

Parapraxis of the Tiny House

Position Paper 1.1. The aim of this paper is to establish a protocol for considering the combination of condensation and displacement (metaphor and metonymy) as the spatio-temporal rationale of the Tiny House in relation to Lacan's idea of the interval of suspension: between the two deaths (*katabasis*), the suppression effect of $\pm i$, and the *pharmakon*.

Don Kunze¹

In the simultaneous imagination and memory² that is the concept of the Tiny House, the following "tiling problem" exists. If the space (and time) of the Tiny House is to be mapped completely, it requires a Möbius-style twist of a map "atlas"³ that, in twisting, constitutes a 180° twist in the 360° completion of spatial description. The twist, exemplifying projective geometry's principle of non-orientation, writes across both surfaces of the atlas's separate "maps," but simultaneously this reduces the atlas to two dimensions. The tiling is both complete and incomplete. There is an indivisible remainder, a case of the Lacanian *objet a*, that is indivisible because it is actually "division itself": a *katagraphic cut* creating two Möbius-shaped facets separated by a void of pure circulation. By "circulation," I refer to the global project of energy conservation that derives from Sigmund Freud's "Project for a Scientific Psychology," which demonstrated the necessity of the Death Drive as a dual of passivity (the Nirvana element) and activity (unending repetition).⁴

The subject's appeal for recognition by the Other is made up of two circuits, one that returns the series to its origin point precisely at the point where it appears to vanish on the horizon at infinity, the other which seems to advance indefinitely along a straight line held in place by contingency, on one hand, balanced by need, on the other. The coincidence of

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² Giambattista Vico should be credited for the "Lacanian idea" of retroaction in his insistence that memory is simultaneously imagination and *vice versa*. In effect, imagination is the sudden emergence of an idea already present in the unconscious, in the famous example cited by Slavoj Žižek in his lecture, "Love as a Political Category," May 16, 2013, 6th Subversive Festival, *Cinema Europa*; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u9eyImD3i4>. This accounts for lovers' universal report, that although they met completely by chance, they were destined to fall in love. This famous example of the Lacanian *après coup* hints at the role of *lalangue* in "phonetic" (meaningful) speech; in effect, the speech act actualizes what is "already-always present," but in a problematic way, both as an excess and lack in relation to the *énoncé* (content). Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fish (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), §§211, 819.

³ The atlas is to the individual map what the tiling project faces as a mandate for completion.

⁴ Sigmund Freud, "Project for a Scientific Psychology" [1895], *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Imago Publishing Co., 1950), 281–391.

the circular and the straight line is a principle of projective geometry, where every line (“one-dimensional subspace”) is both a line and the point where origin meets end; therefore, the line of projective geometry is simultaneously finite and unbounded and, as such, a condensed version of Einstein’s Second, or “strong” Relativity, where space is not a Euclidean set of extended dimensions deformed by strong gravitational fields but, rather, “deformation itself.”

The subject appeals to the Other for recognition; but another kind of appeal is “anamorphically” embedded within the first: an appeal that is circular, repetitive, returning ever and always to an indivisible remainder, a *lack*. This circle within the square space of contingency-need extension, the subject’s model of free will put in the form of a field allowing free movement, shows how the determinacy of the anamorphic repetitive demand is not antithetical to free will but in fact requires it, *topologically*. What makes this space “tilable” (mappable) is that completion of the tile/map project requires the element of incompleteness, the presence of an indivisible remainder that is simultaneously a surplus and a lack.

In an early *Scientific American* article by J. J. Callahan, the tiling problem is put succinctly.⁵

The notion of infinity has always been wrapped in mystery, and historically it triggered apprehensions that have only gradually been overcome. During the scientific Renaissance, Euclidean geometry became the main instrument for comprehending infinite physical space. Euclidean geometry contends that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, and that the sum of the angles in a triangle will always be 180 degrees. The Renaissance scientists saw that Euclidean geometry treated ideal objects in a mathematical context that was infinite, but that its axioms and propositions exactly described the spatial relations of the real world. Leibniz and Newton shared the view that physical space was infinite and Euclidean. They disagreed, however, on how matter was situated in space. For Leibniz a finite group of stars was unthinkable: such a group would have to be in some specific location in space and God would have had no sufficient reason to put it in one place rather than in some other. Leibniz thus concluded that the universe must be infinite. Newton rejected that possibility, however, on the grounds that God is the only possible actual infinity. Although today these arguments may not seem persuasive, at the time they were considered sufficient.

The solution to whether the universe is finite or infinite, bounded or unbounded, Newtonian or Leibnizian, comes down to the conclusion that space must be both finite and unbounded (the worst of both worlds, as far as the two scientist-philosophers were concerned), and that this “worst case scenario” is in fact the element of radical non-orientation present with every attempt to describe what goes on in the two dimensions of projective geometry.

Projective geometry is “projective” is projective because it derives from the evidence of the senses, the parallax that seems to place in front of our eyes a perspectival truth, that

⁵ J. J. Callahan, “The Curvature of Space in a Finite Universe,” *Scientific American* 235, No. 2 (August 1976): 90–101.

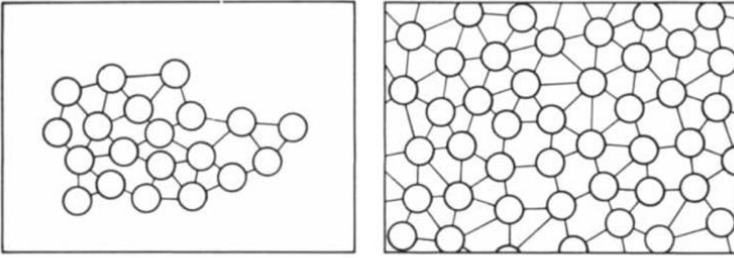


Figure 1. (From Callahan:) TWO "BALL AND STICK" COSMOLOGICAL MODELS demonstrate the philosophical views of Newton and Leibniz; each ball represents a galaxy and each stick represents the distance between galaxies. Although both men accepted Kant's assumption that space obeyed Euclidean geometry, Newton believed the galactic system was finite and inhomogeneous (left); thus his model of the galactic system had both a center and a boundary. Leibniz, however, believed the galactic system was infinite and homogeneous (right), with no center or boundary.

parallel lines in fact meet at a single point lying on a hypothetical (circular) line lying at infinity, the horizon. This meeting is not an "appearance" waiting to be disconfirmed by the "reality" of the geometrical proof, that parallel lines *shall never meet*. Projective geometry reverses reality and appearance.⁶ The appearance (that the lines meet) is the reality; the proof is a demonstration not of the truth we perceive in our senses and

are tempted to discredit as illusion, generically isolating the perceiving subject as a victim of illusion, but a "compulsion of the Symbolic," a mandate embedded within our (linguistic) conviction that the Order of the world must be consistent and grammatical. Rule-based behavior lies at the heart of our presence as subjects within the layers of symbolic networks: our concept of the individual, the family, the group, culture ... leading eventually to the generic idea of humanity as such. The rule is conceptual, the conceptual is the rule. It establishes the limit of what we can think to be reasonable, and the obligation to define ourselves as subjects within this limit of reason.

If anything, the Tiny House embodies our desire to escape this limit. It is the way the deficiencies we encounter in the Symbolic are patched up and smoothed over by the Imaginary, which for both Lacan and Vico is the same as memory in the sense that as soon as we can imagine the remote location, cozy sparseness, and utopian comforts of the Tiny House, we are in the middle of these projections emerging from their presence in the unconscious. Along with the features we experience as new and as-yet-unenjoyed, the unconscious has left its tell-tale signature. The Tiny House is *timeless*. This is not the absence of time but, rather, the purification and distillation of time's most ancient element, *duration*.⁷ The Tiny House combines imagination (the element of freedom) with memory

⁶ For this reason, projective geometry should have been enthusiastically adopted by phenomenologists; however, many of them have embraced Euclid as the geometry "natural" to human presence on earth.

⁷ The idea that time is simultaneously sequential and non-sequential ("timeless") is typically credited to Henri Bergson, "Time and Eternity," in *Mélanges* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002) or, more popularly, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson (Montana: Kessinger Publishing Company, original date, 1910) or *Matter and Memory*, trans. N. M. Paul and W.S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1994). Again, I would cite Giambattista Vico as the originator of the idea of *après coup* that Lacan would use to show the unconscious as a *sinthome* of emergence at the moment of the linguistic act. In his *New Science*, Vico invents a hypothetical "first word" that is, simultaneously, the "no-word" of the thunder, phonemic syllables in a sequence that is also an "eternal return" of Jove's mandate, felt as fear. James Joyce figured this word as 99-letter sequences containing, he claimed, the roots of all spoken languages, the Adamic language that was bi-univocally concordant — a 1:1 relation of word to thing. Vico called this *lalangue* True Speech, *vera narratio*, true in that it *completely lacked the ability to employ irony*, a capacity by which human speech, *non-bi-*

(the idea of destiny) by making each the determinant of the other, a relation of “symmetrical difference.” What memory lacks, imagination supplies, and *vice versa*. But, the Tiny House carries this relation one step further. Memory, in its desire to *replicate the past*, finds that it must recover and restore the very thing that is antipodal to it: invention. At the same time, the imagination finds that the lost element it needs to perfect its free motion is, in fact, the determinacy of an original element that is not just fixed but inexplicably *given* — a radically alien element, like the metallic pylon in Stanley Kubrick’s *2001: A Space Odyssey*. The Tiny House we project into a fantasized future returns to a “monument” inexplicably given as a primordial marker, a center that is Everywhere in a universe whose circumference is Nowhere to be found.

Slavoj Žižek is fond of telling this joke, which was told by Freud and quoted often by Lacan. “Two Jews meet in a railway carriage at a station in Galicia. ‘Where are you going?’ asks one. ‘To Cracow’ was the answer. ‘What a liar you are!’ broke out the other. ‘If you say you are going to Cracow, you want me to believe you are going to Lemberg. But I know you are going to Cracow. So why are you lying to me?’”⁸ This is how, in the midst of ordinary language’s *non-bi-univocal* concordance, the “Adamic speech” (*lalangue*) survives as a *vera narratio*. The “lie” of saying that you are going to Cracow when you are going to Cracow is silently, “anamorphically” present in the truth-claim. It is a truth *more than truth*. It includes both the claim as a speech content and the truth *act* that runs past the boundaries of the truth table. By being neither true nor false *and* neither true *and* false, the Cretan Liar Paradox is not so much circumvented as turned, from a circle rotating between “if true then false” and “if false then true” to an “interior-8” figure, where two circuits rotate simultaneously in opposite directions. The “if” and “then,” contingency and determinism, merge. As soon as free will is offered it is immediately revoked. Fate incorporates its dependent pre-condition, accident.

univocally concordant, attained its ability to self-differentiate, mutate, create idioms, tropes, figures, and diversions that, collectively, constituted a basic disingenuousness. To read how Vico’s *vera narratio* became the authoritative basis for divination and, hence, the origins of Law, read Donald Phillip Verene, *Vico’s Science of Imagination* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981).

⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, tran. by James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1960), 137–8.

Tiled Bathrooms



Figure 2. Roger Penrose in the foyer of the Mitchell Institute for Fundamental Physics and Astronomy, Texas A&M University, standing on a floor with a Penrose tiling. Source: Roger Penrose, Creative Commons, Wikimedia, 2010.

The tiling issue of the Tiny House, which zooms out from the question of completion-incompletion to the cosmic issues of General Relativity and linguistics, circles back to a question of the tell-tale detail: how to accomplish, in one and the same room, ease of maintenance and durability and at the same time warmth, security, and intimacy. The personal bathroom aspires to offer the naked subject the chance to feel at home in the presence of a steaming bath or shower, the opportunity to relieve oneself without being forced to acknowledge the messier aspects of carnal life, and a convenient way to revisit the Mirror Stage with a sense of jubilation undiluted by promised obligations of the Symbolic. In housing's standard editions, dwellings are made to share, at least at the level of visits of friends. The Tiny House's characteristically remote settings suggest that privacy is implicit; that, if shared, the Tiny House's

hospitality conforms to an intensified desire for solitude. This is seen most clearly in the rooms dedicated to hygiene. The bath will be, at the very worst, available on a time-share basis, its pleasures unpolluted by tell-tale signs of previous use.

This may seem to be a very different kind of "tiling" problem. Tiling would seem to be a matter of phoning the contractor, selecting from a range of ceramic products, and arranging for installation. But, tiling is also the project of completion, to be accomplished only in relation to an "indivisible remainder" that turns out to be nothing less than the tessellation of the tiles themselves. The mathematician and contractor/client have parallel interests in completion. The mathematician aims to describe a space or space-time completely in terms of tessellated divisions. The Tiny House contractor and client aim for a well turned out, easy-maintenance bath completed within a specified time-frame. Both projects, however, have a relation to the break-joint that makes tiles tiles and not simply a continuous ceramic coating.

There would presumably be no relation connecting the mathematician and the contractor-client to the ancient token known as the *tesseræ*, the two parts of a broken clay disk used by parting friends as a promissory note to return and join the two parts along their unique fracture line, and the joint between the mathematical tile.

The ancient token of friendship comes with an implicit time limit, marked by the rejoining of the two fragments. This wistful promise uses the accident of the original fracture as a means of authentication. No other halves will be able to join in this precise way. If we look at M. C. Escher's *Circle Limit IV*, "Heaven and Hell" (Fig. 3), we can find a connection between the "un-boundedness" of Penrose tiling and the economy/finiteness of



Figure 4. Tiny House Bath view, AI generated view. Source: Ben Myhre, Tiny House Town, <http://www.tinyhousetown.net>. Accessed March 30, 2024.

the *tesseract*. It is the ring where the alternation of devils and angels creates a perspectival horizon, the place of all possible vanishing points, where (as Lacan puts it) “a line is expected to bite its own tail at infinity.”⁹ Citing the architect-geometer Girard Desargues (1591–1661), Lacan indicates that he not only knows the early-modern founder of projective geometry but that he understands the central principle of its radical curvature.¹⁰ Parallel lines don’t just “appear” to meet at the vanishing point at infinity, there is a projective space where they *actually do meet*, and this meeting has the consequences of retroactively redefining a (projective) line as both a line and this point where the line meets itself, equally understood as the center. Pascal’s saying, that God is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere, is an almost literal, compact definition of projective space, where there is no dimension

allowing a viewer to “take a step back” to look at forms such as the torus, cross-cap, Klein bottle, or Möbius band. What we do see when we easily draw these figures is their *immersed* representative in 3-space, where the step back allows for the “space of demonstration” made famous by Euclid’s axioms, theorems, and proofs. In the 2-space of projectivity, there are no axioms, theorems, or proofs. There are only topological relations that do not depend on angles or lengths, directions or oppositions. Like the unconscious, these forms and manners of negation are entirely unknown, entirely impossible. *Like the unconscious*, projective space is timeless because, ironically, it is a pure form of eternity and thus a pure *durée*. These commonalities are surely what led Lacan to pair his clinical findings and historical examples to topology from *Seminar IX* onward, intensifying with the “middle seminars” (XI–XIV).¹¹

This aside on the role of projective geometry in Lacanian psychoanalysis is to talk about the way desire works in the Tiny House, particularly in the space of the bathroom. Crudely put, the Tiny House, one step away from camping in the wilderness, takes that step with the assurance to its occupant that there will be a satisfactory restoration of what are known as

⁹ Jacques Lacan, “La troisième,” *La Cause freudienne* 3, no. 79 (2011): 11–33. Lecture delivered at the 7th Congress of L’École Freudienne de Paris, Rome, November 1974, translated by Yolande Szczech; https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307210365_Lacan's_La_Troisieme_English_Translation. Accessed March 30, 2024.

¹⁰ Desargues and Blaise Pascal had discovered and expanded the original theorems of Pappus of Alexandria (300 C.E.). “Projective Geometry,” *Wikipedia*, March 2006; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Projective_geometry. Accessed March 30, 2024.

¹¹ Possibly Lacan’s topological interest began with his 1945 essay, “Logical Time and the Assertion of Anticipated Certainty: A New Sophism,” first available to English readers in Bruce Fink and Mark Silver, translators, *Newsletter of the Freudian Field* 2, No. 2 (1988): 4–22; later published in *Écrits: the First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006).

“modern conveniences.” Instead of the makeshift sanitary measures imposed by camping, the Tiny House offers civilized access to hygiene and sanitary waste disposal. Somehow, it comes with the promise of a reliable supply of fresh, heated water and the privacy insured by uninhabited surroundings or siting. Ideally, the (almost invariably large uncurtained) window of the Tiny House bath faces a lake, ocean, or desert expanse.

In this abrupt vanquishing of the important psychoanalytical and ethnological consideration, “the neighbor,” the question of the margin is allowed to extend to the edge of the visible universe. In other words, between the space identified as the most *intimate* of all domestic spaces, in a house where functions and forms have been abbreviated down to an ideal *limit*, the inside and outside, the intimate and the cosmic, are dramatically juxtaposed.

The Symbolic without Neighbors

Could it be that the Tiny House is an experiment, to see what happens when the key component of the Symbolic, the inevitable “neighbor” — the generic standard-issue Other, paired down to an otherness without family, clan, ethnic, or other readily identifiable sources of social protocols, is suspended? This “Symbolic-without-neighbors” has been done before. The first example that may come to mind to the mind of the American reader is the self-styled autonomous hermit, Henry David Thoreau, who from 1845 to 1848 enjoyed semi-isolation at Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts.¹² My preferred example, however, is the famed humanist, Petrarch, who retreated to Mount Ventoux after a period of intense perplexity.¹³ Here, the intentional forsaking of “neighbors” was specifically philosophical. Petrarch, finding that none of his contemporaries was worth the time taken to engage in discussion, determined to write letters solely to those luminaries of the past, who, though long dead, would constitute the best correspondents. Surely, this is the first time anyone had ever thought of surpassing the Turing Test with a fully enthusiastic engagement of a self-emergent Other. Petrarch’s fourteenth-century ChatGPT was intelligent to the degree that Petrarch himself had assimilated the main luminaries of classical literature: Pliny, Ovid, Vergil, Cicero, Plato, Aristotle, etc. The exclusion of the neighbor in Petrarch’s case, if regarded as an experiment to measure the change in the Symbolic (ΔS) due to the subtraction of this key element of contiguity, proximity, and interpellation ($\Delta S = S - CPI$). What would be left, this Symbolic-without-neighbors? This is what the Tiny House promises: the benefits of the Symbolic — personal identity, a sense of historical continuity, anxiety control — without the trouble of inter-personal interaction. This perhaps is like de-cafeinated coffee or diet cola. Or, perhaps, it is an essence, a “Coke is it!” moment.

In the model of neighboring that sees the benefits and drawbacks of sociability as a linear binary variable, certainly the neighbor lies on the side that we would amputate if possible; and dreams of such an amputation constitute what Žižek would call the “dirty

¹² “Walden Pond,” *Wikipedia* (January 2007); https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walden_Pond. Accessed March 30, 2024.

¹³ “Ascent of Mont Ventoux,” *Wikipedia* (June 2007); https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascent_of_Mont_Ventoux. Accessed March 30, 2024.

little fantasy” that lies, as a Mr. Hyde, behind every positive promise of Dr. Jekyll, in the same way that the Nazi fantasy of a perfect, harmonious German people required death camps.¹⁴ The Symbolic-without-neighbors focuses on the one element of the Tiny House, the bath, whose spectral prosthesis allows the occupant returning to the liquid warmth of infancy to skip past the trauma of the Mirror Stage without the displeasure of having to read the Symbolic’s fine print warning label. In exchange for shedding the shameful body-in-pieces (*corps morcelé*) of pre-Subjectivity, the new he/she will always find him/herself in the *company of others*.

Even when others are not physically present, any *thought, word, or deed* will, thanks to being affiliated with the networks of social order, be tangent to the experiences, histories, and advice of others. So, how does the Tiny House achieve its exemption from the neighbor factor, apart from its isolation and minimalist accommodations? At least part of the answer has to do with the role of *jouissance* in Lacan’s discourse theory. Up to 1971, Lacan had defined the fields against which \$, S1, S2, and *a* crossed in their circular parade as Agent, Other, Product, and Truth. In Seminar XIX and, slightly later, in “La troisième,” Lacan turned to *jouissance* and semblance to define this quadrated ground. Stijn van Heule documents this move:

In seminar XIX, the position of the other is described as the position of *jouissance* (Lacan, 1971–1972, p. 193). Here Lacan defines *jouissance* as a disturbing dimension in the experience of the body, which renders the subject unable to experience itself as a self-sufficient enjoying entity (Lacan, 1971–1972, p. 217). *Jouissance* is immensely disruptive. It is a dimension of otherness that we all have to deal with. Indeed, the very idea of “dealing with it” bears witness to discourse; that is, to the fact that we treat *jouissance* by making an appeal to an agent or semblance, which is expected to manage it: *jouissance* provokes the mobilization of semblance. The root of *jouissance* is in the structurally dysfunctional status that the body has for the human being (Lacan, 1971–1972, p. 217).¹⁵

This is radically *contrary* to the Tiny House idea! If anything, the Tiny House promises *jouissance* galore (all the negative bits filtered out or ignored, all Otherness held at back at the turnoff onto the dirt road). Van Heule’s “subject unable to experience itself as a self-sufficient enjoying entity” because of the disruption of *jouissance* is simply not in the market for one of these jewels in the wilderness. But, is this not a case of antipodal cross-contamination? In the same way that Slavoj Žižek re-annotated *The Sound of Music* as a pro-Nazi fable, where the von Trapp family epitomized the German rural ideal — aristocratic yet homespun, tuned into folkways, dedicated to female fecundity beneath the paternal signifier — while the visiting uniformed officials from Berlin resembled nothing less than the sophisticated, well-dressed, well-mannered Jewish bureaucrats that kept the Weimar Running against all odds.¹⁶ Žižek cited this as a case of a fifth, “Effective Cause,” added to, if

¹⁴ Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (New York and London: Verso, 1997).

¹⁵ Stijn van Heule, “Capitalist Capitalist Discourse, Subjectivity and Lacanian Psychoanalysis,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 7 (2016); doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01948. PMID: 28018280; PMCID: PMC5145885.

¹⁶ Slavoj Žižek, *The Reality of the Virtual*, produced by Casper Børretzen; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RnTQhIRcrno>. Accessed March 31, 2024.

anything, correct what Lacan called Aristotle's short-shrift version of Material Cause. In Effective Cause, the most active element is the passivity of "substance" that, in a new definition of Material, looks to fluid dynamics as its model. The only permanence in this world comes from attunement, streaming, laminar flow, what Lucretius, in *The Nature of Things*, described as an even flow of atoms, the proper ground for *clinamen*, the swerve that, like the exception in Euclidean parallax, proves the rule.¹⁷ Van Heule, again, confirms this:

What is typical for discourse, is that it envelopes a semblance around jouissance, and as a result jouissance is no longer unlimited, but *conditioned by the element occupying the position of semblance*. In this maneuver, a social bond is created: "What is discourse? It is that which, in the arrangement of what might be produced because of the existence of language, makes up the function of the social bond" (Lacan, 1972, p. 51, my translation) [emphasis mine].¹⁸

In other words, the resident of the Tiny House has dispensed with neighborliness because he/she (we will argue later that the resident is *perforce* structured by the feminine not-all) has become semblance, identified fully with the spectral self, but has gone past the narcissistic mandate laid out by Freud in his essay, "On Narcissism." This is the adult edition of the child, whose reflection on the face of the water is transparent, allowing the subject to see the bottom. The ideal here is the one the parents set up at infancy, the ideal-before-the-fall(s) of adolescence and (usually) disappointing adulthood. The adult returns to this ideal only when the structures of "civic" society have been removed. In effect, the adult goes on a "camping trip" to "get away from all that," to clear away the noise, to enjoy again the benefits and privileges of autoerotic pre-subjectivity. What was this utopian time like? Freud, in "On Narcissism":¹⁹

The child shall have a better time than his parents; he shall not be subject to the necessities which they have recognized as paramount in life. Illness, death, renunciation of enjoyment, restrictions on his own will, shall not touch him; the laws of nature and of society shall be abrogated in his favour; he shall once more really be the centre and core of creation — "His Majesty the Baby," as we once fancied ourselves. The child shall fulfil those wishful dreams of the parents which they never carried out—the boy shall become a great man and a hero in his father's place, and the girl shall marry a prince as a tardy compensation for her mother. At the most touchy point in the narcissistic system, the immortality of the ego, which is so hard pressed by reality, security is achieved by taking refuge in the child. Parental love, which is so moving and at bottom so childish, is nothing but the parents'

¹⁷ The *clinamen* is the elegant trope of circumlocution, used in conjunction with the lipogram, artfully rendered by George Perec in his novel written entirely without using the letter "e." *A Void* [1969], trans. Gilbert Adair (London: Harvill Press, 1994).

¹⁸ Van Heule, *ibid.*

¹⁹ Sigmund Freud (1914), "On Narcissism, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, XIV (1914-1916): *On the History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*, 67-102.

narcissism born again, which, transformed into object-love, unmistakably reveals its former nature.

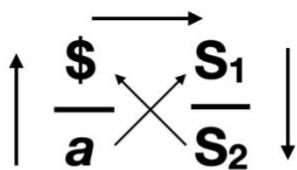
The future tense of the parents' wishful thinking becomes the future anterior of the Tiny House. It is the "moment by the time of which" this foretold ideal *will have come true*. The time suspension evident and only achievable in the wilderness settings of the Tiny House is a *durée* of a laminar flow of contradictory currents: *forward* to an imagined bliss, *backward* to the unblemished hopefulness of parental optimism. Here, neurosis is suspended and the inevitable happens: a psychosis of peace and happiness, or (more informatively) peace and happiness written in the firm hand of psychosis. The corollary of this offers a means of corroboration: without neighbors, there can be no successful neurosis, nothing to complain about if only because there is no one to complain *to*.

Where neurosis relies on and endorses, as a universal basis, Euclidean space and time, psychosis knows better. First, there is the retroactive circularity of the future anterior realization of His Majesty the Baby. Megalomania takes several distinctive forms. There is the pre-subject's belief in projective will-power: making things happen simply by thinking them to happen. In adulthood, this will become the psychotic symptom of misplaced concrete reference. In the positive form, the psychotic continues to believe in his/her magical powers over objects and others. The negative form is paralysis. The psychotic is frozen (or compelled) by the "if and only if" signs: three stop lights in a row, salt shakers out of alignment, numerical relations (*A Beautiful Mind*, directed by Ron Howard, 2001). This magical realism is Žižek's Fifth Cause, the Cause of Active Passivity. This is the cause of the Tiny House: the locus and locale of abbreviation, attenuation; the merger of condensation and displacement (and, hence, its claim to connect directly to the logic of the dream).

Capitalist Dream

Remember van Heule's prophecy. Once semblance becomes the basis for discourse, its ground so to speak, "jouissance is no longer unlimited, but conditioned by the element occupying the position of semblance [formerly the position of the Agent]." How else are we to flesh out this element, in the case of the Tiny House, than through the model of the dreaming subject — the subject who not only experiences condensation (metaphor) and displacement (metonymy) in the cipher-rebus language of dreams, but the subject who him/herself becomes a hybrid of condensation and displacement, in the starkly material methodology that creates a house that is smaller, more compact, yet enriched if not saturated by displacement, first by aspiring to an idealized Elsewhere, second by seeking out locales the intensify their relationship to *edges*.

Before we commit the sin of blurring the differences that define condensation and displacement let us shift to a conceptual model that uses difference to create a distinctive symmetry, or, to be more informative about this relationship, synergy. In energetics terms, synergy is structural support and amplification. Materials are stabilized when either (1) tension results from opposed forces or (2) when compression does the same, but with material and force reversed. Think of a wire that is straightened by forces pulling in an opposite direction or a foundation block that resists weights placed above it by pushing up



Discourse of the Hysteric, with \$ in the position of the Agent, S₁ (the master signifier) in the position of the Other, S₂ (the metonymic signifying chain) as the Product, and the *objet a* in the place of Truth.

on a push down. Loosely speaking, synergy in condensation is a kind of compression and displacement is a kind of tension. One is the obverse of the Other. We might write the relation as C_D/D_C, shorthand for symmetrical difference. Condensation contains a *latent element* of displacement, and displacement contains a *latent element* of condensation.²⁰ But, as Lacan would say, this is an analogy, not structure.²¹ The criss-cross of this latency is akin to the criss-cross of the discourse *matheme* itself.

If we take the *matheme* of the Hysteric's Discourse, something quite interesting is revealed. First, there is the horizontal relation between the Agent (Semblance) and Other (*jouissance*) that makes us think immediately of the Unary Trait, the cough that Dora and her father "shared" unconsciously.²² The cough was identical, but this was noticeable only by outsiders who knew both the father and daughter (e. g. Freud). At the same time it was something overtly painful, or at least a symptom of a potentially painful condition, yet by being repeated it produce a *jouissance* that was by definition both a surplus and a lack — in other words, "jouissance conditioned by semblance" (a literal transcription of \$S₁/S1\$). The latent elements are *condensed* and *suppressed*. They also afford a displacement, in Dora's case from father to daughter and, retroactively, back to the father: suspension of time.

The second remarkable thing about this *matheme* is that it seems to re-state what Lacan says about the exchange of *jouissance* between the demanding subject and the desiring Other. The *objet a* of the subject belongs to the Other, and the *objet a* of the Other is that of the Subject. With the S'...S' of the hysteric converted into *jouissance* by Lacan's re-assignment of the labels of the *matheme's* ground, this becomes a literal representation of the toroidal exchange between demand and desire. It is as if the blocks of Lacan's thinking have been given a shake and they have fallen into a more compact arrangement. The *mathemes* of not just this discourse but all five (including Capitalist discourse) revert to the primary analogy of discourse to the energetics model: both a circuit (to conserve energy) and a flow (the simultaneous ⇌ of speaker and listener as they alternate in conversation or even when one speaker dominates).

²⁰ Latency might be easily thought in anecdotal terms, as in the case where packing for a trip is a rather literal example of condensation (at several level) that would make no sense without the intention to leave home. Attenuation and askesis are more synonymous, with meaning both converging and diverging. However one draws the vectors, ⇌, opposition and viscosity are always simultaneously required, with the result of time suspension and extension.

²¹ Jacques Lacan, *Seminar XIII: The Object of Psychoanalysis* (1965–1966), trans. Cormac Gallagher, *Lacan in Ireland*; <http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/13-The-Object-of-Psychoanalysis1.pdf>. Accessed March 31, 2024. Although "analogy is not structure" (242) was in relation to Lacan's objective to Otto Fenichel's "analogies between scopophilic identification and manducation," it is an accurate description of his antipathy to characterizations that avoided structural, and hence *topological* relations relating to the Real.

²² Sigmund Freud, *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* (1905 [1901]). *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, VII (1901–1905); http://web-facstaff.sas.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Freud_SE_Dora_complete.pdf. Accessed April 8, 2024.

Where flow (displacement) suspends time, we have a direct analogy to laminar flow, whose Reynolds coefficient “cancels out time” in its calculation of viscosity.²³ But, again, we have an analogy, not structure, even though the analogy happens to be, precisely, about structure. It is more to the point to argue that the case of the Hysteric is *toroidal* in that its *matheme* explicates the torus’s “fundamental polygon.” This is the only true drawing of the 2-d torus. Donuts, bagels, and bicycle tires are *immersed* versions of the projective torus form. The correlation between the projective and Euclidean torus is the cut, in particular the *Villarceau* cut that Lacan describes as the 2-d space created *between* two Möbius-shaped faces made by pinching the immersed torus with thumb and forefinger and rotating the hand 180° while completing a 360° circuit.



M. C. Escher's *Circle Limit IV (Heaven and Hell)*, 1960 (left) and *Tetrahedral Planetoid*, 1954, embody the hallmarks of projective geometry, self-intersection and non-orientation. The circular horizon where the angels and devils vanish is relocated to the center of the bi-fold of the *Planetoid*. Projective topology does not distinguish between the outer edge and the center; they are the two conditions of the (katagraphic) cut that is identical with the Unary Trait.

Remembering that each Möbius-shaped surface is 2-d, the space between the two halves is also 2-d, confounding the viewer’s claim to be seeing a three-dimensional form with evidence of non-orientation. The torus revises our reading of the Hysteric’s *matheme* by showing how *jouissance* (of the Other) makes a 360° with a 180° twist in order to conclude in the “true speech” of the Unconscious, *lalangue*, at the opposite corner of the fundamental polygon. This argument will annoy even the most devoted followers of Lacan’s

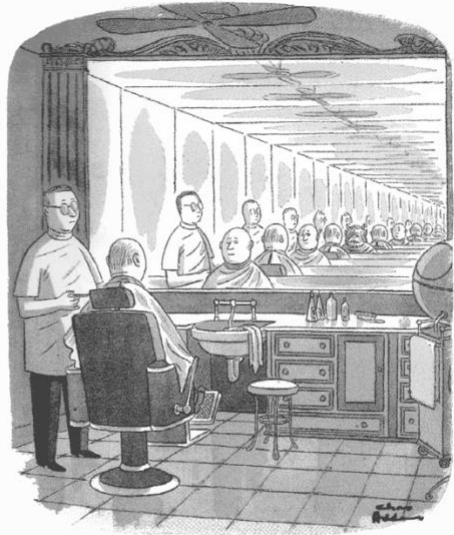
topological interests. The fundamental polygon itself has never been accurately developed by official commentaries, and has been misrepresented as folding instructions for making a torus by first creating a tube and then joining the ends of the tube. This is the immersed version of the torus, not the 2-d projective torus. The fundamental polygon opposes paired vectors. Like Lacan’s pinch demonstration, the vectors accomplish a (non-orientable) twist at the same time they complete a circuit (self-intersection).²⁴

Having probably annoyed those Lacanians committed to the importance of topology in psychoanalysis while permanently alienating those who have wished that Lacan’s topology would simply go away, let me suggest that the solution lies not in resolving the

²³ This technical reference has several benefits. On one hand, the *definition* of laminar flow involves a literal suspension of time; on the other hand, experiences of suspended time (or extended *durée*) characteristically involve elements of flow, harmonics, and “active passivity.” If there is to be any further understanding of Žižek’s argument for a need for a Fifth Cause to restore Aristotle’s flawed Material Cause, it should explore all cases where active and passive are held in counterpoise.

²⁴ For example of this confusion, see Michael Friedman, “Torus and Identification,” in Michael Friedman and Samo Tomšič, *Psychoanalysis: Topological Perspectives, New Conceptions of Geometry and Space in Freud and Lacan* (Bielefeld, DE: transcript Verlag, 2016), 167. Friedman reproduces the fundamental polygon upside down and backwards, and does not indicate the different colors of the vectors leading out from the point Lacan labels “repetition,” to positions inside and outside the Symbolic, converging again to a corner labeled “sublation.”

mathematical debate but, rather, seeking solace in the beliefs, social practices, representational styles, and architectural forms of the Tiny House. Here, the completion of the 360° circuit occurs, typically, at an edge either external or internal to the site, while the “cost” of a 180° element of non-orientation is, like the edge of Escher’s *Circle Limit IV*, both central (*Tetrahedral Planetoid*) and peripheral. In Euclidean space this appears as a contradiction, a non-orientation.²⁵



Charles Adams, “Monster in the Mirrors,” *The New Yorker*, 1957.

What can serve to “domesticate” topological mathematics without losing sight of the two central features of self-intersection and non-orientation, which are anything but *Heimlich*? The key is that, in ethnology, the key elements are, in fact *unheimlich*, both “uncanny” and “un-homely.” This takes in the paradox that Freud presented in his famous work on this subject. This is the fact that, while the home is antithesis of the unknown wilderness that is its antipode, the home itself is the source of the radical uncanny, which arises from the fact of concealment of *that which ought not to have been concealed*. The contronymic of “home” is revealed in its etymology as well as folk practices. We might say that, within the home is another home, just as within every frame of pictorial space, there is another frame. The double home, like the double frame is not simply the re-application of the principle of hominess, but the

introduction of a non-orientable concentricity. Although we should be able to continue the principle of home within the home itself — in effect to have a model of one’s house displayed inside the house, as in Harold Pinter’s *Tiny Alice* — a new and disturbing element is revealed, when the model, representation, or (more accurately) *effigy* of the house is revealed to possess powers unnoticed in the original. Concentricity is not uniform but, rather, “polyform.” Just as mirror images reverse left to right, right to left, etc. in a series of alternating odd and even variations, the original cut of the mirror initiates a Möbius-band style void, inserted at the radical center of the idea of home.

In Iraj Ghoochani’s essay (in this collection), “The Persian Connotations of Tiny House Architecture,” the etymology of “tile” is complex: “کاشانه (Kashane): According to Dehkhoda Dictionary, ‘kashane’ refers to a winter house or a small and humble dwelling. In literary usage, it symbolizes both the anticipation of life’s future. The term is often employed poetically to evoke images of longing and transient beauty. In the context of bird nests, ‘kashane’ signifies a cozy dwelling adorned with glass, suggesting a delicate and luminous habitat. In short, ‘kashane’ encompasses notions of shelter, illumination, and existential contemplation within the confines of domestic space.” *Kashane* involves both the idea of scale reduction and tiling as a means of making a complete inventory, of finding, in the space and time of the house, *all that there is to be found*. This project confronts the idea of

²⁵ Elsewhere I have called non-orientation “Escher constructs,” in honor of the Dutch inventor of staircases able to descend and ascend at the same time.

the “indivisible remainder,” the element shown as a monster in the Charles Adams cartoon (*The New Yorker*, 1957), the space between the two frames in the pictorial phenomenon of the double frame and the space *between* the house and the “perfected” (i. e. *model*) house that is smaller but, in its abridgement, more “economical.” By this, I mean that the *Kashane* exemplifies the principle of the conservation of energy. It is a circuit or, rather, a *double circuit* that, like the famous Death Drive in Freudian psychology, strives both to maintain a near-zero homeostasis and present an occasion and protocol for “starting over.”

Just as the Tiny House is an uncanny contraction of the house to its essential *aletheia* of “that which ought to have remained concealed,”²⁶ the vague energetics of the domestic house — where the idea of the neighbor is implicit and culturally imposed — is made precise and lapidary with contraction. The effects of concentricity are these: (1) the Tiny House is contained and containable by the idea and literal spatial extent of the ordinary house; (2) in this concentricity, a non-orientation occurs that matches Freud’s “etymological” non-orientation of the adjective *Heimlich*; (3) the “indivisible remainder” that appears in the Tiny House is the unconscious of the ordinary house, the house with neighbors; therefore, (4) the effect of removing the neighbor element is to find its antipodal counterpart, which in Lacanian psychoanalysis is equated with the Unary Trait, the one that is both single and numerically 1, the “one of 1.”²⁷

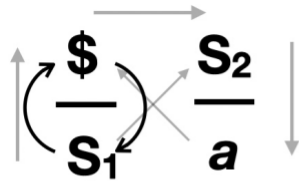
Tiny House + *Lalangue*

Our logical chain reads: TILES (1:1, self-intersecting inventory) > CONCENTRICITY (non-orientable) > UNCANNY (home>non-home)> UNARY TRAIT (indivisible remainder). Where do we find that this linear sequence curls back onto itself? Where do we find a *clavis universalis* allowing us to think through the Tiny House phenomenon in psychoanalytic terms, making the *askesis* of the Tiny House contraction into a condensation around an “indivisible remainder” that becomes the essence of *lalangue*? This must be something consistent with Lacan’s theory of the signifier, in particular, the relation of the signifier to the “glue” that surrounds the phoneme with nonsensical, seemingly unintended surplus sounds and gestures. But, to be refutable and replicable — i.e., to be “scientific” — this substance of what Lacan called the *sinthome* must be found in culture where, in general terms, it resolves problems of a more general nature. There must be, in this idea of the concentricity of the Tiny House, (1) a relation of entropy to neg-entropy, an order that

²⁶ Here, I go against my usual condemnation of Martin Heidegger’s use of the privative aleph in *aletheia*, “truth” as “un-covering.” Even though Paul Friedländer’s arguments in *Plato* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1970) are sound, there remains a series of associations connecting truth with concealment, presentation, revelation and, hence, processes of covering and uncovering.

²⁷ For future consideration, the “one of 1” is a case of “audioactivity,” a mathematical distinction, then recombination, of what Lacan would call the *énoncé* (content) and *énonciation* (act) components of language. In number theory, John Conway has argued that each number is both a place and a value, but that these interchange in lawful ways, as the series 1, 11, 21, 1211, 111221, 312211 ... shows. (Translation: each number is “read out loud, so that 11 is read as “two 1’s,” written as “21,” then written again as “one 2, one 1,” or “1211.” The final number shown is read “three 1’s, two 2’s, one 1.” See Anthony Bonato, “Audioactive Series,” *The Intrepid Mathematician* (May 2018); <https://anthonybonato.com/2018/05/02/audioactive-sequences/>. Accessed April 1, 2024.

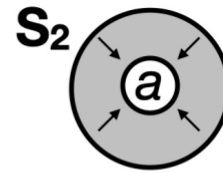
arises out of the *passivity* of the Tiny House’s energetics; (2) an element of *consecration*, the creation, through informal and even unconscious rituals, of an exchange between opposed elements, just as in religious rituals, material transformations are used to bring about “spiritual” exchanges of contronymic terms (death for life, mortality for immortality, dissolution then resurrection, etc.); and (3) objective confirmations in terms of the structural properties of numbers, topological forms, and transformations that independently model the passive/mechanical aspects of what, at the level of human experience, appear to be contingent situations that nonetheless produce meaningful outcomes.



Discourse of Capitalism, with \$ and S1 changing the places they had in the Master's discourse. The naturally proletarian \$ adopts the ideals and methodologies of the capitalist.

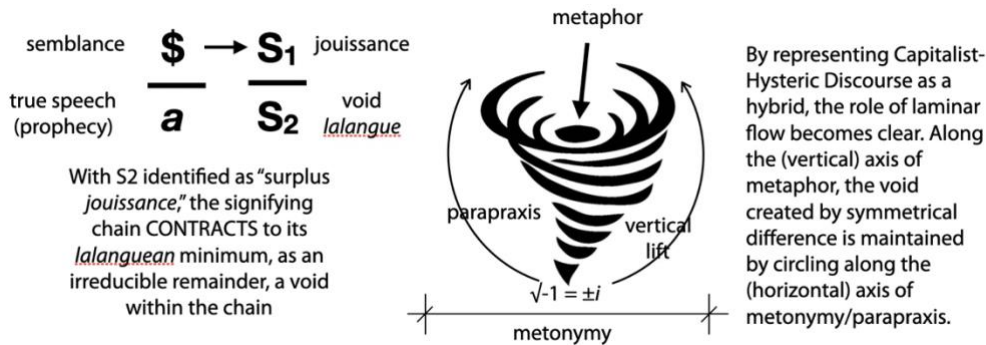


One way of writing this switch is to say that, just as Capitalism has “ingested” the barred subject, the barred subject has internalized Capitalism.



Yet another way of understanding this is to focus on contraction, with *jouissance* as the “irreducible remainder,” the *lalangue* within the Hysteric's Discourse

Lacan’s claim that there was a fifth discourse, “capitalism,” in addition to his paradigmatic four (Hysteric, Master, University, Analysis), came in the context of his revisionary labelling of the field over which the barred subject, master signifier, signifying chain, and *objet a* (\$, S1, S2, *a*) rotated. AGENT, OTHER, PRODUCTION, and TRUTH became SEMBLANCE, JOUISSANCE, SURPLUS JOUISSANCE, and TRUTH. These changes were necessary, perhaps, to make the observation that, instead of the proletarian worker-subject finally triumphing over capitalist exploitation, the worker had in fact conspired with the capitalist and, in effect, become even more the enthusiastic capitalist, for the puzzling reason that both the capitalist and worker now were not able to enjoy the surplus *jouissance*, the difference between use value and exchange value, that formerly seemed to be the aim of capitalism in the first place. “You can’t always get what you want” became “You can *never ever* get what you want.” The relation to enjoyment, as Todd McGowan prefers to call surplus *jouissance*, is foreclosed not because of historical failure of the proletariat to win their revolution but because of the structural failure shown by the capitalist discourse *matheme*, namely the relation of surplus *jouissance*, the former PRODUCT of discourse, to TRUTH, the one element of the discourse field to remain the



same. The hysteric gives us *lalangue* by making S2 a PRODUCT, in the position of a signified rather than a signifier.²⁸

Lacan made three major alterations to his discourse theory in the early 70s. The first was the switch from thinking about discourse as a relation of Agent to Other to a relation of Semblance to Jouissance. The second was the speculation about a fifth, Capitalist discourse, where Marx's expectations of the triumphal proletariat was reversed into the realization that the proletariat had enthusiastically adopted the practices of the very capitalists who had historically abused them.

Thirdly, Lacan began to tighten his focus on the role of *lalangue*, both in terms of this switch to *jouissance* as a basis of discourse as well as the Hysteric as the most obvious candidate for the role of the "inverted master." This relation of the Master's discourse to the Hysteric's discourse, via the operations of *lalangue* was a bold move. It featured the Hysteric's use of discourse as Product, in the position of *surplus jouissance* in Lacan's new discourse schemas. This dramatic re-positioning of what, from the point of view of standard linguistics, was simply a remainder of the exchange of phonemic units, a conduit of the unconscious, with all of the staging and timing particulars associated with Analysis, diagrammed by the L-Schema. In effect, the by-product became the main product. *Lalangue* became the central material commodity — in the economy of exchange as well as the conservation of energy — of psychoanalysis!

These changes made it possible to redirect abstract conceptualization about discourse to ethnographic practices where *lalangue* and Hysteria would be annealed within the laminated flows held in place by metonymic centripetal forces in counterpoint with vertical lifting-falling forces of metaphor, a mechanism of — literally — suspense. In the popular culture examples, this vortex was sometimes literally manifest, as in the tornado that transported Dorothy (*Wizard of Oz*, 1939) to Oz as a therapeutic measure, a kind of induced coma to allow her to recover from a concussion. The $\pm i$, or $\sqrt{-1}$ serves the same function in mathematics — a "non-grammatical" element allowing the "flow" of the solution to continue with the addition then subtraction of the "fictional" negative element, or rather the element where negation has no power (as in dreams or the unconscious).

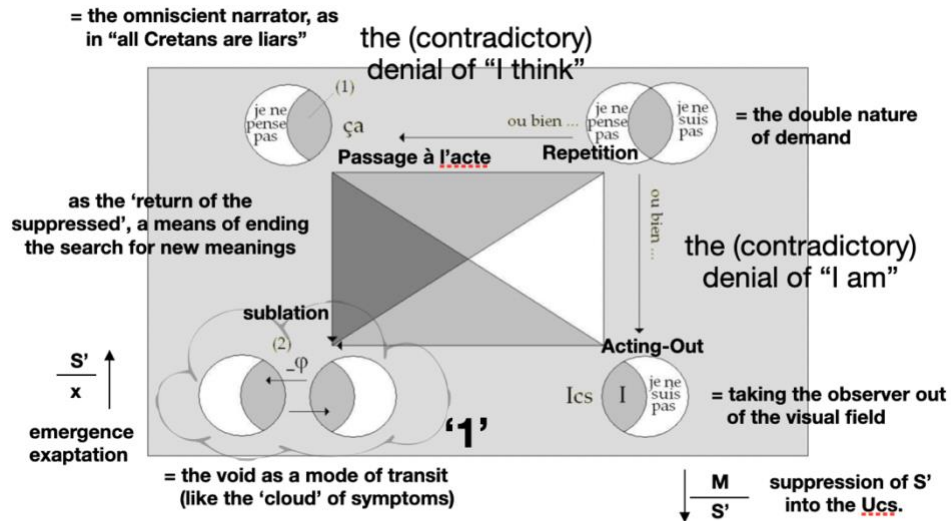
²⁸ This claim involves seeing each side of the discourse matheme as the "fraction" Saussure used to indicate the relation of the signifier to the Signified, s/S, which Lacan revised as the relation of the Signifier to the signified, S/s. As signified, S2, or S'...S' (the signifying chain) is referential meaning "as such," allowing for an all-inclusive view of phonemic signifiers alongside element associated with *lalangue*: sighs, gestures, pauses, coughs, etc.

In light of Lacan's new staging/timing of *lalangue*, a template can be constructed around the essential function of the "induced coma effect" of the imaginary *i*. It is an interval, a suspension, a therapeutic strategy. It is both the "interval between the two deaths" and the liminal space where, traditionally, cultures practice rituals of transformation. It is as universal as "Once upon a time ..." and as concrete as the party wall. More significantly for theory, the ethnographic examples retain their complexity within highly specialized contexts tailored to fit social and cultural demands. Psychoanalytical content is preserved by being suppressed — a uniquely Hegelian strategy by which cultural practices insure stability in the face of contingent material demands. The interval/margin/void is known to both psychoanalysis and culture because it is a structure of discipline and a discipline of structure. Its variants are predicted by their geometric form; and just as Lacan showed off the elasticity of Borromean logic in *Seminar XXII*, this form meets his criteria of the formula, Real>structure>topology. There is no better place to study mathematics than in the vicissitudes of cultural mandates, and no better place to study the variability of culture's productivity than through the invariant laws of projective geometry.

Parapractic of Reversed Parallax

Lacan's revision of his idea of discourse with the addition of a fifth discourse of Capitalism, his conversion of the discursive ground into a terminology able to explain the role of the Hysteric, *jouissance* (both of the Other and Production), and the coincidence of discourse's "axes" with metaphor and metonymy's "viscosity," evident once they are translated into elements that appear — sometimes literally as in the case of *The Wizard of Oz* — in popular culture, the arts, literature, and folk practices, is nothing less than revolutionary. It is a mandate to consider not just the relevance of the Borromean structure of discourse, where the subject must act out from *within* the Symbolic and the psychotic subject "outside" language must effect a *passage à l'acte*. It reinstates the logic of the (projective) torus, visible to us only by means of the fundamental polygon, where the inside and outside position constitute an *extimité* resulting from demand (as repetition). And, it specifies that the centrifugal forces defining this *extimité* are prologue to the (instrumental) convergence that terminates in the configuration known as symmetrical difference, which Lacan labels as sublation in the fundamental polygon he uses throughout *Seminar XIV, The Logic of Phantasy*.

By "Logic," Lacan means to say Structure, specifically the structure of the Real, which carries us to the third term of his mantra, topology. The presence of the torus in *Seminar XIV* has gone unnoticed by authoritative readers, who have claimed that, after *Seminar IX*,



fundamental polygon of the torus

Annotation of Lacan's version of the fundamental polygon, the standard mathematical diagram for representing projective 2-d forms, used throughout Seminar XIV, *The Logic of Phantasy*. Comments have been added to suggest the relation of the fundamental polygon to Lacan's formula for metaphor, where the "suppression of S' into the Ucs" simultaneously produces the "emergence/exaptation" of a signifying chain, S', which (as S'...S') becomes "parapractic" by being able to *map over* (tile) and thus *inventory* a space-time sequence, as in the case of Freud's Adriatic vacation, as a "stranger in a strange land."

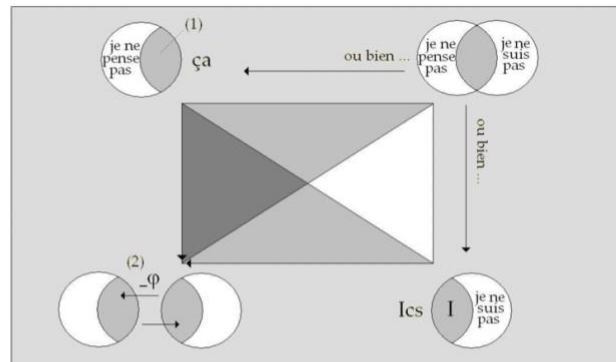
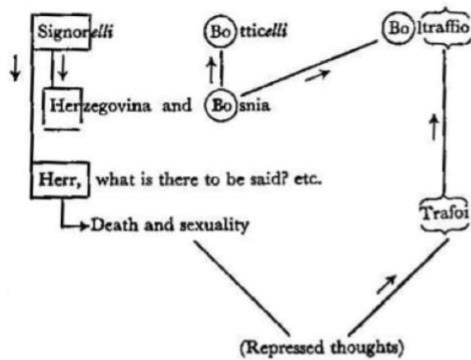
Lacan does not mention the torus. In fact, Lacan not only mentions the torus, he goes deeper into its significance. He re-labels the corners of the torus to distinguish the "vortex features": the centrifugal force laminated by demand and desire to a centripetal force producing the emergence of a signifying chain, a *parapractic* chain in relation to Freud's famous anecdote about his forgetting of the name "Signorelli" after his visit to that artist's famous murals in the cathedral at Orvieto.

In Freud's own description,²⁹ what is suppressed or sublated (the name Signorelli) "produces" a congeries of failed attempts, all based on sound associations (phonemics, and hence *lalanguan* associations) of words generated from Herr, the German substitute for the "signor" Freud saw in the name Signorelli. In terms of Lacan's metaphor formula, this congeries is the metonymic chain, S'...S', flowing in parallel with Freud's travels across the landscape, where he tries without success to tell the story of the Orvieto murals and their painter but, instead, he managed to "lamine" the failures to other materials: the story of Turks who are always polite with their physicians, and who prefer death to the loss of sexual function; the story of an ex-patient who committed suicide in a small town in

²⁹ Sigmund Freud, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life: Forgetting, Slips of the Tongue, Bungled Actions, Superstitions and Errors* (1901), trans. James Strachey, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 6, vii (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974).

Switzerland, whose name (Trafeï) was begot by the Italian painter BOltraffio, who in turn was begot by BOtticelli, who in turn was begot Bosnia, which was begot by HER-zegovina, begot by HERR. The genealogy followed Ludwig Wittgenstein's principle of "family resemblance": that the child may differ in many ways from the parent and still retain a certain semblance. *This is the semblance, I would claim, that Lacan re-assigned to the position of the Agent, who becomes the barred subject (and, hence, Hysteric) when the proletariat adopts the behaviors of the capitalist.* Freud's semblance was the mask he wore as a "stranger in a strange land," the genial German Jew, well-dressed, not just affable but chatty.

The viscosity of the substitutes for the forgotten Signorelli as it flows past the train window has to do with the relativity of the reverse flow of figure and ground. In the normal parallax, we say that the train is the figure moving across the fixed ground; the ground cannot possibly move. There is however a secondary parallax known to all story-tellers, that of the fixed figure, with the scenery, like time, flowing past. We gauge the former by assigning the third dimension of depth as the marker of anxiety we have towards objects that may be advancing or retreating, attractive or repulsive, harmless or dangerous. However our culture and experience teaches us to scale this line, it is a variable, not a constant or universal. It is "assignable" and easily adjusted. In the parallax of the story, the



metonymy of the second parallax

What holds Freud's parapraxis in place to "legalize" each wrong guess to the ground beneath his travel, making each place a variation on a central (forgotten) theme, retroactively proves the parapraxis of the Law itself, that the original covenant grounding the proliferation of separate laws across a legal domain — the Imaginary as such — is necessarily a suppressed scandal, equivalent to the father's murder at the death of his sons, in Freud's own retelling of the myth of the Primal Hoard. Only then do the sons follow the phallic law in its negative form, $-\emptyset$. In practice, however, what holds the lower left corner of the fundamental polygon of the torus in place is the glue of symmetrical difference, the instrumental convergence of the inside and outside of the Symbolic because of their Möbius cut identity, being either side of the space cut by the knife that, completing its 360° circuit, makes a 180° twist (the *katagraphic* cut). Just as topography establishes a mathematical rule-force, the rule becomes the Law binding the parapractic traveler, comparable to other laws of transit that regulate the movement of foreign visitors.

sagittal has a completely different function. The ground advances and departs, moves to the back as we move forward, and *vice versa* if we backtrack. *If we are the traveler*, despite the fact that by definition we are pilgrims in motion, our passivity is our stillness, the landscape is "motivated" to present this or that

scene, the scene is “motivated” to present itself or hide from our view, our view in fact is not a light shining outward to illuminate the scene but the scene’s own reverse gaze, as it observes us observing it, with — because of our status as strangers — a stern, judgmental eye.

The reversed-directional flows stick together; they never separate or act on their own. One is centrifugal (the parallax that throws out new scenes to the far horizon, *ad infinitum*), the other centripetally throws the spotlight on the paralyzed traveler, who, no matter how he travels, finds himself in the same situations. In Freud’s case, he is held in place by this second parallax, the centripetal force exerted by his forgetting a name. Of course, the point of view becomes quite complex under the opposed effects of the two parallaxes. It is a figure in one, a ground in the other. Parapraxes suspends the traveler in a “walking paralysis.” No matter how things change, they remain the same, held in place by the long metonymic chain of HERR/BO/BO/TRAF and their “excessive” signifieds, polite but suicidal Turks and dead ex-patients. Metonymically, the horizontal forces hold the vortex in place, metaphorically the still eye levitates loose objects and animals upward to Oz, the last half of the alphabet (O to Z) in hopes of meeting its long lost twin, (A to N).³⁰

Lamination of the substitutes to the ground beneath precedes *lawfully*. The rule is that the vertical condensation is held in stasis by the horizontal squeeze of metonymy, a *binding force* horizontally inducing paralysis of the traveler caught within the second parallax. Thus the squeeze is both convergent (enforceable) and instrumental (based on invisible “machinery”). The toroidal logic of parapraxis proves the existence and effectiveness, as a fifth Aristotelian Cause, of effectiveness, correcting Aristotle’s underestimation of the way passivity can be active, namely by holding in place those who most feel themselves to be free to move: namely, tourists moving across the Adriatic, whose only displeasure — *whose only surplus jouissance* — is the hysterical forgetting of the name of a painter who looks like the assassinated Father.

³⁰ Reportedly, Frank Baum was staring at a filing cabinet at the time he was casting about to think of a name for his fictional kingdom. Evan Schwartz, *Finding Oz: How L. Frank Baum Discovered the Great American Story* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009), 273; David Greene and Dick Martin, *The Oz Scrapbook* (New York: Random House 1977), 10.