

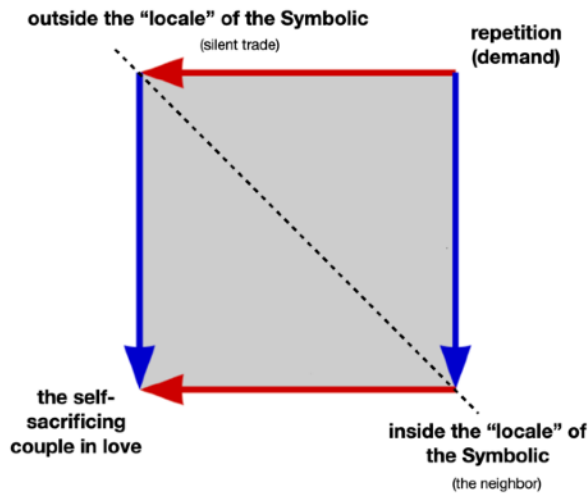
Seminar XIV (Logic of Phantasy): Notes on the Situation of the Neighbor

These notes stem from discussion with Claudio Sgarbi, Berrin Terim, and Jodi LaCoe on session 14 of Jacques Lacan's Seminar XIV. Lacan presents in this session a slide-rule analogy, more claims about a diagram based on the reference diagram of the torus, a brief reference to Claudel's play, The Hostage, and many other topics. Sgarbi began in independent line of questions about the status of the neighbor in architecture, and given the interest of many Lacanians about this "architectural" topic, I decided to make some notes about the origins of neighboring in the institution of silent trade. References to silent trade are drawn from Norman O. Brown's study, Hermes the Thief; ideas about Cyclopean culture are based on Giambattista Vico's New Science and Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges' The Ancient City.

1. As we know by studying Lacan, the question of the "Big Other" (*Autre*) is a complicated idea. It is *our* construct, *our* idea, but it is something alien to us. We never know for example what the Other wants of us. Yet, we identify with the desire of the other, and form our demands to the Other in relation to that desire. This is part of the essence of being a human subject, that our signifiers are always constructed in relation to this (unknowable) desire of the Other. I will try to understand the Other in relation to a specifically architectural condition, the neighbor.
2. The neighbor is an Other who has certain qualities. First, both you and the neighbor have implicitly given consent to be next to one another. You will not kill your neighbor, he will not kill you; you both agree to lay aside aggressive actions in order to be neighbors. Otherwise you are not neighbors, you are attacking forces who are at war. If you and the person near to you are both neighbors (there is no such thing as one neighbor), then you have ALREADY come to this point. No intention to be aggressors, at least "not for now."
3. Even Cyclopean culture allows for a degree of neighboring, and its techniques are worth examining. Cyclopean neighbors implicitly agree to be neighborly (have a trading mechanism) but they don't want to see each other (this is *always* an option of neighborliness). Their mechanism is to determine a mutually convenient trading point by kicking stones into a pile at various places, and the biggest pile wins. The pile, by the way, is called the "herm," and this evolves into the idea of the god Hermes.
 - a. This technique does not require any face-to-face interaction! The two principles of neighboring, (1) agreement to be non-aggressors and (2) the construction of a "propinquity," in this case a "trading relationship," are met. Note that Cyclopean traders are neighbors who are not physically adjacent. The only requirement is that they have access to a trading point. This demonstrates a quality of neighboring that is not normally noticed: that neighbors do not have to be adjacent, they just have to be related through some "propinquity structure." One of these is of course adjacency, but it's not the only one.
 - b. Without having to meet face to face, Cyclopean traders are able to trade by "taking turns." One leaves a surplus good at the trading point, The trading partner comes later, takes the left goods and puts his own surplus good in its place. The first partner comes back and finds the replacement, the trade is consummated. Note that there can be more partners, the system still works!

4. Do we still have the neighbor idea? Yes. No aggression is built into the system. Propinquity based on adjacency might allow for this, which is why it is a fragile form of neighboring. In fact it is forbidden in the Bible (“Do not build your houses with common walls”). This rule was violated by the families of Pyramus and Thisbe, look what happened. This is also a theory of tragic love, as we know from the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, who fell in love *because* their only means of communication was a hole in the party wall. This story became Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, so we know that it is a durable formation of the love relationship, particularly when we get to the conclusion of double suicide. Both parties in this kind of love make a foreclosure, a self-sacrifice. In the O. Henry story of the woman who cuts her hair to buy her husband a chain for the watch he has sold to buy her a hair-clasp is the same story, and the symmetry of the sacrifice is the key element.
5. We have a way of answering your question, “What is the little ‘a’?” Lacan refused to define the little a, the *objet petit a*, Lacan is a smart guy, so I conclude that we should be a little cautious in thinking that we can simply define the little a as you ask. Why is the *objet petit a* hard to define simply? Because it is about the complex symmetry of the kind of love that arises from improper neighboring! Pyramus and Thisbe love each other not because they meet and fall and love but because they *don’t meet* and they must construct fantasy ideas of what the other (A) is like, using the acoustic evidence of their conversations through a tiny hole in the wall.
6. You challenge the idea of the Golden Mean because it does not suit you. This is not a rational way of rejecting something that has lasted for over 2000 years. Your dissatisfaction is personal, and if we are to share it you must justify why it is a case of “not all that glitters is gold.” The Golden Mean is golden of course because “gold” in ancient speech meant “immutable,” like the substance gold it can’t be corrupted. That is all it means. A ratio is immutable if it doesn’t change when conditions change. When the golden rectangle is big or small, the ratio is still the same. It is Golden. It is silly to say that you like it or don’t like it. It has nothing to do with liking it or agreeing with it. I’m looking at the nice tree outside my window. It is there whether I like it or not, although I have the power to cut it down. I decide that this would be a nasty thing to do. WE should neither be nasty nor nice to the Golden Mean, we should respect its antiquity and learn its meaning.
7. No one needs to be a genius to think that there is something similar in the hole in the wall and the *objet petit a*. We know that the little ‘a’ is a lack or cut, we know it is something people act on even though they can’t define it or maybe don’t even notice it. So there is a *similarity* but we don’t have proof. This cut/hole turns acoustic speech into acousmatic speech — the speech of love. How do we get proof?
8. Let’s go back to the idea of Cyclopean silent trade. We know it exists, it has a structure, the structure is resilient. We also know it is durable because of its *structure*, that it works because of the symmetry that is built in, and we can compare this symmetry to the kind of love-symmetry of Romeo and Juliet, the double-sacrifice.
 - a. Claudio Sgarbi’s question of youwho-ness is not as ridiculous as it sounds [source: previous [email communication](#) where Claudio uses this term]. The O. Henry couple who mutually and symmetrically self-sacrifice are, I would argue, a case of the youwho. “Who” is an interrogation of the identity of the “you,” the subject. You is the name the Other gives you, so

- we have a case of a neighbor who has to call you something, and if your neighbor doesn't know your name, or you don't know his, you call them "you." "Hi, you!"
- b. So the youwho is the Othered subject, which brings us back to what Lacan has already said, that the subject is automatically Othered. I am a subject in that I relate to the Other I construct but who is filled out by empirical evidence, plenty of it, of Others who meet the specifications of my construct. [This symmetry of the subject's Other-ing is derived from the addition of the Symbolic to the Imaginary in Lacan's later reflections on the Mirror Stage.]
 - c. The connection to silent trade: I have seen the pile of stones, now I must imagine the trade that will go on at this point. I leave something at the spot, come back the next day, there is something I can use, in the place of something that I couldn't use. *I think that what I got is more valuable than what I left behind.* AND, the other trader feels the same way.
 - d. Now it is logically contradictory to say that both objects are more valuable than the other of the trade, but without this contradiction, no trade would ever take place. BOTH trading partners must think that they got the better end of the deal. If this doesn't happen there would be no trades, no deals, and since we know for certain that there are deals, lots of them, then it must be true that this SYMMETRY not only is possible and exists, but that it is NECESSARY.
 - e. This is the necessity of love, demonstrated by Pyramus/Thisbe and Romeo/Juliet and the couple in the O. Henry story. Mutual self-sacrifice. The youwho construct is the barred (sacrificed) subject, \$, who *must* construct a principle of propinquity (neighboring) that agrees to drop the intention to kill/destroy at the same time it agrees to agree — i. e. to make the agreement symmetrical, but in a "non-orienting" way. The couple in the O. Henry story demonstrates non-orientation the most directly, Pyramus and Thisbe a little less so. The symmetry of the youwho, the "Othered subject," is automatically sacrificial.
 - f. The trade involves non-orientation of the two gifts. Each gift implies the presence of something that will be absent because of the trade. The trade itself is a self-intersection, and the system is by definition a self-intersection, but the "self" here is the \$, the barred subject, the self-sacrificing subject, the subject who has agreed to put aside his murderous intentions.
9. Is there any other kind of subject than the youwho subject, the subject who is "always called into question," who is always set off balance by the desire of the Other, A, and the Other's incompleteness (\bar{A})? The answer to this is what Lacan gives in the reference polygon of the torus, which begins with repetition (another way of saying "communication," which is always a repeat of something, always a demand made to the A) and ends in suppression, either (1) the suppression of bad intentions or aggressions, like the Cyclops who say "Yes, we hate each other but let's trade!" or (2) the suppression of something we know without knowing we know, i. e. the Unconscious. I know that my neighbor is an asshole and he thinks the same thing but to be neighbors we have to say "Forget about it!" Or: to be a good neurotic I have to say "I know very well that X is Y, but *nonetheless* ..." In other words, to be a subject we must *suppress* an Id, whatever that is, and replace it with an Ego, which is our idea of our subjectivity put in imaginary terms. From the Mirror Stage on, we are able to form our subjectivity around a *spectral image*, a self *among* other selves (neighbors!) who use language to make demands



In this “fundamental polygon” of the torus (instructions for how to fold the projective 2-d plane to get a continent/incontinent bicycle tire), Lacan constructs the subject at the lower left as a double, a “Pyramus/Thisbe” who (his example is Synge de Coufontaine) is “between the two deaths.” This can be either (1) the deceased person who has forgotten how to die or (2) the living person who is outside the Symbolic but not yet dead, “undead.” In the O. Henry couple example, the husband sells his watch, the symbol of his standing, but the wife cuts off a part of herself, psychotically. Note that cutting off hair is a standard way of ostracizing women, as when the French cut off the hair of women who had fraternized with the Germans.

(away from town, in the countryside), the other is the very definition of a town.

12. Note that in both Pyramus and Thisbe and Romeo and Juliet, there are two parts of each story, a “town part” and a “country part.” Then there is the mutual suicide conclusion, which is seen clearly in the O. Henry story, which has town and country translated into the gold watch and the shorn hair.
13. When we see “abstract” principles as the basis of cultural practices, we have a “proof system.” We use one to check the other. In the seemingly random example of the O. Henry story, we see self-sacrifice but wonder about the two contributing forces Lacan says “must be there,” the outside and the inside forces. What are they? We know the gold watch is a status symbol for the husband who goes to work and, like the other guys, checks the time with a valuable gold watch. His wife wants him to have the accessory item, the chain, so that he can “do this in style.” Her hair sacrifice is more complicated, but

and structure stable relationships. It’s the stability we crave: we want both to wake up each morning as the same person who went to sleep the previous night, and to be able to imagine that the demands others make on us are not changing from second to second. In other words, we want things to be sane and not change continually.

10. To say that this is a universal case, Lacan uses the torus diagram. We do not have to ponder the existential qualities of the torus; we need only to note that the torus *as a 2-d surface* involves self-intersection and non-orientation. We can draw a closed figure on it that cannot be reduced to a point. This demonstrates, topographically, that it is a kind of “Möbius-band thing.”¹ It makes sense (to Lacanians) to say that “Romeo and Juliet are toroid.”

11. It also makes sense (to Lacanians) to say that silent trade, which happens in the remote countryside but still allows for two parties to receive goods they think are better than the ones they left, and the neighbors, each of which agrees not to kill the other but does not need “to know their name” (Claudio’s youwho principle), are two aspects of the same situation. One happens outside the Symbolic

¹ A Möbius band demonstrates this irreducibility more directly. If the band lacked the twist, we could draw a circle on it and shrink the circle until it was a point. But, even though we can also draw a circle on the Möbius band and shrink it to a point, the *edge* of the Möbius band is already a closed curve but it doesn’t/can’t reduce to a point. The principle of projective plane, that it is self-intersecting and non-orienting, is universal. When we “immerse” projective plane figures into 3-space, these two features appear visually and graphically as a cut, but the cut does not exist for the 2-d plane. The ant crawling across the Möbius band does not notice anything, sees no “twist.” The tiny ant moving around the cross-cap does not notice when he goes from inside to outside. Same thing with the Klein bottle ant. The projective form is 2-d, even though we can “immerse” it in 3-space. You can buy Klein bottles on eBay.



Frenchwoman getting her hair shorn as punishment for her sexual activity with German occupying forces during World War II. Shorn hair was both a sign of guilt and a demand that the guilty woman be shunned. The hair is the Lacanian “part-object,” whose loss can be noted, more in women than men, hence its use as a “feminine” punishment. But, hair’s power as an *objet petit a* goes back to the story of Samson, whose strength lay in his “powerful” mien, like the lion’s.

we find it in the way that shorn hair is used to ostracize. We say that the hair is an *objet petit a* because it has meaning when it is lacking, and the possibility of having hair involuntarily shorn as an act of ostracism creates the “psychotic” condition of the subject being ejected from the “sites of the Symbolic” — no longer allowed to be a neighbor.

14. The wealth of ethnographical data that comes with consideration of hair as an *objet petit a* is enormous. We only have to pick a few from the long list to confirm the validity of “toroid love.” Reverse engineering the model we have confidently confirmed allows us to extend the ethnographic evidence and the logical structure it manifests to better understand what the Big Other and little other are, and how they relate to each other.

15. Our first guess would be to say — intelligently, because we see it as the “unconscious action of cultures all over the world, who know nothing about Lacan — that A and *a* are self-intersecting and non-orienting, or “toroid.” Indeed, this is also what Lacan says about the torus, that the \$ subject, in making a demand to the Other, A, repeats something that is missing something. The repetition spirals around the 2-d surface of the projective torus (i. e. not the bicycle tire but the 2-d projective plane twice-folded) but each time it completes a 360° cycle, the plane has “moved on” a small bit, and that small bit is called *a*. *It should be there but it isn’t*. Where does this *should* come from? Who says it *should be there*? The Other, that’s who! The Other desires the little *a* to be there, but

we can’t find it. That’s why we repeat ourselves in our communications.² We have to. We use the Symbolic, language, to get recognized by the Other. Even when the Rat Man calls his father a lamp, plate, and dish-towel, he is asking to be recognized from *inside* the site of the Symbolic, the site of A.

16. Our torus is self-intersecting and non-orienting. Our demand creates/sustains the lack, *a*, that itself rotates around the central void. Because we can draw a closed curved figure that can’t reduce to a point, we know that the torus is “durable,” i. e. a form. It has the Vitruvian virtue of *firmitas*. What about *venustas*? Interesting! In Session 14 Lacan describes Synge de Coûfontaine as a beautiful woman who, in the play, *The Hostage*, sacrifices herself for her ugly abusive husband and is another case of Antigone, a woman “between the two deaths.”

- a. OK, we know that “between the two deaths” has two modes. One is the deceased person who doesn’t yet know he/she is dead (cf. *Mulholland Drive*, *Sunset Boulevard*, and countless other

² Language is by definition a repetition of words that already exist and are being used *at least two times*. Even in the case of the hapax, the original expression (“tuffet” is the famous example), the listener assumes that the word has already existed for it to be used, and invents a meaning. Neologisms are presumed to be manifestations of latent signifiers that have “always been around” but just not noticed until they are suddenly brought forth in the new expression. Language > repetition > demand (the implicit claim for recognition from the Other, who could be considered as nothing more than the source for the subject’s need to be recognized, a need that will *always come up short*).

examples from fictional literature and film). Two is the person who is deprived of subjectivity (the upper left corner of the fundamental polygon), the woman (usually) with the shorn hair. This is the person who is “dead to the Symbolic,” i. e. cut off from communication, exiled, in the desert or wilderness.

- b. Synge is beautiful but, as the play reveals, she has a facial tic. This, Lacan comments, also comes in two modes, a *grimace de vie* and a *grimace de mort*. It is an example of the part-object, also given the little *a*, *a*, and it turns the beautiful Synge into a not-so-beautiful suicidal woman who gives her life for the no-count Count, Toussant Turelure, mean and ugly. Asked to confirm her cousin, Georges, the “good guy” she actually has loved, she says no. This “no” makes no sense; it is a case of the *a*. It “holds the structure of the drama together.” The part-object, the tic, mars her beauty, cuts off her hair, so to speak, authenticates her as a resident of the upper left corner of the fundamental polygon. She is involved in silent trade. Her beauty is no longer a part of the society of the *Autre*, where she will be loved and admired. She is between the two deaths, outside of this zone.



Is it really necessary to say why this is the case? Image from *Lacanian Ink*.

- c. What do we have with all this potentially confusing detail? We have metonymies. The grimace is a part of Synge’s beauty, a part that marks her out — *out*, literally. She is not a part of the Vitruvian realm of *utilitas*, of language. Her no and her grimace have made her Symbolically dead as well as, in a few minutes, literally dead.
- d. We could go all over the place with this, to funeral customs identifying “between the two deaths” with the 40-week (or in some cultures 40 month) period of mourning, to the graphic identification with the meander of the Thesean labyrinth, with its 2x7 (back-and-forth) passageways, to the link between desiccation and the period of mourning, to the function of 40 and the sarcophagus to the idempotency of $1+x=1$, the math behind the unary trait and the Fibonacci series. Any one of these metonymies will fit into a cloud that is itself a projective surface of non-orientation and self-intersection, since it will “tell the tale” of the suppressed signifier, the Herr that made Freud forget “Signorelli,” and allow us to add the stories of the mural and the artist’s relation to his predecessor Fra Angelico, which he took so seriously that he painted himself standing *in front of the rival artist*.
- e. We can “go all over the place” with metonymies ... why? Because they combine the generic functions of the act and content, common to language in general, in their division of an indicative attempt to frame meaning with a mimetic gesture that materializes meaning directly. The classic metonymies, “forty head of cattle” or “twenty sails in the flotilla,” use the most vivid aspect of something to represent the whole. Heads and sails stick up and are noticed first. They materialize meaning directly. But, they point to more, the *whole* cow beneath the head and the *whole* ship beneath the sail, S/s. In the concrete experience of the signifier, S, we have reference to more, s, the signified, that is currently absent, thanks to distance or the horizon that hides the rest of the cow or ship.

- f. When Freud, trying to remember the name “Signorelli,” comes up with Botticelli and Boltraffio after going through HERzegovena and BOsnia, he moves down/up a staircase where only part of something justifies a move to something else. HER sounds like “Herr,” but Freud does not yet realize that this is the latent signifier, not “signor.” Signor goes nowhere. Herr goes all over the place. It is the master, the father, the Big Other, the *structure* that directs traffic all around the “cloud of signifiers” that is called parapraxis.
- g. A directs traffic because it is a structure and nothing more. Any time we try to pin it down, give it a name, an identity in real life, it slips out of reach. We spiral around the torus but we always miss something, the little *a*, and so our spiral moves around the void that is the *Autre*, the void that is the surface of the fundamental polygon that *calls us back* to the condition of mutual self-sacrifice, where parapraxis will “resolve” by revealing the structural principle, the X, of $S_2 \dots S_2$ (translation: the principle directing the flow holding together the series of signifiers we encounter in the parapraxis). The X is the *Autre*, void because it is suppressed (the lower left corner of the fundamental polygon). We know that X is “Herr” but what we don’t know is how Freud feels about his father that his suddenly frightened him when he sees Signorelli’s self-portrait standing in front of Fra Angelico’s. This is Freud’s version of Synge’s facial tic, something that has thrown into the zone “between the two deaths” that he names “parapraxis.” This is like being in a dream where we are looking for something we lost.
- h. Lacan has left us a lot of notes on the refrigerator door about metaphor. Although parapraxis involves metonymies galore, it is also about metaphor. It is about the suppression of a signifier, Herr, and the latent force of that signifier. So, do we have what we need to say why it is “wrong” to build something, *anything*?
17. It’s time to attempt a close to this long and, for some, tedious essay. Some say we build because we “need shelter.” Filarete says, or rather shows, that we need shelter because we no longer have God’s idempotent Paradise, where there is bi-univocal concordance (Adam creates things simply by naming them). Without Adamic speech, we can’t build the Tower of Babel. God sees humans building the tower and destroys it, making language bi-partite (both content and act, *énoncé* and *énonciation*).³ God knows his linguistics! So do the painters who represent the destruction of Babel as a line of clouds that can be indicating either (1) the destruction of the top, (2) the incompleteness of the project, or (3) the Real and hence invisible tip of the tower — which would, paradoxically, indicate that the tower is *successful* in bridging between earth and heaven — a truly GOLDEN ratio.
18. Isn’t this what is implied by all signifiers? That they connect a particular with a universal? The universal is given *prior* to the speech act that essentially embodies the universal in the act of speaking, which *repeats* this universal meaning. The speaker wishes to access this universality in the instance of making a demand of the Other, a demand to be recognized. The ratio is present. Earth connects to heaven, in hopes of saying to the Other that “I am here and I want your recognition (and respect).”

³ Linguists Lacan confers with also emphasize this. For example Roman Jakobson, who relate two binaries, act/content and contiguity (of metonymy) and semblance (of metaphor). Given that Lacan associates de Saussure’s signified with the Real in S/s (Signifier over signified), the Real is *inaccessible* to the Symbolic and, thus, in the upper left corner of the fundamental polygon. This is the *act* component, with the content component coming from the Symbolic corner at the lower right.

19. What is GOLDEN about this demand? It is a ratio, and the ratio does not change no matter how many times the demand is repeated (it is always repeated). It is always either too much or too little (this is the meaning of Lacan's demonstration with the ellipses where $A=1$ and $A-a = a^2$ and then a^3, a^4 and so on, dividing the "slide rule" into left and right sections of odd and even powers of a , point to a *vanishing point* not in Euclidean space but projective space (2-d that is immersed into our visual field).
20. Can we take this GOLD to the bank? Can we cash it in to redeem the question of why the compulsion to build is (1) a compulsion and (2) evil? One answer is that "God thought it was evil, and since God is by definition the source by which we are able to distinguish good from evil, we have to rely on Him." I am not satisfied with this answer. It postpones the problem without solving it. I also do not like the idea that evil is "the opposite of good." This binary signifier begs the question. We don't know any more about the good than we do of evil, so "Fuck us!" We do know however about the interval between the two deaths, where Synge and Antigone say "no!"
21. First, this space is an interval, between the Real (universal?) and Symbolic (particular?). As an interval it has a ratio, first presented as the opposition between what is immortal (the language that has come before us) and the particular (we must be living and existing to be speaking). I speak therefore I am. But here we run into a problem. We "are" only to the extent that the Other recognizes us, but the Other is something we constructed to "direct the traffic of metonymies we produce thanks to our suppression of a latent signifier." The Other is the X in the metaphor formula — the "signified" of all those chained-together steps of the parapraxis. We don't stand a chance of existing with all these fictional creations.
22. So the CUT that is said to come from God defending himself against beings who speak Adamic, whose words are equivalent 1:1 with things. It must be seen as a cut from below but be invisible from above. Below: Euclidean projectivity. Above: projective 2-d forms. The Above and Below require a line dividing them, although in the case of S/s we have to reverse the position of signifier and signified the same way Lacan did with de Saussure's s/S. Why? Because as speaking beings we are always not-beings. Our being comes from confirmation, from language, directed by the Other who is made distant from us, disconnected by a bar, —, every time we speak, S/s. That being goes away every time we open our mouths, the Symbolic *sucks out* Being, the definition of the neurotic who is good with words but doubts his/her own existence.
23. In architecture we have cuts of our own. We cut the ground after pacing out the foundation lines. This act simultaneously defines the earth as a surface that is to be penetrated orthographically, katagraphically: going *directly* down. We cut into the s, the X, the latent signifier, and the point is to *make sure it stays latent*. Otherwise the building erected on top of it (*scenography* assures that it will have a shadow) will stand. The words for standing and being are very close (STA- as in *estar*). The Being (*firmitas*) must be guaranteed by something, something *innocent* (idempotent, universal, uncontaminated), and we all know what happens next: the sacrifice.
24. Do we need to be reminded that sacrifice always comes in two parts? The husband sells his watch for the wife who has cut her hair? The *virtue* of a firm structure must be held up by the *NO* that is the self-sacrificing Synge or Antigone, the one who is "virginal by definition," a virgin by virtue of being between the two deaths. Neither Creon nor Toussant Turelure can mar her beauty, because she has herself limited it with her tic, a *unary trait* that repeats, forever and ever, the repressed signifier, just as Dora has coughed the same little cough her father had coughed "but she did not know it." More

correctly, she “did not know that she knew” (*kenosis*). Her latent signifier kept her coughing, but it was deniable. She did not know the cause of her cough. *Something had to be buried in the foundations to allow the Utilitas to have its shadows.*

25. The buried victim in the foundation wall — a universal in relation to architecture but not to building — does not have a shadow because it is a shadow. It is the shadow of the building above it directly, the “shortest shadow” that happens only at noon — *midi*. I won’t take you into Nietzsche’s elaborate romance with this idea, Alenka Zupančič has already done this. Rather, I will emphasize that the shadow at noon is both a shadow and not a shadow, thanks to the fact that at noon the shadow becomes the function of the vanishing point, and that all who stand (STA-/exist) will have the nature of all who no longer stand, since at death we “go to our ground,” prone, and our shadow departs from us, at least in religion and folklore. So standing at noon is a way of being “between the two deaths,” and of having an orthogonal relation to our non-existence — *which we now know to be symmetrical and different*, like the husband and wife in the O. Henry story. We also know it from the convergence of inside (the Symbolic) and outside corners in at the “suppression corner” of the reference polygon of the torus, relating repetition/demand with suppression. Now we know what is being suppressed in suppression! —Our Being.
26. We suppress a being in the foundation rite, literally. Do we also “suppress” “Being” in the more general sense, making the reference polygon a logical picture of architecture’s foundation ritual? My guess is that, yes, the reference polygon not only shows what happens when Romulus makes his own circuit of the wall location resistant to being reduced to a point (the collapse of the city) by making a katagraphic cut into the soil (and killing Remus just to make sure); it gives us a program that relates how the victim buried in the foundation also requires our *sorrow*, which we must feel as guilt, a guilt we must feel repeatedly if at all, and to repeat this feeling we must address the Other who is not paying attention (♩) because He/She is “just a structure.”
27. The structure? It is the non-orientation and self-intersection that, in origami fashion, folds over itself with a twist, to make itself Real, to Real-ize itself. This is not to trivialize the question of evil as inherent in architecture, but rather to say that it is central to architecture and the difference between architecture and building. “Building at any cost” means that sacrifice continues, “no matter what.” So, even in stupid buildings there is the architectural imperative, obscured and suppressed in the stupid building but realized in architecture. And, when building is minimal, as it is in the monument, the collectivization of guilt is even more evident. Every monument is a ratio, and a Golden one, or rather 1, that is a “tomb of the unknown soldier.”
28. In the film *Frantz* (Ozon, 2016), Adrien, a French soldier after the Armistice of the Great War visits the grave of a German soldier he has himself killed, Frantz. He tells the dead soldier’s family and fiancée that he was the former best friend of the soldier, concealing the fact that he was in fact the son’s killer. The grave is empty, but it is a place “within the precinct of the Symbolic,” the small German town, where it is possible to bring flowers and tend. The fiction of the grave (its emptiness) is symmetrical to the concealment of the visiting Frenchman. The two “lacks” create the forced-choice situation the fiancée faces when she falls in love with the Frenchman, and when she tries to follow him



Éduard Manet, *Le Suicide*, 1877–1881, which Adrien had characterized as his and Frantz’s favorite, a portrait of a man who bends backwards in laughter. Of course the bend backwards is the suicide’s recoil after firing a bullet into his brain, but the fiancée Anna realizes this only when she goes to the spot in the Louvre that Adrien has described. She is spared her own suicide by the painting, which keeps the structure of the story intact. She meets her new love, who is also drawn to this painting and sits on the bench beside her.

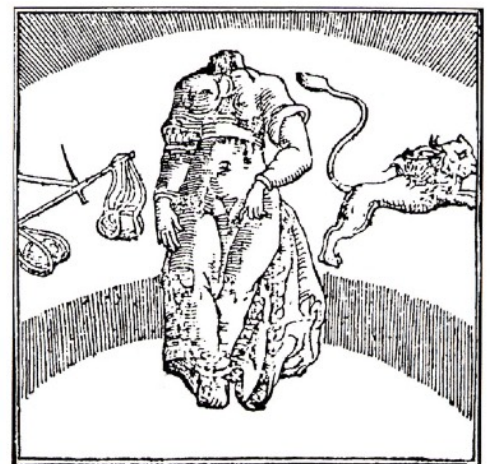
in hopes of marriage. She is saying NO, the No of Synge and Antigone, because she is between the two deaths, an exile from her home town and not yet really dead. The film fortunately replaces the fiancée’s second death with a new love she meets at the painting Adrien had claimed was his and Frantz’s favorite, which turns out to be ... [drum-roll] ... Manet’s painting *Le Suicide*.

29. Why does a French film by Ozon strive to “obey all the rules” of the architectural foundation ritual? Why does it use the ironically empty grave (= every monument) “correctly” and in symmetry with Adrien’s misrepresentation of his act of violent aggression in the wartime encounter? Part of this is compacted into the story told often about trench warfare, that two soldiers, each from the opposing side, would be found in an embrace. The enemies would appear as lovers, a reversal of the logic by which lovers such as Pyramus and Thisbe are destined to commit suicide. They do not have Lacan’s reference polygon at the ready; they are not structural linguists nor Biblical exegetes.

NONETHELESS, the rule must be obeyed. We MUST build and we MUST feel guilt, and this guilt MUST be repeated.

30. Can we say that all repetition is a repetition of this original guilt, the guilt that comes from the orthography and katography of foundation rituals? Possibly. The key would be to find, in the *original* compulsion to build “no matter what,” the Tower of Babel, all of the working parts of the mechanism by which the cut that is, alternatively, incompleteness, destruction, or invisibility (to God), is about projectivity (for which the cut does not exist) and projectivity’s relation to the view from below, where the cut is visible.

31. We know that this is a big deal, thanks to representations of Justizia and other figures, shown as “headless” though in reality their head, being in direct contact with the Real of the Emyrean, is not — and would never be — visible from below, because the Real resists the Imaginary and Symbolic. It can be *felt* at the site of the Symbolic, as Lacan points out, in the *objet petit a* of the slip of the tongue, the bungled explanation, the incoherent acting-out of the son calling his father a lamp, plate, towel. Such outbursts are attenuated in all feelings of anxiety, which means that anxiety is “in touch with the Real.” As Lacan puts it “anxiety never lies.” Anxiety is what keeps us going, or rather what powers up language as a never-satisfied plea for recognition from the *Autre* who never gives consistent



Justizia, NOT decapitated but rather with her head in direct contact with the Emyrean, making it invisible below, just as the tip of the Tower of Babel is possible not destroyed or incomplete but rather invisible. Mortals can see the cut but not what is cut off. Immortals cannot see the cut but allow for the “immersion” of heroes and magical figures such as angels to be the ratio between death and immortal life.

responses, thanks to the little gaps and errors in the Symbolic, the “little bits of the Real” that Analysis uses to pry open the latent signifiers of the Unconscious. These bits are like jewels, “sapphires bedded in the axel-tree” as Yeats called them, or the sparkle off the sardine can Lacan saw when he was out on a boat off the coast of Bas-Bretagne and never forgot it — the “ambiguity of the jewel.”

32. The fact that we can see the cut but not what’s “above” (really beneath) it, and that from the point of view of the Real there is no cut, means that projective geometry is *always going to be a central feature of psychoanalysis*. But — lucky us — this means that psychoanalysis is always going to be “about architecture” and *vice versa*. Projective geometry can explain our situation, our compulsion to build and then feel that we have done not just the wrong thing but the worst thing. Foundation rites from the earliest times prove this ethnographically. Lacan proves it using his delivery of *mi-dire*, a style that forces us to *think through these truths in our own terms*. These terms are architectural, both abstractly and in the concrete terms of architecture’s ethnographical practices. We cannot divorce architecture theory from the ethnography of architecture, with the central kernel of this being the foundation ritual, thinly veiled in the story of the first building (failure), the Tower of Babel.
33. From Babel we get the issues of linguistics, how bi-univocal concordance, the 1:1 of word and thing that St. Augustine mistakes for language instruction, ignoring the difference between framing acts and content, which is the retroactive realization of something already given — the universality of the universal, so to speak. We also get the projective geometry issue of the cut, and the invisibility of the cut to the Immortals, and the invisibility of what’s beyond the cut to the mortals. This suggests that there are mortals who, exiled from the Symbolic’s safe interior precinct, are psychotically, suicidally, aware of the symmetry (their impasse, their situation, in the forced choice, of having to embody the two self-intersecting, non-orienting lovers all by themselves, in a kind of inverted narcissism, self-sacrifice). This means that theory actually AIMS to be psychotic, to be able to cease complaining (neurotically) to an imagined Other and start *enacting*, through language however, the truth of anxiety. Can we do that?

Don Kunze
Boalsburg, Pennsylvania
June 22, 2022