

The Bitter Taste of Green Oranges¹

an 'ex falso' parapraxis methodology

Scope and Aim



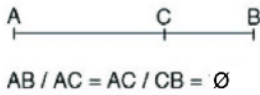
Figure 1. Gordon Matta-Clark, 1943–1978. With two/four packages of “button mushrooms,” immature form of the edible fungus *Agaricus bisporus*, which also includes cremini and portobello mushrooms, which are the same mushroom at different stages of development.

This project began as one of several “treatments,” in the way that this term is used in relation to the development of production ideas based on a primary text.² The text in question is the last installation of Gordon Matta-Clark before his untimely death in 1978. Matta-Clark’s twin brother Sebastian had died two years earlier, by suicide, in 1976. This traumatic event was carried into the project, *Circus or The Caribbean Orange*, which intensified with Matta-Clark’s insistence on cutting a hole in the floor of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, as well as circular cuts into the walls and floors of the townhouse adjacent to the museum. The project requires any critique to address the issue of trauma, both as biographical and as the material damage to the “conventional” space of the buildings. Matta-Clark’s methods of cutting into the material building forces the issue of trauma to be addressed in relation to the voids he created, and to the general role of the void in architecture.

Matta-Clark’s work forces criticism to find a new methodology, a new intellectual basis. And, in Matta-Clark’s last project in particular, where the issue of trauma is unavoidable and where it is impossible to separate the issue of biographical trauma from the material trauma that is the central motive and feature of the work, criticism must come face to face with the impossibility of interpretation as such. There is no paraphrase, no possible explanation. The work is meaningful, but we cannot arrange or bundle any particular meanings. We are in the position of the fiends who, when Chopin played his new piano composition for them, asked him to explain the work, and he gave the only possible answer by playing it again. Matta-Clark, as the ultimate author-ity of *The Circus or The Caribbean Orange*, can only repeat. This is not an imitation of a first performance as the only fully valid instance, but what Lacan would call a unary trait: something in the mode of repetition that restores its authenticity with each new instance, an

¹ The Caribbean Orange is the *aurantium*, with a variegated green peel and orange interior. It’s taste is described as bitter. In Jamaica, it is peeled and sucked rather than eaten in sections or squeezed into juice.

² The “text” in question was brought to light by Camila Mancilla Vera; who will, with her colleagues produce different treatments. In the screenplay-writing process, rights to a novel or story are secured and passed over to writers who first produce “treatments.” These may involve story-boards that merge the necessary forward-moving narrative with visual frames that freeze the story by blocking the characters and props within the sets so that the dynamic action will be apparent and readable by an audience. In merging the temporal narrative with visual framed “slices,” the treatment attempts to find the essence of the script that will be *effective* in the face of the audience’s inevitable subjective *misunderstanding* of it. Mutual understanding, consensus, will not be possible; but it is also not desirable, in that the aim is to have each individual of the audience achieve a level of personal understanding that can also support the claim that “others should have seen what I saw and felt what I felt.” A critical treatment differs from interpretation in that the former allows for this (ethical) unity-in-the-face-of-polysemy while the latter insists on resolution.



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

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

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

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

Figure 2. The unary trait is the function of 1 and both a numerical value and a designation of that value. This is called the “audio-active” relation since “looking” and “saying” 1 involve two different modes of calculation. This becomes relevant in the way the Fibonacci numbers are grounded in self-intersection of the 1 with itself playing two roles. The series 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 ... superimposes itself over itself to produce 2/1, 3/2, etc.; or just as productively, 1/2, 2/3, etc. for $x = 1 + 1/x$. In psychoanalysis, Freud called Dora’s unconscious cough, which she “caught” from her father, the unary trait.

component carries the series *toward* an “inner ideal” that, the result of change, does not itself change. In fact, the *stasis* of the Golden Mean can be geometrically constructed and shown as the Golden Rectangle. The dynamic aspect can be demonstrated by superimposing the series over itself, as 1/2, 2/3, 3/5, etc., each fraction being a more accurate approximation of the Ø, the Golden Ratio. In this superimposition, it is clear that the ratio is itself this *cut*, the internal division that is the “inside nature” of the one as a “1” that changes in order not to change.

This, geometrically, is the logic of the torus, which is why it is the form of the A/a ratio, what the subject must construct as being the external world *in order to continue being a subject*. Continuance points to the issue of homeostasis, which we can visualize in two ways. First, it is the means of the organic being’s

authenticity that takes the form of “that which is lacking.” Each repetition restores the lack, renews it. We are taken back to a zero-degree level, where we have no meanings but maximal meaningfulness.

The Unary Trait

The local aim of this project to find a new criticism will be to understand the essential equivalence binding repetition (repetitive acts, standardization, returning, etc.) to the “unary,” a quite complicated idea. The unary is, originally, set in opposition to the idea of the composite whole, as when one says that life is a combination of good and bad, or that love is a combination of one person with another. Carl Jung based his entire psychology on this idea of joining two disparate or (especially) opposite parts, usually with the aim of showing that the reunion was the mirror of an original division, as with Aristophanes’ theory of love, presented in Plato’s *Symposium*, that humans were originally spherical beings whose split into man and woman led to a desire to re-merge. This is a charming idea but it is tautological in that anything qualifies as a split reminiscent of an original division of a whole, substantiating the binary’s symmetry. The simplistic unity of division theories is that the linearity they require is an imposed logical substrate. Unity cannot exist but in one of its stages of failure, even when the whole is a whole.

The unary is a more dynamic construct, whose model is (in Lacanian theoretics) the torus, built on the relationship between the Other — the sum total of constructs subjects make about externality as *desire and will*, a kind of program of “how we should behave in reality — and the failure or gap that limits our access to and knowledge of this Other. Abbreviated as A and a, Lacan argued that these were the visible components of what was primarily a relationship, a ratio, but a *durable* ratio, and to explain this durability he used the analogy of the Fibonacci number series, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13 Numbers that are the sum of their two predecessors in the sequence, and which will convert from being a sum to being components of the next number’s addition. In this Golden Mean idea, the important thing to notice is how conversion from being a result to being a

survival: the need for stimulation (news from the world) balanced by the need to resist this stimulation's ability to saturate and overwhelm the very structure set up to perceive and measure it. This aspect of homeostasis goes from the level of perception, where the two competing forces are evident in the figure-ground distinction, to the level of neural networks working entirely on principles of energetics.

Second, homeostasis is maintained by conceptualizing subjectivity through actions and agencies, the first of which is the subject itself as an enduring entity, a self who wakes each morning as the same personality, ready to start a new day. Without this re-set capacity, the self-subject has no reference point for memories, behaviors, relations to the networks of symbolic relationships such as families, friends, work colleagues, etc. that constitute cultures. As "herd animals," security and well-being rely on the sameness of the self, a formation as an "ego," to stabilize threats and optimize ambitions.

These two aspects of homeostasis internalize the unary trait's ideal of submitting to change while maintaining non-change and give two faces to the desire that is the "energetics" applied to the *Autre*, A, and the element *a*, the defect, shortfall, lack that is also the surplus, the excess, the remainder. The *a*, which Lacan refused to describe more than calling it the "object-cause of desire," is, as you can tell from these contradictory descriptions, a kind of reversal machine. As such, it is capable of re-setting a system where incoming stimulæ must be "neutralized," or where any change must be integrated into what has gone before — i. e. the Fibonacci logic of addition that does not accumulate but, rather, defines ever more precisely an *internal* constant. The *a* is like the \pm of mathematics. It doesn't matter whether it is an addition or subtraction. Its model is $1/x \cdot x/1$, where the *x*'s "cancel out." In fact, the mathematical analogy of multiplication of an inverted fraction with itself miniaturizes the principle of non-orientation that is the torus's main feature, since it is a surface across which one may draw both circles that reduce to points and circles that cannot reduce to points. Also, if one slices a torus with a knife that rotates 360° as it slices, the product is two linked donut shapes whose cut faces are Möbius bands.

More correctly, we could say that it is the cut itself that is the *single* Möbius band, the internal divide that is the essence of the torus and basis of its other properties.

It is difficult to think of a cut with such a definitive shape as a Möbius band, with only the evidence of the two faces that are the result of the cut. But, this is precisely what Lacan intended to prove with his thesis of the Mirror Stage. Moving beyond Henri Wallon's observation of the importance of animal's and human's ability to recognize themselves in a mirror, Lacan isolated the key role played by non-orientation. This stems from the optical fact that the mirror image is a cut rather than a reflection. Like the slice of a twisting knife through the torus and the line between the two sets of Fibonacci numbers, the slice doesn't "exist" except as an effect, the two (chiralistic) faces that result from it. Lacan invented a new word to talk about this actual thing that was not a thing: *ek-sist*. Like Derrida's *differance*, the slight difference in spelling can barely be heard when it is pronounced. There is a short pause between "ek" and "sist." This gives time for the idea to go from the inside of itself



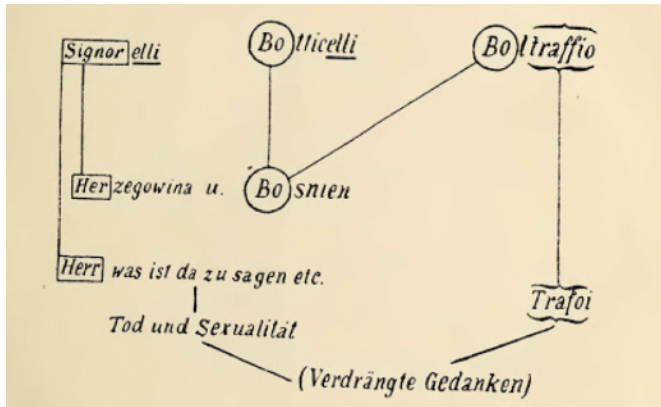
Figure 3. The ex-sistence (standing-outside) is, for Adam and Eve, a move from the continent system of Paradise to the incontinent (extended, unpredictable, contingent) system of mortality on earth, where continence can be established only indirectly (children as a means of "continuing one's life" or ideas as a means of establishing immortality through an "enduring" discourse).

to the outside, where it is a “stranger in a strange land.” The pre-subject does not stand outside itself, it “exists without knowing it.” Consciousness comes only when the subject is able to look back at itself by imagining an external viewpoint from which it is visible in a way that has not before been able to see itself. This is a kind of “intersubjective” or “pronounced” parallax (as Kant would call it), where the personal parallax of seeing an object in 3-d thanks to a slight shift in the background as we distinguish the figure from the ground. Ek-sistance, standing outside of one’s self, becomes possible at the Mirror Stage because the mirror cut produces an Other-ized image that the subject can identify with, but with the irony that this left–right reversed image is *not* what other subjects actually see.³ Again, there is a small remainder that we associate with the small-*a*, and the \pm capabilities of the *a*.

The “proper/neurotic” subject others itself in the form of an ego that, after the Mirror Stage encounter, contends with two competing ideas of parallax. The mirror image reverses chirality, the photo doesn’t. The mirror image never loses its positive effect (despite the contradiction of reversal), while the photographic image never loses its negative effect (despite the confirmations of others). Chirality, therefore, must play a key role in how parallax, or rather the *two* parallaxes, subjective and objective, make perception a battle ground for the maintenance of homeostasis. The unary trait, which we must also recognize, along with the *objet petit a*, as a “homeostasis machine,” must also deal with this perceptual basis, this parallax, which is more accurately the double nature of parallax. This is a question of multiplicity *versus* “unification,” to the zero–degree, to meaningfulness in the face of contradictory independent “meanings,” as a goal including meanings but canceling and surpassing them in a way that preserves them. Let us squeeze this idea into the form of a project that we can label, generically, “the memory theater.”⁴ This asserts that every artistic endeavor is *theatrical* in the way the auditorium focuses on a stage, requires the temporal paralysis of its spectators, and uses an alternating binary, $+/-/+$ v. $-/+/-$, when the curtain goes up and down when the performance begins and ends. The *interval*, which is timed, correlates to the two reversible goalposts of the stylized drama known ethnologically as “between the two deaths,” the need to add a Symbolic death to the literal one or, in reverse, the anticipation of death in the Symbolic preceding actual death in biological terms.

³ Kojin Karatani misses this important point and equates what the subject sees in the mirror with what everyone else sees. *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*, trans. Sabu Kohso (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT), 4. This is an unfortunate error, since it is key to his central distinction between the mirror image and the photographic image. The former produces a mixture of joy and anxiety, the latter at first is met with indignation and denial (“That’s not me!”). The mirror image is carried further as an identifying index (we “check the mirror” to see how we “look”) while the photographic image never loses the negative effect it has on its subject *and only its subject*. This is because the objectivity of the photograph is something that the subject is eternally obliged to deny, and the mirror image is what the subject is eternally obliged to affirm. Chirality-reversal of the mirror, *versus* the chirality preservation of the photograph, reveals that denial and affirmation are two sides of the same “objectivity coin,” since we “other ourselves” by these two basic devices. The reversal-engine of the *a*, the *objet petit a* or object–cause of desire, both objectifies and causes the lack — desire — that is itself chiralistic and, hence, affirmable or deniable, being sustained by either, \pm . Karatani, in missing this symmetry, has missed the opportunity of connecting the *a* to parallax and, thence, to the need to extend intersubjectivity (which cannot recognize the difference) to trans-subjectivity, which can.

⁴ Inadvertently, this new critical methodology will solve another related problem, that of the meaning and role of the memory theater, whose logic began with Simonides’ discovery of the truth behind the technique of assigning material to be remembered to mental “places” as analogies of architectural places. Simonides’ discovery was not realized until Giulio Camillo (1480–1544) constructed his hypothetical memory theater for Francis I. See Lou Beery Wenneker, “An Examination of *L’idea del Teatro* of Giulio Camillo, including an Annotated Translation, with Special Attention to his Influence on Emblem Literature and Iconography,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1949.



another metonymic shift, the artist Boltraffio produced Traffei, a small town where his ex-patient suffering

Figure 4. Diagram of associations (metonyms) that came to mind when Freud tried and failed to member the name of the painter of the Orvieto mural, *Teachings of the Anti-Christ*. Lacan notes that Freud saw in the name Signorelli what native speakers of Italian did not see: the word/rebus “signor,” which translated into the German “Herr,” giving Herzegovina. With the connection to Bosnia, Botticelli and Boltraffio, both painters came to mind. Then Boltraffio yielded Trafoi, the town where Freud’s ex-patient had committed suicide in despair over his sexual dysfunction. A story about Turks, their respect for doctors, always calling them “Herr,” and their preference of death over the loss of sex curved the metonymies into a single “cloud” held together by the absent agent, Signor.

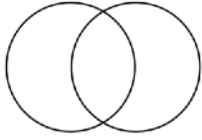
In the latter case, the living subject endures exile, is a “stranger in a strange land.” Freud accidentally discovered the relation of this travel interval when, as a tourist, he forgot the name of the artist who painted the famous mural in the Orvieto Cathedral. As a foreigner, he saw something in the name Signorelli that native Italian speakers *did not see*: the word “signor.” As its German counterpart, Herr, it became “Herzegovena,” which metonymically yielded BOznia, then BOticelli, then BOLtraffio — names that Freud recalled in the effort to recover Signorelli. Then, in

yet another metonymic shift, sexual dysfunction produced the example of Turks in Boznia and other Adriatic countries who were always respectful of their physicians, calling them “HERR doktor,” and who were famous for preferring death to the loss of sex. The bottom line here is the function of metonymy as a substitute for the suppression of the name Signorelli, and the way suppression and metonymy work as $1/x \cdot x/1$ as “non-orientable” components of the metaphoric process of re-assembly, which by replacing one signifier for another is able to establish

the effect of meaningfulness over that of a the “collection of meanings” that defines S/s (the process of signification) as a dictionary exercise, one word defined by another word, then another, etc. etc.

When something ex-sists, and “stands outside of itself,” it ceases to exist as a natural being in becoming a human (speaking) being. Its Being is cancelled by its Speaking, but this is not a for–once–and–for–all action but a smooth ratio that, like the volume control on a radio, can be adjusted to find the right level. Note that in the radio volume knob, you only have silence versus loud. In the case of Being *versus* Speaking, each term is silent to the other, which is unaware of the other as a possible signal source. “Mutual inverse deafness” is what we might call subjectivity’s relation to Being. *To the degree that Speaking gains, Being loses: $S/B \vee B/S = 1$, or $B=1 \cdot S$ and $S=1 \cdot B$.* From Speaking’s point of view, when it lowers the volume it does not notice any signal getting louder; it just hears silence; and *vice versa*.

When the traveler leaves home, his/her exile follows the B/S//S/B plan. The traveler is dead to Home but does not notice it. Home is silenced, the traveler adjust the volume of the travel experience. The aim is to submit to exposure to stimulation without being overwhelmed (saturated). The traveler turns down the Home volume (the comforts of a chain hotel) to risk the exposure of the exotic, which requires the traveler let down his defenses and become passive. “Enjoy!” is the passivity element of the Other, which defines the subject as a primordial traveler who, to enjoy the travel experience, must turn down the Home volume in order to hear the Other volume.



1. $P \wedge \sim P$
(and)
2. P
3. $P \vee Q$
4. $\sim P$
5. $\therefore Q$

Figure 5. The principle known as *ex falso quodlibet sequitur* demonstrates that any proposition may be valid if there is at least one false premise. As ridiculous as this sounds, it is a historical reality that anything, no matter how atrocious, can be justified in the name of religion. But, the EFQ is a productive method in science, where it is the *ersatz* conjecture, a proposition known to be false but, when tested against reality, reveals data in the negative that would be easily overlooked if a positive presupposition were applied.

Methodology

The problem of this installation forces criticism to take a different path, or rather *paths*. I would say, following Vico, that Matta-Clark’s installation is an effect for which we should try to find “as many causes as possible.” But, for this “many,” I claim that there is a consistent logic. My abbreviation of this logic will not be understandable for those without familiarity with the terms, but this can be remedied as the method is unfolded. I begin with the logical puzzle known through the Latin saying, *Ex falso quodlibet sequitur*, or EFQ. Briefly, this is the principle that, if a process begins with a false premise, anything can result as true. As logically impossible as this sounds, in history it is the case that, as St. Paul claimed, sin is the result of the law. When Dostoyevsky’s Kirillov claims that, if God does not exist, then everything will be permitted, the opposite is actually true, because historically we know that people will do anything if they believe that God will justify it. Vico amended the atheist’s aspect of this claim to say that God is, in the first place, *ex falso* — a metaphorical construct. By this he replaced the idea of the Judeo-Christian creator God with the god that is created by the (*ex falso*) displacement of the first human’s nature onto the objects of nature, specifically the sky, where the power and indeterminacy of the *subject* was made, by a metaphorical logic, into properties of the natural *object*.

The bundling effect of condensation then worked in reverse, as this primary *ex falso* was elaborated into the general animism that saw, in any natural object, a divine kernel. Thus, nature was “metonymized” and each perceptual instance became an act both of suppression and expression, visibility at the “expense” of an equal and opposite concealment. Thus, EFQ is the logical foundation of the metaphorical process that, for the first humans, produced an appearing/ concealing world of metonymies, which demanded the cultural practice of divination, which led to the elaboration of Law, first theological, but then gradually secularized.

Freud’s famous account of parapraxis — his attempt to remember the name of the artist he had admired in Orvieto (Signorelli) through a series of metonymical substitutions that only Freud as a foreigner could make out of the Italian name. *Signor* (*Herr* in German) became the ‘x’ factor concealed within the series of substitutions that came to mind as Freud traveled across the Baltic on vacation. The tourist role however reinforced the fact that, in seeing “signor” in the name Signorelli, he was doing something that only a foreigner, a stranger in a strange land, might be able to do. For Italians, there was nothing in Signorelli to suggest anything other than a kind of rebus in the word for master.

Freud, like all tourists, was mimicking the soul of the deceased person who does not realize he/she has died. Lacan named this interval “between the two deaths,” but it is a universal in all cultures’ recognition of the obligation to mourn the dead. Although the biological person has died, whatever counts as the spirit lives in a zone where literal death is not recognized. It is the Real that must be assimilated within the Symbolic (“acceptance”), but just as the Real resists this assimilation into the Symbolic generally, as Lacan

teaches, the “soul” (an originally theological idea that has many secular forms, such as “memory” or “that which denies death”) must accomplish “the impossible” (EFQ) by undertaking a journey.

The journey is by definition a trial or set of trials, specifically trials that are at first deemed impossible (again, the EFQ factor). Mythology has enshrined these as “heroic trials,” as in the Labors of Hercules. Architecture has given the form of these trials as the Thesean labyrinth, a single passageway folded over itself in a fractal way, which is to say that the labyrinth is an architectural metonymy: self-intersecting but non-orientable.⁵ The deceased does not know he/she is dead and so encounters the trials as actual experiences; but they are in reality (or, rather, the Real) the “logical structure” of the interval between the two deaths. Freud’s Signorelli Parapraxis is also formed by a suppression (of “signor”) that gives rise to actual experiences, the *grounds* of which produce various metonymical forms of “signor” while concealing the original source.

The aim of this methodology will be to identify the particulars of Matta-Clark’s last work as the sequence of metonymies that is a prelude to the *finale* of metaphor, where the process of elaboration “comes to rest” when the unknowns, the signifieds, are put in relation to the Unary Trait. The question becomes: how does any part of Matta-Clark’s installation constitute a repetition of some x, some instance — some Real — that, in refusing to be paraphrased (assimilated by the Symbolic) construct a *space of resistance*, i. e. a VOID. Of course there are things in this work that are immediately identifiable as voids: cuts, holes, blanks, etc. But, criticism cannot treat these empirical voids correctly unless it addresses the issue of impossibility — hence the need to understand the significance of *ex falso quodlibet sequitur*.

Just as EFQ is characterized by its difficulty and resistance to understanding, criticism, like Freud traveling across the Adriatic, is a traveler unaware of something. The question posed by travel is the same as it has been for time eternal: is it heroic or trivial? Does it meet the requirements of all “authentic travel,” namely, does the traveler realize and respond to the risk of *saturation* (being overwhelmed) and at the same time make use of devices (guides, maps, hospitality, etc.) that work to suppress the traumatic/Real nature of saturation? This is not a binary opposition, and a binary plan would fail to find any correct balance between the forces of saturation/exposure and comfort/shelter. Instead, there is what Lacan would call an “extimate” relation between saturation and shelter that makes of the labyrinth’s meander a performance that visually realizes the fractal (unary) logic of repetition that is both the essence of “between the two deaths” and the critical aim of “meaningfulness without meanings.”

Elaboration

Jacques Lacan’s interest in architecture was minimal but focused and decisive. In no uncertain terms, he described architecture as a “surface of pain,” by which he meant the 2-d projective plane that was generated by the axis, *demon/askesis* as exemplified by Daphne’s flight from Apollo.⁶ Daphne generated her own spatial entrapment *as soon as she formed the intention to flee the embraces of Apollo*. The backstory, which Lacan omitted, was that Apollo had insulted Eros about his archery skills (people always fell in love with

⁵ These two characteristics qualify the Thesean labyrinth as an example of the geometric topography known as the projective plane. Self-intersection and non-orientation can be used outside of their geometric context to describe projects, writing, behaviors, etc. While the topological aspect is suppressed, the possibility of re-connecting is preserved.

⁶ Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Seminar VII, 1959–1960, trans. Dennis Porter (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1977).

the wrong people). In revenge, Eros shot Apollo with an arrow of love but Daphne, the water-nymph, with an arrow of hate. This involvement of “non-orientable two-dimensional subspace” seems to be proof of myth’s involvement with projective geometry at an intuitive, experiential level. The surface generated by this vector was self-intersecting. In other words, Daphne could not escape it. Her only option was to transform into a laurel tree, which is the fundamental operation of metaphor in Lacanian terms: the



Figure 6. Daphne in the process of transforming into a laurel tree as a defense against Apollo’s pursuit. Lacan tells the second part of the story in Seminar VII, omitting the juicy backstory that Eros, stung from Apollo’s criticism of his archery skills, had constructed an arrow of love for Apollo and an arrow of hate for Daphne; but the timing of his shots suggests that this was one arrow capable of flying in two opposite directions at the same time — the principle of any vector (“two-dimensional sub-space”) in projective geometry.

replacement (sublation) of one signifier by another.

Lacan gives a precise recipe for what happens after replacement in the logic of metaphor. The “downward” action of substitution, which “drowns” the original signifier, immediately produces an equal and opposite buoyancy as a counterpart rises to view. Although this submersion and emergence (think of Botticelli’s Venus, rising from the waves whose sea-foam (*ros marinus*) she personifies) are equals, they are also opposite, allowing Lacan to treat them as the denominator and numerator of a multiplication: $M/S' \cdot S'/x = M/x$, after the two S' elements cancel each other out. But, we would be wrong to say that this cancellation zeroes out the effect of S' . As a numerator, the second appearance of S' is as a return, a repetition, and specifically the return of a “Real” in the sense that the first S' was submerged into the unconscious, which for both Freud and Lacan was the zone of the Real — that which cannot be assimilated by language (Lacan: “the Symbolic”).

But, metaphor in this formula states that the Real can nonetheless be *experienced*, a fact that we know already from our everyday encounters with jokes and dreams. Here, we find S' in the form of ciphers that disguise their Real aspects through the processes of condensation and displacement. In

condensation, many elements join to appear in a single manifestation; in displacement, meanings are transported to a new context and new forms. Although it seems evident that dreams and jokes are metaphoric in their replacement of original signifiers by new ones, Freud and Lacan force us to think through what this replacement process means as condensation and displacement. Both are forms of metonymy, said Roman Jakobson. Why? Because in the many-to-one logic of condensation and the one-to-one (but a different one) of displacement there is a common logic. The figure that is distinguished from a ground becomes enigmatic. It is no longer in any 1:1 relation to a cause. In condensation, the effect has multiple causes, and in displacement, the effect remains the same but the causal ground has shifted. In the former, we have a case of parallax, where one viewer becomes aware that his/her view is different from other possible views; in the latter, we have another, complementary case of parallax, where a single viewer distances an object in relation to his/her specific viewpoint, thanks to the slight shift of the ground against the figure.

Both forms of parallax call into question the validity of the senses and require the viewer to make a demand that, in effect, is impossible. Kant put this in terms of the viewer’s expectation that others,

standing in his/her shoes, *should* see the same thing he/she sees, and with the same judgments that identify the object/scene as this or that. However, this expectation is impossible to meet. No one can stand in anyone else's shoes at a given moment; agreement about "how things look" is a construct, an acceptance of a metaphoric situation, where the replacement of one point of view by another suppresses some content at the same time it *expresses* the same content in a different form. "You see X from your point of view, but I see it from another; but it is the *same* X, nonetheless." The rhetorical/ethical element required by the impossibility of standing in the shoes of another re-conditions our idea of what the "same" must mean. It cannot mean identical in the space-time way that an X is the same because it can be mapped or photographed. It must mean the same in some way that includes the "impossible claim," the ethical obligation to affirm, despite the unavoidable issue of difference that arises out of different positions and subjectivities.

The metonymic quality of dreams' and jokes' use of condensation and displacement tells us that what we experience *always* has a metonymic quality that results from our inability to identify the sameness of things except intersubjectively, and this only as a project that is destined to fail (because no one can stand in the shoes of another). With metonymy we have a specific structure. Metonymy has its own parallax system. It "breaks" with a ground that is its causal basis. In the metonymy that replaces the ship with its sail, we treat the sail as something that can separate itself from the ship (in perception, when the ship is just on the horizon) without giving up its authoritative power to represent the ship. Although it is the viewer who can see the sail before the ship comes into view, this subjectivity is converted into an *objective authentication*. As in the case of another common metonymy, "heads of cattle," the perceptual prominence of the sails or the heads allows them to be counted, not as sails but as ships, not as heads but as cows.

This is to say that, in counting sails of ships or heads of cattle we do not give up the connection between the part and the whole. In fact we use it in the authentication (counting) process. Metonymy seems to be the device by which we say "seeing is believing," or, more definitively, perception is the basis of knowledge — *nihil in intellectu nisi prius in sensu* (there is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses). Paradoxically, metonymy allows that it is the *cut* that separates the sail or the head that allows the senses to operate in this authoritarian way. The cut between the part and the whole allows the dream and the joke to bundle many *different* parts into a single whole and to transport a single whole to another that has different parts, preserving the identity of the whole (metempsychosis, reincarnation).

More about *ex falso quodlibet sequitur*

Lacan introduces this logical paradox in Seminar XIV, *The Logic of Phantasy*.⁷ It plays a critical but curious role in relation to the idea of the failure of the sexual function, as Act, to establish itself as a relation. This may have to do with the Lacanian antagonism of the Real and the Symbolic. The Act is something that happens "in" in the Real and also establishes the Real as such — which always has the status of the trauma. The Symbolic is a relationship of signifiers, the basis of not just language but of the systems by which humans organize themselves through family, group, societal, national, and even global relations ("the human" as such).

⁷ This seminar is not officially published, but an English translation has been made available at Lacaninireland.com.

Just as groups are held together by laws of one kind or another, the limit they all face is that of the Symbolic: that there is, as Lacan puts it, “no such thing as literal meaning.” This means that the search for meaning is inherently circular, since in the sense of the dictionary one signifier is defined by another, and that by another, etc. etc. Lacan’s antidote to what Dan Collins has called the compulsive search for further signifiers within this circular system is metaphor.⁸ This is not the colorful replacement of a provocative word or idea for poetic effect, but something Lacan regards as foundational to any production of meaning, a kind of logic grounding the Symbolic at the most primary level. In this, Lacan restates the radical position of the 18c. Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico, who also asserted that metaphor was not an embellishment of ordinary communication but the ground that made any communication possible.⁹

With this foundational idea of metaphor in mind, the question of the sexual relation (which Lacan continually asserts “does not exist”) connects its own impossibility to that of the Real of metaphor, the element by which the Symbolic can claim to have “a little piece of the Real.” The Real is by definition resistant to the point of being antithetical to the Symbolic. The Real cannot be assimilated within the Symbolic’s logic of S/s, the Signifier over the signified, because in effect there is no satisfactory entity that can be the signified for the signifier, only another signifier which requires another signifier ... an endless process of substitution. Metaphor, Lacan (with Vico) claims, puts an end to this compulsive endless process by connecting the *intention* to signify with the designated *meaning* of the signifying act, as if to say that “it’s not what you say it’s the way that you say it.” The speaker is a part of the message in the logic of metaphor, but not in the sense that biography is attached to the real meaning of what is said. Although it is true that the role of biography is easily understood by saying that the child understands how an X said by the mother is different from the same X said by the father. This principle allows us the other extreme, that wisdom can sometimes come out of the mouths of fools, or profound remarks out of the innocent mouths of children. Metaphor’s merger of the speaker with the speech works in reverse. The speaker would seem to come before the speech, but actually the speaker is constructed by what he/she says. The speaker is the new “who” of the speech, in the sense that we are what we say, but only in the way that we inevitably say more than we had intended to say, despite the fact that we always say we failed to say what we actually meant to say. This is a version of the chicken-and-egg problem, because obviously the speaker is the efficient cause of any speech act. However, the speaker as such begins with an *intention* to say something that must wait to be clarified in what is said. Then and only then do we become more aware of the intention. In this retroactive moment, the speaker is somewhat surprised by what he/she said, more aware of how there were hidden intentions that may have surpassed the what was originally felt.

EFQ presents a problem for standard criticism, if only because it seems paradoxical that something false offers any advantage to any writer of non-fiction. However, if we replace this felt obligation to tell the truth with the obligation to *find*, within various competing truths of seemingly equal value, a *truthfulness*, a kind of structure that accommodates differences of opinion and at the same time is about the nature of truth itself. Here, we are led back to a primary condition of all human speech, namely the issue of self-reference. At the level of the signifier, this is, as Lacan says, the inability of the signifier to signify itself. In terms of speech, this is the inability of the speaker to say something about him/herself without creating a

⁸ Dan Collins, “On Metaphor,” (Re)turn: A Journal of Lacanian Studies 6 (Spring, 2011): 149–157.

⁹ Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Cornell: Cornell University, 1948).

contradiction. The Cretan Liar says, “All Cretans are liars,” and if he happens to be telling the truth, then he must apply this principle to what he has just said, falsifying it. But, if the statement is false, then Cretans are not necessarily lying. The circularity of the claim (its self–intersection) produces non-orientation, and hence we land on another case of having a projective geometry situation without any literal forms such as the Möbius band, cross-cap, torus, or Klein bottle. Just as David Hilbert claimed, that there is an experiential everyday aspect of projective geometry, we must go further and say that the two determinative properties of projective geometry, self–intersection and non-orientation, permeate the situation of the human as the speaking animal.¹⁰

As experiential, parallax issues are best pursued as Lacan did in his treatment of “logical time” in the anecdote, *The Three Prisoners*. A prison warden decides to offer early release to one of three inmates. He devises a contest where he will pin three out of a set of five dots, three white and two black, on each prisoner’s back. The prisoner able to guess the color of the dot on his back wins his freedom. The prisoners look at each other in perplexity, for the warden has pinned white dots on all of them. Each prisoner sees two dots but does not know what the others have seen. In a second stage of reflection, the prisoners simultaneously think about the hypotheticals in another mode. Knowing that two dots are already used by the others, each prisoner thinks of how the other prisoners would react if they saw a black dot on his back. The results are quickly evident. Each of the other two would think, “I see one black dot and one white dot, but if I have a black dot on my back, then the prisoner with a white dot would see two black dots and, knowing that there are only two black dots in the supply, would immediately run to collect his prize, *but no one has done that* . . . THEREFORE, in addition to the two white dots I see, I also have a white dot. All the prisoners come to the same conclusion at the same time, and all make a rush for the door.

Derek Hook has astutely noted that the thoughts of the prisoners go from being personal (the perception of two white dots), to intersubjective (wondering what the others see), to *trans*-subjective (observing actions, converting thoughts to conclusive acts, which superimpose over mental calculations).¹¹ Here we have direct evidence of Hilbert’s argument, that geometry, even projective geometry, should be taken into the intuitive realm. Here, the relation of personal parallax to intersubjective parallax is formalized as *trans*-subjective parallax: the construction of “the Act” out of an analysis of the differences of points of view. The implicit ethical status of the Act means that, as Lacan had argued, as fundamentally “biological” as the optics of perception might seem to be, ethics is already there, a primary constitutive factor. The Cretan is a liar before he is a Cretan, or anything else. Daphne and Apollo have, in the mere *cut*

¹⁰ David Hilbert and S. Cohn-Vossen, *Geometry and the Imagination*, trans. P. Nemenyi (Providence, RI: Chelsea Publishing, 1952), iii. Hilbert himself seems to contradict what Kojin Karatani said of him (64), that he desired to free mathematics of all intuitive content and thereby reinstate the “Kantian program.” But, even here, the impossible (Gödelian) proposition, that a system cannot prove its own consistency, involves a necessary intuitive staging. While abstraction makes it easy to formalize inconsistency, intuition presents it directly, *especially* in the highly subjective forms of the joke and the dream. Kojin Karatani, *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*, trans. Sabu Kohso (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT). Karatani additionally conflates the mirror image with “the image others have of us,” where in fact the mirror image is a cut rather than a reflection. The photo Karatani contrasts with the reflection is more what others see, and the term “pronounced parallax,” which Karatani claims to derive from Kant’s pre-critical writings, is more a contrast between the parallax that produces depth perception individually and intersubjectivity when the viewing–points of others is taken into account. Žižek also seems to make this mistake when he credits Karatani for giving an accurate account of perceptual parallax as a “slight shift in the background against the figure.” Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT, 2006).

¹¹ Derek Hook, “Towards a Lacanian Group Psychology: The Prisoner’s Dilemma and the Trans-Subjective,” *Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior* 43, 2 (2012): 115–132. <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/60337/>

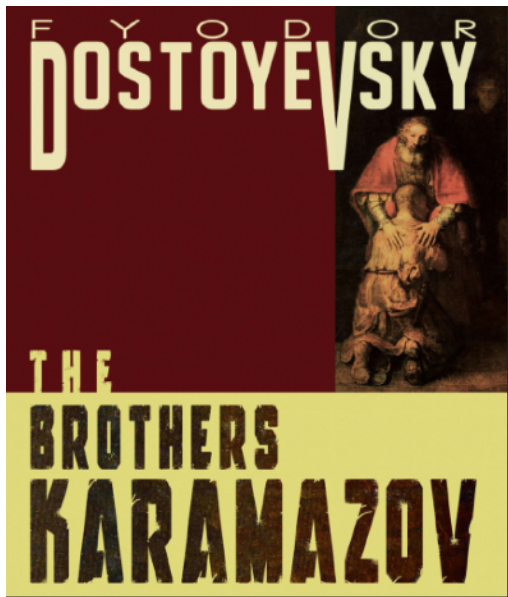


Figure 7. Lacan notes that Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* invert the actual position of the *ex falso* to claim that, if God is dead, then everything is permitted. The reverse is the case, at least from the historical evidence that believers can justify any atrocity by saying that they commit it in the name of God. This absolves the sinner, where in fact the *ex falso* obliges the "sinner" who "does anything" to admit that there is no principle of truth, only a false premise. Legitimate use of the *ex falso* is the ersatz conjecture, which announces its bogus intention from the start, and justifies it by a comparison of the negative data that will be generated by the false theory to the often falsified data that comes from positive hypotheses. The *modus tolens* standard of science, advocated by Carl Popper, confirms this approach.

of their opposed desires, already in a space of self-intersection and non-orientation.

Is this "ethical space" EFQ? The answer seems to follow from the application of EFQ to the question of the existence of God, with Lacan (and Vico's) note that, not only is everything possible as long as God exists (the EFQ principle), but that if God is a (metaphorical) construct that initiates the pre-human as a proper subject, *it is even more the case*, that the non-existence of God, far from being an atheistic cancellation, is a proof of God's universal effectiveness, thanks to the EFQ principle. Paul of Tarsus seems to grasp this when he says, ironically, that sins are the product of laws. Laws are constriction of the original gods produced by the human imagination, and, gradually, secular legality overtakes theology. Less and less becomes possible because EFQ is diminished by non-contradictory reasoning. When finally the idea of God is eliminated due to this substitution by Law, violation is done "in the name of God," which is readily observable in contemporary civil disobedience. Anything can be justified by grounding it in "God's will." But, the necessary justification for this anarchy is the equal belief in the oppressiveness of the Law, the over-reach of government regulation, etc.

EFQ is, however, established in Vico's "metaphoric moment," where both transference and condensation work as agents, constructing the animistic universe of mythic thought. If we look to Vico's and Lacan's identical accounts for the logic of metaphor, we understand how suppression (the replacement of one signifier by another), producing simultaneously an array of metonymies

whose condensation is the signified "x-factor," leads to the self-restoring "epiphany" of the metaphor as (compulsion-) repetition combined with the Act. This is, Lacan would say, "psychosis in a nutshell." With neurosis requiring a delayed construction by means of successive stages, more or less patterned after the individual's oral, anal, and phallic developmental drives, culture itself evolves a neurotic modernity that does not entirely dispel the EFQ of mythic mentality. This remains as a reserve (or threat, a suppressed Real) within culture itself, which from the point of view of neurosis can appear only as a void.

Can the void be actionable? That is, can the void play a part in "everyday, acceptable" narrative? Clearly, this is what happens when the story of Daphne and Apollo converts the projective plane into a fable about metaphoric transformation of a maiden into a tree. This is a story about metaphor as much as about the irony of desire, set in the fictional time of the (principle-based) gods and their natural counterparts, Titans first, nymphs and sprites later. But, the void is not a hole or cave as much as it is the trap that Daphne constructed simply by thinking about escaping Apollo's embrace. The magic here is that the element of non-orientability, the escape wish and the trap preventing escape, were self-generated. The

one necessitated the other. The projectivity of the event, the act, led to the projective *surface* that was the trap. The law produced the sin. The projective surface allows *quodlibet*; you can go anywhere you like, there are no barriers. The *ex falso* derives from the non-orientability of the desire to escape with the automatic production of the trap space. You can go anywhere but you won't be able to escape. This is, after all, the message of Gian Battista Piranesi's famous illustrations, the *Carceri*, the prisons that are not sealed inside a single building but are a series of spaces where prisoners can wander freely, forever. This freedom (= "God is dead") is the definition of the perfect prison.

EFQ in Practice

Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Pale Fire* is almost entirely constructed of annotations following the theft of a 100-line poem completed by his poet-neighbor just before his untimely death. Unauthorized by friendship or profession, the narrator, Kinbote, is an extreme case of the "unreliable narrator," in that his notes as well as his self-descriptions present evidence of delusional psychosis. Convinced that he is the deposed king of a small eastern European monarchy, he construes the poem to be a coded account of his illustrious past, unjust dethronement, and attempted regicide. The poem, which seems clearly to be an autobiographical-artistic reminiscence of the American neighbor, John Shade, is nonetheless subjected to an *ex falso* premise: that it is secret encomium to the deposed King of Zembla.

The novel is remarkable in that, by the end of the series of detailed "delusional" annotations, the reader begins to consider that it may be possible that the text is, in fact, about this doubly fictitious entity. Yes, its superficial subject matter is the poetic life of Shade, but with amazing clairvoyance, it has also managed to define with precision the vicissitudes of the barking mad visiting academic teaching in the Slavic Languages Department. The logic is not that of "just perhaps" but "now it's evident that." The more improbable the connection, the more perfect the fit once the initial brute fact of appropriation is passed over. The reader begins to understand Nabokov's application of the idea of theft. The initial false premise forces nothing; but it legitimizes any subsequent transformation. It is the fact of guilt that "authorizes" Kinbote's retroactively "true" narrative that lives within the dead body of Shade's poem. (A botkin is a fly that lays its eggs in a fresh corpse; Nabokov's qualifications as an entomologist positions his expert use of this metaphor.)

In this novel more perhaps than any other, the reader *finishes* the story by realizing that Kinbote's preposterous claim is true. Beginning with an *ex falso* premise, Kinbote has demonstrated the impossible, that he is the "true subject" (or, shall we remove the scare-quotes?) of Shade's poem, and in his annotations has even become the true author, because it is he, through silent manipulation of Shade's imagination during the time of composition, has steered the unknowing puppet around the mediocrities of a biographical account of immortality. The clue to this is in Shade's own admission of his misunderstanding of a dream, where a "mountain" was mistaken for a "fountain." The M/F might be a code for feminized fountain in contrast to the male mountain, Shade's desire for a quest image in contrast to his drowned daughter's attraction to water, but Nabokov does not deal in trivial captions. Rather, he is the master of the *ex falso*, knowing that it is the primary motive of art, the kick-start that gets the engine of beauty moving and way the artist can rev it up.

The reader who is successful in completing *Pale Fire* is rewarded. He/she is the thief in the night who has not set the dog to barking because the dog knows this trespasser. All too well. The threshold requires

silence, and reminds us that all thresholds demand the silence of the password anamorphically concealed within the ordinary expression. “Codeword,” “trigger word,” and “tell” are cousin-equivalents, in that they *initiate* a project of effectiveness from within a blah blah blah of discursive exchange. Lacanians would say that this is precisely what happens in Analysis, where the Unconscious, structured like a language, uses the hapax to spring the gates constructed by the Imaginary. Only Analysis focuses on making, within the Imaginary that is the exchange between the Analyst and Analysand, a wall that is thickened by faking it. Motto on the Analyst’s wall: “The Analysand Always Lies.” Embroidered like any “Home, Sweet Home” sentimental tchotchke, talk that is blah blah blah is pumped full of *ex falso* fuel. The Analyst has only to accelerate or decelerate it, mash down on the gas pedal or take his/her foot off. Psychoanalytic training might be done best at the race track.

The proof of the psychoanalytic cure is not an argument the Analyst presents to the Analysand, explaining what the blah blah blah actually means. The Analysand realizes it, not intellectually, but viscerally. It is a “proof of the body,” a proof Vico made use of in his *New Science*, saying that the reader will not come to any intellectual conclusion about the arguments of the book but will experience the proof viscerally, as a *pleasure*. This is the end of the *New Science*, and end that takes place in the body of the Other of writing, the reader. It is the same technique as Nabokov used in *Pale Fire*, the same as Dante used in *La Comedia Divina*; the end that every writer and artist hopes for. The body takes over where the mind cannot go; Dante can pass into Paradise, thanks to Beatrice, but Virgil has to stay behind. Virgil is after all a dead soul, Dante must come back to write his account.

How can a “treatment” deal with the proof-of-the-body ending to the *ex falso* presupposition? ...

...

...

Timing.

Timing

The audience intent on making a false landing is ignoring the importance of the *ex falso* beginning, the fact that it has occurred *before the first step has been made into the work of art*. There is a moving and effective technique in gospel singing, evolved from evangelical inventions of the black church that began in Los Angeles. The black gospel song is, if anything, necessarily transformative. The song is not to be enjoyed but, rather, lived. This is the “new life” of rebirth, instilled by the Holy Spirit at the moment that will constitute the “end of the song.” The technique is simple. The hymn, rousing in itself, pretends to conclude. The choir and soloists may actually leave the stage. Sometimes just the spontaneous enthusiasm of the audience will be enough, but it is always wise to have “plants” who will call out to the departing choir, and the response will reprise the hymn’s choral conclusion. The effect is that the end cycles around to the beginning, abbreviated to condense its effects.

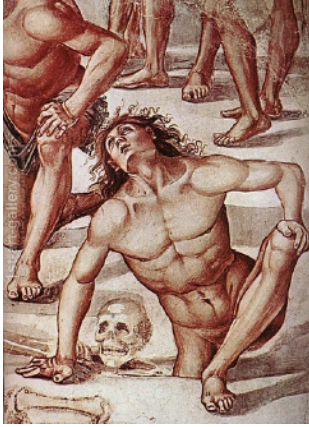


Figure 8. *Resurrection of the Flesh*, 1499–1502. Albert Bierstadt Museum. This is the figure–ground distinction made in terms of pure theology, in relation to the desiccation function of the ground.

Wisely,¹² the artist knows that the audience peaks before the proper moment. Implicit in the *ex falso* that frames artistic performance, separating it from the everyday flow of experience, is the expectation that the audience will recognize the ending and act appropriately. Artists from Parrhasius onward have realized that the *technē* of art must use this desire in a flip-flop way, turning it around to conclude with a moment of astonishment. Parrhasius himself used the judges' desire to tie up the contest in terms of a visual equalization of Parrhasius's (undisclosed) painting with Zeuxis's just-presented masterpiece. The flip-flop was direct: the curtain withholding the evidence the judge's sought was the painting itself, which by representing a delay induced a delay, the same interval as that induced by the gospel choir by leaving the stage.

The pleasure is, of course, in the body because that's where pleasure happens. *Jouissance* necessitates a body, embodiment, but the body it presumes and brings into being in the moment it courses afresh is a different kind of body, a resurrected body; the body that, in emerging as a *figure* from a *ground* (literally, ground as the earth "that which desiccates the corpse") becomes a model for any and all figure–ground distinctions. The body has "paid its debt," a balance of payments taking place after life, *from* the dust, must pay back to the dust all that

it drew from the accounts of the soil. This includes anything that was thought, done, or said. Human action is a process of making withdrawals from a trust fund. These withdrawals have to be paid back, to the same fund, which, like all treasures, is by definition buried. In the invisible (Hades, Ἅϊδος).

In ancient thinking as well as in the imagination of children, blindness and invisibility are interchangeable. "If I put a bag over your head, no one can see me!" is the irrational claim made by any four-year-old. The same claim is however made by adults, as when the statue of justice, arms outstretched to hold a sword and scales, is blindfolded. This is way of showing the provenance of the idea of the Law, as both unprejudiced (blind to the outcome, committed to the "touch-logic" of following procedure), thanks to the direct connection it enjoys with the *æther* above the tangible, visible world. From below, this makes the head invisible. The Law is the reason invisibility and blindness are contronyms. Without the claim of the "direct connection," and the invisibility of this connection; and without the blindness of impartiality, no law is Law.

Jouissance, which would seem to be an effect or result of the body, is actually the cause of the body, but a *new* body. Embodiment is not, as most architectural phenomenologists would wish to say, the happening of a feeling to a body already possessed, but an event, a revelation, that dispossesses the subject from its

¹² "Wisely," for Nabokov is wise in comparison to Vico's four-fold system of intelligence: (1) the fool who doesn't know the difference between a high truth and a low one, (2) the astute ignoramus, who notices only the low-truth particulars, (3) the learned man destitute of prudence, who knows the high truths but tries to deduce the low truths from them. The fourth, correct category is the wise man who sees, in the low truths, all that is needed to find the high truths. This is an anticipation of the phrase attributed to Aby Warburg and Mies van der Rohe, that "God is in the details." Of course the sentiment is much older, involving the architectural corner, the "holy corner" (εικονοστάσι) that was the place for shrines (or apotropes) to secure divine blessing or extirpate demonic contamination. This traces back to the *palintonos harmoniē*, the architectual joint that was to "paralyze" the structure to achieve Vitruvian *finitas*, the necessary counterpart to the *palintropos harmoniē*, which was *utilitas*, or circulation and use. The obvious dichotomy of continence/incontinence pits architecture's containment function with the necessity of admitting strangers, accompanied by the complex rituals of the threshold.

body and gives it a new body. It is disembodiment as well as re-embodiment. *Jouissance* is the cause, the *object-cause*, and desire is what *jouissance* causes: endlessness, since nothing desire desires desire. A more accurate way of saying this is that “nothing but desire does nothing but desire nothing but desire.” The series of “nothings” is essential, because denial, negation, and impossibility are the conditions by which *jouissance* detaches itself from pleasure, appeal, and affirmation. Without this detachment, the subject remains in a mode of comparison, relativism, and conformity. The object is judged in a process of assimilation and streamlining. *The rules are applied*. The object is *sub-jected*. But, with *jouissance*, the *sub-ject* is *ob-jected*, thrown out in the street, mortified. While *ab-jection* is considered negative, it is the required prerequisite for *jouissance*, whether through self-abnegation or involuntary humiliation. This is why the Japanese tea hut uses a “stepping-over” entryway that simultaneously forces the participant to bow, or why viewer of Holbein’s *The Ambassadors* is required to kneel in order to see the anamorphic skull. Humiliation is an advance on the full payment of desiccation, the process by which the corpse must reduce its flesh to bone (“sarcophagus” says as much). These negatives assure that *jouissance*, always ambivalent, is in the driver’s seat.

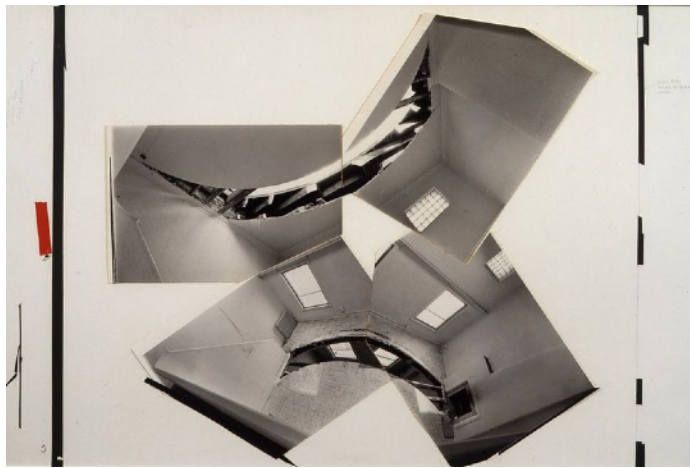


Figure 9. Gordon Matta-Clark, *The Caribbean Orange*, photomontage.

The Caribbean Orange, and the Critique

Circular cuts, new and unconventional openings. Malice, vengeance, aggression. The “natural end” of architecture thickened, extended, tortured. Yet, with these, a dehiscence is made thanks to the katagraphic cut. The line that confirms the surface it marks is simultaneously a cut into a thickness it redefines as both thin and thick. How are we to measure, and with what instruments to we measure, this work of art? Certainly a formal critique would be blasphemy for the anti-formalist Matta-Clark. A journalistic account would, to be properly objective, not touch on the work of art as an experience.¹³

If we begin by situating this last work as a response to his brother’s — his twin’s — death, there is a different dimension. Affected by mourning, we must avoid being sentimental and accept Sigmund Freud’s sober, if mathematical-sounding, account, in an overlooked essay “On Transience.”¹⁴

Mourning over the loss of something that we have loved or admired seems so natural to the layman that he regards it as self-evident. But to psychologists mourning is a great riddle, one of those phenomena which cannot themselves be explained but to which other obscurities can be traced back. We possess, as it seems, a certain amount of capacity for love—what we call libido—

¹³ The exception to this is the jazz reporting done by Whitney Lyon Balliett, who wrote for *The New Yorker* from 1951 to 2001. Balliett was able to avoid describing music in abstract by “playing it for the reader,” animating its parts and dynamics. See the poignant postscript to Balliett’s work in <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/02/12/postscript-whitney-balliett>.

¹⁴ Sigmund Freud, (1916) “On Transience.” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 14: 303–307.

which in the earliest stages of development is directed towards our own ego. Later, though still at a very early time, this libido is diverted from the ego on to objects, which are thus in a sense taken into our ego. If the objects are destroyed or if they are lost to us, our capacity for love (our libido) is once more liberated; and it can then either take other objects instead or can temporarily return to the ego. But why it is that this detachment of libido from its objects should be such a painful process is a mystery to us and we have not hitherto been able to frame any hypothesis to account for it. We only see that libido clings to its objects and will not renounce those that are lost even when a substitute lies ready to hand. Such then is [mourning](#).

As mourning, as an *act* of mourning, we are presented with the ethnographic obligation to consider that the interval by which the passing of the dead is respected by the living is set to some form of the number 40, the number of insulation. Time insulation is derived from architectural insulation. The building secures its inhabitants by compressing the distance between them and a potential threat into the thickness of the wall, the strength of the door, and the suitable apotropaic defense of windows, vents, cellars, and — of course — corners (the most vulnerable because the most “anxious” detail of the construction). The building is also secured by the number 40, thanks to the role of quadrature in relation to the “number of completion,” 10. Square the twin, 2, to get “the twin of the twin” (Gordon, of Sebastian). “Secure” the building by performing the necessary rituals of desiccation (proper form of the false term, “desecration”). Make the building a “build-ling,” diminutising the adult to the child. This is not just a spelling error but an *ersatz* construct, the idea that a building is the adult to the *ichnographic* plan, which has to be “raised up” (*scenografia*) in order to cast its shadow (= accept its fate).

The two is the one, as James Joyce argued in his coined term, *twone*. The 1 is already in its own way a double, a “one of 1.” This is the phenomenon by which any number is simultaneously a name and a content, an indication and a valuation. (In the calculus of George Spencer-Brown, a distinction is simultaneously a cut and an indication. One sign, two functions.) Mourning is built into buildings and buildings — namely, the Thesean labyrinth with its 14 passages that happen from a 7-fold space — and the energy of the libido flows back to the subject from the cathected object. We are forced to be reborn by, first, faking death. We put on black, stay at home, turn the mirrors around, drape the paintings. Mourning families naturally invoke the (Lacanian/topological) principle of projective space as *extimité*, self-



Figure 10. The tomb wall, whatever shape and size, is figuratively the Thesean Labyrinth, in that the insulation it provides is primarily spiritual.

intersecting and non-orientable. They turn their living space inside-out. They create an *ex falso* condition once libido does its back-flow. In the simple, non-reflected customs of mourning, we are forced to accept that *projective geometry principles are the Truth of truth*, the structural *ground* out of which our lived spaces are the immersions of this truth into the perspectivalism of Euclidean space. We don't have to be geniuses or even mediocre thinkers; we just use space as seems fit, and to give the dead the proper respect we turn it inside out.

The Thesian Labyrinth celebrated by Borges as “The House of Asterion” goes inside at the same time it goes outside, and *vice versa*. It is a space of mourning, on this reversal alone, but it is also ethnographically the idealized form of the tomb. Ostensibly, the aim is to insulate the dead from the living; prevent haunting or the return (zombies, vampires, etc.) that would visit

incontinence on the importunity of continence. We say that architecture shelters us, but at the same time it leaks, and when we complain of leaks we are always meaning more than we intend to say. When we tell our friend she is looking tired or her hair is out of place, we are really saying that we fear for her life and are already shopping for black clothes. We expect the 40 to happen any minute. The 40 after all is always “about to happen.” It is the shadow that, at noon, is most intense when it is the shortest.¹⁵

The twin has died, *The Caribbean Orange* is an effort to *do something*, to labor; specifically, to labor in the interval that spans the 40 and is a “time in hell.” Like the heroic labor, it is done by someone who is dead (Gordon) but does not realize he is dead, on behalf of someone who is living (Sebastian) but does not realize he is living. Reversing what must seem to be obviously the right case, that Sebastian has died but Gordon has survived him, is the irrational *ex falso quodlibet* of mourning that has the living dress as if they were dead. We play dead, and like all audiences who obediently sit still in their seats in the darkened auditorium, we are paralyzed. Our actions, if there are any, must be circular, i. e. return to where they started as an action of cancellation. Matta-Clark’s circles are doubly that. They cancel the material they cut, violate, abbreviate, in their reduction of the building to the build-ling, the small child.

In early childhood, the subject is a pre-subject, auto-erotic as Freud would put it, believing in the power of thought to affect matter (megalomania) and able to play the part of a (directing) subject or a (directed) object in play. Inside–outside does not matter to the young child who converses with toys. This fluid mentality is stabilized only by the recognition of the spectral image, which will remain with the child reborn as a subject forever. Reversed left-to-right, this chiral image will be seen as indexical by its owner, and the suggestion that the photograph is indexical will meet him/her with indignation and disgust — “That doesn’t look like me!” Kojin Karatani misses this indexicality difference and thus spoils the foundation of his argument about parallax.¹⁶ Correcting his error is important, because the personal parallax that, for the single viewer, makes depth perception possible; and the “pronounced” parallax that is the difference between the viewer and other viewing subjects, involves the Kantian ethical argument: although no one else can really stand in my shoes, they *nonetheless should* see what I see and, in seeing it *authenticate* my perceptual experience. In other words, my perceptual experience requires authentication, it is the “test” of what is authentic, the casting out of truth into the contingent world to see if anything sticks. Authenticity is at first inter-subjective. We require other subjects to agree with us, a requirement that comes with the proviso that other subject must report to us *honestly*. “Tell me what you see.” However, given that this is impossible, our demand for the ethical dimension of sense experience (the beginning, if not the basis of knowledge — *nihil in intellectu nisi prius in sensu*) begins with an *ex falso* premise: “I know this is impossible, *nonetheless* I demand it of everyone.”

But, we do not experience this ethical dimension of perceptual experience without reflection. Rather, we experience it in the reverse direction, as primary and elemental to perception itself. This is the Lacanian demand of the Other, “You [the subject, who hears the Other speak, in signs or words] must see what I see!” We ask, “... but what is it that you *wish* me to see? What is it that is *right to see*?” The Other’s demand is a desire, an ambiguous one. It is spoken in the language of *jouissance*. The truth of what we see is there to *Enjoy!* It is to be seen through the body that enjoys/suffers what it is seeing, and that enjoyment/suffering

¹⁵ See Alenka Zupančič, *The Shortest Shadow: Nietzsche’s Philosophy of the Two* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2003). This short-shadow analogy is intended to connect with Freud’s essay “On Transience.”

¹⁶ Karatani, *ibid.*, footnotes 2 and 6.

will be the “proof of the body,” the body becoming an instrument of truth, a place where the art of seeing happens, and happens to be ... an art.

In this, we realize the importance of being dead without realizing it. We are paralyzed, held in place. We are for a moment reduced to the childhood of both the individual and culture itself: the Cyclopean¹⁷ state of wonder, where thanks to the suppression of the fact of the subject seeing a world produces a metonymic cloud of relations, which is at first embodied *as a cloud*, a thundering cloud as Vico and Joyce would have it, capable of speaking in all tongues, the language of Adam that is now unintelligible to the first human who is capable of speaking (how ironic).¹⁸ This is the condition embodied by the Tower of Babel, the architectural counterpart to the statue of blindfolded Justice.

Gordon and Sebastian are twins, but in their apposition due to Sebastian’s suicide, they take up the role of the classic twins, Castor and Pollux. Perhaps the story is well-known. The Dioscuri are children of Leda and *two fathers*, Zeus and Tyndareus. Castor, son of Tyndareus, was of course mortal, while Pollux, son of Zeus, was immortal. Nonetheless, they loved each other as brothers, more truly than if they were both of the same status. In this way they answer to Freud’s question about transience, how the “immortal” is a component of the “mortal” and *vice versa*. The key to the twins’ relationship is ignorance. The brother who has died, Castor, due to an accident gone wrong, “does not know he has died” thanks to the deal worked out by Pollux with the masters of Hades. Instead, he spends time in the underworld but does not stay there permanently. He is “ignorant” of death because this spell is, like the *katabasis* of the hero who visits Hades to consult with the ancestors (*apophrades*, the voice of the dead), he knows he will return to the living, thanks to the rotational scheme won by his brother. Equally, Pollux must deny knowing about his “living” because it too has a terminus, a finite duration. To know of living would require denying its limits, so Pollux must live with the Heideggerian principle, “Being toward death.” Every moment of life will involve anticipating life’s extinction. The structure of life as a whole will be rounded (made self-intersecting), as Shakespeare put it, by a death. The dyad of the twins makes non-orientation (the simultaneous living-in-death and death-in-living) the principle by which Castor and Pollux rotate on an annual basis. A similar rotation is enacted by Persephone, as the causal factor of the seasons: death and resurrection; resurrection *thanks to* death, the “impossible” or *ex falso* required to precede life.

We have not begun the “Caribbean Orange Critique,” only prepare for doing it. The actual doing must, rather than present itself as a sequel, a way of finishing the work of art with an “intellectual” assessment, renounce this way of doing critique and assert that if critique is any to be regarded as a final act, it must continue in the *ex falso* vein of the original. IT must be in mourning; IT must acknowledge its dead (or living?) twin; IT must recognize the fact of not-knowing that converts being alive and being dead into conditions of eclipsed truth. How is such a critique possible, if in fact it is possible?

This cannot be demonstrated in the form of argumentation, but rather as a statement that takes the form, “it already is this.” The critique existed before its object, but was suppressed, eclipsed, latent. The

¹⁷ Neither the word nor the idea of the Cyclopean exists in architecture theory. The first human thought is equated with modern conceptual expression, and the metaphor that was the basis of this thought is reduced to a sub-species of analogy (with one term missing). Thus Paul Ricœur’s book, *On Metaphor*, omits the only two theories of metaphor that allow for the distinctive structure of Cyclopean thought and expression, Vico and Lacan, but includes nearly every metaphor theorist who upholds the analogy relation. Architecture theory, bereft of both Vico and Lacan, misses both the reality of Cyclopean culture (which even Homer acknowledged) and the means of theorizing it, which belongs exclusively to Vico and his (poetic) predecessors.

¹⁸ On Joyce’s thunderwords in *Finnegans Wake*, see <http://www.finnegansweb.com/wiki/index.php/Category:Thunderwords>.

critique was prior to Gordon Matta-Clark's construction project, the critique must simply demonstrate this priority and put it to the test. The test will be that, naturally, of *jouissance*. It will operate by the time-honored principle of intellectual desiccation: without specifically testing each and every proposition, the critical — *critique-al* — question will be: *are there any more?* A new proposition will, predictably, come to mind. To test it, the question will be "Has this not been given before?" Clearly this will not be a matter of literal presence, overlooked, but more significantly a question of latent presence. In any one reason, are there not others that must be presumed, as conditions that lie latent within the manifest?

The aim will not be to confirm but to attempt any *ersatz* conjecture that will maximize the chance and opportunity of failure. There is no such thing as data of confirmation. As such, these are justifications grounded in the hope of belief. They do not meet the criteria of *modus tolens*, falsifiability, which means they resist testing and this resistance stands in the way of proof. The *modus tolens* is a mirror image of the ethical obligation, in perception, that others should see what we see (pronounced parallax).