

# Notes for the Impasse between Architecture and Lacanian Theory

June 2022

1. A diagram in Seminar XIV, *The Logic of Phantasy*, sums up the impasse between Lacanians who look at architecture theory and architecture theorists who for some reason take up Lacanian theory (Fig.

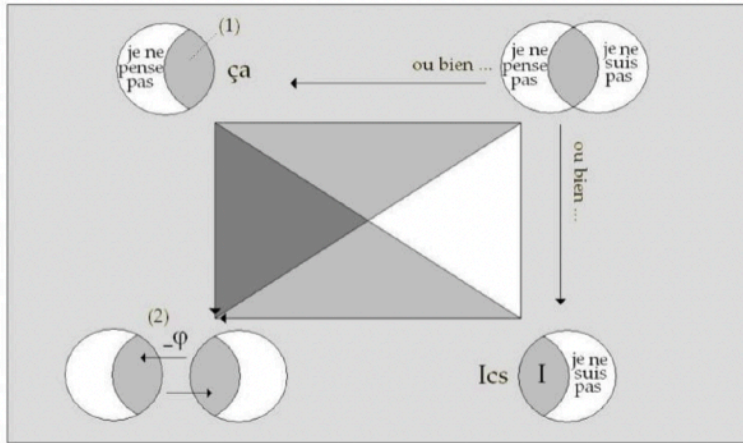


Figure 1. Lacan's diagram detailing his inversion of Descartes' *je pense donc je suis* to expand to positions outside (psychotic) and inside (neurotic) Symbolic and then contract to a bi-lateral exchange of  $-\emptyset$  across the portable void taken from each position is also the "standard reference polygon" of the 2d projective figure of the torus. We know the torus from its "immersions" into shapes such as the bicycle tire and bagel. The chiralistic expansion of horizontal and vertical vectors is simultaneously a reference to Lacan's L-schema, which is also an expansion into the Symbolic ( $a-a'$  positions of the egos of Analyst and Analysand) traversed by the Real of the Unconscious, whose target is the *Es*, or unbarred "S," which Lacan also describes as the dummy in the game of bridge.

1). It is effectively the "standard reference polygon" of the torus, where two "chiralistic" vectors depart from the upper right corner, expand to an external position (the *passage à l'acte*) and in internal position ("acting out") to indicate the extimity of the Symbolic in terms of psychosis and neurosis, respectively, and converge again on a position that renders the "portable void" of Euler-circle union (but not intersection, says Lacan) as a simultaneous circumnavigation of this chiralistic void, done from a control point within the Symbolic and a control point from outside the Symbolic.

2. This interpretation of the diagram requires several cross-readings about not just psychosis and the Symbolic, but about the *fou-literature* of nonsense that, for the psychotic is discourse without the paternal signifier and for the neurotic is the zero-degree enjoyment of "pure singifierness,"

found famously in the Rat Man's outburst before his father, calling him "you lamp! you plate! you hand-towel!"

3. The torus is a sphere with a hole in it, meaning that, unlike the sphere, where travel does not impose non-orientation on a trip around the world (you arrive back at the departure point facing in the same direction). The sphere-traveler does not notice that each step forward builds an imaginary wall that grows to the point of coincidence with the great circle, but then begins to shrink, although it encloses more territory. This weird feature of circumnavigation is invisible to the traveler, but its logic of reversed expectations, its non-orientation so to speak, is the Real of the sphere. The traveler is the dummy who may sense something weird only if he tries to imagine him/herself building a wall around his/her starting point at each step — something that most travelers don't think of doing, unless they should happen to conceptualize and expand the idea of the "space in front of them" *versus* "the space behind them."
4. The sphere "actually" has a hole in it, if one is willing to consider the surface of the earth as a "site of contention," where the idea of "flat" can be defined alternatively as (1) congruence with the curved

surface of the earth, which can be determined locally using a spirit level or (2) congruence with a Euclidean line, the shortest distance between the two points of measurement. For short land-based measurements, Euclid is generally preferred, for longer travel (flights, ships, guided missiles), the curved surface defines shortest distances in terms of great circle segments. Because the straight line and curved line are in no way commensurable in the way they define minimum distances, the sphere is, like the torus, non-orientable — i. e. a space that cannot be resolved into a uniform system of concordances.<sup>1</sup>

5. The torus combines “logics” of two disparate voids. The first void is the tube that, in the bicycle tire, must be continent for the tire to work. The second void is the hole that is more clearly addressable in the bagel or donut. A bagel, for example, can be cut with a knife that twists 360° as it cuts through the full circumference of the bread, producing two interlocking segments whose inner surfaces are Möbius bands, indicating a kind of “radical” projectivity of this form. We could object that we can see and handle toruses as easily as spheres, but this overlooks the fact that *both* the sphere and torus we see and hold are *immersions* of projective forms. We don’t think of the ball-sphere as an immersion, but we forget just how radical the *idea* of the sphere was before and after Eratosthenes demonstration of sphericity with the proof that the earth’s center was a nexus/point of vertical (plumb) vectors, not a plane. His index was the sun’s “parallel” rays, a fiction if the sun is considered to be a point source. Non-parallelism would be indistinguishable at the scale of distance he used to compare verticals, Alexandria and Cyrene.
6. While the sphere is self-intersecting (closed and curved) but orientable and the torus self-intersects but is (radically) non-orientable, the torus is able to demonstrate, for Lacan, the radical antinomy separating demand from desire. This is not simply a “here and there” relation, but a message (demand) for recognition that conceals its central object both from itself and the Other, to whom the demand is made; and a desire from an Other who/which is entirely constructed by the demanding subject. So, demand is not a “call” and “desire” is not a response; but the rhythm of demand and desire has something of the call-and-response theme in music, which is possibly why, in jazz and the blues, demands are always frustrated and desire continues forever.
7. This reminds us of Hegelian dialectic, whose “synthesis” is not a merger or solution to antithesis but, rather, a right-angled movement to a new level of complexity. While the subject remains the same, the context is different. Dialectic is metonymical in the way it links signifiers in a solid chain sequence while, at the same time, it replaces the context beneath the solid (figural) elements, much like the websites for fancy rugs can show the same furniture but with different carpets beneath. The figure and ground do not reverse in this case, but the figures take on different qualities and even identities with the changes in the background.
8. Lacan used a style known as *mi-dire*, of breaking off discourse at an imaginary half-way point, which could be (romantically) considered to be the proscenium stage between Lacan-the-performer and his audience or the ornate screen between the priest and confessor in a Catholic church. In other words, without the cut, the break, the screen, there can be no psychoanalytical theory as far as Lacan is concerned. What seems at first to be a stylistic affectation is actually a rhetorical structure, known as

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<sup>1</sup> Berg, J. H. (1970). *Things: Four metabletic reflections*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne Univ. Press.

the “enthymeme,” where the middle (connective) term is removed in order for the audience to “hear what they wish to hear” and conclude that they have understood the speaker not only correctly but in a privileged way, “going straight to the heart of the matter.” The *mi-dire* technique employs a kind of virtuality related to *kenosis*, or “knowing without knowing.” The listener of the enthymemic speaker does not know for certain that he/she truly understands the speaker’s inner thoughts, but in fact has a certain apprehension of something *better*, considering that the speaker’s thoughts would be out of place in the listener’s mind because they do not share the same single context. Again, the “shifting carpet” example, same figure, different grounds.

9. The traveler making a journey around the world does not notice that the ground has changed when he/she passes the great-circle line. This half-way marker shifts, making the sphere as a 2-d surface into a projective manifold with a latent element of non-orientation. Apply this to Lacan’s diagram (Fig. 1), which expands to the *passage à l’acte* and acting out at its great-circle line. The diagram’s toroidal rules make it clear that the vector to one corner is different from the vector to the other. One goes outside, the other inside — again, the ground changes while the figure (the movement) stays the same. Convergence, therefore, cannot be anything but a second void defined by  $+ø/-ø$ , as two figures (for the phallus is, if anything, a figure, in positive form a bump, in negative form a hollow) who circle the empty space — *differance*? — between them.<sup>2</sup>
10. The questions spiraling — sometimes literally — around the figure of the torus, Lacan’s “shape of desire,” are relevant to architecture on this key central issue. From a pragmatic point of view, most people view architecture in terms of Maslow’s pyramid. At the base are practical concerns: shelter, safety, security. Only after these are well established does the second layer come into play: social satisfactions, freedoms, diversions. As the pyramid narrows so do the aims and the percentage of the population expected to achieve the top layer of “self-actualization.” There is another, inverted view, that is critical in distinguishing architecture from building. It is impractical, non-survivalist. It begins with a point, the idea of the point as something receiving rays from all angles: a point of view. This is a point of actualization that presumes awareness, and a mental complicity with what is being received, whether it’s the view of the stars at a particular moment of the night, the fury of a storm, or the discovered hidden meaning of a conversation. These are all intimacies that, intrinsic to life, are intensely personal. Without them, some of them at least, we would say that life is not worth living.
11. Only *after* we establish our subjectivity as something related to the *possibility* of this point definition of our place in the world, can we build on it. We expand concentrically and vertically, but the first thing we notice is that Maslow’s practical pyramid is not below, above, or beside our inverted one, but super-imposed virtually over/within it. At the same time we have found a point of identification and identity, we have noticed the particularity of things, their raw materiality. What is basic for survival is no longer just a means to an end, but something with a vivid reality of its own. As we expand our point upward to a broad base of otherness, we simultaneously see the Maslow pyramid contract to its own idealistic point.

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<sup>2</sup> For a funny example of this seemingly abstract situation, see the Marx Brothers gag where Groucho thinks himself to be standing in front of a mirror in his nightshirt but in fact the mirror has been broken and Harpo, dressed in an identical nightshirt and with a fake mustache, mirrors his every move — with notable errors that make the audience howl. *Duck Soup* (1933). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2P0VctbRpc>

12. The two intersecting pyramids, subjective and objective, by (crude) analogy architecture and building, point to a feature that more functionally defines the difference between architecture and building that “architecture outsiders” usually fail to notice. This is the issue of the surplus that, with any intention or function or process, is unavoidable. Often it is a surplus that is not noticed or even denied. In the classic 70s film, *The Karate Kid*, the jujitsu master, Mr. Miyagi, trains the novice Daniel by asking him to polish his antique autos, paint his wooden fence, and scrub down his deck. Exhausted, Daniel suspects that Miyagi is simply taking advantage of his willingness to work, that the chores are delaying critical days for instruction in the martial arts. Miyagi’s method, however, is precise. Without specific muscle-group development, any jujitsu moves would be impossible to learn, let alone master. The surplus has become the critical foundation, the key to success.
13. The phenomenon of emergence is well-known in the biological sciences, where it is known as exaptation. Living things evolve; some of the traits are advantageous, others unadvantageous. Some are neither. They are carried into future generations without being edited out or favored. However, when environmental situations change, these surplus traits are like a menu of possible solutions to problems. Evolution takes place quickly because the genetic response has already been “stored in reserve.”
14. In architecture, the program of a building could be regarded as a solution to a problem, but it is one that produces many “traits” that lie outside of this main purpose. Even in a strictly functional building, there are unintended consequences, barely noticed details, unpredictable advantages and disadvantages. There is *always a surplus*. One of the surpluses has to do with our esthetic encounters with the building. It can please or displease us. We can be satisfied or frustrated. Or amused. Or angered. We might think that these responses are subjective and, hence, not material. But, it is precisely at the level of materiality that the surplus of any building offers itself to such encounters.



Figure 2. Two spandrels, decorated with allegorical figures. The spandrel space is a consequence of the *firmitas* of the arch, as the chosen means of supporting the horizontal architrave between columns to make the *utilitas* of the functional opening.

15. Exaptation means that, even for a stripped down functional building or minimalist construct (think of a campfire), there is a surplus; the more stripped-down and minimalist, in fact, the greater the chance that this surplus will be the raw material for something intensely personal and meaningful. In this sense, the ideal of building, which is to shelter something more and more completely; and the ideal of architecture, which is to reduce functional relationships to a minimum in order to expose the unintended surpluses; are inverted and meshed, like the Maslow pyramid and its inverted form that begins at a point. The less there is building, the more there is architecture, and *vice versa*.

16. What is “meaningless surplus” in building is the stuff of architecture’s “Unconscious,” if such a thing exists (I advocate that it does) is an analog for the human subject’s Unconscious, often described as a “trash heap.” Slavoj Žižek’s only direct reference to architecture focused on this meaningless surplus but did not go into how the surplus of exaptation, in fact, becomes Architecture (with a capital “A”) in the metaphoric processes of the inverted Maslow

pyramid. His chosen example, the spandrel, is informative. It is the space triangular between the column and architrave, when the architrave is supported by an arch between two columns. Surplus meaning in literature becomes *Fous Littéraires*, a genre of nonsense writing.<sup>3</sup> As Jean-Pierre Brisset has noted, this is not just ridiculous writing but something that sets up a specific margin between what is said *inside* the Symbolic and what is said *outside*, psychotically. For an example of the first we have Jacques Tati's *Mon Oncle* and *Playtime*. For the latter, we have Tarkovsky's *Stalker*. In other words, the major categories of exaptational surplus in architecture are not haphazard; they are exemplary paradigms that, once they are recognized, evoke universal recognition *precisely on behalf of their meaninglessness*.

17. Why did not Žižek think to venture into this rich territory? Possibly he was overwhelmed with Fredric Jameson's interest in the Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles, or the work of Frank Gehry. The essay drifted towards the politics of post-Modernism, and Žižek missed the opportunity to make any significant contribution to architecture theory. Had he persisted with his idea of exaptation, he would have connected the biological, architectural, and philosophical aspects of surplus to the issue of the *sorites*, which he often cites with the shorthand "one grain more, one hair less," without giving its proper logico-philosophical name. Sorites is indeed involved with exaptation in that it is about how a proof that requires counting reaches a conclusion that something is uncountable, under the imposed threat of absurdity. In short, question of when a pile of sand ceases to be a pile requires subtracting grains one by one until the absurd condition of finding that the last grain is "still a pile."
18. Lacan himself addresses counting's limits in the issue of the unary trait, the mathematical form of which is  $x + 1 = x$ ; also  $x \bullet x = x$ . The former leads to the expression for the Fibonacci number series, also a kind of counting that "contains itself;" the latter  $x \bullet x$  form is Lacan's structure of metaphor, where suppression/replacement of a signifier produces an "equal and opposite" appearance of a signifying *moiré* — metonyms held together by a spooky latent force, each term of which performs a "figure-ground" reversal to relate to the adjacent term in the chain.<sup>4</sup>
19. The "cloud" of metonymic signifiers works because of the function of latent signification in Lacan's schema for metaphor, which structures surplus and "stores it" in the cloud. This is more clearly revealed in the example Freud supplies about his parapraxis of the name "Signorelli," after he visited Orvieto and admired the painter's murals in the cathedral, but afterwards could not recall his name. The various stories, words, place-names, and other details he did recall tell the story of how signifiers

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<sup>3</sup> Jean-Pierre Brisset, "La Natation ou l'art de nager": *Fous Littéraires* is the name given to a species of writer beloved by the French, and almost unknown in English-speaking realms, though *fous* probably abound in every tongue. Whilst the common translation of the phrase is "literary madmen," on the model of the outsider artist *fous* may be seen as "outsider writers," for they usually work outside recognized sites of literary production. However, one fundamental difference subsists between verbal and visual outsiders: while the visual kind rarely, if ever, take Art as an overt topic in their work, to the *fous* Language is always an overarching concern. In other words, the term does not designate *anyone* who writes from beyond the pale: it denotes specifically those who do so whilst maintaining a focus on, if not an obsession with, the workings of their own tongue—even if, or especially when, their purpose is precisely to reject this organ. Here we discuss a "budget" of fools, (to use Augustus de Morgan's felicitous adjective concerning the legions of outsider scientists who plagued his own door). We also unwrap some of the more outstanding ideas these madmen have inspired in the minds of the (formal) philosophers, including some alternative notions of "subjectivity." Lastly, these new ideas on the "subject" are compared to Alexander Weheliye's concept of *Habeas Viscus*, developed to think through the differences presented by those subjectified under conditions of extremely violent containment. <https://jacket2.org/commentary/fous-littéraires-brief-history-idea>

<sup>4</sup> The example that comes to mind is another Marx Brothers scene, where Chico questions Firefly about an aqueduct: "Vy a duck?"

are fundamentally split between their “audio” materiality and their signifying indication. In mathematics, there is a strange parallel. A number is both what it indicates and the indication itself. The number symbolized by the numeral “1” indicates, of course, the value of 1, but it is also one of a possible group. A cluster, 11111, would be “five 1’s” as well as the designated value of eleven thousand,

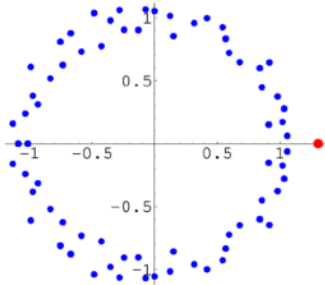


Figure 3. Audio-active decay of Conway's Constant ( $\lambda=1.3035772\dots$ ). Source: *Wolfram Mathworld*. The crucial point in Conway's proof is that each C-number is made up of one or more of 92 “basic” non-interacting strings (subsequences), or audioactive “elements”, called him as the basic 92 chemical elements, from Hydrogen H to Uranium U.

one hundred and eleven. The shift from the indicated content to the more visual array of five digits is done conventionally, without notice, but this surplus content is always present in experience. A mathematician, John Conway, showed that the suppressed visual/audio content (what we see or say when we take notice of a number expression) *has its own logic*. This logic is key to the meaning of exaptation and its role in architecture.

20. Conway uses the following example. What is the next number in the following sequence? 1, 11, 21, 1211, 111221, 312211? The answer is 13112221 if we “read the number out loud” to “activate” the way that 1 is also 11, and 11 is also “two 1’s.” Conway discovered a constant of this series, related to, amazingly, the table of elements. Audioactivity, for architecture and psychoanalysis, is however the way (metonymic) latency structures the “side-effects” of metaphor, in such instances as forgetting, astonishment, mystery, discovery, or other “event-based” experiences of meaningfulness without the support of conventional semantic designations. Another way of saying this is that the support of a signified's conventional designation by a signified is suddenly removed, converting the word into something like a rebus. This is the case with foreign words, where the intention to signify is recognizable but the intended designation is unknown. In Freud's case, the name “Signorelli”

became (Lacan says) a rebus, with the result that he could not recall it. The “traumatic” cause of this suppression was the presence, unnoticed by native Italian speakers, of the element *signor*, which for Freud was the “sir,” *Herr*.

21. We should consider how *Herr* worked as a paternal signifier, and how suppressing it created a temporary “cloud-based psychosis” for the forgetful German psychoanalyst. The gender of *Herr* is clear; it is the same as the gender of *der Vater*. An associate explanation: fathers command respect, which is given in the expression *Herr Vater*, the apotheosis of which is *Herr Gott Vater*, “Sir Father God,” well known through the traditional German hymn. Although some sirs are not fathers, no father is not also a *Herr*; and the respect the paternal signifier requires also requires this form of address.
22. Freud gives proof of the connection with the “psychotic” (= externalized) cloud associations of Botticelli, Boltraffio, Taffei, stories about Turks who always call physicians *Herr Doktor*, and regard sex as the *sine qua non* of life itself, and the ex-patient of Freud's who committed suicide in Taffei, in *Bo-lzano* Provence. Each of these terms and stories has a rebus-like surplus held in suspension by the audio-active force of the latent signifier, *Herr*, suppressed and thus momentarily “psychotic,” externalizing Freud's mental loss throughout his travels around the Adriatic.
23. Žižek uses the architectural spandrel as the starting-point of his elaboration of “interstices between philosophy, psychoanalysis, and the critique of political economy.” Once “interstices” take over,

architecture is left behind, in the dust. Why? Or, rather, *why not*? What is in the architectural example of exapted surplus that might be valuable for philosophy, psychoanalysis, or political economy? For Žižek, nothing. This is possibly because the Slovenian thinker has not thought beyond the flat triangular space between “the curved figure and a rectangular surround,” which in this form lack even the very uselessness that is grounded in the structural role played by columns, arches, and architraves. Here the spandrel has a somewhat unusual role to play, as a decorative *set*, often two sculpted images that seem to assist with the heavy lifting that supports the ceiling in order to allow passage through the arch-way. This makes the spandrel into a case of hospitality, an “after you” spoken to the entrant indicating welcome. The stranger is admitted past the threshold with the ambiguity accorded to all guests, as the root term *hostes* (both host and enemy) indicates.

24. Why do we need manners, which in the case of an entry-way, amount to the small rituals of invitation and conditional occupancy. “Enjoy your stay” also means “but don’t stay too long.” Everything having to do with this kind of hospitality has to do with the imaginary line between a necessary gesture (preventing animosity or, worse, aggression and violence) and unexpected reactions. We say “welcome” because we fear the alternative. Thus, the spandrel is the ribbon on the gift, the bow and sweeping hand. It is part of architecture’s “good manners.” It is required to be offered in the same way Homeric Greeks required hosts to offer visiting strangers not only shelter and food but gifts. The spandrel is thus a case of “... *ou pire*,” or worse: doing something to prevent or at least forestall something worse happening.
25. Then, obviously, the spandrel is about (metaphoric) suppression and the immediate appearance of a “cloud of metonymic signifiers.” The protocols of a well-mannered visit in the Victorian era required a visit to be terminated by the host’s offer of another cup of tea. Knowing the code was both an indicator of one’s good upbringing and being a part of the society where such codes are sent, received, and obeyed. Think of the *hostes* contronym as the protocol of the greeting (the spandrel–element that says and gestures the welcome); and think of the visit as the (metonymic) protocol of conversation, offered refreshments, expectations, postures. Do not forget the furniture, decor, utensils, and cuisine (which must indicate that something less than dinner is being served).
26. Why did Žižek forget about hospitality in his critique of political economy? Possibly, this was because the scale of his inquiry required a view from above, using satellite imagery of conditions on the ground. Marx’s satellites examine specific spectrums, claiming to see inside the subterranean bunkers of Capitalism, and Žižek enjoys analyzing these maps. The architectural spandrel has gotten him to the point where the GPS atlas can be assembled, it is no longer relevant to this project.
27. But, of course, if anything, the spandrel, as an exapted/surplus element that facilitates a temporary fix to the problem of the visiting stranger, it has everything to do with (1) politics, and (2) economies. It is in fact an economy in both the sense of “relating to the household, the *ecos*,” and finding a structure that is mutually agreeable between host and guest. The spandrel is everything for architecture in these terms. It should be everything for Žižek, in his. Why does Žižek see the “hospitality” of the spandrel as a byproduct that has no clear benefit for survival? In every culture depending on manners and protocols of neighborliness, the spandrel’s clear emergent benefit is to preclude or at least postpone acts of aggression. Talk about survival value! But, the issue is that part of this survival function depends on maintaining a “register” of uselessness, where the spandrel and the customs of welcoming

that accompany it must suppress their survival value, and where the immediate result of this suppression is the creation of a metonymic matrix of (dis-)associations that rely on the signifier's *fundamental* audioactivity.

28. What does it mean to apply the (mathematical) concept of audioactive (split) signification to (1) Lacan's schema for metaphor, qualified in terms of (2) Freud's famous example of parapraxis? What if the architectural example of the spandrel holds the key to these extensions? The spandrel, *as both useless and useful* (proved by the custom of decorating these triangular spaces with signs of non-aggression), is a model of audioactivity that extends so far back in history that we might regard it as a "paradigm exemplar." Set between the Vitruvian categories of *utilitas* (access, passage) and *firmitas* (suspension of the roof/ceiling), there is a *venustas* that, like the goddess Venus herself, is half of a dual: a gesture of hospitality to counter potential aggression, Mars. The coupling of Mars and Venus is a standard trope of Roman religion, the idea that marriage does not obliterate the difference between love and hate but offers a *cut* that is useful elsewhere. In fact, it is the cut rather than the friendly gesture that is key. The cut is what requires those who employ the hospitality protocols of inviting strangers into the house to suppress the idea that these protocols are in any way necessary. Without this cut, entry would deteriorate to a less-than-civil disputation about the rights of private property *versus* the desires of the stranger.
29. If Žižek has missed the point of the spandrel by quickly moving to the philosophical abstraction of Universal, Particular, and Singular, he has lost access to this antiquity and the many ethnological conditions that might support his interests in, for example, parallax, where the visual field mediates figure-ground distinctions and reversals critical to the creation of architecture. Did he miss the point? Yes, because in this one sentence from "The Use of Useless Spandrels" (where the title holds out hope that he did not), he writes: "This 'spandrelization' of the content in no way implies a confused, nonsystematic structure" (p. xi). Žižek proposes his own system of organization based on the UPS, the "universal of philosophy," the "particular of sexual difference," and "the singular dimension of the critique of political economy." Of course, the disadvantage is that the UPS is not a mainstay of anything except abstract critical theory.
30. "Loss of access to this antiquity" (above) is not the minor tragedy of losing out on the local significance of some person, place, or thing of the past out of the innumerable treasures that are forever lost to modern knowledge. This is the loss of a *line of thinking*, a provenience behind customs central to daily life. This was a failure to think through the *structure* of entering, visiting, and polity, compressed into a single architectural feature that Žižek has compressed into a "space between a curved figure and a rectangular rectilinear surround" (*Incontinence of the Void*, xi). These words are hardly adequate even to the physical spandrel, to say nothing of how such a space, given over to specific decorative practices, tells an important story. It is a surplus but not a "confused, nonsystematic structure." Stephen Jay Gould's point about exaptation was, in fact, that such surpluses are *the* central feature of evolution. How did Žižek apply Gould's idea to move so quickly to the abstract structure of UPS?
31. Lacan learned to write in a way that continually produced a surplus, to the extent that we could say that his entire theory was, in fact, a spandrel. By stopping midway through a thought or argument, Lacan would set the time of his thought at noon (*midi*, a pun on *mi-dire*). Lacan himself did not



“move on” from the fine-grained details of his cases and accounts to the Big Ideas of “rejecting the utopian notion of Communist Society” or critiques of the political economy. Žižek becomes impatient with Lacan on many matters and prefers moving to examples from popular culture. This is not a complaint; this is Žižek’s style and there is no one as productive or accomplished as he. But, while Žižek’s momentary interest in architecture relied on some worn-down issues (Frank Gehry, the Bonaventure Hotel), Lacan’s interest in Seminar VII contributed to architecture on several levels, from specific insights into the nature of the Baroque to the broad but difficult issue of projective geometry.

32. The *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* is translated as a “representation of a representation,” a bridge between the dream thought and dream image, mediating the dream’s unconscious but real work and our conscious memories and images of the dream. This is not the same as a “copy of a copy,” as if a page in the out-bin of a Xerox machine were placed on the glass and the copy cycle repeated. What is copied in the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* is both the image and the act, a radical attempt to encircle the whole of representation, to include the copier along with the copy. At the same time, the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* includes, also, the *limitation* that comes along with this attempt at encirclement, and it is this limitation, inscribed as a central void, that makes the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* a “toroidal” unit of (non-)meaning. The nearest approximation of what the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* actually represents is the action of cutting: a “katagraphic” mark that is not

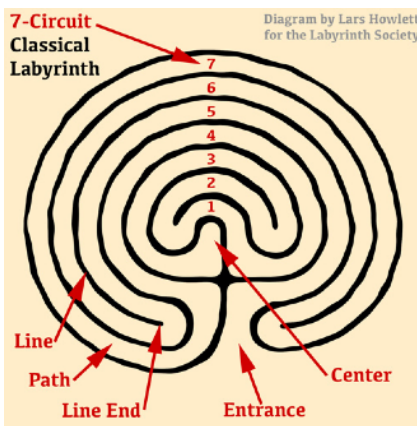


Figure 4. The Thesean labyrinth shown as a seven-folded pathway (ground) between a continuous wall-figure. The point at which the wall crosses itself juxtaposes the outermost and innermost positions of a traveler, who, by including folds in his/her mono-directional journey, makes the ground a part of both entry and exit.

on top of its medium but etched *into* its medium — the difference between a smudge on the skin that can be washed off and the tattoo that colors the skin permanently, or a surgical cut that, when it heals over, retains a reddish tinge.

33. The internal fold of the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* is evident in the terms Freud lists in his metonymical set: BO-snia and HER-zegovina, BO-ltrafio, TRAFFei, BO-ticelli .... Even the Turks who always address their physicians as “sir,” and their fabled fear of the loss of sex as a death sentence convey this idea of a dual folded over itself. In the reference polygon of projective geometry’s non-oriented and self-intersecting 2-d surfaces, the Möbius band, torus, cross-cap, Klein bottle, etc., the four sides of the polygon are actually two, and the two are folded into one, requiring a twist that, impossible in Euclidean space, produces the cut-phenomenon that, for example, allows the cross-cap to have properties both of a bowl and a Möbius band, or the Möbius band to seem to have two edges and two sides. We could say that the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* is a signifier that, like the Klein bottle, has been “immersed” into 3-space, where its cut/fold becomes evident, but if allowed to remain in the dream idea would have none. The *feature* of the cut/fold is, however, the distinguishing mark.

34. Immersion must be considered to be an act, *the* act that combines with the representation in its repeat performance to constitute a bridge that cancels its bridge function by converting ABC to ABA: the fold that inverts direction only when the intention to cross is formed. This is the famous “appointment in Samarra” effect — the servant who flees Death, whom she encountered in the

market, only to find Death waiting for her in Samarra, her refuge. This is the *dæmon* aspect of *askesis* (flight). It reverses the *ground* of flight at the very moment flight is begun as a response to the *dæmon* of fright. (This is why Borges has given the seven folded pathways of the Thesean Labyrinth the number 14 as equal to infinity; each pathway is bi-directional.)

35. Immersion is intrinsic to projective forms, which are not allowed to remain in the ivory tower of some hypothetical hyperspace heaven. Their being begins with their embodiment, as if to say that the rabbit did not exist before it was pulled out of the hat,  $x' \vdash x$ , or  $\vdash$ , with the cut,  $|$ , initiating the  $—$  as bi-directional escape attempt destined to land in its self-created trap. Because immersion is an act,  $—$ , it is retroactively an immersion *from*,  $|$ , retroactively creating an imaginary  $\bullet$  or void on the other (non-existent) “side” of the  $|$ , a  $\bullet|$  condition. Flight presumes flight *from*, retroactively establishing both a cut and a condition of being un-cut:  $— > \vdash > \bullet \vdash$ . The intention to flee generates a surface of no escape, as when Daphne runs to escape Apollo’s embrace (a *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* if ever there was one).
36. The condition of  $\bullet \vdash$  is the same as that of the symptom,  $x$ , which is more properly written here as  $\vdash S$ , or “something that appears, which presumes the existence of something prior, causal, and at the moment inaccessible. The Symptom is a Signifier that appears in the context of a metonymical chain,  $S' \dots S'' \dots S''' \dots$ , with the curious feature that *counting* the sequence of these appearing symptoms leads to audioactivity. The “one” or rather “1” is encountered over and over again, each instance “resetting to zero” the system of the count, undermining its attempt to progress to an uncountable/countable infinity.<sup>5</sup>

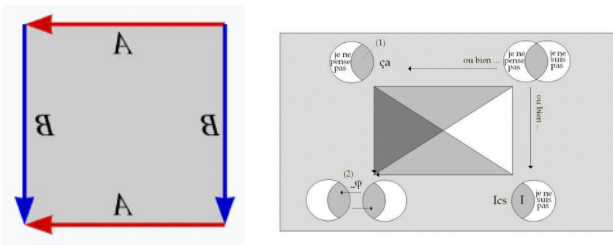


Figure 5. The “fundamental polygon” for the torus is the model for Lacan’s diagram of the split of repetition (demand) into an external (psychotic) relation to the Symbolic (*passage à lacte*) and an internal (neurotic) relation (“acting out”). The two vectors, colored blue for inside, red for outside, indicate that the torus created by demand is simultaneously a case of topological extimity: the “inside void” generates an “outside void,” the former is continent, the latter incontinent. When the fold is complete, at the lower right, the two voids are the basis of a circulation,  $-\emptyset$ , an exchange exemplified by the twins, Castor and Pollux, destined to spell each other between life and death, earth and Hades.

37. Obsession–compulsion entails a 2-d surface that, like the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*, exists only in the act in which it appears, retroactively bringing into being a “prior space,” a *site*. This is evident in Sgarbi’s principle that drives architecture to “build, no matter what.” This has the same logic reversal as the flight to Samarra, appropriate in the sense that the Thesean labyrinth counts each movement twice,  $2 \bullet 7$  as both 14 and infinity, the count that is no count, the rabbit, never in the hat in the first place, that generated its own emergence, from a metonymical

matrix. Obsession–compulsion folds over on itself from two sides, and in two ways. What is the end, the point of this folding of compulsion? On the lower right, there is a synchronized simultaneous circumnavigation of a void (or two voids?) labelled as  $-\emptyset$ , castration, the principle by which, to gain access to the group or region defined by the phallic law, one must be alienated by that law. In other words, being inside entails being outside, and being outside confirms one’s imprisonment. This condition is actually representable.

<sup>5</sup> Counting is itself a self-intersecting, non-oriented project, in that any count, no matter how finite, implies infinity as its goal. Its *aim* however continually refutes this aspiration in that each instance of the count is finite. A count retroactively resets itself thanks to this fold, which is also a cut:  $1 = 1/1$ .

Federico Fellini captured it perfectly in the freeze-frame ending of *La Strada*, when Zampanò (Anthony Quinn) realizes the gravity of his loss at the death of Gelsomina (Giulietta Masina), the simple-minded, compliant girl he has continually abused.

38. The cut is internal, the cut in fact creates interiority. Interiority is simultaneously continent and incontinent, hence the architect's anxiety has to do with continence. Does the roof leak? Is the shelter protected from spiritual invasion? Both kinds of problems are addressed through the sacrifice of an innocent victim who, when buried in the building's foundations, will protect against spiritual invasion and structural corruption. The compulsion to build is immediately reflected as *compulsion* in the anxiety about the building's continence/incontinence. The upper right corner is immediately led by the blue and red vectors to conditions of outside (incontinence, the central void of the torus) and inside (continence, the "inside of the bicycle tire"). This compulsion creates anxiety out of the antagonism of continence and incontinence, which is "treated" by the death of someone innocent, who must be *ritually renewed* in order to re-establish the phallic law and contain the two voids.
39. When the rabbit comes out of the hat, the void of the hat is created retroactively. The magician has shown the audience the empty hat, but the hat's interior is not a void until the rabbit comes out of it. At this point, the void acquires its value as a passageway between the space of the audience and the space that is the magician's "beyond," where women can be sawed in half, suspended in mid-air, or put in closets and made to vanish. The magician plays the role of Janus, the hinge, the guardian-controller of the portal. What is the principle of Janus's magic? If we pause at the midpoint, between the non-existent rabbit in the existing empty hat and the existing rabbit out of the now-existing void, we have the external/internal (incontinent/continent) positions of the psychotic and neurotic. With the two voids in suspension, we can look at their "speech." For the neurotic who is acting out, language reduces to sheer signifierness. The Rat Man is the paradigm, when he accuses his father of being a plate, a lamp, a towel. The father correctly notes however that the son could either be genius (remaining within the continent boundaries of the neurotic Symbolic) or a criminal, a psychotic. The father is mistaken only in that he fails to see that the son can be simultaneously criminal and a genius, inside and outside, continent and incontinent. He has deployed the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz*, the magic word that, once out of the hat (mouth), retroactively generates the Real of the void these words have left behind. This void, none other than the Unconscious, is itself binary. If it can be said to "exist," the Rat Man is a neurotic. If it can't be said to exist, he is psychotic. But, the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* is a dual, a metonym that is a part of a matrix of metonyms, so the Unconscious void(s) it arises from is, like the magician's rabbit-hat, empty and not empty at the same time. If it's empty, it can't be a void, but if it's a void, it can't be empty. The void/empty binary is the spatial aspect of the rabbit/non-rabbit and the before/after temporality of the trick.
40. The psychotic knows everything. In absence of an unconscious, the result of repression, everything is sayable, everything is "out on the table." Even the table and the things on it become indistinguishable, or rather "reasons for each other's being." The psychotic is saturated in Being, giving nothing to the Symbolic without pumping it full of blinding over-significance. The neurotic "knows very well, but nonetheless ... ." This kind of knowledge operates with a shadow category of things that are known without being known, *kenosis*. The neurotic tolerates repetition and keeps it running, so to speak, because it is "something the Other wants, and who are we to deny the Other?" The psychotic aims to call out the Other, to show him for what he is, an imposter. The neurotic is able to signify the lack in the Other, S(~~A~~), because signification can be done by proxy, through metonymic chains that postpone the solution of the mystery of suppression.
41. This delay obeys the logic of travel, which is to say that it seeks to balance between self-annihilation in the saturation of travel's otherness and control, which would, if allowed to overreach, would reduce travel to running an errand. Henry Johnstone has elaborated ten categories of this relationship between saturation and



Figure 6. Athanasius Kircher, “Pan,” *Obeliscus Pamphilius: hoc est, Interpretatio noua & Hucusque Intentata Obelisci Hieroglyphici* (1650). Pan’s body could be said to be a “katagraphic” in that its topographical manifestations of the universe are not pictures or images but rather representations of that which are *already* and *primarily* representations, “emerging” from the desire of the Other, in this case the Creator-God.

control in such a way that it is necessary to conclude that the psychotic, always traveling, is simultaneously incapable of traveling. The neurotic, for whom travel is a risky venture, the goal is to make a home in the exotic world, as antipodal to the way that being at home is never fully restful containment. The neurotic is thus always traveling, even when at rest; and the psychotic is static, even when — or especially when — in rapid motion (which is always).

42. Compulsion-repetition makes the unconscious into a square-wave function, alternating without any medial position between the states of neurosis and psychosis, presence and absence, existence and non-existence. The model of Castor and Pollux for the final fold of this projective surface at the lower left corner is thus quite apt. Neither brother can be said to be alive *or* dead. Neither brother can be said, even, to be either Castor or Pollux, except that Castor began as the mortal made to be immortal while Pollux began as the immortal who voluntarily became mortal. The story of their devotion is that mortality/immortality themselves are of this nature. The compulsion to build has its “perfect shadow,” the compulsion to deny the possibility of building. The builder builds the Symbolic, spaces for acting out. The anti-architect becomes Pan, whose body mirrors the structure of nature, from earthly hooves to star-bound crown, but in doing this becomes the first god to die, a model for the Christian Jesus who, in dying, became immortal.

43. The body of Pan is “tattooed” by nature, which is to say, nature penetrates the skin katagraphically (Fig. 6). Pan is the immediate “popularization” of the cyclopiian concept of idempotency: the paralysis of the hearth-altar by sidereal signs, transferred to earth as katagraphs (divine signs) produced on a

ground decontaminated by aleatory rituals. Randomness is the perceived ground from which any divine intention might be detected. Sidereal order, transferred to the earth at a 1:1 ratio, creates a Promethean injunction: “thou shalt not relocate the place of divination.”

44. The contemporary pedagogical position on the nature of the first humans is that they were fundamentally like moderns, but their beliefs expanded to fill the field of experience where science, at only a primitive stage, “left everything to the imagination.” As science expanded, imagination contracted, simple as that. Human desires, proclivities, and needs were fundamentally the same. Lacan did not treat the case of ancient thinking directly, but cited its close relations to projectivity principles in his retelling of the Apollo–Daphne story and his citation of the “Injunction of Pophilius,” where a Roman consul in Egypt prevented military invasion by drawing a “magic circle” around the King of Syria, who promptly withdrew. When Lacan asks, in Seminar VII, “what was anamorphosis before it was anamorphosis?” he indicates a temporal divide between thinking dominated by the uncanny (anamorphosis by another name and in different modalities) and “the anti-uncanny,” which maintains its stance by isolating anamorphosis as a strange perversion of representation’s fundamentally Euclidean basis.

45. Knowing that Lévi-Strauss had shown the simultaneous materialism and idealism of *pensées sauvage*, Lacan might have based further incursions into the ethnography of ancient times on his contention that “there is no such thing as literal meaning,” a claim with the silent implication that meaning-ful-ness is formed out of the interactions of metaphor and metonymy, precisely the same schema that Vico had used in his 1725 *New Science*. As Lacan attempted to schematize this relation, he followed a pre-existing plan developed by Freud in his account of parapraxis. It was the function of suppression (again, the fundamental polygon of torus comes into play) that caught Lacan’s attention, in that metaphor’s act of replacing one signifier by another “synchronously” was matched by an equal and opposite — and homeostatic — emergence of a metonymic “field of relations” among terms that, as in Freud’s example, were “anything but the name Signorelli.” This “anything but” was the surplus, the spandrel, the field charged by the absent signifier that Lacan had said was the essence of metonymy.
46. This field appeared “like a rabbit out of the magician’s hat.” It was a case of  $\vdash$  evoking, retroactively, a  $\bullet$  or void inside the hat, not just vacancy. In the metaphor schema, this  $\bullet$  became a multiplication sign, or rather a minimalist matheme allowing suppression to be “cancelled out” by emergence of the metonymic field,  $S' \dots S'' \dots S'''$ , where each S was cut, dividing it into a posterior and prior functionality, like Dante’s *terza rima*. Where Signor led to Herr, which led to Herzegovia and BO-snia, which led to BOltrafia, which led to Traffei ... the prior term served in the role of cause, the posterior form led to the effect, but the word itself has to transform into a REBUS, a visual form that had nothing to do with its conventional meaning. This is Lacan’s argument in Seminar V, *The Structures of the Unconscious*.
47. When Desargues develops his famous theorem using triangles in a “perspectival” relation relative to a single point, he discovers a correspondence between what could be imagined to be a viewer at a fixed point and the emergence of a single line representing the co-linearity of points made by extending the sides of those triangles. There is, out of sight from the viewer, a “magical” congruence. *Any* triangle fit perfectly within the lines of sight emanating from the single point, set at *any* angle, would extend its edges to meet the extensions of the first. Within the prismatic shadow cast by the first triangle, a play of form. Within that play an order (the co-linearity). Within that “regulating line” the idea that within every “perfect shadow” (the space whose leading edge begins with the silhouette of an opaque object) there is a conjunction of free play and regulative order. But, because there are perfect shadows every where there is a visual field with opaque objects in it, *the process of replacement*, of *standing before* and *standing behind*, belongs to ordinary experience and is its most universal characteristic.
48. While Euclidean geometry leads, thanks to the Fifth Postulate, to establish a vanishing point that Euclid proclaims to be fictional but which the ordinary viewer experiences as actual, there is within this other space of perfect eclipse another kind of perspective that, relying on the same rules, treats the viewing point as the vanishing point. Where Euclidean perspective involves the kind of virtuality of figure-ground relations we associate with painting, photography, set-design, etc., this reversed perspective is something like the see-saw effect of aphanisis. It metonymically constructs formation within the “perfect shadow” that happens as a result of one signifier (the visible triangle) taking the place of another (the invisible triangle fitting perfectly into the lines of sight). This “law-abiding invisibility” had only this one condition: that it be perfectly invisible from the viewing point. The perfect shadow was the scene for a second kind of virtuality, one that Žižek has alluded to in his lecture on the reality of the virtual, inverting the common expression “virtual reality.”
49. Inversion is indeed the relationship between Euclidean space and the space of concealed regulations discovered by Girard Desargues. This would be odd if nothing like it existed before. Fortunately, Desargues theorem has a telling relation to Kircher’s image of Pan (Fig. 6) that is logically condensed in the theorem that is forerunner to his, Pappus’s theorem of two “anywhere” lines. With Pan, the katagraphic inscription of nature onto the mortal God’s body is an inversion, like a celestial sphere that shows constellations and star/planet movements by

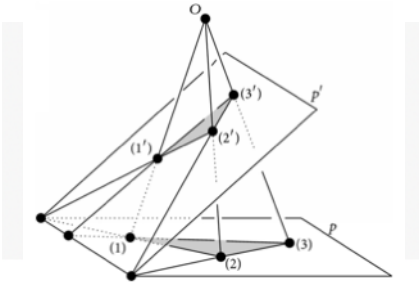


Figure 8. Desargues theorem, configured as an origami fold of two planes hinged at the “eigenvector.” Because the triangles can be oriented at any angle, any pair constitute a new unique fold of two planes. There is an infinity of such planes and hinge-folds.

turning the outward view of the sky into an inward view of a finite sphere whose center condenses the function of the plenum (occupied by Elyseum?). At the same time, Pan is “meroitic” in that the order of his body, foot to crown, is a perfect match for the cosmic order that connects earth to the heavens. What makes the image of Pan katagraphic is the combination of this inside-out flip and the linear meroitic metonymy of spaces linked along Pan’s height. It is not hard to see that the flip accomplishes the same “perfect shadow” effect as Desargues’ fore-standing triangle, and that the question of order is taken up by the linearity of the meroitic correspondence of body to cosmos.

50. Pappus’s theorem also employs the idea of the katagraphic mark as a co-linear congruence of points located “anywhere” along two “anywhere-positioned” lines lying on the same surface. The three points on one line (ABC) must be connected to three points on the other line (A’B’C’) in a criss-cross pairing: A to B’, A’ to B; A to C’, A’ to C; B to C’, B’ to C. The criss-cross secures the position of an intermediary line, an “eigenvector,” Desargues’ eigenvector is secured by intersecting sides of two perspectival triangles. Like the interior of Pan’s body, which

thanks to the inversion must be the “outside” of our viewing, what can be represented as a counterpart to the center–point of the celestial sphere must be the plenum corresponding to the TSR of Desargues and the eigenvector of Pappus: a kind of spine, a metonymic linearity that is like a universal meroitic translator, that is shown as a focal point but in fact is a plenum “out there.” The perfect shadow, the model katagraphic mark, is a cut that is simultaneously a flow of space from inside to outside and/or outside to inside. The terms become meaningless as such, with this kind of cut, so we can say that the katagraphic cut is the material act that neutralizes or folds psychosis on to neurosis in Lacan’s toroidal diagram (Fig. 5).

51. This connection helps us interpret the line, from upper left to lower right, that indicates the act of folding the space of the rectangle to create a torus, or in other words folds demand/repetition to create desire. Since we know what happens when a bagel is cut with a knife that rotates as it cuts — two Möbius band surfaces are produced on either face of the split torus — we are justified in claiming that desire is the product of a katagraphic cut, and that all katagraphs have this same effect: namely, to form the desire of the other out of the spandrel of the subject’s demands, which are organized meroitically (linearly), which is to say, metonymically: a *chain* of signifiers: S’...S’...S’... . This is the lesson of Pan.
52. The problem of Daphne is that she creates her own trap *as soon as* she decides to flee. The trap and the panic to avoid being trapped are two sides of the same coin, or rather, a sphere turned inside out, a “sphere with a hole in it,” or torus. The celestial sphere with its infinite hollow is a feature of Vico’s *dipintura*, inserted into pages left over after Vico was persuaded to retract an account of his patron, the architect-priest Carlo Lodoli, as a preface to the 1725 edition of *The New Science*. Like Dante, Vico may have been using “new” and “nine” interchangeably, for the number 9 is itself a token of substitution. It can be withdrawn and re-inserted into a calculation to check the accuracy of the result. Numbers with a “sigma value” of 9 have strange properties.<sup>6</sup>
53. Desargues theorem can be demonstrated to be a kind of fold or hinge (Fig. 8), leading to the idea of Diana (Jana, whose consort is Janus, where “J” is descended from “Dj,” as in “Djana/Diana”). Janus is the god of the hinge, not the portal or door as is often assumed. The inside and outside are connected not by a surface but by the hinge between two surfaces or, more correctly speaking, 2-d manifolds. Because there is, thanks to the “anywhere” and “any position” aspect of the perfect shadow, the planes and hinge-folds fill space with their

<sup>6</sup> See Cecil Balmond, *The Number 9: The Search for the Sigma Code*. A sigma value is the sum of the numerals in a number, for example  $\Sigma 427 = 4+2+7 = 13, = 1+3 = 4$ .

“opportunities.” This second kind of virtuality is more pervasive than the first, which is a virtuality of an exterior world, inapplicable to interiorities. Because Desargues’ Djana-space is simultaneously inside and outside, ignoring (thanks to its katagraphics) the distinction between inside and outside, it is everywhere; but its logic condenses on hinge conditions, i. e. boundaries that, like the  $\vdash$ , which simultaneously create the void they seem to emerge from.

54. The fold is the creation of an internal space by hinging an appearing space. The “outside” folds over “into itself,” with the result that whether it has the properties of an inside or outside depends on one’s position. From the inside, it’s an outside; from the outside, it’s an inside. The fold, as per Fig. 8, is the formal geometric portrayal of Lacan’s idea of *extimité*, the intimacy of the object and *vice versa*. The fold does not exist as a third term but, rather, as an extension of the properties of the surface, a *mani-fold*.
55. In the enthymeme, the third term (the element that connects the first and second terms) is missing, as if one gets a new piece of furniture that has to be assembled, but without connecting parts. The idea is to pass on the idea from the speaker to the audience for completion, without over-specifying how this is to be done. This was Lacan’s *mi-dire* way of talking, intentionally broken off in mid-thought, passed on to the audience who silently completes the lecture. This is the connection of the first kind of virtuality (Lacan’s presentation) to a second, one which *includes* the act of passing off to the audience, who occupies the folded-over space and thus has access to the *idea* that is symbolized by the eigenvector.
56. Have we forgotten, that not just failure but self-betrayal is an essential part of telling the truth? In Žižek’s assessment of his two “formative” figures, Lacan and Hegel, both thinkers are their own worst enemy. Lacan fails not by his style, but by his adherence to his rigid plan, a lock step of left-foot subject and right-foot signifier, from the Imaginary of the Mirror Stage to the Symbolic to the Real of Joyce and knots. Like Lear, Lacan wrote the script for his eventual dissolution. Hegel, likewise, as Robert Kilroy has written, “came face to face with his own shadow” or, as Žižek put it, “found himself where he shouldn’t have found himself” (“Negativity in Hegel and Freud”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aKrH5O2ZB7E>). But, wait! Isn’t neurosis defined as the means by which the subject is destined to undermine his/her own happiness? This works even if we set unhappiness as our project; we even fail this goal. What ever the target, the aim is excessive, a creation of a false destination that, like the spandrel, curves to create a meaningless space.
57. This is the question Borges condenses in his invented theology of Jesus’s self-betrayal, his collusion with Judas, who is destined to be the actual Christ because his death, for *our sins*, will actually condemn him to eternal suffering, reviled, as a betrayer. The historical “Jesus” will be vindicated by betrayal and the unthinkable possibility that Judas is actually doing what a sacrificed savior must do. Certainly, Vico found it necessary to present himself as a maniacal obsessive, repeating his mantra of gods, heroes, men just as he said history repeated it, to the point that one scholar, Maria Frankel, argued that Vico had intentionally constructed the very labyrinth some readers had accused him of being trapped in. The question psychoanalysis requires us to ask is, if we don’t betray ourselves, what is life for? Only psychotics see the irony and refuse to take the bait, preferring instead to jump to the end of the story where every minute is the Real. Self-antagonism, it seems, can be done either in one go (psychosis) or on the installment plan (neurosis). Given Borges’ example, there should be a name for the (1) the creation of one’s shadow, followed by (2) coming face to face with that shadow. There is already a name! It is “the perfect shadow.” The picture of it is Lacan’s standard reference polygon (SRP) of the torus, where, out of repetition (the gapped circle that *is* the *objet petit a*) two antipodal conditions develop, expand to a “great circle position” at opposite corners, then converge on situation where two voids construct a circulation pathway for  $-\emptyset$  — or, rather, *two*  $-\emptyset$ ’s, the “Castor and Pollux resolution.” The twins, Castor the mortal (sexuated) the other, Pollux, non-sexuated because immortal. In *The Symposium*, Socrates contrasts those who seek immortality through sexual generation — the theme of repetition, in genealogical terms — with

immortality of death, specifically allowing him to speak with the dead (*apophrades*). The humanist Petrarch, despising the intellectual poverty of his own age, decided to write his dead philosophical heroes, since they would be the only ones able to understand him.

58. It would be only reasonable to assume that speaking with the dead would come with the obligation to imitate death or actually be dead. This was of course the *katabasis* of the ancients, the obligatory visit to Hades in order to obtain advice from the dead. *Apophrades* had a geometry, in other words; that of descent and return, synonymous with the word “hero,” alphabetically a V, a cut into the earth, by far the most famous *katagraph* of classical literature, the apotheosis of which is Book VI of *The Aeneid* and Dante’s elaboration, *The Divine Comedy*. With a library like this, it is hardly necessary to continue the charade that pretends that the *katagraph* is something obscure. It is the mind-matter problem in a nutshell, where disembodiment and embodiment become the contronymic extensions of the V, which in effect asks matter to speak as if it were mind — not just any mind but the Unconscious automata of matter that is ordinarily supposed to be mute.
59. The Br’er Rabbit Tale of the “tar baby” effigy dressed up to invite an interrogation by the unsuspecting rabbit, knows that things will come to blows and uses tar to cancel and preserve this result. The point of a blow is to hit and retract; the rabbit “gets more than he bargained for” when the non-speech of the effigy becomes the non-body that, instead of reacting with a bruise or broken tooth holds fast to the fist of the rabbit. Again, the V situation, but an encounter gone bad. The matter penetrated holds the interlocutor (the rabbit, Dante, and *Aeneas* are all interlocutors with questions to pose to the dead) rather than allowing discourse. But, this is because the rabbit has deemed it necessary for a failed polite conversation to end in violence. The hero in this case reverts to the etymological root of ἦρωϛ, originally just “the dead,” μακαρίτης [How did this word become, less generically, “the defender”?]
60. The terms politeness and violence are figure-ground terms. We cannot see them simultaneously in the process of civil engagement; when one becomes the “figure,” it is a figure *as against the ground* of its antipode. It is the “or else.” The figure-ground comparison can be explained in terms of the example of the playing field, which is at first a figure on a ground (a marked-off space used only for the purposes of a specific game) that, once the game commences, the ground against which play is the figure. When the whistle blows to end the play (half-time; end), the field again becomes a figure on the ground of the space outside. At the beginning of the conversation, the public space co-habited by potential interlocutors is the ground, on top of which a field is established by the opportunity of engagement. With the action of conversation, that field becomes a ground. The quick shift of figure-ground inversions is necessary to define how interaction is initiated and terminated. The figure-ground reversals are the essence; there are no spatial “qualities” that supersede this function.
61. To show the relation to the unconscious, consider the relation of sleep to dreaming. The sleeper and his/her sleeping contrast with the waking world as does a figure on a ground, which can be condensed in the image of the bed. Once *in the bed*, the place of sleeping is the ground for the sleeper’s activity of dreaming, which takes no account of its ground, the bed, but becomes figural in its construction of dreamed actions and exchanges. Once these cease, the bed again becomes a figure. F>G>F is the three-part sequence of the frame (field, bed) that allows the feature, the dream (the game, the conversation, etc.) to play the figure. The *katagraphic* function is revealed in the *katabasis* when the earth is ground to the entry to the underworld, then the entry becomes the ground to the descent journey and its goal, the conversation with the dead. The trick is for the hero to come back alive, and not suffer the plight of the rabbit whose fist has got stuck in the Tar Baby. The success depends on the symmetry of the F>G>F sequence. The figure (which is itself chiralistic, or contronymic) must remain a figure — in other words, the polity of the exchange must be preserved at all costs. This rule is demonstrated in Odysseus’s encounter with the Cyclops in episode twelve of *The Odyssey*. The Greeks visit the Cyclops to see if polity can be preserved: the Cyclops must offer the visiting strangers required gifts and concessions. He does





Figure 9. Book VI, *The Æneid*. Æneas at the Cumæan Gates, before his ascent to meet Askaneas. The hero pauses to read the panels of the bronze doors left by Dædalus in tribute to his son Icarus, telling the story of King Minois, Pasiphaë, and Minotaur. Before he can order this narrative surplus to “tell the tale,” he is whisked away by the guardian attendants of this portal to the underworld.

not, thanks to the cultural differences between the Cyclopes and Greeks, which are themselves cases definable in terms of figure-ground differences).<sup>7</sup> Where the Greeks had special spaces for trading and political conversation, the Cyclopes did not. Thus, the “civic” dimension of the Cyclops’ cave did not exist; instead, it was a trap, like the Tar Baby, which held the gesture of politeness hostage. In other words, the figure-ground sequence,  $F>G>F$  is essential, from the neural level of sleep in relation to wakefulness to the public realm and its spiritualizations in the *katabasis*. The *katabasis* is the  $F>G>F$ , the creation of a special field of play, the initiation of the play that converts the figural field to a ground, and the return of the field to a figure once the play is completed. The  $F>G>F$  sequence is the  $V$  of the katagraph, the rupture (dehiscence) of the “finish” of space first to mark off a specialized zone, “consecrated” as a portal, then the service of this zone as a ground for an exchange. What is true of silent trade, the *katabasis*, the Br’er Rabbit story, and the story of Curtius is true of any symmetrical transformation of a figure into a ground and back to a figure, which is a figure of a void.

62. Sequencing the katagraph shows it to be the program for the foundation of civic space (Curtius) as well as any “phallic exchange” where, as in every game, one team tries to “emasculate” the other team. Lacan’s designation of the lower left corner of the fundamental polygon of the torus is just such an exchange on the “ground” of the void  $-\emptyset$  versus  $-\emptyset$ . This is for the possession of the dismembered phallus, the trophy, held erect by every hero who celebrates victory.

63. In the Lars von Trier film, *The House that Jack Built*, Angie Voela has studied the modern psychotic architect’s re-enactment of the ancient practice of ordering corpses as trophies of his imagined victories. The victims as per custom, must be “innocent” in the sense that they are set up by psychotic rules of the game, where the paternal signifier has been temporarily neutralized. Could this be the archaic roots of what is generically known as the *contest*? Why, for example, in *The Æneid*, do we read about

funeral *games* before we follow Æneas on his journey to the underworld? The games here were among individual contestants rather than teams, but the same principle, of suspending the paternal signifier for the duration of the game, led to its restoration at the end of the game. The  $F>G>F$  is in fact a model of the phallic signifier as a paternal rule. The game must suspend the dominant rule in order to establish its “dis-rule” — a game where contestants are “neutralized” by the rules of the game, i. e. given an equal chance at the prize.

64. Von Trier’s Jack reveals how the game, as a suspension of the paternal signifier, can be inverted if the original “ground” is covertly converted to a figure by — who else? — a psychotic. Lacking a paternal signifier in the first place (like the Cyclopes of *The Odyssey*), the murderer has no moral definition of the figure that is the field of play. Rather, this figure is already a ground, so the sequence reads  $G>F>G$ . The psychotic enacts a forced-choice condition, where he keeps the rule book to himself, denying it to those he entraps as unwitting “players.” They do not know that the choices they make will always lead to the same loss: death. This makes the trophy process necessarily obsessive-compulsive accumulation that must be *stacked in a particular order*. Jack is a cyclops, i. e. psychotic, because like the Cyclopes of ancient days his paternal signifiers are invisible but local. Jack talks to a

<sup>7</sup> The Cyclopes lived on a field defined as a ground without any “figure” of discourse — i. e. no spaces for face-to-face interactions. This is evident in the example of silent trade, designed to allow for redistribution of surplus wealth without the actual confrontation of trading partners. Why? The only answer is that such confrontation could not be “(con-)figured.” The space of silent trade was a figure of a ground, Hades. The trade items were “gifts of Hermes,” i. e. direct surplus of Hades itself, the basis of the perception that traders were regulated by spiritual rules of order and worth, not any perceived constructs of market value.

voice, named Verge (Virgil). This is a paternal signifier, literally, who is buried, literally, but internalized as a voice in Jack's psychotic unconscious. This allows Jack to plan the next victim with a game that he recognizes but is unknown to the victim, justification for claiming yet another trophy to be stacked.

65. Is not every building, constructed in the same *compulsive manner*, not the result of an inner psychotic conversation with a suppressed "father," the co-conspirator who justifies the entrapment of an innocent victim given a forced choice (turn left or turn right; go up or go down — the classic Cartesian dimensions of "inhabitable space")? This would explain C. Sgarbi's designation of architecture as the *compulsion* to build "no matter what" and the repetition function of that compulsion that leads, in the reference polygon of the torus, to the forced choice exchange that entraps the victim *inside* the Symbolic by the psychotic who is *outside* the Symbolic.
66. The torus polygon relates repetition, the essence of the barred subject's relation to the Other (who must be the other corner of the polygon) bi-modally: a "psychotic" vector without an unconscious, and a "neurotic" vector of "acting out." Both vectors relate to the Symbolic as if it were a region, space, or (more appropriately) Home. The psychotic's last resort against the terror of anxiety begins by leaving the scene of Home, the neurotic decides to stay. This in turn engages the bi-modal nature of the Uncanny, namely the exile's status as being "between the two deaths," a theme common in all cultures, not just to psychoanalysis,<sup>8</sup> and theme of the "appointment in Samarra," the creation of a spatial/topological trap by the very intention to flee danger.<sup>9</sup> These two options correspond to the Great Circle position on what I have called the Planet of the Idiots, a small occupied sphere whose King of the West determines to enlarge his territory by rebuilding a wall at increasing distances from his capitol city; at the point of the Great Circle, the wall's next building phase, instead of requiring more stones as expected, actually has stones left over. This is the point at which the architects of the wall realize that the *very nature of space* they are building in has "betrayed them." This is the architectural version of how Žižek has criticized Hegel's philosophy, as the point where Hegel "has encountered his own shadow," a definitive version of the theme of self-intersection and non-orientation.
67. The move from a specific to a general theory always involves such an unexpected and uncanny encounter of one's own shadow, and it is this universal consequence that allows us to interpret Lacan's torus polygon as, fundamentally, a literal *and* metaphysical diagram. Literally, the two antagonistic vectors require space to twist as it folds over to an opposite side. This involves a relation of two voids, one that is continent (the bicycle-tire aspect of the torus), another that is incontinent (the "hole in the donut").
68. What has not been recognized in Lacanian theory is that the reference polygon of the torus is actually an alternative model of Lacan's schema for metaphor. Metaphor is the answer Lacan implies as the alternative to his assertion that "there is no such thing as literal meaning." This reveals a general level — a general *theoretic* — of metaphor that is more fundamental and historically foundational than specific metaphors, such as "Some day I will grow a tooth in my bottom," Dan Collins' example of how metaphor in speech reveals the presence of a latent signifier.<sup>10</sup>
69. In Collins example, a little girl making this claim cannot articulate the idea of the penis that she lacks, and so the penis is the latent signifier in Lacan's formula  $S/S' \cdot S'/x$ . The  $S'$ , "penis," appears as the denominator in the first

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<sup>8</sup> This is the theme of the *katabasis*, the V-trip whose focus is to speak with the dead (*apophrades*) and return alive. The katagraphic aspect of this descent into Hades as a model of all travel into exotic territory, and its relation to the Death Drive, is addressed above.

<sup>9</sup> This creation of a projective surface, self-intersecting and non-orientable, is the basis of Lacan's story of Apollo and Daphne.

<sup>10</sup> Dan Collins, "On Metaphor," *(Re-)Turn: A Journal of Lacanian Studies* 6 (Spring 2011): 161–158. Collins' approach is different from others (e. g. Stephanie Swales) in that he features the distinction between meanings and meaningfulness. The metonymy of meanings can be a bridge to the experience of meaningfulness, which stops the "endless search for new signifieds."

fraction and a numerator in the second, thus “cancelling out,” reading the “•” stood for the multiplication sign. But, there is more than arithmetic at work in this expression. Lacan sees the first fraction as suppression that instantaneously gives rise to an expression, and in this sense the latent signifier is latent in the right-hand fraction, but as the “x” or unknown basis of metonymic relations. The S’ could be re-written as a chain of S’s — S’...S’...S’... etc. — held within the gravitational field of the unknown “x,” in the same way that Freud’s attempts to remember the forgotten name “Signorelli” were metonymically related, thanks to the split of each signifier that tried but failed to capture the lost, latent term Signorelli, failed because it failed to identify the “true” latent term, Herr, the REBUS-value of the proper name Signorelli. In the condensation of  $S/S' \cdot S'/x$ , the right hand expression  $S (1/s)$ , Lacan relates the finish or conclusion of metaphor, S, as mediated by the relation of the unary trait, 1, to a signified, s, that terminates the search for new meanings (the S’...S’...S’... of parapraxis, all of which lack the latent signifier “Herr” and so must repeat their demand — a feature evident in the fundamental polygon version), replacing the multiple meanings with the 1 of meaningfulness, which must be seen as the concluding meaning of the lower left-hand corner of the polygon. Here, continence and incontinence, possession and loss, are foundationally linked. In architecture, this means that every building must be protected, with the construction of the literal foundation walls, by a sacrifice, specifically of an innocent victim.

70. The foundation equation: “Foundation” should be taken both in the sense of (1) literal actions, such as initiating the building of a city, fortress, or dwelling — or even an encampment; and (2) the *topological basis* of those actions, itself a simultaneity of *metaphor* and self-intersecting/non-orientable topology of “toroidal” demand (repetition). This addresses C. Sgarbi’s interest in the compulsion to build by reversing the terms of his question.

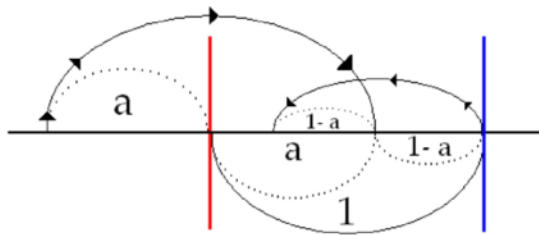


Figure 10. In the French text of session 13, Seminar XIV, Lacan develops a point on a line of length 1, where  $a/1-a$  equals  $1/a$ . This is the “inside/outside” ratio he wishes to equate to the “inside/outside” of the reference polygon of the torus, to say that, in essence, demand itself engages the Other (outside of itself) through the device of repetition (continence) that implies/necessitates incontinence (the central void of the torus). The two voids are a single “formation,” the 2-d projective surface of the torus.

Instead of “why are architects driven to build, no matter what” to the question of why repetition as such is an “architectural act,” and why the architectural act is fundamentally a demand that is repeated, even if it is posed as a “first” —  $S (1/s)$  — and continued as a relation between continence and incontinence, an exterior and interior, a death journey to and from Hades as the obverse of Daphne’s self-inspired trap.

71. The continence/incontinence dual (expressed by the blue and red vectors simultaneously emanating from the upper right corner of the fundamental polygon) requires ritual renewal, hence the ancient device of the *pomærium*, the space between the city’s double-wall, regularly circled by priests to restore the wall’s spiritual powers, *both of continence and incontinence*, i. e. allowing the acceptance of beneficial visitors while rejecting harmful ones. This filtration protocol is expressed directly in the design of the Thesian Labyrinth, a triple fold meander that Borges defines

as governed by the “infinite number, 14,” reading each of the seven layers as a dual, leading both in and out. The seven folds are the result of two fractal folds, beginning with one ABA and resulting in AabaBabaCaba (Fig. 4). See notes 34 and 57.

72. Does the connection of the reference polygon of the torus to Lacan’s metaphor schema have any other advantages? In Session 13 of Seminar XIV Lacan shows that, along any given line (in projective geometry, a “one dimensional subspace”), there is a *single point* that is able to specify an interior and exterior. This is the point at which the inside and outside are both understood not only as equivalent but capable of infinite extension

(unending demand, demand as unending, and *implying* an infinity that is finite, thanks to the self-intersection of the projective surface).

73. The value of connecting the reference polygon to metaphor is that the extension of metaphor to parapraxis (suppression that is simultaneous to the “demand structure” of metonymic signifiers held together by the latent “rebus” signifier) and the extension of the reference polygon to the projective geometry of mythological *dæmon-askesis* themes (Apollo and Daphne; Diane/Djana and Actæon) justify and even demand a revisionary review of ethnological cases, where demand (Lacan’s more accurate term for subjective desire) ends with “getting more than one bargained for.” Demand is “too clever by half,” an expression that gets at the humor/irony of self-inflicted pain, the essence that the neurotic feels from inside the Symbolic (the joke) and the psychotic experiences as self-destruction. The literary expression of these are Comedy and Tragedy, respectively.
74. Completing (Northrop Frye’s) schema, we add Romance to the “high noon” segment of the cycle and Satire to the lower half. Comedy is the condensation of the transition from the Melancholy that is the humoristic counterpart to Satire to the Choleric condition of the manic hero, who must fall as far as he has risen thanks to his own latent surpluses. Tragedy is the accounting methodology by which the surplus products of the hero’s desire (= demand, or compulsive repetition in Lacan’s more accurate terminology) *emerge*, as if magically (†, the magician’s creation of the void out of the hat’s emptiness, *as soon as* a rabbit is pulled out of it), from the



Figure 11. Signorelli’s graphic signature in his fresco, *Preaching of the Antichrist* (1500–1504), shows him eclipsing Fra Angelico, since he literally took over the wall space his predecessor had left unfinished, leaving open the question of an intended analogy between his succession and the Antichrist’s (temporary) succession of Christ.

matrix of metonymic signifiers structured by the latent signifier — which turns out to be nothing less than his original desire, understood as a REBUS.

75. This is the classic formula of tragedy. The audience is returned to an original prophecy that has not been understood, and whose suppression has led to metonymic encounters somehow held together by the latent/suppressed signifier, just as Freud’s parapractic signifiers (BO-ticelli, BO-snia, BO-ltraffio, TRAFFei, etc.) allowed Freud to “encounter his own shadow,” the Herr of both Herzegovina (twin of Bosnia) and SIGNOR-elli, the painter who took over from his predecessor, Fra Angelico.

76. Fra Angelico is left out of most Lacanian-Freudian commentary on the Orvieto frescos, but he is shown as a figure eclipsed by Signorelli, opening this painterly gesture to the question about an intentional analogy to the theme of the mural, the interruption of Christ’s rule on earth by the Antichrist, a V-shaped event if there ever was one, a *katagraphic* interval. Although the viewer can identify the partly eclipsed figure of Fra Angelico, this is thanks to the parallax by which the mural’s illusion of three dimensions presupposes the ability to shift the point of view slightly, to see what had been, just a moment before, what had been a *perfect shadow*, invisible.

77. The perfect shadow engages a reversed perspective, whose visual lines radiate outward from the point-of-view, made evident in Pavel Florensky’s illustrations of reversed perspective in Orthodox icons, converting the point-

of-view into a vanishing point as a condition or conclusion of meditation where the representation function of the icon must be ignored in favor of the “icon looking at the worshiper.” This is the logic of the “celestial globe,” which shows the heavenly constellations as if they were continents on the terrestrial globe. The center of the celestial globe condenses the sphere that marks the limit of the visible universe to a single central point, just as the reversed perspective icon has made the viewer into the vanishing point. *This is the void*, the *incontinent void*, that accompanies/complements the finite void where the viewer occupies a single point and the limit of vision is a sphere.



Figure 12. The celestial globe, where the sky is shown as a surface and the horizon of the visible is represented as a central point.

78. The celestial globe presents us with the essence of projective space. Its point — the ultimate expression of continence, what Vico called *conatus* — is revealed through the reversal of vanishing point and point-of-view (cathetus), based on the correlation of these two points *in everyday experience*, where motion of the viewer produces a parallel motion in the vanishing point of perspectival space. Thus, the virtuality of perspective space (the model of Euclidean continence) itself *contains* the incontinence of projective virtuality — incontinent because self-intersection lead to non-orientation rather than reduplication. This is the thinker who “encounters his/her own shadow,” teaching us that this is not simply due to a flaw in the thinker’s theories but as a “final sinthome” of any “strong thinking” — i. e. thinking about meaning-fulness rather than single meanings.

79. It is significant that Vico used the celestial globe as an element in his frontispiece to *The New Science*, 1725, where Lady Metafisica perches between the astrological signs of Libra and Leo, October and July, indicating that the idea of Justice has emerged from the Cyclopean

clearings attributed to the vanquishing of the Nemean Lion, eponymous beast of the primeval forests. The first clearings were “sidereal”: determined by the positions of the stars, planets, sun and moon, and hence unmovable. Around the hearth that formed the communications portal linking the living and the dead (*manes*, ancestral spirits), ceremonies of marriage and burial structured social relations and produced prophetic judgments that were absolute, i. e. taken to be literal in a literal sense, “by the letter.” Here the function of the rebus is essential for understanding the mentality of these first cultures. The Cyclopean mind was incapable of abstraction, thus the rebus was seen hieroglyphically, a visual “matrix” of metonymic elements structured by an “absent signifier” that was latent and, hence, contronymic. Just as the word *sacrum* indicated both revered and reviled, the latent signifier was simultaneously dead and alive, related to the sacrifice whose death would give life to the architecture by being interred in the “dead” building.<sup>11</sup>

80. Lacan’s formula for metaphor and Freud’s example of parapraxis inform Vico’s account of the clearings made in the forest by the first human groups, known as “Cyclopes” on account of their focus on sidereally determined clearings, which were true voids and perfect shadows — “shadows” indicating the ancestral *manes* who would be encountered through ritual. Lacan demonstrates the symmetry of suppression (metaphor) and metonymic chains that are held together by the gravity of the latent signifier. It is not a coincidence that Freud’s parapraxis hinged around the repressed signifier “Herr,” drawn from a hieroglyphic reading of Signorelli, seeing what a native speaker of Italian would not see, the SIGNOR in SIGNORElli. Metaphor at the primary level of parapraxis induces ignorance, not the “wisdom” of the literary metaphor as “an analogy with one term missing.” Failed theories of metaphor regard metaphor as a more intensive use of “ordinary speech,” an ornament or elaborate puzzle. The analogy (“the hero is courageous, like a lion”) becomes a metaphor by removing the middle function of comparison, the bridge. “The hero fights with great courage, the lion is courageous, therefore the hero is metaphorically a “lion.” This analogy-minus theory appears to be an enthymeme, the conjunction of a major

<sup>11</sup> The connection of building with death is reflected in the necessity, in many if not most cultures at some point, of “killing” the quick (“live”)-lime as *morter*, just as a *mordant* was required to fix a die in cloth. Mixing the blood of the sacrifice into the mortar mix is still done in China, with the blood of a pig rather than a human, but the planting of a token into a foundation wall or slab occurs frequently in most modern construction work. Thus is the infinity of the horizon of the invisible able to “see over” the safety of the architecture thanks to its premature burial and “innocence,” just as the celestial sphere establishes a human (Cyclopean) space by exterminating the Nemean Lion in order to create a legal space (Justizia’s scales) for hearth-based judgement.

(tenor) element with a secondary (“vehicle”) element. The lion is a vehicle for expressing the hero’s courage, in this view. The metaphor (expanded by options that allow the hero to do things like Hercules’ wearing of a lion skin) thus *ornaments* ordinary speech by requiring that we must bring an element of wit to the expression. To appreciate a metaphor, one must “get the point,” employ a bit of wit. This price goes down with the process of catachresis, when a metaphor is repeated so often that it becomes a commonplace. No wit is required to understand “bag of tricks” or “trail of sorrows.” These are worn-out metaphors that no longer surprise or amuse, nor does their use indicate cleverness or art.

81. The reference polygon aspect of Lacan’s graph of repetition–to–suppression not only shows how metaphor operates in the subject’s expressions, which by definition are addressed to an (external) Other, are predicated on the idea of the  $S(\mathcal{A})$ , the signifier of the *lack* of the Other, which is fundamentally the opacity of the unconscious as the LACK of what is otherwise personified in objects and other people, especially one’s parents, bosses, and model egos — heroes or villains in the ordinary sense, the focus points of positive or negative transference in the Analytical session. The lack in the other is the result of suppression, i. e. what made Freud forget the proper name Signorelli. What was suppressed, Lacan emphasizes in Seminar V, is not Signorelli but the REBUS reading of Signorelli’s name, producing HERR, which, once suppressed, became the latent signified “x” of the extended metonymic chain of signifiers moving, *terza rima* fashion, from alternating sides of each signifier’s container–contained functionality.

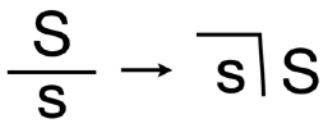


Figure 13. Lacan’s “reversed Saussure” S/s can be expressed as a relation of container (S) and contained (s). This Spencer-Brown notation preserves the idea that the “s” is incontinent while the signifier, S, is continent.

82. Every signifier implies a signified, and works as a container for this meaning: S/s could be written as (s)S, the contained “s” inside the parenthesis with S as “following” the containment process, in the same way an effect follows a cause. Re-stated, this could be “the signified, s, has caused the effect, a signifier S, which tries to contain the meaning of the signified (but inevitably fails).” The failure of the container to contain the contained “s” seems paradoxical at first. This can be understood by realizing that the container is a frame that cuts off a *segment* of the signified that correlates with the subject’s point of view. The signified’s vanishing point is at the limit of the frame’s attempt at enclosure. For Euclidean rationality, this vanishing point is a fiction. The signified continues *ad infinitum* past the vanishing point at the horizon. For projective geometry, the vanishing point is a nexus, a component related to *every* “family” of parallel lines.

83. The difference between Euclid’s infinity that runs past the apparent vanishing point and projective geometry’s Real Point, is that the Real Point is a material component of the line. Every line, in projective geometry, is a line and a point, its vanishing point, and this point is created by the viewer’s necessary construction of a frame (the  $\top$  element in Fig. 13). This necessary projective plane equates the vanishing point with the viewpoint, evident in the way that the vanishing point appears to move as the observer moves through space — the phenomenon Brunelleschi identified as “cathetus.” Cathetus shows that the frame fails to contain what it has framed, that its very definition depends on its status as a sample of something that extends beyond the frame, making every frame a frame *of* something that has a temporal priority and spatial surplus extension.
84. Thus the framed scene (or map, or formula, or theory) can never fully exhaust the reality it attempts to sample, even when, as in the case of the map, there is an assembly protocol presuming the complete mappability of the object, the surface of the earth. The map will always subtract a dimension as the “cost of doing mapping,” in the same way the frame inserts a two-dimensional transparent plane that flattens the view it quadrates. Transparency seems necessary to this plane, but the flattening of the contained scene beyond (which is itself incontinent) betrays the presence of a surface, a “finish.” This is Lacan’s idea of the *lamella*, a thin sheet that is “neither alive nor dead” but always in between both life and death and the viewer’s attempt to grasp reality

through representation. The lamella represents the representation and, thus, is the meaning of Freud's term, the *Vorstellungs Repräsentanz*. Ordinarily this is translated as "the representation of representation," or "representational as act (rather than content)." The latter follows the pattern of Lacan's division of language into act and content, or *énonciation* and *énoncé*. The *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* is credited with being the Real of the otherwise Symbolic or Imaginary representation, and thus the password that traverses the forbidding boundary between consciousness and unconsciousness.

85. As a password, the *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* functions within analysis as the "tell" by which the Analyst is able to hear what the Unconscious wishes to say, independent of what the Analysand, in his/her blah blah blah, thinks is what Analysts want to hear. The *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* thus includes slips of the tongue, bungled explanations, and repeated gasps or sighs that can be provoked artfully by the Analyst's cough or suggestion, as long as the slip is referenced without the Analysand's awareness. This amounts to a kind of operant conditioning directed at the Unconscious, which has been "listening all the time" to what the Analysand has blabbered on about, waiting for the moment to "break out" in a psychotic moment — psychotic in contrast to the Analysand's neurotic blah blah blah.
86. Where the Rat Man as a child impressed his father by insulting him by calling him "you lamp! you plate! you towel!" the father correctly diagnosed (differentially, in the tradition of Lacanian psychoanalysis) his son as a future *criminal* (i. e. psychotic) or *genius* (i. e. neurotic) — moving to the point of the great circle on the reference polygon of demand/repetition. The next part of the "journey" across this toroid space will converge on the exchange of the  $-\emptyset$  of trophies, just as Apollo's chase of Daphne led to the great circle position of paralysis, her metamorphosis into a laurel tree, followed by Apollo's acceptance of defeat, recognized by using laurel boughs as trophies for victorious athletes competing at the Olympics. Games equalize opponents through the extended idea of the "field of play," and here we see how the field is at first a figure, then a ground for the *agon*, then a figure again at the conclusion of the contest. FGF (figure/ground/figure) is the symmetrical rhythm of the "show," the "spectacle," that in theater is marked by the rising and lowering curtain.
87. The paradoxical incontinence of the contained (framed) element is explained and expanded by the anecdote of Zeuxis and Parrhasius, the two painters who competed for the title of Best Painter, the former by painting a *trompe-l'œil* of a bowl of fruit on a window ledge so realistic that a bird flew into the wall and broke its neck, the latter by painting the curtain that the judges took to be the real device of privacy/secretcy over his real entry. The technical reason for Parrhasius's victory is that the bird lacked cathetus and, hence, the ability to regard the incontinence of the contained with irony. An even more complicated answer is that the judges did not identify the curtain as a *katagraphic*, a representation that penetrated and merged with its medium, its *finish*. At the level of a funny joke, however, it is clear that the punch line has to do with judges breaking their necks on an image relating to their expected delay, while the simple-minded bird broke its neck "without delay" because it didn't, like the sophisticated judges, expect one. Both the bird and the judges were "killed," if in different but symmetrical ways. The bird was "psychotically" outside the Symbolic, the judges were "neurotic insiders." In the Zeuxis–Parrhasius story we have a material example of the Great Circle position of the torus's reference polygon, what in the Planet of the Idiots was the point at which the greater wall required fewer stones.
88. With the material evidence of the wall as, really, *two walls* — one to break the neck of the psychotic bird outside of the system of signifiers known as the Symbolic, the other to break the necks of those neurotics impatient to look past the "conventionality" of the frame, we have the benefit of now knowing why Romulus killed Remus and thus initiated the custom of sacrifice at the foundation of the city with the conventional metonymy of a plowed furrow. The furrow was, in religious terms, the crevice, the *katagraphic*, the V, into which blood was poured to lure the souls in Hades to appear and deliver prophecy. It was not a simple way of indicating the

$$x = 1 + \frac{1}{(x)} = \frac{2}{1}$$

$$x = 1 + \frac{1}{1+1} = \frac{3}{2}$$

$$x = 1 + \frac{1}{\frac{1+1}{1+1}} = \frac{5}{3}$$

$$x = 1 + \frac{1}{\frac{1+1}{\frac{1+1}{1+1}}} = \frac{8}{5}$$

Figure 14. The unary trait, in terms of the Fibonacci number series (1, 1, 2, 3, 5, etc.) is “audioactive” in the way the question is plugged back into the answer, all a matter of relations of the number 1 (“one 1”) to itself, where the designation (framing) of the value (contents) constitutes a radical binary division, a “/.” The fractions are successive better approximations of the Fibonacci  $\emptyset$ .

position of the future city wall, an *ichnographic* mark to direct construction, the *orthography* or raising of the wall.

89. The “all or nothing” of binary signification, the standard methodology applied by humanistic phenomenology to such pairs as love/hate, just/unjust, inside/outside, authentic/inauthentic has been consolidated into a theory contrasting the poetic-imaginative modality of “traditional ways of thinking/feeling/making” to mechanization. Under the heading of “instrumentality,” projective geometry has been condemned and Euclid extolled, on the grounds that projective geometry used “abstract concepts” to convert the idea of space into something that could be quantified. This happens to be true only in the way that projective lines, and their correlated points lying on the horizon at an “infinity” could be brought within reach because the periphery was simultaneously a center through which all vectors must pass. Each vector can thus be represented in terms of its relation to a plane placed within Cartesian coordinates, which if set so that one coordinate is zero, any vector can be represented algebraically by its X-Y values. A variation of this method allowed Desargues to devise a topological technique for defining sculpted solids that the architect could communicate directly and precisely to stonemasons. Of course, the stonemasons did not appreciate the architect’s intrusion into their protected secret lore, which often involved erecting curtains at building sites so that their methods of approximating stone shaping were not disclosed.

90. The binary signifier requires calculating a midpoint, a “Golden mean” in Aristotle’s terms, that balance out the interests of the opposed values. This is the Goldilocks Method, of finding a point that is neither too much nor too little but “just right.” As with the point, the proof of its accuracy is foiled by the fact that it is tautological. A “bad infinity” is generated by the problem of this middle’s relation to each of the binary originals. 1/2 becomes 1/8 becomes 1/16, etc. etc. The Mean, statically determined, must be supplemented by further “relational” specifications, in the same way that being rich raises

the question of “how rich?” and ends up by concluding that it is possible to be “poorly rich” or “richly poor” — the billionaire who, being stingy, cannot conclude that he/she has enough money. By suppressing the self-intersecting, non-orientation of things like love, wealth, health, or sex, the binary signifier style of philosophizing fails to understand the role of satisfaction in human culture, namely that it is there “not to be had.” Lack is the radical feature of human desire; any specification of a utopia, a Golden Mean, thus required stopping short of the discourse that ultimately calls the assumption into question.

91. Thus, much of phenomenology replaces its scientific–mathematical basis in Husserl and Hegel with utopian pronouncement taking the form of “if (we stop doing X) ... then (some Y value will return).” This relies on the uncritical reception of the (fundamental, axiomatic) good what Y is to be, antipodal to the assumption that X is axiomatically bad. Proofs are customarily offered through associative reasoning. Dilapidated housing makes people unhappy, unhappy people commit more crimes, therefore improved housing will reduce crime. Cause and effect is assumed to be linear and determinative.
92. In contrast, Lacan replaces the Aristotelian version of the Golden Mean with a historically more accurate and theoretically more useful idea of a point that can be found (anyone can learn to do it) along a line such that the length to the left stands in the same relation to the whole line that the whole line stands to the sum of itself added to this length to the left (Fig. 10). Instead of generating both internal and external bad infinities, this “mean and extreme,” as Lacan calls it in Sessions 12 and 13 of Seminar XIV, accounts for its internality and externality, its continence and incontinence, through the radical binary condition of the unary trait, 1/1,



algebraically expressible as  $x = 1 + 1/x$ , where the answer is always the “next version” of the problem (Fig. 14). The unary trait is “audioactive,” just as the signifier is simultaneously a content and an action, *énoncé* and *énonciation*. The frame frames content, but content “refuses to be contained” and shows that the frame is grounded in the idea of its failure to contain.

93. Audioactivity and the katagraphic mark are two aspects of the same interaction of medium with message. The *katabasis* is the ethnographic play-out of both audioactivity (as *apophrades*) and the unconscious (*kenosis*, “knowing without knowing”). The unconscious reveals its password as a signifier of its own lack,  $S(\bar{A})$ , where the bar is the attempt to frame or contain the unconscious, which is incontinent, i. e. a treasure of signifiers only in that it cannot be added to or subtracted from but remains “idempotent” ( $x + 1 = x$ ).
94. If idempotency is the key to the Golden relation of mean to extreme (because the ratio is maintained with every addition of a 1x1 square to the Golden Rectangle), then the architectural function of the buffer must be reconsidered. The wall aims to maintain a homeostasis within (usually) despite changes on the outside. This is the customary means, in fact, of confidently identifying shelter in terms of a *difference* between inside and outside.
95. However, this association is contingent and ultimately false. The union without intersection of the uncanny’s two primaries, “between the two deaths” (*tesseræ*<sup>12</sup>), and the subject who creates a trap at the instant of desiring to flee (*askesis*) establish that the interior will be, simultaneously, contaminated by the exterior (just as the subject is interpellated by the Big Other) and the exterior will nonetheless be hauntingly familiar, as if a product of *anamnesis*, as Plato argued.
96. If this sounds familiar, it should, since the idempotency of the Golden “mean to extreme” is nothing other than the homeostasis common to the neural networks as Freud defined them in his “Project for a Scientific Psychology” (1895), where not one but two networks were required, a “continent” network based on the pleasure principle, and an “incontinent” network he termed the Death Drive. Of course there are but one “set” of neurons in the neural supply system, but a network is defined by the completion of a task, and both the pleasure principle and death drive “complete” a task of homeostasis. Unlike the pleasure principle, however, the death drive is unable to distinguish between a positive or negative stimulus. It treats both the same, which explains how a hysteric can express pain while experiencing pleasure (but a special kind of pleasure, called *jouissance*).
97. The unary trait is one of the few things that Lacan spots in ethnography that he pulls into psychoanalysis along two paths, the first as a purely mathematical —which is to say projective-geometrical — phenomenon, the second as the key to compulsive repetition and desire/(non-)satisfaction. The unary as such is a relation to the Fibonacci number series in a way that can be demonstrated on a line: between two marks on a line, it is possible to find a point whose ratio to the line simultaneously is the same to successive points *inside* the marks and *outside*, relating to the Golden Rectangle’s growth or contraction with the addition or subtraction of a 1x1 square. In terms of desire, the unary trait is the repetition that does not “satisfy,” that calls for another repetition, and another, and so on. This is the spiral around the tube of the torus, which defines a contained space, e. g. the inflated bicycle tire. At the same time, the spiral encloses a second void, an incontinent one, in the middle of the torus, and in terms of the unary trait this is the feature of self-intersection expressed in Fig. 14, where the “answer” is plugged into the “question,”  $x = 1 + 1/x$ . Just as the fractions generated at each stage of the “plug-in”

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<sup>12</sup> *Tesseræ* were the two halves of the single token friends broke at parting to insure their reunion, when the two random edges would be perfectly re-matched to authenticate the original promise. This broken-edge authentication factor is the logic behind the interval between the two deaths, when, according to W. F. Jackson-Knight (*Cumæan Gates*), the newly deceased must guess at the half the map of his/her trial that has been erased by the boundary guardian-ghost. Authentication (successful completion of the interval-journey) comes when the initiate to Hades remembers the patterns learned in childhood, where the bi-folded sequence of turns (remember Borges contention that  $14 = \text{infinity}$ ) and applies this “muscle memory” to complete the test.

process are increasingly better at estimating the value of  $\emptyset$ , the value of  $\emptyset$  is not a real number but a ratio, a *cut* between two numbers. The cut is the constant. The cut is both continence and incontinence, both something that can be represented, a part of the Symbolic, and a part of the Real, the non-Symbolic. This is why the two corner conditions of Lacan's reference polygon, the *passage à l'acte* outside the scene of the Other and acting out, inside the scene of the Other, refer to something contained (acting out) and something not containable (the *passage à l'acte*). The cut is the key, because the cut is made simultaneously in two kinds of spaces, a Euclidean space where continence and incontinence are clearly distinguishable, and projective space, where continence and incontinence are constantly changing places.

98. Just as the *tesseract's* two broken edges are really a part of the same act of breaking (two sides of one fracture), the unary trait's continence-incontinence formula is two parts of one cut. The cut, the distinction, is primary and primal. It exists both mathematically and in culture, and is a bridge between psychoanalysis as theory and the world where ethnography, art, architecture, theater, culture, etc. are nothing but so many instances of the unary cut. Just as the unary notch on the bow of the Stone-Age hunter made Lacan think of subjectivity as a historically transcended essence of the human subject, the cut of the Romulus' plow marking out the territory of Rome, or Curtius's dive *into* the cut into the earth to restore the public space of the Forum, escapes the limitations of historicism and constitutes a *ground against which* historical change can be gauged. For Vico, his discovery of the "imaginative universal" of mythic/cyclopean thinking was equivalent to Lacan's unary trait. This is not just a parallel, but a telling coincidence that raises the question: is not Vico's imaginative universal an 18c. version of the unary trait?
99. This question can be answered only by shifting to a ground common to Vico and Lacan: metaphor. For Vico, the first humans suppressed knowledge of their own nature and found it appearing in front of their eyes, as nature's objectivity, incomplete in its appearances but unified in the idea of single cause, which we might write up in "Lacanesé" as  $(S \dots S)/x$  — metonymic chains of signifiers held together by an unknown factor, a "1," requiring repetition. For the first cultures, repetition was the purpose of ritual renewal: the creation of a calendar-style temporality where, from the scale of hours to eons, time's continuity had to be divided by markers that "re-set the system to zero," so to speak. This is Eliade's "eternal return," not a representation of a past event but a re-enactment of it as perpetually new. But, as we see in all cultures but especially the Mayan, where a fantastically accurate calendar was devised using sidereal observations, the eternal return is, simultaneously, a *count* that leads to a material infinity enclosing time itself in an apocalyptic "finish." The finish instantiates 1 as a count of the whole, negating but preserving the series. Unlike Euclidean temporality, extending to an abstract infinity, the unary count asserts that time must have a stop, when the incontinence of counting is contained.
100. Vico reverses the many-to-one ratio of effects to causes, asserting that, for any *one* effect in the human world, there are as many causes as one can imagine. This is a temporal version of Florensky's reversed perspective.<sup>13</sup> This makes any appearance, any effect, into the point on Desargues' theorem, where the profiles of innumerable triangles converge, making the point the *locus of shadows* that, in converging, "meet themselves." This is the idea of the perfect shadow, the shadow that meets itself; and Desargues has shown us the theorem by which the infinite variations allowed the triangles within this shadow to be collected and contained by a single line. For Vico, the single line is the "ideal eternal history," a sequence of ages through which all cultures evolve, not thanks to any intention or drive, but to the "surplus products" that make each subsequent age a matter of emergence. Emergence is what Vico means when he says there are as many causes as one can imagine for any given effect. It is the surplus that creates the "perfect shadow" of the unary trait, the fixed viewing point that holds the triangles into its prismatic view.

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<sup>13</sup> Jorge Luis Borges develops the same thesis in his short story, "Garden of the Forking Paths."



Figure 15. Gahan Wilson, source unknown. Provisional title: "Landscape with(out) the landscape painter, reasons why." Metalepsis is detected when an absence can be indicated in the "Other" of the framed cartoon. The frame's claim to contain is exceeded by the view it frames, whose incontinence affirms the frame's legitimacy as an "representational snapshot of reality." Metalepsis makes this claim humorous in that it refers to a moment prior to the artist's sudden flight from the scene.

101. **Emergence and jokes: the metaleptic structure of the Witz.** Metalepsis, a form of metonymy known as "metonymy of metonymy," has been connected to the function of the frame in its necessary pretense of invisibility or neutrality. Although yard sales are famous for providing opportunities to purchase an expensive item (a picture frame) for the price of the highly-discounted graphic work it contains, reversing the usual inverse ratio, where the frame is considered of minimal value in relation to the work of art. Imagine a Sotheby's auction where, as the bidding accelerates into the seven-figures range, a bidder who believes that the competition is the acquisition of the frame, and the painting it contains will be discarded once he/she wins the bid. Metalepsis uses the frame in an *après coup* fashion: we realize retroactively that what had been undervalued (the frame) is the surplus that now becomes inversely significant. In the Gahan Wilson cartoon (Fig. 15), the empty scene ("incontinent") shows mountains on an otherwise featureless plane, but the artist's abandoned painting ("continent") shows the moment just before flight: the appearance of a monster's head.

102. The moment of recognition must have been anamorphic, as the painter began to paint what he/she thought was a green mountain like the two formations to the left and right. At first the "mountain" appears to be harmless, the next moment the artist realizes the monster's face in the process of painting details that suddenly appear to be eyes. This relieves the standard protocol of anamorphic recognition, where what seems to be a meaningless *surplus* of a framed/perceived view suddenly turns out to be not just a Real but an *antithetical* Real that redefines radically how one should react to or "receive" the scene.

103. Leaving the scene or not leaving the scene is critical to the idea of neurosis (which comes with an unconscious) and psychosis (which lacks a paternal signifier and the unconscious it would afford). Neurosis "remains at the scene of the Other," according to Bruce Fink, while psychosis "flees the scene of the Other." By considering Gahan Wilson's framed view as "the scene of the Other," we have a way of thinking about Lacan's reference polygon of the torus, used to relate repetition to suppression *via* this distinction based on the framed scene. Because this particular framed scene is a joke, and because the joke is metaleptic (a self-reference to the function of the frame that is retroactive), some important distinctions can be made about continence/incontinence that, thanks to the relation to the Witz, where omission leads to a key *après coup* action or realization, and because jokes are, as Freud has shown, *about* the unconscious, the frame's relation function as a continence/incontinence "management system" is critical.

104. Foucault's account of the measures taken to control the plague in the French town of Vincennes is helpful. The syndics appointed by the city to surveil residents organized around an imaginary-actual *cordon sanitaire* followed the strict fantasy that the plague could be controlled by a well-regulated enclosure. This belief in the effectiveness of continence relied on a theory of the plague bacteria as something that would respect the frame. This relies on the corollary that space is Euclidean: non-intersecting and orientable. However, as Mladen Dolla has noted in his consideration of Covid-19, the virus is a dual: it is both continent (responsive to quarantine measures) and incontinent (boundary-evading). It evolves as the human measures to contain it are put into place, to the extent that we could say that the virus adapts to the measures we take to fight (contain) it, and that ultimately the virus is incontinent in that it is simultaneously (1) an independent biological being and (2) defined by the very strategies taken to eradicate or avoid it. The virus subsumes this "anti-virus."

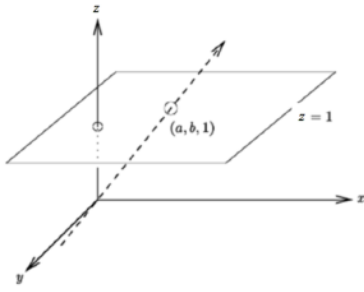


Figure 16. The projective plane at  $z=1$ , allowing the vector (dotted line) passing through the common origin point to be defined by two algebraic terms,  $a$  and  $b$ . Source: "The Projective Plane: A Visual Introduction," Professor Quibb (February 12, 2016); <http://quibb.blogspot.com/2016/02/the-projective-plane-visual-introduction.html>.

105. Foucault somewhat understands this when he lectures on bio-politics. The concentric model of disease containment is contrasted with the sectorial model of protocols based on social-racial-economic *differences*. We could compare this concentric v. sector theorizing to urban geography's classic two models of city structure, Burgess's rings and Hoyt's sectors. Note that rings are about containing and releasing urban growth based on the idea of containment, and sectors assume the infinite extension of sectors that radiate outward from a central point.

106. Projective geometry can be explained as the convertibility of space from (1) the model of a plane bounded by a horizon along which families of parallel lines have their own unique vanishing points to (2) a "sector" model where all lines pass through a central point defined by Cartesian coordinates,  $X$ ,  $Y$ , and  $Z$ . Any line ("one-dimensional subspace" is the technical term) can thus be defined by the two coordinates of the point where it intersects the "projective plane," if the plane is set to 1 on one of the axes. What does this have to do with Foucault? Foucault is (in)famous for getting the Lacanian gaze backwards, which has led to his interpretation of the Panopticon allowing his followers (feminists in particular) to imagine that Power has a gaze that encircles them no matter where they move. This is actually related to the phenomenon of cathetus, the conjunction of the viewing point with the vanishing point in perspectival space. As the viewer travels, this conjunction can be noticed if a view is taken at an orthogonal angle to the line

of travel. The lines connecting the viewer to the horizon will always vanish at a point that runs in parallel to the moving viewer's viewpoint.

107. Thus, the Foucauldian viewer associates the vanishing point with an ever-surveillant Gaze that is orthogonal but correlated to the surveilled subject's line of travel, associated with autonomous desire. The viewer desires, the Gaze, independent because of the orthogonal vector's  $90^\circ$  angle to desire, countermands this desire not by opposing it (in a  $180^\circ$  confrontational way), but by paralleling it as an antipode. This, incidentally, was defined by Lacan as the essence of the term "purloined" in his analysis of Poe's "The Purloined Letter." We could say that invisibility runs parallel to visibility. It would be more productive to say that invisibility and visibility each have their own forms of virtuality, and that these forms run parallel to each other, each has its own "protocols." Joan Copjec has noted that this concentric model of the Gaze (which surrounds the "victim" in a portable containment) was not only a misinterpretation of the (Lacanian) Gaze but an impediment to feminist theory. Once inside the trap of the Gaze, the victim can only respond "concentrically," as a self-limited subject. But, this is not how the gaze works. The gaze, as Lacanians know, is a hole in the perspectively constructed Imaginary, counterpart to the *objet petit a* that is a hole in the Symbolic. The connection (employing the Borromeo rule by which any two domains are connected *via* the absent third) is the Real, the *a* as a drive, namely the scopic drive.

108. The hole in both the Imaginary (the "front" or "face" of the scene that the viewer constructs perspectively, i. e. as *contained* by a visual frame) and the Symbolic (the inconsistency of the Other,  $\mathbb{A}$ , signified as a lack in the Other that produces unbearable anxiety), is of course *incontinent* in comparison to the continence of (Euclidean) perspective, the geometrical basis of containment. In Jorge Luis Borges' story, "The Aleph," the gaze is reconfigured as a bright sphere allowing the viewer lying prone beneath a cellar stairway. (Note: the descent and prone position of the observer are critical to the vectorial definition of this important example of "katagraphic" panopticism). Unlike the feminists who imagine themselves surrounded by a "spherical" gaze presence, the prone viewer in Borges' story sees a spooky correlation (cathetus) connecting his viewing point with the infinity of images seen through/in the bright sphere. This is the correct Lacanian reading of the gaze, which is emancipatory, not confining. The viewer is released from perspectival containment and given access to a

“treasury of signifiers” that is uncontained by either space or time. His prone position and maximal depth (the cellar in this domestic situation) are key to the maximal passivity required for this link between continence and incontinence, perspective virtuality (which is canceled) and projective virtuality (whose essence is preservation). Together, continence and incontinence echo Hegel’s logic of *Aufhebung*, the suppression that both cancels and preserves *simultaneously*.

109. For Vico, *Aufhebung* was of course the logic of metaphor, which simultaneously repressed/suppressed the element of appearances that was to be reconfigured as a perpetual infinite gaze, which Vico converted into the currency of the acousmatic voice, the thunder. Both drives related to the incontinence of the void planted in perspectival space by the subject’s anxiety. The voice was acousmatic in its incomplete command, its “Che vuoi?” The subject, not knowing what the acousmatic voice commanded, was compelled to *repeatedly* demand of this Other blessings (or fend off curses), in ways structured by ritual and temporal protocols. The sidereal determination of the *loci* of these protocols determined (contained) the *locale* of divination, the rule by which Cyclopean culture defined itself. Each religion was related to a single site, and contact with others devoted to other sites was forbidden.
110. Vico further saw this simultaneous continence–incontinence relation as a theoretic problem. Just as Cyclopean culture made itself blind to the structure of its social relations and phenomenological relations to the world, the theorist self-blinded her/himself to the metaphoric nature of this structure, which Vico called “imaginative universality.” An imaginative universal was not a metaphor that could be classed and compared as would a totemic system, the basis of a “comparative theology,” but was instead a blank structure. Like Lacan’s own template for metaphor, the instance of suppression was simultaneously echoed in an “emergent array” of signifiers metonymically ordered. At the stage of culture where metaphor was taken to be the basis of the Real, *via* the Symbolic and Imaginary, these linked metonyms were given an absolute authority, at the same time they were regarded as immutable and fixed within the *locale* of observation, collection, and interpretation of divine signs. This was the Promethean Effect: the chaining of the one who had “stolen the fire of the gods” (= invented the science of auspices) to the locale. Lacan would position Prometheus at the lower right corner of his toroidal diagram: unable to quit the scene of the Symbolic Other, the subject has no choice but to revert to an idiomatic code that, to any outsider, would appear to be nonsense. The Promethean subject holds nature prone by flaying the sacrificial victim and examining its organs as a flat presentation (e. g. the liver as a stellar representation). In contrast, Borges’ victim, lying prone in the cellar beneath the stairs, is the “dummy” who, as in the game of bridge, displays all of his cards, open to the view of the Others. Like the psychotic, the Borgesian victim, obverse to the Cyclopean Prometheus, “sees everything” but is silent. Prometheus, in contrast, “tells all,” in the form of a polyglot prophecy, a claim to say not just something but everything, about everything — the access to the truth of uncontained nature with an equally uncontained discourse of infinity.
111. The connection of Vico to Lacan *via* Borges invites psychoanalysis to theorize in a way it has formerly refused to theorize. Freud, sensing that Jung was taking psychoanalysis into a mythic night of darkness where, as Hegel put it, “all cows were black,” made what can only be judged to be a scatological claim to/against Jung: “of seeing a profound theory of the psyche finding itself in the rut of what he himself called ‘the black tide of mud of occultism.’” For Jung, there was no Cyclopean mode or stage of culture, only a heroic. The hero symbolized the overcoming of antinomies and antagonisms, a victory for the unconscious repressed thoughts over a reality paralyzed by oppositions. The overlap of two circles was, for Jung, a transcendent space elevating the materiality of its components to a spiritual union. Odysseus conquered the Cyclops just as the spirit conquered base corporeality, with its monocular determination to refuse passage — a story about continence *versus* incontinence if there ever was one! The Greeks freely roamed the seas, the Cyclopes imprisoned themselves in makeshift caves. The cultural superiority of Greeks over Cyclopes was evident, a “lesson to the psyche to embrace adventurous free thinking over the superstitious and pious. This was Jung’s relation to Freud: a self-

styled free-thinker in comparison to Freud's strict self-discipline, which seemed to many outsiders as obsessive and particularistic.

112. Mythic thinking, for most moderns, has a Jungian spin — a lottery of archetypes, love, and magical unions. Vico's myth was the opposite because it demonstrated the necessity of the cyclopean mentality's concern with detail, the absolutism of metaphor. Lacan was no less insistent on this absolutism. In his claim that "there is no such thing as literal meaning," the silent conclusion is that everything begins with metaphor, the metaphor of suppression of one signifier by another, and the consequent — immediate, even "quantum" — production of a surplus that is the surplus Žižek identified in the architectural element, the spandrel. Why didn't Žižek pursue this fruitful comparison? Was he thinking that, because the spandrel was an architectural term, that he was obliged to follow Jameson to a consideration of the Bonaventure Hotel and Frank Gehry? Without tarrying with the negative of the spandrel — its uselessness — he did not make the connection to the ambiguous gesture of hospitality, that in inviting the guest into the interior of a domestic space, the guest is automatically contained by an exterior. The guest is by definition "free to leave" but this is disguised as the obligation (hence, not free) to leave, to over-stay his welcome, as it is said.
113. Not only is the spandrel representative of the contronymic aspects of hospitality, it is a surplus structured by the logic of all surpluses: exaptation. In turn, exaptation (emergence) is structured by the exchanges of continence and incontinence, a lesson we learn in Odysseus's *gratuitous* visit to see if the Cyclops will offer the visiting strangers the customary required gifts. Reading ancient literature in terms of continence and incontinence is not strange if we realize the predominance of themes of entrapment, which can be physical, psychological, moral (a pledge or bond), or seduction. Fight or flight constitutes a large proportion of "situations" of drama; Hamlet could have easily asked, instead of "To be or not to be," "should I stay or should I go." His is a case of continence, of being unable to break his implicit pledge of revenge. Incontinence is present in the form of the friends Rozencrantz and Guildenstern, Ophelia, and Polonius — one by one they are pulled into Hamlet's vortex of entrapment.
114. The suppression in the lower left corner of Lacan's reference polygon would seem to be applicable only to someone with an unconscious, which is *continually* suppressing on behalf of metaphor, *ex-*pressing in the form of linked metonymies. But, as Bruce Fink notes, the position of "I am not thinking" and "I am not" (unconscious meaning) are the two sides of the barred subject, \$, which appears as a convergence of these two conditions after they had been expanded at the "Great Circle" position of the torus. Like the Great Circle of the sphere, there is a flip, from the mentality of the reversed *cogito* (I think therefore I am, to I am not thinking and I am not thinking) is an expansion to the point at which inside and outside, the neurotic and psychotic, are maximal. This tempts us to personify the neurotic and psychotic and substitute their pathologies for the topological meaning of these corner positions. Yet, the logic is reverse. It is the positions that condition the personifications, not the other way around.
115. If the diagonal connecting the lower right to the upper left corners can be labeled "\$," the other diagonal is akin to the subject's movement from the logical act of reversal (of Descartes' *cogito*) to the subjectivity of castration. Men (Lacan: "those who choose to call themselves men") use castration,  $-\emptyset$ , as a social bond, held in place by the exemption of the One who does not obey the phallic law, the paternal signifier. Women are, all of them, involved in the phallic law, but only partly. "Those who choose to call themselves women" are a part of an array of Lacanian partials: the part-object, *mi-dire*, the split subject. Indeed, lack, which leads to partiality, is at the center of psychoanalysis because it is lack that initiates subjectivity from the start, the Mirror Stage ... or, before, the infant's extended period of underdevelopment. Where infants of other species quickly and "instinctively" acquire the basics for survival, the human infant's development is dramatically long, marked by stages, crises, and lacunæ guided by the sequence of phases associated with drives: oral, anal, phallic.

116. In the act and the (continent) acting-out, we have the same division as found in language between *énonciation* and *énoncé*, the speech act and the communicated content. For Lacan, every speech is a demand (for recognition by the Other), and every demand is a repetition. The key is to note that repetition by itself begs the question of repetition of ... what? Each act of repetition poses a repressed content *in a new key*. While the aim is to secure recognition, the goal, the target, is this unknown repressed content. The medium of this repetition where the aim repeatedly miss the target is metonymy, which could be considered as a step, made up of a tread and riser, in a staircase of descent that pretends to be an ascent. If the aim is to reach the bottom, the actual outcome is the arrival at the antipode, the top. This is not just a characterization but a popular trope, famously employed by Dante in his descent-turned-ascent. The V of the *katabasis* is the universal form of this time-honored metaphor.

117. In metaphor generally, what goes does must come up, in the form of a metonymic staircase, a *Bahnungen* as Freud might put it (network), where some repressed “x” works as a gravity field curving what seems to be

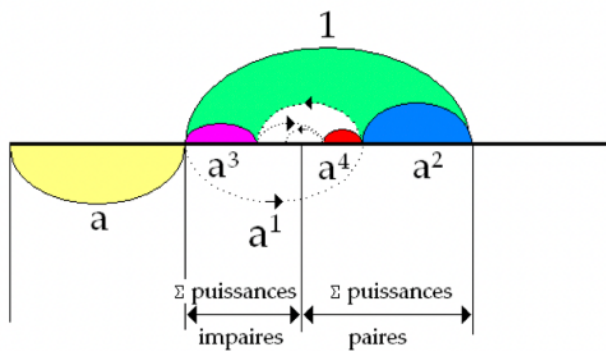


Figure 17. Seminar XIV, session 14. Lacan demonstrates the function of the “mean and extreme” of the Fibonacci number series (1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 ...) by extending *a* to the powers of 2, 3, and 4 to show the complementarity of

Euclidean relations into projective ones. Freud developed this in relation to the dream’s coordination of *manifest* content and *latent* (suppressed) content. To universalize this relation we must include a “psychotic” vantage point or contribution alongside the interior (to the Symbolic) neurotic source. If we translate to the terms of the externalization of psychosis as incontinent and the internal situation of neurosis as continent we have a solution. The metaphor’s  $M(1/s)$  expresses/condenses the reciprocal continence/incontinence (or suppressed/expressed) logic of the left side of the formula as an order brought about by superimposing the 1 over the signified field. In the linear diagrams (Fig. 17), the 1 is imposed to allow the *objet petit a* to “advance” into an interior at the same time, and in the same proportion, as it encloses the original order. The issue is around the relation of sense to nonsense. We are alert to this in the case of the Rat Man’s outburst (at the scene of the Symbolic) to his father. This nonsense is still capable of creating the neurotic/psychotic division, in his father’s response, that his son will grow up to be either a criminal (psychotic) or great artist (neurotic). Inside the inside, there is still an outside.

118.