before she was a tree? This would have us looking for the way Daphne’s tree-ness worked as a latent signifier so that as soon as she had the idea to run from Apollo, she found herself on a surface without boundaries, i. e. a trap. Apollo and Daphne present themselves as paradigm exemplars of the standard neurotics’ division between compulsion (Apollo) and hysteria (Daphne). Apollo is driven to remove the *separation* between himself and his beloved, while Daphne is, on a surface of no escape, the classic case of *alienation*. It is now that we realize how clearly these two clinical diagnoses are related to the “criticism of the cut” and “criticism of punctuation.” Daphne, thanks to her premature termination of the chase, her idempotency and insulation defense, punctuates the story by invoking the very self-intersecting topology that was her spatial curse. Apollo, thanks to the reversed arrow-vectors (either one double-tipped arrow or two arrows shot simultaneously in opposite directions with opposite “poisons”),  $\Leftrightarrow$ , becomes the epitome of non-orientation. Like a denial of service attack on a web server, the obsessive “floods the system” with repeated demands. And, like the idempotency defense of algorithms designed to neutralize such attacks, Daphne converts the first arrow into a palindromic resistance shell, “domesticating” Apollo’s emotion into respect for her immortality, which we now see is another word for a durable paradigm of metaphoric conversion, able to bring signifiers from out of a protected treasury of signifiers just as the dream pulls out infinite details to re-situate the external disturbance as one of many elements in the narrative. Domestication here means “within the power of the imagination to materialize.”

### **Daphne’s Retroactive Virginity**

The joke about Doris Day (“I knew Doris Day before she was a virgin”) points to a critical feature of Lacan’s theory of metaphor, namely that it involves a staging of retroactive causality. In Dan Collins short essay on metaphor, he uses the example of a little girl who sudden says something quite bizarre: “Some day I will grow a tooth on my bottom!” She is of course referring to her lack of a penis, by projecting a time

when this missing part will be restored. But, she does not yet know what a penis is, or how it is possible or impossible for her to have one. She does have the signifier, “tooth,” however, and she uses it to suppress and at the same time “manage” this unknown anatomical feature. Consider the first expression of this situation. It is penis/x, where x is the unknown ? of penis. It is not articulatable. However, with the metaphor of the tooth, we have the moment when penis is sublated: tooth/penis. The combination of tooth/penis • penis / x is Lacan’s formula for metaphor (before it is condensed). It shows that conception is impossible (the “x”) until the metaphor is formed; then meaning occurs retroactively. We encounter the metaphor first, in experience; but this encounter identifies a *moment prior* to its formation, the penis/x condition of unknowability: penis/?.

Daphne was a virgin before Apollo was inflamed with the passion to take it away from her, but she didn’t know this: Virgin/?. With the metaphor of the tree, the transformation Daphne employs to evade her suitor for once and for all (tree/virgin), it is easy enough to say that the tree is a metaphor for Daphne’s perpetual virginity, something that Apollo immediately recognizes as a “hapax” formation. It is the first time he has experienced his love-object convert herself into a tree. But, the hapax lies not in this historical firstness. Actually, the conversion, though first in experience, points to the virgin/? condition as *logically prior*.

Could this not point the way to the unary trait’s circularity? In Seminar XVII, Lacan gives an account of the unary trait this way. In talking about the way Euclide demonstrates the idea of proportion in Book V, it is easy to miss the fact that what Euclid requires is a symbolic demonstration, grouped into equalities and inequalities (Lacan, Sem. XVII, 155–56), to achieve the *logos* in the sense of proportion. But, it is “curious” and “indicative,” Lacan notes, that we had to *wait* for the Fibonacci series before we could see what is given by the “proportional mean.”

SPECULATIVE, FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION: If Daphne was anything before she was a tree, it was that we had missed the fact that she was *already* this “tree,” this resistance, from the moment she was shot with a hate-tipped arrow. But, she was a tree in a way that was suppressed by the metaphor tree, which is to say, she was a virgin before she was aware of what being a virgin meant. This latency was suppressed; the suppression was *already and always* an insulated *incubator*. A water nymph’s status as virginal states that the insulation of the womb remains inviolate. Its interior is forever interior because of its capacity to convert anything external. This already-always is the latent form of the tree as evergreen, immortal.

NOTE: In telling the Apollo-Daphne story Lacan leaves out the beginning of the story, Apollo’s mockery of Eros’s archery skills, and Eros’s revenge of the opposing arrows of Love and Hate (or single arrow with two points). This would have supported Lacan’s idea of Daphne’s escape as generating its own “surface of pain,” but since he doesn’t, the reader has to put the story together himself. Why this omission? He also doesn’t say anything about the ever-green status of the Laurel tree, or even mention that it was a Laurel, and thus related to the garland awarded to the victorious athletes of the Olympic games. Again, why? The arrow would have linked the story to the issue of the vectors in projective space, and the tree’s species would have linked it to the issue of idempotency as an insulating *buffer*. With these two missing elements, we have a program to advance the idea of a “Gettier RSI” and talk about how mapping relates to a *failure of knowledge*, from the “impossibility” of Justifiable True Belief (111) to the “improbability” of science’s



skeptical position (000). The declension of the 111 to the 000 shows that the Imaginary is the central, pivotal term/domain, and that this pivoting function is in essence *anamorphosis*.

My project these days has been to show the necessity of connecting anamorphosis to the “secondary virtuality” of projective geometry. The idea of a map that could be “non-projective” (more like a rubbing than a photograph) involves orthography, a 1:1 that might theoretically be distinguished from bi-univocal concordance and bijection. This would be an orthography of touch, of transfer, where  $1 \rightarrow 1$  becomes the *unary trait*. I would use the binomial algebra of the Fibonacci ratio,  $x = 1 + 1/x$ , to demonstrate that. The unary trait is one of those ideas that is poorly understood because it appears in so many forms and is applied to so many different situations. MAYBE this could be overcome by relating it to idempotency (because, as in the equation there is self-intersection but the ratio is not a real number, so there is non-orientation, it is “ever-evading” being pinned down) and then to the reversal of figure-ground in the dream, where the sleeper is paralyzed and the dream must be moved in front of his/her frozen eyes, as in Plato’s metaphor of the Cave.

What kind of cartography would come out of this project? I would hope that it would allow the mapping of those “transgressive” spaces where the orderliness of the neurotic gives way to the blahblahblah of the psychotic, as in Joyce’s *Ulysses* or, better, *Finnegans Wake*. Fin-again after all is “begin again,” which is the principle of the Death Drive. So, there’s a lot at stake!

WAIT, THERE’S MORE ...

**An interesting coincidence of conversations about the role of the wedding ring in *Rear Window*:** the ring is clearly the “agalma” of the film’s story. It becomes the basis of the quest that compels Lisa to climb into Thorwald’s apartment. Prior discussion sets up the algorithm of marriage: a ring, though  $360^\circ$  in its official round, is one of a set of two, so  $720^\circ$  equals the marriage. As half of the circuit of marital union, a ring is both  $360^\circ$ ,  $720^\circ$ , and  $180^\circ$ , one of a set of two. Lisa recovers the ring and puts it on her own finger, liquidating the conversation she and Jefferies have had about marriage. She has effectively gotten married thanks to her heroic recovery of the hidden ring, proof of Thorwald’s guilt.

At the same time, the scene of recovery short-circuits the surveillance circuit by which Jeff had watched Thorwald without being detected. This was a half-circuit,  $180^\circ$ , filled out by Thorwald’s return glance once he noticed Lisa signaling to Jeff that she had found the ring and was concealing it “out in the open,” displaying it (like a Purloined Letter) on her finger. This kind of concealment is a “super latency.” It is durably concealed because it is out in the open, its invisibility is based on the fact that others are not looking for it there. Looking and finding are a  $360^\circ$  circuit, a  $\Leftrightarrow$ . Not finding is therefore  $180^\circ$ . But, super latency is  $720^\circ$ , as if to say, “no matter how much you look for the ring, you won’t find it because it is in a space you yourself define as ‘not a place to look.’”

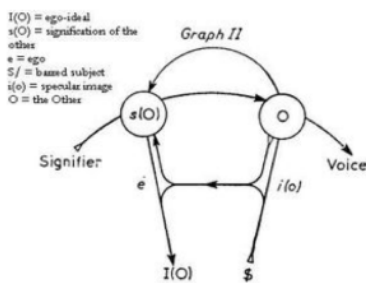
Idempotency’s formula is  $X + X = X$ , or  $X \times X = X$ . Note, in the case of multiplication, that the number 1 actually meets this criterion! The case of addition is also idempotent if, as Lacan and Miller have noted, you do not notice that there is a count going on until you reach the number 2, then you “recover” the 1 retroactively. So the ‘1’ was not ‘1’ until 2. Miller goes further, to implicate zero. See his essay on Suture,

where in the second section, “The Zero and the One,” he gives a synopsis of the numeric version of idempotency.

There are two kinds of critique in Lacanian psychoanalysis, the critique by the cut (= the bar, the division between conscious and unconscious mind, the pairings of suppression and return of the signifier, the ego ideal and ideal ego, alienation and separation ... ) and the critique by punctuation (closure, *récit fort*, retroaction, *après coup*, etc.). IDEMPOTENCY ARGUES FOR THE THEORETICAL UNITY of both kinds of critique. It is about the inclusion of the double and the splitting of the unity. What is the advantage of having a single theoretical consolidation?

In the case of “signifierness,” it is usually only the child who is naïve enough to take pleasure in the sheer repetition of signifiers that break free from their signifieds. Thus, the dog that goes meow meow and the cat that goes bow-wow are hilariously funny to the child. We must not make the error of Ernest Jones, however, who dismissed this phenomenon of sheer signifierness. Lacan takes this up in the essay, “In Memory of Ernest Jones,” *Écrits*, 593, 2. Yet, in following Freud’s pairing of symptoms and repression, Jones seems to miss the function of direction by which “what goes down must come back up,” the very dynamic model Lacan uses in metaphor, where the metaphor M sublates a signifier S’ (M/S’) making it “necessary” (= just, right, necessary) that a signifier should return (S’/x) but with an element of mystery attached (the x in S’/x is sometimes written as ? or s, the “signified effect”). There is justification for reading Lacan’s formula for metaphor,  $M/S' \bullet S'/x \rightarrow M(1/s')$  as a *section cut* into the circuit that connections the signifierness of metaphor, its function as a symptom without a physiological *locale*, as in the case of hysteria, where the latent cause is also allowed mobility (the womb can move to the ear, as in the case of Mary’s miraculous conception).

The case of the 1 in  $1/s'$  is not to be overlooked. It can be the unary trait, the usual assignment for a symptom that recalls an earlier instance, where as in the case of Anna O., the father’s cough has been appropriated unconsciously and pops up later in a little cough she manifests. The 1 can also be the basis of the “notice that counting is going on,” with the appearance of the number 2, which makes 1 the logical



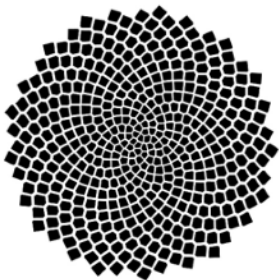
basis of what is empirically first. (Then, we must allow J.-A. Miller’s essay on suture to solve the problem.) Or, we can consider the  $1 \times 1$  square in the case of the Golden Rectangle, the square that is added to the rectangle without changing the ratio of its sides or, alternatively, subtracted with the same result. Whether a large square or small one, the area is still “the same,” namely  $1 \times 1$  because it is a ratio rather than a quantitative bit of territory.

Sometimes the 1 is substituted by an I, which is interpreted as an ego-ideal, an  $I(A)$  correlative to an ideal ego, an ideal ego, an  $i(a)$ , which is the rival that inspires (“inflames”) the Master’s rage for recognition in the Graph of Desire. In this circuitry, the idempotency rule would still apply. The Master’s Discourse is plagued by the irony that, if all rivals to the master’s claim of superiority are eliminated, as he seems to want, the only one left will be the servant, who is unable to provide, except in a humiliated version, the respect he desperately craves. Irony is the essence of the wedding ring analogy, where every ring is one of a pair ( $180^\circ$ ) or symbol of the double

circuit (720°) in addition to being, from the jeweler's point of view, 360°. Note that Thorwald is in fact a “jeweler” who has a suitcase filled with sales samples that Jeff speculates he has used to carry away the parts of Anna he has cut up after strangling her. Why would Thorwald take any care to preserve Anna's wedding ring if he has a whole suitcase of similar rings? Clearly, it is a “one of 1.”

The unary trait involves a recognition of the 1 as one, or one as 1, which is to say that it is not enough that it is a signifier, it must also be a “signified effect.” Mathematically, this is related to the Conway Constant, derived from the series of numbers generated by saying what is seen: 1 becomes a “one 1,” then it is converted to 11, which becomes “two 1's.” The series 1, 11, 21, 1211, 111221, 312211 ...” can be learned easily by looking and saying, but it makes no sense that this merger of a number's “audio-active” aspect and its numerical function should have any determinative end in a constant. Yet, this is just what idempotency implies, whether we are looking at the Fibonacci number series or the Conway Constant. With Fibonacci's series, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21 ..., each number is a sum that is converted into the component of a subsequent sum — a whole that becomes a part. The 5 that is the sum of 2 and 3 becomes

a new part of the sum of 8, when it is added to 3, which was originally a part of 5. Each number's *turn* from being a sum to a part of a sum is the rotation that implies a 180° but the circuit is present, already, in the constant  $\emptyset$ , the Fibonacci ratio. Again, the 5 is half of something to be completed but also a double. Idempotency is already demonstrated by the Golden Rectangle's constant shape, and the ratio  $\emptyset$  is used in nature to pack things into the most efficient array, such as sunflower seeds on the corona of the flower. You can see two “competing” spirals, further suggesting the idempotent power of 360°, 720°, and 180° as co-equal ways of qualifying the idea of the circuit, and a way of seeing how the “criticism by punctuation” necessitates the idea of idempotency.



We should not think of this commentary on the double or half circularity of the circuit as itself “closing.” It is simultaneously centrifugal, as the idea of “signifierness” implies. If the cat can go bow-wow, then we have the beginning of unlimited semiosis, the ability of anything to say everything. This is concretely manifested in the “object that speaks,” whether we must first kill nature or allow that, from the beginning, it has had the power of speech but that this power was suppressed by the realism of human conception, i. e., that objects are things without minds, intentions, or expressive autonomy. If an object is dead, then the idempotency rule means that it has *maximal potentiality* as something that has something to say. Its very deadness insures that it has all the more to say to us, and we are in the zone of Galileo's Book of Nature, his *Il Saggiatore*, where he wrote “the grand book of the universe ... cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and to read the alphabet in which it is composed ... the language of mathematics.” Galileo was late to the game of having objects that talk. The entire science of divination, Vico argued, depended on the sacrifice. Only the dead animal could speak, a palindromic reversal of the living animal, whose bow-wows or meow-meows were, as *expressive*, the surest indicators that an equal and opposite content was being *concealed*. If that were so, it would be necessary to kill the animal to reach this *maximal occulted content*. Again, the cut (*templum*) would be implicated, and the anatomical section of the sacrifice would lend a particularly sinister meaning to the architectural section.

This is to say nothing about what is even more obvious, that the *templum* also established the idempotent (unmovable) status of what was obviously portable, the cross of *cardus* and *decumanus* that was the center of the Roman *urbs* ... or the relation of the *urbs* to the plow, which founded the city by plowing a *circuit* around a space, dividing inside from outside that would later require a space (*pomœrium*) for maintenance. Why maintenance? — Because this spatial division was primarily temporal. Just as the sentence's idempotent meaning (or, rather, the requirement that all meaning be idempotent in its *truth* function) is established retroactively, so that we *must wait for* meaning to complete its *circuit*, which will be simultaneously a return (360°) accomplished/certified by a retroaction (180°), doubling the vectorial aspect of diachrony (720°). The circuit to repair the city wall's idempotency is always a *re-circling* in the sense of Eliade's "eternal return." If every time is a first time, then the first time is also the "every time," not increased by repetition but confirmed — in the same way Lacan emphasized that the marks on the hunter's bow were the very model of the unary trait, in that they did not "add up to anything" but simply confirmed the authenticity of each kill.

### **Apophesis**

The Medieval rhetorical technique of describing something by listing what it is not, "apophysis," might tell us something useful in relation to Lacan's interest in the lozenge-shaped void of the join of the two Euler circles. We have to remember that the Euler circle, unlike the Venn circle, steadfastly refuses to enclose what cannot be enclosed in reality. Thus, it stops when it reaches the limit of the Real. Unlike the rash Venn carriage, which rides over the frozen lake despite warnings, the Euler will stop, prudently. Or, if told after unknowingly riding across the frozen lake, the passengers in the Euler carriage will die, outright — retroactively obedient to their rule of reality.<sup>4</sup>

The overlap between two circles should be something, but Euler insists that not only are they nothing, they are *less than nothing*. They are a void. Two circles, 360° each, should add together: a zone of 720° unification! Or they should at least maintain the 180° territory that each has lost. OR, they should add the two 180° halves back to restore the 360° in the name of intersection. Rather, Euler maintains, they are *less than nothing*. How less? Lacan explains ("...") this by saying that there is a "symmetrical difference." We can imagine this by saying that what each circle lacks is a palindrome of what the other lacks. The series 1, 2, 3, X, Y will be mirrored by Y, X, 3, 4 5. The  $XY \Leftrightarrow YX$  palindrome will, in its crisscross, both cancel and preserve the void of the vesica, the  $\cup$  without  $\cap$ , union without intersection, or "how two circles can embody Hegel's principle of *Aufhebung*."

Apophesis is the rhetorical name for symmetrical difference,  $XY \Leftrightarrow YX$ , by virtue of the fact that the missing parts are missing in "opposite positions" (first two *versus* last two) which convert across the "cut" made by the void. A palindrome maintains a constant sum or sigma value: 12345/54321 > 1/5, 2/4, 3/3, 4/2, 5/1 ... all  $\Sigma = 6$ . The way 6 is "maintained" is by employing a bar that requires the value of the space above it to add to the space below it to produce, in every instance, the number 6. Thus, the bar, —, = 6, but only as a combination of elements that vary in equal and opposite ways, "sliding past each other" like a

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<sup>4</sup> This comparison resurrects the story repeated by Koffka in his *Gestalt Psychology*.

train moving across a landscape that, in a process shot made for a movie, has the landscape move across the train window.

In *Genesis*, the first day is left blank, ☉, while the last day is left “unused” (the sabbatical). Is this not the same argument? Are not the first and the last, the alpha and omega, “in need of each other” — in order to *close* the project of creation? This points to the fact that projective geometry’s 2d surfaces exemplify “projects of enclosure,” which can be embellished, in the poetry of myth, as a nymph pursued by a god (Daphne by Apollo), or by the Möbius band’s “join,” which twists XY to meet YX, not so much eliminating one side and one edge as “escaping the grasp” of two fingers daring to pinch the band as it is drawn between them. Daphne, realizing there is no escape, is after all able to escape Apollo’s grasp by becoming the evergreen laurel tree, which will be the “laurels we may rest upon” after the successful completion of heroic labors.

The mystery of the signified *effect* is that it requires nothing. It can speak from anywhere, but especially from the dead thing, the sacrifice. You can’t be dead without being killed first. The importance of ethnography is that it gives us so many examples of the “interval between the two deaths,” that time-space after literal death and before Symbolic recognition, hence the moment before the Mirror.

