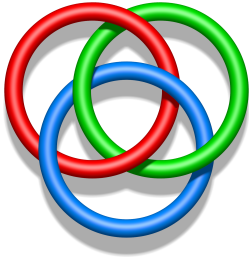


The (Architectural) Case for Imagination's Radical Passivity

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The architectural *versus* the psychoanalytical imagination would seem to be a case of the hopeful *versus* the illusionary. Thanks mainly to architecture education's branded phenomenology (Pérez-Gómez, Pallasmaa, Holl, etc.), architectural imagination ("IA") has been alloyed to the creativity of the lateral-thinking poetic/heroic inventor. In the studio, imagination is defined either through disappointing lacks, <, or its enigmatic excesses, >. Ruefully, any systematic definition is dismissed with the belated judgment, that "one knows it when one sees it."

The Lacanian Imaginary ("I^L") is, in contrast, considerably more specific. It is one of the three domains of the RSI (Real, Symbolic, Imaginary) figured by the Borromeo knot. From the Mirror Stage's intrusion into autoerotic pre-subjectivity, to fantasy's role in papering over gaps in the Symbolic, to the nearly-impossible-to-visualize topologies Lacan used to, among other things, define architecture as a "surface of pain" (Seminar VII), one would hope to see the possibility of a bridge. But, Lacan's perplexing reference to Ovid's tale of Daphne and Apollo seems to confirm the aporia. Daphne's *mere intention* to flee created its own space-of-no-escape, epitomized as projective geometry's defining qualities of non-orientation and self-intersection, demonstrated in shapes such as the Möbius band, Klein bottle, and cross-cap.

Even Lacanians have difficulty understanding Lacan's topological references. IA's phenomenological theorists, choosing rejection over perplexion, have endorsed Euclidean perspectivalism, marginalizing projective geometry as the artist's allowable "non-Euclidean" exception to humanistic homeyness (Maholy-Nage, Duchamp, Weber, etc.). The 19c. heritage of Euler, Möbius, Plücker, Gauss, Riemann, and others has been dismissed as "instrumental" and thus foresworn. I propose using a sideways concept of passivity to link together the imagination's Early Modern traditions of inventiveness (*ingegno*) in Góngorism and Vico to Lacan's own investments in topology. Where Lacan's geometry aspirations might be epitomized in his concept of extimacy, I claim that Lacan's early Imaginary (especially the Mirror Stage) conceals a more architectural secret: that of the "fourth wall" of cinema and theater, generalized to the case of representation and drawing as the architect's *raison d'être*.

The fourth wall applies not simply to spectatorship but to drawing, where the surface of work imposes a goal/limit of orthogonality, which Joan Copjec allies with Gaston Bachelard's ortho-*psychism*. Unlike the computer-generated immersive graphics ("virtual reality") that architecture schools promote as the summit of representation, orthopsychism aims instead the "reality of the virtual" (Žižek, 2004), a virtuality of *effectiveness*, which can be modeled by the torus's linked voids of demand and desire (Greenshields, 2017). The ultimate payoff of such a project would be to return to architecture's native understanding of the imagination in terms of its lack or surplus, <>, but to fuse this into the Lacanian *poinçon*, \diamond , and place it on the L-schema as the "forbidden passage" of the Symbolic to the *Es*, the unbarred Subject, S (the autoerotic pre-subject?) thanks to the *passivity* of the Analyst, manifest in a retroactive strategy of too-early/too-late.

Passivity as such returns the case of the Imaginary, IA and I^L, to a common origin in anamorphosis. In his advice to young artists, which we might extend to young architects, Leonardo da Vinci recommended the study of stains and cracks on pavement to strengthen "anamorphic awareness." In psychoanalysis, Mladen Dolar has proposed that anamorphosis be used through the full range of psychoanalytical subjectivity, a goal I see as extending through topology with the Golden Bough of passivity: the retroactive creation of entrapment.