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Visualizing Lacanian Mathemes

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Don Kunze has taught, lectured, and written about architecture theory since 1984, at Penn State, the University at Buffalo, LSU, and Virginia Tech (Alexandria). Since 2014 he has intensified his interests in Jacques Lacan by contributing to conferences and events (*Écrits*, LACK, APW, APCS, LacanSalon) and organizing a group of architecture theorists interested in psychoanalysis (iPSA: https://ipsa.psu.edu). He is presently engaged in a book proposal for the Palgrave Lacan Series on Architecture and Lacan.
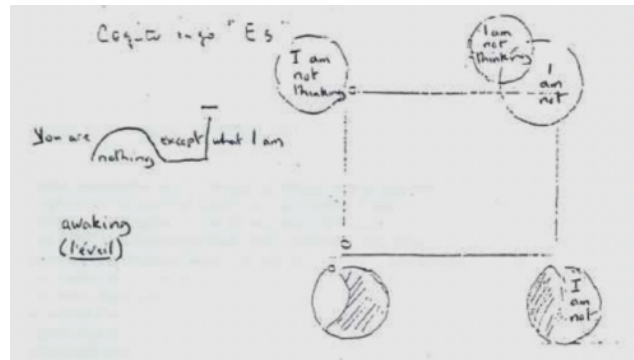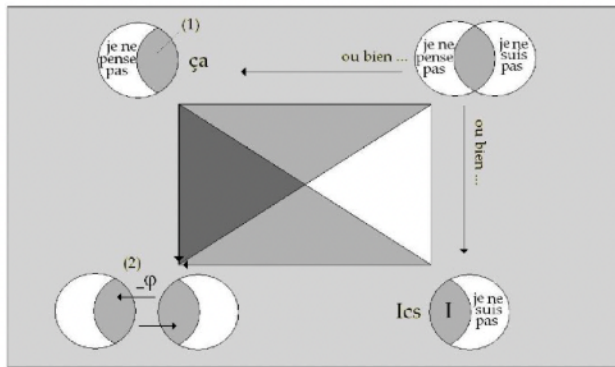
Illustration from the French text of Seminar XIV (*Structure of Phantasy*), left; Cormac Gallagher's translation, right. Even for official translations of the seminars, graphic insertions are often inconsistent, incomplete, or entirely omitted.

Visualizing Lacanian Mathemes

Although many Lacanians would wish Lacan's topology and knot theory would simply go away, Lacan's commitment to the projective geometry discovered by Pappus of Alexandria in 300 a.d. and expanded by Girard Desargues and Blaise Pascal in the 16c. never wavered. As early as

Lacan's 'flagship' writing on the Mirror Stage, it is clear that projectivity for Lacan constituted a second form of virtuality, co-existent with but anamorphic to Euclidean perspectivalism. With Seminar IX (*Identification*) and XIV (*The Logic of Phantasy*), he was more explicit. Topology constituted an 'effectiveness factor' of the Real behind the key functions of metaphor, construction of the Other, *jouissance*, and the Analytic session itself.

My presentation will limit itself to the proposition that re-visualizing and animating Lacan's difficult references to topology can allow us to overcome the inconsistent transfer of Lacan's blackboard sketches to transcripts and translations. Patient analysis of a few key examples ('a little fragment of a surface', shown above as an inversion of Descartes' *cogito*, from Seminar XIV) reveals the pervasiveness of Lacan's 'toroidal' thinking and key extension of this to such important central features of his theory as metaphor, parapraxis, and anxiety.

My analyses involve figure–ground reversal, animation, *extimité*, and silhouette to demonstrate how Lacan returns to a 'quantum' conception of simultaneity binding suppression to symptoms and symptoms to the 'blah blah blah' of sheer signifierness — the 'dog that goes meow and the cat that goes bow-wow'. In the matter of nonsense ('colorless green ideas sleep furiously'), the *cogito* finds its antipode in projective geometry's origami procedures and where 'bi-univocal concordance' finds its graphical nemesis in symmetrical difference of Euler circles' 'overlap without union'.