

Circle of the Sangallo Family, amphiprostyle temple plan, Vitruvius's *De Architectura*. Illustration to Book III, Chapter 2, c.1530–1545. Source: Paul Emmons, "Vitruvius: Follow the Footprints," *Drawing Matter*, December 7, 2020. In this first of Vitruvius's three categories of architectural drawings, "ichnography," the horizontal outline of the future building is drawn in anticipation of being paced on the ground. The spaces can then be anticipated by walking over the open plan. This outline also gives directions for the digging of the building's foundations, cuts that must be made into the earth, a kind of grave-digging. The drawing is both foundational in relation to the building and to the set of three drawings, since without this "ritual," the orthogonal façades and subsequent section drawings could not exist. The cut of the ichnographic plan converts the ground into a drawing plane and defines the drawing plane as a kind of ritual surface, like the one Romulus created with the plow-share when he traced the outline of the new city of Rome. And, like that foundational ichnogram, the surface is "isomeric" in its connection of an underworld to the sidereal sky.

Six (or Seven) Critical Terms

Don Kunze

The aim of this essay is to introduce and connect six (or seven) terms that elaborate the theme of anamorphosis, which is actually one of the terms in the set. In addition to anamorphosis itself, these critical parts of the technique of concealing images within images — latency in general — are generally unrecognized by either psychoanalysis or architecture theory, but they are critical to the way visual-optical experience may serve to model the topologies of psychoanalysis or the geometries of architecture, particularly in the relation of the three "Vitruvian drawings," ichnography, orthography, and sciagraphy. Ichnography is the hodological measure of the building made on the surface of the site to position future cuts made to dig the foundations and, subsequently, raise vertical walls. Orthography relates to the position of the draftsman to the plane of representation and the use of that plane to validate measures transferred from representation to the represented, the built project. Traditionally, these drawings characterize the raising of the structure above the horizontal plan. Sciagraphy, the calculation of shadows, begins in the ethnology of the shadow as soul, equivalent to the living person who casts a shadow when living but none when dead, stretching the full length of the shadow in a final isomorphy.

1. Conatus

This is a well-known term in philosophy and the standard references would be to Spinoza, Hobbes, or Leibniz. However, the 18c. Neapolitan philosopher of culture, Giambattista Vico, revised and refined the idea of conatus in two moves.¹ First, he defined it as the way that the subject identifies with the object, a transaction that endows both with unity and continence they would otherwise lack. Second, Vico extended conatus through the concept of Law, developmentally based in ritual sacrifice, secularized through the principle of inversion, that vices resulted in the virtues, specifically the gradual step-wise extension of rights and privileges to, eventually, universal mankind.² Conatus, *chez* Vico, becomes emblematic for the Freudian idea of transience, the inclusion of all phases of development and stages of growth in the idea of the “desire for continuance” that the subject, in attributing to objects, establishes for itself.

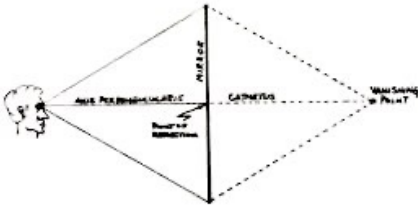
Traditional associations of conatus with striving, desire, wishing, etc. is, for Lacan, the relation of lack to the project of realization by means of objectivizing an imaginary Other, a structure more than any specific object or authority figure. The Other (Lacan’s *Autre*, A) and the lack (Lacan’s *a*, the *object-cause-of-desire*) are related by a ratio comparable to the Fibonacci series, 1 1 2 3 5 8 13.³ Thanks to the phenomenon of “audioactivity” (the unit as both a content and designation of a series), the Fibonacci ratio, \emptyset , is identical to what psychoanalysis calls the “unary trait,” the “refresher function” of experience that allows for the appearance/emergence of novelty. What is radically new is simultaneously archaic, a universal, timeless event/act.

The distinctive conatus of Vico anticipates the Freudian-Lacanian discovery of the death drive as not an antithesis of conatus as a “life drive” (pursuit of pleasure, avoidance of pain) but, rather, as the *essence* of conatus as a survival mechanism. The death drive includes identification in the standard definition of ego-formation, accompanied by the background of paranoia as a sense of future dread; in this light, conatus includes the sense of fate in the otherwise objective properties that link it with the physical momentum of objects. Conatus’s simultaneous objectivity and subjectivity qualify it as a “middle term” in a syllogism connecting the subject’s self-creation as an ego exposed to the terrors and promises of reality. In connecting this inside and outside, conatus is what Lacan would call “extimate,” a conversion function. This is a switch capable of reversing polarities in order to maintain a circuit, so we might consider how the properties of self-intersection and non-orientation, the qualities of projective topology, are embodied by conatus. Conatus proves that the 2-d projective plane is latent within subjectivity at the level of formation and is, in a sense, the logic of its foundation, a logic that early cultures ritualized and embodied in the first human structures.

¹ Tommaso Parducci, “Sul concetto di conatus nella filosofia di Vico,” *Laboratorio dell’ISPF*, XV, 2018, 9; DOI: 10.12862/Lab18PRT. In addition to Giambattista Vico, *The New Science and Universal Law*, consult John Shaeffer, *Giambattista Vico on Natural Law: Religion, Rhetoric, and Sensus Communis* (Abingdon, OX: Routledge, 2019).

² Divination springs from the anxiety about the future, which was unknown before humans became “the animal who speaks.” Language introduces a temporality that is unstable, in need of confirmations, both of the future and the past.

³ Jacques Lacan, *The Logic of Phantasy*, Seminar XIV (1966–1967), trans. Cormac Gallagher, *Lacan in Ireland*,



The simplicity of Brunelleschi's mirror experiment conceals a psychological and even theological depth. In verse XV of Dante's *Purgatorio*, the status of the mirror's "reflection" as a cut rather than a simple reflection becomes a matter of the way depth is discovered and held within a "chiral trap" reversing left and right but not up and down. The reflected space is the unique twin conditioning the viewer as an ego whose investment in outward reality creates a latent substrate, capable of surprising, rewarding, and punishing its creator. If the twin should die, the investment flows back to the ego, creating a surplus that cannot be readily re-assigned but does constitute an energetic resource for a poetic or artistic intervention.

rather than a reflection, although this distinction is sometimes missed, even by those who draw attention to the role of the mirror image (see footnote 9).

Cathetus has a broader significance if only in consideration of its perceptual phenomenology. In the traumatic aspect of the Mirror Stage, the mirror *captures* the essence of the subject, in a "left-hand" image that cannot ever be fully assimilated into the "right-hand" version of photographic reality. While the individual's spectral double is counted as an index of well-being, it simultaneously undermines the subject's awareness of its prior status, demoting it as a *corps morcélé*, or body in pieces. This is the ground against which the subject as ego, allied with the ever-reversed spectral double, must form a figure, a profile, a projection.

Cathetus is a line relating an intimate subjectivity whose experience of parallax affects both a perception of depth but an inter-subjectivity that requires an ethnical component allowing the idea of a shared common perceptual field. The orthogonal line is a *gradus*, a stepped continuum, that Raymond Roussel configured through his idea of the *procédé*, an annihilation of depth as the viewer gradually moves toward the goal of vision, constructed as a "local infinity."⁷ The point at which the

2. Cathetus⁴

This barely-known term is found in Brunelleschi's mirror-perspective experiment but, more generally, in geometry, where it is the property of the right angle of a triangle. The orthography of the line of sight, relative to the picture plane makes the viewing point and vanishing point appear to be coordinated.⁵ Movement of the viewer seems to provoke an equal movement in the vanishing point, perpendicular to the line of travel. Note that this perpendicular view adopts the model of the torus, where a spiral that constitutes the tube of the torus itself rotates around a void. The torus also haunts the architectural function of the tower of Purgatory in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.⁶ The mirrored perspective is a trap for the ego, a delaying mechanism that, in addition to optical reflection, retroactively engages the temporality of the subject before the moment it recognizes itself in the mirror. This temporality of the past is complemented by the even more famous use of mirrors to predict the future (catoptomancy, the formalization of "speculation," drawn from the words for mirror in several language based on the Latin *speculum*). The mirror's chirality is based on the reflected image's status as a cut



Jack Torrence appears as a reveler in a party at the Overlook Hotel that took place in 1921, retroactively revealing him to be the reincarnated *dæmon* who returned in 1980 as a failed author hired as the winter caretaker who would open the gates of hell allowing the hotel's dead souls freedom to revel, in the tradition of *Walpurgisnacht*.

⁴ To distinguish between the strictly geometric interpretation of cathetus as the right angle, I introduce the variant, "cathesis."

⁵ Samuel Y. Edgerton, Jr., "Brunelleschi's First Perspective Picture," *Arte Lombarda*, 1973, Vol. 18, No. 38/39, IL FILARETE (1973): 172–195. Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43133328>.

⁶ See "Purgatorio 15," *Digital Dante* (Columbia University). <https://digitaldante.columbia.edu/dante/divine-comedy/purgatorio/purgatorio-15/>.

⁷ Mark Ford, *Raymond Roussel and the Republic of Dreams* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).

depth model breaks down, humorously described by Roussel in his depictions of details on the label of a bottle of mineral water on the table on the deck of a boat viewed from a great distance, becomes a point of breakdown in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, where the camera gradually approaches a wall of photographs. The designated center of this scene will be a photo in which the maniacal caretaker will appear as a guest in a photo of a party that had taken place in 1921.

3. Isomerics



Isomeric pottery designs show the non-oriented closure of two antithetical domains, sometimes configured as a labyrinth or circular horizon. Key to the boundary relation is the theme of folding, twisting, and turning. In poetry, this function is the “trope,” where simple inversion alters the meaning of a prior expression, converting it into its opposite.

This term has been applied to describe the parallel and sometimes interlocking designs of North-American, Meso-American and South American pottery and textile designs. The zig-zag, labyrinth, crenelated patterns co-mingle with knots, with the implied themes of splitting combined with interlocking.⁸ Hence, isomerics relates to the two principal ideas of projective geometry, self-intersection and non-orientation, a point confirmed by the thematic association of these patterns with life–death situations, where the patterns themselves are put forward as portals connecting ordinary space with that of Hades.

“Isomeric” is borrowed from chemistry/biology, but the idea extends to metonymy, which allows a step-wise transfer of meaning across multiple isolated signifiers. The formula is $AB > BC > CD \dots$, meaning that in the example of Freud's parapraxis, BOLtraffio can link to TRAFei and HERzegovená's association with BOSnia can link to BOTicelli. The option of circling, notated as $AB > BC > CA$ means that any chain can ultimately constitute a *récit fort*, a “strong narrative” that, no matter how many elements are chained metonymically, there is an internal gravity pulling the end back to the beginning.⁹ This circle can be reinforced internally,

if secondary elements also involve circular chaining.

Parapraxis involves the suppression of one signifier by another, in what is technically the metaphoric logic of (synchronic) replacement. It is possible to compare the metonymical chain of parapraxis as an action mirroring suppression in metaphor, although in the strict standard formula Lacan uses to define metaphor, the mirror chains are not involved. However, mirroring is critical to Vico's idea of metaphor as a cancellation that affords a “veiled structure of relations” whose latency is the cause of temporal anticipation. This is the logic of the mystery story, which, thanks to the suppression of a central fact (the “whodunit”), a solution will involve the simultaneous semantic agreement among a large collection of facts. Metaphor in this case corresponds to the suppression (whodunit) and subsequent tension of possible meanings tying clues together.

⁸ Scott G. Ortman and Joseph Traugott, *Painted Reflections: Isomeric Design in Ancestral Pueblo Pottery* (Museum of New Mexico Press, Santa Fe, 2018).

⁹ In a line AC where B marks the point of the Golden Ratio, the relation $BC:AC$ is \emptyset , that is, the *inside relation* is to itself what the outside relation is to the inside relation. This is a curious way to describe how parapraxis holds together the collection of metonymies, each of which has a step-structure (one part designating the meaning of a whole, the other part capable of linking to completely different wholes), but the spirit of the Fibonacci number series, where each number plays two roles, first as the product of the series, next as a component producing the subsequent product, is the essence of metonymy.

Isomers are points along the cathetic dimension connecting the viewer with the goal of a step-wise process, also a temporalized structure, a *gradus*. The steps of this incline are metonymy, which we could imagine as a tread (the x-value) that automatically produces a tension of meaningfulness (the y-value). In the case of *The Shining*, the audience may anticipate the actual visual confirmation of Jack Torrence's presence in the 1921 photograph. The imagined presence of a point along the line remains the same, and with the same function of recognition. As a point, the isomer confirms the role of the cathetus factor as a double — the point where the viewed switches from a passive to active role, where the photograph in *The Shining* looks back at the audience.

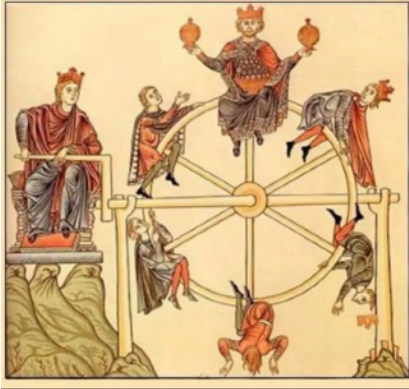


Pieter Bruegel the elder (c.1525–1569), *Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery*, The Courtauld, London (Samuel Courtauld Trust). The Sanhedron of Jerusalem planned to trap Jesus into making an adverse legal judgment that would justify their subsequent persecution of the troublesome Nazarene. Thinking that he would violate Jewish law to show compassion for the woman accused of adultery, Jesus had realized a procedural error. The Sanhedron had failed to prosecute the woman's lover at the same time, as required by law, but to mention this directly would have provoked new complications, so Jesus employed a custom generally known among Semitic cultures, *katagraphhein*, kneeling to doodle on the ground. The letters need not be legible or explicit. The idea is that “there is a text,” and this recognition is sufficient to remind the accusers that Jesus was capable of making a conclusive legal argument. After this gesture, the Sanhedron silently and collectively terminated the confrontation.

4. Katagraph

This is a term of great antiquity, equally mysterious in all of its historical appearances.¹⁰ When Jesus employed katagraphics to resolve the crisis of the woman accused of adultery who was brought before him to trick him into a legal error, he was already using an ancient gesture, a scribbling on the ground that implied careful thinking. Thoughtful hesitation through making a mark with a finger or wand had an apotropaic (turning-back) effect, as the later case of Popilius, the Roman consul in Alexandria who, by tracing a circle around the King of Assyria, persuaded him to give up plans for invading Egypt.

¹⁰ E. Power, “Writing on the Ground,” *Biblica* 2, 1 (1921): 54–57. See also Jean-Daniel Causse, “L’Identité et l’Identification: des sœurs ennemies * ?,” *Psychanalyse* 41 (2018): 139–150, first presented at a conference hosted by *Le pari de Lacan*, November 18, 2018.



Tuchē was both the Aristotelian term for chance and the name of the goddess, Fortuna, as she operated her reversing wheel. The literary critic Northrop Frye observed that the wheel is also a model of the major categories of fictional imagination: satire as the upside-down position, comedy as the optimistic rise, romance as the top, then the tragic fall as the wheel completes its cycle.

The engraving of letters *into* a surface has the effect of turning the surface into a face. Petroglyphs made by native Americans on stones were not intended to be read or interpreted, but were ways of orienting the surfaces of the rocks to a prospect, a kind of spatial “appeal,” creating a surface with thin spots connecting the visible/invisible, living/dead. Hence, the katagraph is correlated to the isomeric point. In the example of *The Shining*, at the isomeric point between the viewer and the local infinity of the photograph is defined as a precise distance, where the photograph’s space of viewing reverses into the space of *being viewed*.

The first katagraphic marks in human history are the furrow (to mark the civic boundary), the trench (to pour the blood of sacrifice), and the grave (to return the dead to the ground). They all share the same topography, which is to say that each katagraphic mark deepens the surface on which it is inscribed, connects the spaces above and below (isomerically), relates these spaces cathetically, and achieves the homeostasis of conatus. The katagraphic mark is the *act* that embodies all six of the terms of the critical system, just the other terms embody

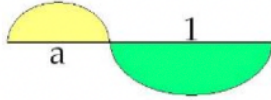
other independent aspects. The katagraph resembles writing but should be understood as a password required to move between the upper and lower regions, an “open sesame.” The petroglyphs of indigenous peoples in the Americas work in this way, as marks receiving the scene that they face, allowing a transfer of this “exterior” to an “interior.”

The password is a version of Hitchcock’s “Macguffin,” an element that has no value or meaning but makes possible the meaning of something else. This is, in Lacan’s terms, the “master signifier.”

5. Tesseræ

This term is taken from the commonplace ceramic token that two friends broke on parting. The jagged symmetrical edge would, when re-joined, authenticate the moment of reunion. Thanks to the material act of fracture, the cut would be unique. This is one of the functions of the unary trait, its value as a “hapax” (singularity). In the context of this new critical terminology, the tesseræ represent the double as an authentication mechanism, in the same way that the exchange of Castor and Pollux was used to calibrate seasonal change.

The zig-zag designs of isomeric pottery and textiles intentionally represent the tesseræ’s authenticating cut, and the need for the bi-lateral relation of antithetical spaces to be a margin of truth, where the soul passing from one side to the other is tested. At the same time, the random cut uses the metonymic logic by which the signifier and signified are detached in conventional language but spookily correspond in onomatopoeia and parapaxis, where the disjunction of parts of any given signifier allow for a re-shuffling, a portability, an extended or even unlimited semiosis, such as that employed by the zairja and exemplified



The ratio of $1+a$ to 1 is the same as a to 1 . The point on the line where the “a” becomes 1 is the place of *jouissance*, as isomeric. The 1 may be further subdivided by a , and thanks to the diminishing value of a^2 , a^3 , a^4 , a^5 , etc. an oscillation between odd and even powers creates a “stereometric” interior. From Lacan’s Seminar XIV, *The Logic of Phantasy*.

in modern zairjas such as *Finnegans Wake*.¹¹ Joyce’s last novel links metonymies to create an atmosphere of cosmic nostalgia that exemplifies the trap function of the mirror and, hence, cathetus. The reader recognizes him/herself, but only in relation to the unmoving point within the text that constitutes a resistant element of opposite but equal self-reference, revealed in the micro-instances when puns and neologisms are deciphered. Where the entire text represents the jagged edge of the *tesseræ*, the required plural form of this word harkens back to the rule that the hero is always a twin, and that even Jesus was thought to have one, named Judas Thomas in the *Gospel of Thomas*.¹²

Finnegans Wake gives away the secret of the *tesseræ* in its use of the *vesica piscis* employed often by Lacan to indicate the production and function of the void. The two circles overlap, creating a zone of “union without intersection,” as Lacan puts it. These are Euler circles, not a Venn diagram. Just as aphasiacs cannot be forced to say or do anything that is not true (i. e. they cannot play-act), the Euler

circle cannot indicate anything that is not true in everyday reality terms. Thus, when it is forced to combine, as Lacan makes it combine, the inverse of Descartes’ *je pense, donc je suis*, the “I don’t think” of the Unconscious and the existence of the subject, which Lacan declares as impossible thanks to the bar of the Symbolic, combine as Euler circles to define a void. The value of this is that the periphery or profile of the void is a katagraphic line, empowered by the cathetic relation of the subject and Other, in the demand/desire relation of repetition (that which is spoken is by definition a repetition, a use of something already invented and spoken).

6. Transience

This general term for change/transformation is specialized, by Freud, to mean the role of change in the structure of essence.¹³ Is a flower what it is only in relation to its peak bloom, or should we not consider its development on one side and decline and decay on the other? This requires us to think about the melancholy involved with loss, and the way the investment of libido in the love-object is returned at death to the ego, creating an unwanted surplus that is culturally expended by lamentation and mourning. The “economy of melancholy” begins with the early Greek theories about the four humors, melancholy being the only one based on an essence, black bile, that is harmful in any degree and thus virtually ineradicable but capable of producing both depression and genius, self-destruction and the immortality associated with poetry, philosophy, and the arts.¹⁴ Like Lacan’s all-purpose word for the combination of pleasure/non-pleasure, *jouissance*, melancholy is a one-word contronym, a singularity having two distinctive and opposite meanings. Like the twins Castor and Pollux, the mortal Castor is granted immortality on a rotating basis; his immortal brother must submit to death while he enjoys the return of life. Thus

¹¹ See “Zairja,” *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia* (December 2006), <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zairja>. Also see Don Kunze, “Zairja,” *BoundaryLanguage*, <https://boundarylanguage.psu.edu/zairja-%E2%80%8E/>.

¹² The apostle Thomas is called “Didymos Thomas,” *didymos* being the Greek word for twin. The *Gospel of John* refers to Thomas as a twin three times (11:16, 20:24, and 21:2).

¹³ Sigmund Freud (1916). “On Transience,” *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud 14*: 303307.

¹⁴ See Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, Fritz Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion, and Art* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, Montreal, 2020).

transience comes to represent the idea of singularity as dynamic and self-reversing, like the Wheel of Fortuna/*Tuchē*.

The continuum that transience insists on including in any estimate of essence is the graphic form of conatus. The point of transfer/conversion, the isomer, reveals this conatus to be the co-product (cathetus) of opposed terms: beauty and ugliness, life and death, viewer and vanishing point. The optical model that zooms in to the “impossibly tiny object in the distance” (Roussel’s *procédé*; Stanley Kubrick’s zoom to the photo of the 1921 party in *The Shining*) uses the isomer as a point where, instead of looking at the object, the object looks back at the viewer. Lacan’s famous moment of isomeric reversal is his account of a youthful vacation to Brittany, where he saw the glimmer of a sardine tin floating on the ocean and his rowing companion, a working-class boy from a poor village, asked him if he saw the tin, but when Lacan replied yes, said “Well, it doesn’t see you!” meaning that Lacan’s sophistication had marked him out as being a spectator, not a native viewer. Lacan was, like the nobles disguised by the all-covering *domino* at carnival. The can *couldn’t* see Lacan because of his costume, shorthand for his imposture, his disguise, which his poor friend could not afford.¹⁵

The exchange of invisibility for blindness is another feature of the isometric point, where passivity and activity change places. The point, like the point indicating the Golden Ratio, is a graphic form of the “unrepresentable” *jouissance*, the *objet petit a*.

7, or the Name of All, Anamorphix (the “ix” is for 9)

There is a joke Slavoj Žižek tells about last being first. A Russian Jew wishing to emigrate from the Soviet Union goes for the required exit interview. The official asks him why he wishes to leave the USSR, the Jew replies that he has two reasons. “The Soviet System protects its Jewish population, allows them to thrive, but what if the System should fall? Then we Jews would be persecuted!” —“But, the Soviet System will never fall!” exclaims the official. The Jew stands up: —“That’s the second reason.”¹⁶

There are lists that fall beneath a single theme or category, in which case the title counts as an independent signifier apart from the items that form its enumerated parts. Then, there are lists where any item on the list might serve as the container of its companions. This is the logic of the hunting group in the famous anthropology documentary film

¹⁵ It has been speculated that carnival disguises allowed the indiscriminate sexual union of social classes, enriching the nobility’s impoverished gene-pool with hardier stock. Blindness and invisibility are key to the function of latent features in the completion of complex cycles. In reading a mystery novel, for example, the text presents all the clues need to solve the puzzle before the end of the novel, but the reader doesn’t pay attention to them. Without this latency, the solution does not arrive with the surprise that makes the ending enjoyable.

¹⁶ Žižek’s joke is an example of the Jewish joke form, the *Witz*, which is fundamentally a metalepsis that refers back to the frame it has created to introduce the joke. This self-interaction must also be non-oriented. The initial assumption is, in the retroactive reference, shown to be false, a case of the logical puzzle known as the false premise, or *ex falso quodlibet sequitur* (EFQ): anything can be proven subsequently if the presupposition is false. EFQ is the structure of emergence/exaptation, where the original suppression creates a latent potentiality that is expanded through the two-part structure of metonymy. The *sorites*, the case of the “one grain more” or “one hair less” that produces the pile of sand or bald head without being able to be traced back to any one addition or subtraction, is itself an application of non-orientation, the \pm or binary flow of “investment” (*cathexis*) that, as soon as the subject values an external object, an equal and opposite back-flow channel is established as a latent conduit of regret or, in the case that the object is lost, melancholy.

When Lacan encountered the wealth of artistic deployments of anamorphosis beginning suddenly in the 16c. with the murals at the Minims Monastery in Paris and Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, he wondered what anamorphosis had been before it was the anamorphosis that suddenly had emerged in these experiments with fixed viewing points and cylindrical mirrors.¹⁷ The answer to this rhetorical question is equally rhetorical: the general phenomenon, within the traditions of the uncanny, that paralyzed the viewer, concealed images within other images, stole objects to curse or bless, planted magic objects inside houses or clothing to affect the owners without betraying their sources.

The broad range of these customary concealments of *pharmakoi* extended to language, where a potent word or phrase, such as a password, might be concealed within ordinary speech, which today would include trigger terms. The implication is that any word has the power to point in two directions at the same time, and this is formally the function of metonymy, defined in the context of isometry as a bivalent division affording the signifying chains of parapraxis. Under the heading of the uncanny, whose general principle is "that which was revealed that ought to have remained concealed," anamorphosis is the visibility that results when the view is paralyzed. When the eyes are prevented from focusing on the near-zone, its infinity gaze allows a patterned background to overlap to produce a stereogram, a form that is entirely made up by the material of the background but which appears to hover above it. The break, and the illusion of three-dimensional space created neurologically, is both a special case and a root paradigm of anamorphosis. All of the terms of this new critical system can be found to operate in the stereogram, making it a way of constructing a material experience that, as an experiment, demonstrates the powers of paralysis in the construction of visual depth, confounding the Euclidean model of parallax. In the 2-d representation, a photographic model shows, to all who view it, a scene that claims to be objective. The viewer's subjectivity is dwarfed by this authoritative claim and its temporal inaccessibility. Only the photographer can have been the one to experience the scene and capture it on film or digitally. As Kojin Karatani has argued, the photograph contrasts, as objective, with the subjectivity of the mirror's parallax, which must suffer the ambiguity of seeming to be the self's image "as others see it" but in fact is reversed, left-to-right.¹⁸

There are two kinds of distinctively different parallax. For the individual viewer, the slight shift of the background in relation to the figure are used, along with other feedback, to judge depth relations. But, this becomes a model for the different views offered to other viewers standing in different locations. Parallax then becomes the basis for the impossible claim that "others should see what I see, in the way that I see it," the claim that the subject is not subjective but rather objective. But, this demand cannot be met; it is impossible for two viewers to occupy the same viewpoint at the same time. The claim of objectivity is thus an *ethical* hypothesis: others *should* see what I see, although it is impossible for them to do so.¹⁹ But, there

¹⁷ Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Seminar VII (1959–1960), trans. Dennis Porter (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997).

¹⁸ The chirality of the mirror image, reversing left and right but not top and bottom, indicates that the mirror *cuts* space. Karatani errs in calling the mirror a reflection that is "seen by all," since only the subject regards it as "what I look like." *Transcritique: On Kant and Marx*, trans. Sabu Kohso (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT), 4.

¹⁹ This is another instance of a false premise allowing a collection of "any and all" subsequent claims, the famous philosophical puzzle of the Latin saying, *Ex falso quodlibet sequitur* (EFQ). If the initial premise is false, then all that stems from it is validated. Read in reverse order, our positive experience is afforded by a presupposition that, when examined, turns out to be self-contradictory. This sounds irrational but when we consider the Cretan Liar paradox, we see that self-contradiction is embedded in language itself, making "the speaking being" inherently a victim of EFQ.

is no such shift with the stereogram. The parallax sensation of depth created by localizing the vanishing point to the thin-thick space of the pattern that splits into ground and figure is experienced identically by all whose gaze into the distance is paralyzed, allowing optical infinity to advance within arm's reach. Parallax is present in the sensation of perspective, but the sensation is neural rather than optical. There is a "short circuit" between the viewer and the viewed, a neural intervention. Parallax in this situation shows itself to be logically divided so that its Euclidean application, resulting in the binary impasse, can convert to a "projective" application, where the impasse disappears.

In projective geometry, a cut (a line marking the pass from two opposite conditions, such as inside and outside) is the form's non-orientation. Two arrows drawn on a Möbius band's "ends" will present themselves as reversed, \updownarrow . But, in the projective plane, the reality of the band, this reversal does not take place; there is no cut, thanks to the continuity of the surface. Self-intersection and non-orientation characterize all projective figures, but these properties occur in works of art in multiple forms: the principle of the *récit fort*, or "strong narrative," where the ending is required to answer to the beginning; the architectural "Thesean" labyrinth, whose seven passageways ambiguate direction so that they may be counted as 14; the fugue or counterpoint in music; the role of chiasmus in the art of memory; the use of metalepsis and *mise en scène* in cinema. A joke is fundamentally non-orientable and self-intersection, just as the dream's combination of latent and manifest meanings, employing condensation and displacement, redefine the wish in the process of fulfilling it.

Because the Cretan Liar is also, and fundamentally, self-intersecting and non-orientable, we can set the principle of *ex falso quodlibet sequitur* at the center of all language, and the architectural emblem of the *ex falso*, the Tower of Babel, shows how the role of the cut is primary but controversial. Is it the isomeric point where conatus is understood as destructive, or simply the point where blindness converts to invisibility? *Tesseræ* becomes the boundary between above and below, immortality from mortality, divine from human.



These two famous paintings construct the experience of their reception around the coincidence of the cut between representer and represented, the viewer and the viewed, in ironic counterpoint. Picasso's twin curtain-keepers reveal two *demoiselles* attended by the seated figure of Melancholia, presiding over the puzzle of the inside-out flip (the "curtain in the back" is actually the sky), while Velázquez paints himself into a scene of him painting himself into a scene by contesting the space of spectating that must have been occupied at least once by King Felipe and his wife Mariana.

A covenant broken promises a moment of final reunion. In painting, masterpieces such as Diego Velázquez's *Las Meninas* and Pablo Picasso's *Desmoiselles d'Avignon*, where the themes of doubles and cuts figure prominently, also convey the dream's antithesis of latent and manifest, and projective geometry's co-dependent variables, self-intersection and non-orientation.

Why give such a broad variety of phenomenon the same name, "anamorphosis"? Anamorphosis does little but extend the logics of conatus, cathetus, isometrics, transience, katagraph, and *tesseræ* to objects and events that would otherwise be untroubled by the identification with "anamorphic art." But, this extension opens up the functional and performative inner workings of anamorphosis so that Mladen Dolar's claim, that anamorphosis can be shown to cover the full range of psychoanalysis, begins to make sense. This new inclusiveness pulls in discussion about important forms of anamorphosis: the "body loading" of the pickpocket and the "lipogram" of the missing element that works like a stone beneath the surface of a stream, forcing currents viewed from above to appear make complex diversionary patterns.²⁰

Anamorphosis is mathematically tied to the number 9, which can be written "ix" to recognize Dante's use of the number in his *Vita Nova* ("Nova" is both new and nine in Latin), where *Beatrix* was configured by the logic of this special number of finishing. Cecil Balmond's courageous book on the number 9 employs sigma values to find, in the sums of numbers (e. g. the sigma value of 354 is 12, or 3) explanations for palindromic operations such as the famous 1089 phenomenon.²¹ The palindrome also figures in the formation of the Fibonacci ratio, \emptyset , where the numeric series is superimposed over itself to produce $1/1$, $1/2$, $2/3$, $3/5$, $5/8$, $8/13$... successively better estimates of the value of \emptyset . In Vedic mathematics, Balmond shows, the number 9 can be used to *verify/authenticate* the results of a calculation by first adding then subtracting it from the calculations. Going and coming, the 9 is in effect a numeric lipogram, something that, at one level, functions as a (katagraphic) cut and, at another level, is an invisible gateway allowing for continuous flow. The theme of continuity/discontinuity that is uppermost in the themes of transience, conatus, cathetus, and isometry is represented by 9, both in the history of the development of numbers and in actual mathematical calculations. It is the EFQ of numbers, the thief in the night who may, like the god Hermes, come and go with impunity, taking what he will.²²

²⁰ This idea has been applied with comic result in Jacques Tati's *Traffic* (1971), where a high-positioned camera cannot see thin wires used to divide a convention floor space. As a group of visitors moves across they must step over the wires, creating "coordinated dance movements" that are otherwise hard to explain. This filmic version complements another famous use of the lipogram in French trickery, *A Void (La disparú)* by Georges Perec. The lipogram in fact answers to Lacan's call for centering all of architecture around the phenomena of the void. Superficially, the building presents non-orientation and self-intersection as a discontinuity, a *cut*, while in projectivity terms, there is only a smooth unobstructed flow, a circuitry — a series of *steps* that constitute the Vitruvian "ichnography" — that indicate the local of the katagraphic cut, the building's fundament and foundation. "Body loading" is the thief's paralysis of the victim, accomplished by repeated contact in small-scale locales but extended in the art of short and long scams, where a "con" and "shell" persuade a "mark" to construct his/her own self-intersecting non-orientation, i. e. fleeing.

²¹ Take a random three-digit numbers where the last digit is smaller than the first, reverse it, and subtract it from the first; reverse that result and add it to get, invariably, 1089. Example: $542-245=297$; $297+792=1089$. The sigma of 1089 is $1+0+8+9$, 18, or $1+8$, 9. Cecil Balmond, *The Number Nine: The Search for the Sigma Code* (London: Prestel, 1999).

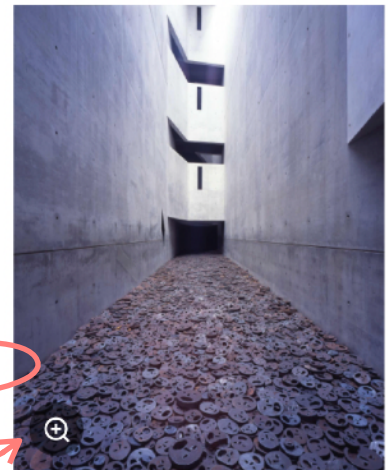
²² This is the theme of Norman O. Brown's *Hermes the Thief, the Evolution of a Myth* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1947). Hermes' multi-functionality reveals the nature of Cyclopean cultures, where theft, messaging, boundary-crossing, trade, and erotic love were aspects of a single logic.

The neologism “anamorphix” intends to extend anamorphosis *via* conatus, cathetus, transience, the katagraph, and isometrics, to the full range of art, architecture, literature, ethnography, critical thinking, and psychoanalysis, as a *tool kit* of terms with interlocking meanings. The criteria for each pairing of terms is that they overlap to create a *void* rather than an overlap requiring resolution. This kind of resistant non-merger is the feature of Euler circles, which are forbidden to represent anything that cannot be found in reality, and aphasia, whose victims cannot be made to say anything they do not believe to be true. The somewhat surprising usefulness of these inabilities/refusals is that attempts to force a merger of the true with the false marks a precise “line of impossibility,” a perimeter or profile of a *void*.

The void refuses, like the aphasia victim, to be filled in any way. It is a singularity resisting caption, reference, definition, description, or identification. The value of this persists even when the rule is violated. In Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum in Berlin, visitors during a period of renovation (2020) were re-routed through unaccustomed passageways. A handwritten sign taped to the wall reading “THIS WAY TO THE VOID” was doubly ironic. The void’s resistance to representation foreclosed the possibility that the visitor to the space indicated by the sign would be anything but disappointed. Any response would have to be faked, a fantasy response to the architect’s imposture of offering a material instance of pure negation. Although the void is indeed constitutive our experience of architecture and the landscape, it cannot be designated or preserved beyond the individual instances in which it occurs *as* an experience. Any attempt would be only slightly less ridiculous than a sign reading “look at the rainbow.”²³

But, in the attempt to indicate that which cannot be indicated, the sign referenced its own objection, making its crumpled and *ad hoc* aspect (bent edges, peeling tape) the occasion of a different kind of void, a “pathetic void,” better than the architect had achieved in the massive concrete corner. The artfulness of this trope was not fully anticipated. Its truth resulted from the *ex falso quodlibet* (EFQ) of its failed premise. The 9 that had been asked to leave in the beginning, returned as Real to conclude. We indeed find the void, but not the one left for us to find. This is the function of the six/seven critical terms.

add the void to
your collection!



Wishing to program the visitor’s response as well as astonishment, architect Daniel Libeskind claims to capture both sides of the presentational moment. “Memory Void” and *Shalekhet* installation by Menashe Kadishman; Jewish Museum Berlin, photo: Jens Ziehe. Jewish Museum, Berlin.

²³ The intention to “create voids” was prominent in the literature publicizing the museum: “Daniel Libeskind uses the voids to address the physical emptiness that resulted from the expulsion, destruction, and annihilation of Jewish life in the Shoah, which cannot be refilled after the fact. He wanted to make this loss visible and tangible through architecture.” *Jüdische Museum Berlin*, <https://www.jmberlin.de/en/libeskind-building>.