SEXUATED TOPOLOGY AND THE
SUSPENSION OF MEANING:

A NON-HERMENEUTICAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL
APPROACH TO TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This study assumes the subject's pursuit of meaning is generally incapacitating and should be suspended. It aims to demonstrate how such a suspension is theoretically accomplished by utilizing Lacan's formulae of sexuation integrated with his work in discourse theory and topology.

Part I places this study into context by examining scholarship from the established fields of hermeneutics, phenomenology, (post)structuralism, aesthetic theory and psychoanalysis in order to extract out their respective theory of meaning. These theories reveal that an historical struggle with meaning has been underway since the Reformation and reaches near crisis proportions in the 20th century. On the one hand this crisis is mollified by the rise of Heideggerian-Gadamerian hermeneutical phenomenology which questions traditional epistemological approaches to the text using a new ontological conceptualization of meaning and a conscious rejection of methodology. On the other hand this crisis is exacerbated when the ubiquitous nature of meaning is itself challenged by (post)structuralism's discovery of the signifier which inscribes a limit to meaning, and by the domains of sense and nonsense newly opened up by aesthetic theory. These historical developments culminate in the field of psychoanalysis which most consequentially delimits a cause of meaning said to be closely linked to the core of subjectivity.

Part II extends these findings by rigorously constructing out of the Lacanian sexuated formulae a decidedly *non*-hermeneutical phenomenological approach useful in demonstrating the sexual nature of meaning. Explicated in their static state by way of an account of their original derivation from the Aristotelian logical square, it is argued that these four formulae are relevant to basic concerns of textual theory inclusive of the hermeneutical circle of meaning. These formulae are then set into motion by integrating them with Lacan's four discourses to demonstrate the breakdown of meaning. Finally, the cuts and sutures of two-dimensional space that is topology as set down in *L'étourdit* are performed to confirm how the very field of meaning is ultimately suspended from a nonsensical singular point known in Lacanian psychoanalysis as *objet a*. The contention is that by occupying this point the subject frees himself from the debilitating grip of meaning.

Dedication

For my father ir mano motina.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Drifting body its sole desertion
Flying not yet quite the notion

> \- Jerry Cantrell
>   Would? (1992)

They don't know how old I am,
they found armour in my belly
from the 16th century, conquistador, I think.
They don't know how old I am,
they found armour in my belly.
Passion out of machine-revving tension, lashing
out at machine-revving tension, brushing by the
machine-revving tension.

Morning broke out the backside of a truck-stop
the end of a line a real, rainbow-likening, luck stop
where you could say I became chronologically "Fucked-Up".
Put ten bucks in just to get the tank topped off.
Then, I found a place it's dark and it's rotted.
It's a cool, sweet kinda-place
where the copters won't spot it
and I destroyed the map, I even thought I forgot it,
however, every-day I'm dumping the body.

> \- Gordon Downie
>   Locked in the trunk of a car (1992)

INTRODUCTION

> The end of my labours is come. All that I have written appears to me as so much straw after
> the things that have been revealed to me.[1]

I mean. These two words are often heard today at the beginning of an interlocutor's speech, so frequently in fact that most people pay them no mind. This phenomenon, however, is quite curious. Whether occurring on the AM radio talk show, in the formal and informal debates of higher academia or anywhere else a dialogue of some import is undertaken, these words usually do not seamlessly flow into those which follow. It is much more likely the case that a brief intervening pause will ensue before a chain of words is taken up anew. In verbatim transcripts such a pause would be written with the elliptic '...' to indicate that perhaps a false start has occurred or else as registering the interlocutor's own acknowledgment that his turn to speak has arrived, in which case these two words might be said to function as filler or as a stalling tactic effectively equivalent to the 'um' and the 'ah.' The reading offered here corresponds to how an attentive onlooker might assess the situation. From his perspective the interlocutor would look momentarily hung up, almost as if whatever is to be said somehow seems to pend for the speaking subject who, for his part, is vaguely aware that more time will be needed for a full articulation. Yet at the same time these opening words mark the common experience that whatever is to be said has somehow already happened but suddenly zoomed ahead, placing the subject into the equally disadvantageous position of having to play catch-up. Given this wavering between a not yet and a too late, the question immediately arises: what is the essential nature of this entity – commonly called 'meaning' – which seems to simultaneously place the subject both ahead and behind it?

Phrasing the question this way already presupposes that meaning has the status of an object with which the subject may square off. Undeniably scholars long ago had unwavering faith that a truthful meaning was embedded within the pages of Scripture and/or the manuscripts of the ancients. But far from being strictly a thing of the past, this in many ways continues to be the most natural way of schematizing the relation the subject strikes with the text. For although adjustments are needed to compensate for the state of contemporary scholarship in the current ideological climate which eschews

notions such as truth and essence, it is nevertheless the case that today's scholar equally conceives his task as involving the employment of appropriate interpretive tools to release textual meaning that is not initially forthcoming. There is, however, a fundamentally different approach that has been pursued by certain scholars of the humanities for the last century. For them meaning is not taken to be an object so much as a substance or medium within which the subject is immersed when engaging with texts and other objects. In stark contrast to the older approach which operates as if a gap exists between the subject and meaning, here the subject is deemed to be always already a meaningful subject. Yet this does not imply that the objective quality of meaning is thereby lost since the claim made by these scholars is that an even greater objectivity is achieved by directing attention to meaning *qua* medium. Indeed these two fundamentally different conceptions of meaning are both to be commended for rejecting the commonplace idea that meaning is entirely relative and cannot be understood as objective in any sense.

Given these two fundamental conceptualizations of meaning before us today, which is closer to the truth? At first glance the more traditional conception certainly appears rather naïve, overlooking how the very pursuit of meaning *qua* object is itself a meaningful project for the subject. Yet the problem with the relatively newer conception is that it downplays the crucial factor of subjectivity in questions of meaning, precisely the factor involuntarily captured whenever meaning shifts from a noun to a verb to which the subject's I is closely (yet not identically) aligned: *I mean*. Of course answering in this fashion is only to critique the one by the other. But this does serve as a reminder that when it comes to fundamental questions, the very field within which they occur appears complete. This is true in the present case where meaning clearly turns in upon itself. Initially functioning as the subject of a question, it somehow eventually ends up constituting the very field in which this question is entertained. Ultimately the very option before us today is nothing if not a meaningful option. Accepting this fact places one in the growing company of scholars favoring the newer conception and from this perspective a vote cast in the older direction is grossly negligent, overlooking how the newer conception enjoys logical precedence despite having arrived much later on the historical scene.

There are consequences to our increasing acknowledgment of this precedence. Generally speaking, it is largely because meaning is now conceivable as an *a priori* substance within which the subject always already dwells that today we are everywhere swamped with meaning, overburdened with it, weighed down with it. Where once scholarship in the humanities aimed for singular points of truth without losing sight of the universal, it has become increasingly *verboten* to even raise such questions let alone strive for them. It seems that only a further dissemination of meaning will now do, a condition easily met by simply declaring that a new context has been discovered for such and such a textual object and then proceeding to interpret accordingly. The overall result has been a proliferation of interpretive scholarship from almost

every conceivable angle. But more is not necessarily better and unfortunately much of the scholarship pursued along these lines has often amounted to little more than self-indulgent displays of how *I mean*.

If it is agreed that the newly revealed *a priori* dimension to meaning makes it impossible to revert to an earlier time when meaning could be treated simply as an external object and further that this has undesirably led to today's tendency to celebrate the overproduction of meaning, how is one to proceed? Is it the case that treating meaning *qua* object and meaning *qua* medium forms our ultimate horizon? It is the contention of the present study that there is a 'beyond' to this horizon and that historically the first explorations of this beyond-of-meaning roughly dates from the origin of the newer conception of meaning. It is further contended that this exploration culminates in the thought of Jacques Lacan whose specific project in the early 1970s to delimit a radical possibility is his most consequential. This possibility does not concern a hitherto unknown third conceptualization of meaning. Nor does it require us to necessarily disagree that these two conceptualizations of meaning completely exhaust the field of meaningful possibilities. Rather, what Lacan's thought makes possible is *the suspension of the very field of meaning itself*. Motivated by the belief that breaking free of meaning is a truthful event for the subject, the following work offers a demonstration of how this is theoretically accomplished.

A general description of the two parts which compose this work is as follows. More detailed introductions with breakdowns of chapters and sections will be found at the beginning of each part.

Part I provides the context for the present study and serves in three main capacities. Firstly, it functions as a literature review of historically significant thought on meaning. As meaning is not an established scholarly field, the approach has been to select important texts by leading scholars of both the past and present which at least tangentially touch upon the subject. So while many of these texts may be considered primary ones in their respective fields, they are here effectively treated as secondary texts on meaning. They have been organized into the five established scholarly fields of hermeneutics, phenomenology, (post)structuralism, aesthetic theory and psychoanalysis, each of which forms a chapter. While some of the texts in these fields quite directly deal with meaning and prove to easily yield up what may be called their 'theory of meaning,' others require a deeper excavation process. In a few cases analogies with theories of meaning already articulated must be made to draw their examinations to a conclusion. However, with every text reviewed the endeavor is made to extract out its theory of meaning without losing sight of its own overall project which, to reiterate, often aims in directions other than those with an expressed concern for meaning. But it should equally be stressed how both the scholarly fields and the individual scholarship which compose them are assessed as per the particular texts actually under review. This is not only to make the scope of the discussion more manageable but also to immediately put into practice the type of close textual reading the present study champions. Secondly, the review of

historical scholarship provides a rationale for Part II where a psychoanalytic approach is developed to demonstrate the suspension of the hermeneutical circle of meaning. For one of the main theses of the review is that an increasingly fatal struggle with meaning has been implicitly undertaken by these five scholarly fields as a whole as they have advanced through history. Yet they have failed to adequately address the crucial dimension at stake. The exception here is Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalysis which has clearly delimited a nonsensical element that effectively acts as the cause of meaning. But even in this field there has been little attempt to leverage such insight for the expressed purpose of systematically theorizing how the subject's hermeneutical pursuit of meaning is suspended whenever this subversive element is encountered. By developing an approach with such an aim in mind this deficit is thereby corrected. In this sense the existence of such an approach can be viewed as a response to and outcome of the historical struggle with meaning. In conjunction with this aim the review is additionally designed to position the subject to best appreciate the proposed re-conception of textual meaning. Lastly, important terminology, conceptualizations and theoretical schemas are introduced as they arise during the examination of the texts under review. Their initial discussion within this limited context nevertheless provides an adequate foundation for understanding the subsequent part of this study which submits these elements to a more intensive analysis and development.

Part II forms the more original part of the present study. As a psychoanalyst Lacan is not primarily concerned with meaning (and even less so with textual analysis) but the modest number of incidental statements he does make throughout the three periods of his career in no way prevents one from picking up this fallen fruit and articulating three corresponding Lacanian theories of meaning. This articulation is made in the last section of Part I. What is additionally developed in Part II is a highly structured model that attempts to capture an approach to meaning that is faithful to the subversive efforts of Lacan's third and final period. Imagine a square with two sides where one side harbors the hermeneutical circle of meaning while the other its potential suspension point. Just such a square is rigorously constructed over the course of two chapters from three major building blocks: Lacan's four formulae of sexuation, his theory of the four discourses and his work in topology. These three components of late-Lacan's work are uniquely combined and taken in directions which deviate from the way they were originally presented and from the way they are usually exploited today. Fittingly, these chapters primarily focus on Lacan's texts from the early 1970s where he endeavors to inscribe the psychoanalytic notion of sexual difference into logical notation. Particularly relevant are those texts where this notion is articulated in unexpected ways, as in the case of *L'étourdit* where this is done via the manipulation of topological figures. Also pertinent to this undertaking is Aristotle's *Organon*, which is examined in some detail as Lacan originally derived his formulae of sexuation by supplementing the Aristotelian logical system with modern logic. As

well, the recent commentaries by Guy Le Gaufey and Christian Fierens are critical to this undertaking and are at times taken up quite closely.

While it is true that the development of a non-hermeneutical phenomenological approach in Part II is very much positioned as a response to and outcome of the historical struggle with meaning, it should also be appreciated how it nevertheless 'posits is own presuppositions' in the sense of having dictated to a large extent the selection of those scholarly fields actually reviewed in Part I. Concisely said, while it may be the case that Part I begets Part II, it must equally be appreciated how the latter embodies the entire trajectory which led up to it. Despite how this gives the appearance that the present work is a self-enclosed field entirely removed from any and all factors of subjectivity, this is simply not the case. Even here the subject counts. However, this is not to be understood merely in terms of textual style or any other discernible marks found in the text bearing authorial voice. For an author maintains such imaginary presence in the mind of the reader whether he indulges in or refrains from, say, the use of the first-person narrative; indeed this is true with even the most abstract of mathematical texts. Rather, it must be conceived how the subject factors into the text at the very point which eludes it. In other words, the very fact that the textual field appears to be self-enclosed is what allows the author to be held ultimately responsible for the success or failure of his work. What the present work endeavors to articulate is that a possibility like this arises only because a point exists such that when occupied by the subject, it effectively operates as the suspension of the very field assumed to be self-enclosed.

As the majority of texts employed in the present work were written in a language other than English (mostly German and French), a general note on the use of translations is warranted. In some cases only a single translation was found to be in existence. This is especially the case with earlier texts from the hermeneutical tradition. But where two or more translations were found, the 'official' translation is preferred over 'unofficial' ones. This particularly concerns the texts of Lacan. In most cases official translations exist for those texts of his actually examined, but significantly one does not for *L'étourdit* which is extensively taken up in Part II. In this instance citations come from either of the two unofficial translations found, although the liberty has been taken in a few cases to modify a citation made from one by means of the other in order to achieve greater clarity (this is duly noted in the text). Where two or more official translations exist, a well-established translation may be preferred over newer ones as the latter often modify key terminology and thus make it difficult to square their translations with pre-existing secondary literature (*e.g.*, Kant). But this consideration may be set aside for the sake of clarity (*e.g.*, Heidegger). In any case, the translations used for each text are detailed in the Bibliography as well as in the Notes.

PART I

THE HISTORICAL STRUGGLE WITH MEANING:
FROM THE ONE TO THE OTHER

> The introduction should neither restrict itself to following the historical development of hermeneutics, nor should it ignore that development and try to draft a contemporary hermeneutics *ex nihilo*...Thus, the path which recommends itself is a combination of the historical and systematic methods.[2]

As the topic of meaning is closely associated with the field of hermeneutics, Peter Szondi's words would not be too damaged if 'hermeneutics' were replaced with 'the theory of meaning.' This citation could then initially serve as the guiding principle of Part I which endeavors to follow the historical trajectory of our understanding of meaning but in a systematic manner. Accordingly, the present study first turns to the long established tradition of hermeneutical theory which, especially when combined with the newer field of phenomenology, expressly advises the scholar interested in meaning to examine historical forms of thought. But as this historical exploration encounters structuralist thinking, it finds there its own advice being somewhat countermanded, for the signifying mechanisms of language are said to be at least equal in importance to the hermeneutical phenomenological presupposition that meaning be accounted for by attending to historical context. However, an irreversible turn comes when this trajectory additionally passes through contemporary aesthetic theory and especially through psychoanalysis, for it finds in these fields forms of thought contemplating the (im)possibility of drafting a theory of meaning *ex nihilo*. So while the present study in a first move does follow Szondi's recommendation to combine historical understanding with systematic methodologies in its effort to survey historical theories of meaning, it finds that the path of this trajectory ends up at the very point excluded from his advised course of action. The non-hermeneutical phenomenological project undertaken in Part II endeavors to position itself precisely within this excluded space to more forcefully express how the endpoint arrived at in Part I paradoxically is both produced by and the causal force of this trajectory.

The theories of meaning of roughly five dozen distinct theorists are assessed in Part I. In most instances only a single representative text has been selected but in some cases two or more by the same

author appear, making the total number of texts 'officially' reviewed somewhat larger. As well other scholars and their work are utilized and commented upon throughout the discussion. While the aim has been to be as comprehensive as possible, this is largely to provide suitable context for those areas chosen for a more focused analysis. There has also been an effort made to select texts which refer back to previous texts examined so as to better converge the threads of the review around these concentration points. While each chapter is already introduced separately and includes frequent breaks from the analysis to (re)assess the investigation as it proceeds, for convenience a schematic breakdown of each chapter by section listing the major theorists covered is as follows.

An initial chapter on hermeneutics is the most obvious place to begin a discussion of historical theories of meaning. While this term designates all significant works in textual exegesis from before the Reformation up to the close of the 19th century as well as many works of the 20th century, its constant re-theorization of textual approaches is already symptomatic of the fact that something about meaning does not sit right. Section 1.1 begins with the newly emerging exegetical strategies of Renaissance thought to eventually pause with Johann Martin Chladenius before taking up Friedrich Ast, who first articulates the hermeneutical circle. Section 1.2 opens with a discussion of Friedrich Schleiermacher's influential general hermeneutical model, then Wilhelm von Humbolt, Johann Gustav Droysen, Philip August Boeckh as well as Friedrich Nietzsche's prophetic work are examined, to conclude with Wilhelm Dilthey's triadic hermeneutical formula. Section 1.3 identifies the major players and dissenters of hermeneutical phenomenology beginning with the Protestant thought of Rudolf Bultmann and Gerhard Ebeling, to then center the work of Emilio Betti, E. D. Hirsch Jr., Karl-Otto Apel, Jürgen Habermas, Richard E. Palmer, Paul Ricoeur, Manfred Frank, Jean-Luc Nancy and Demetrius Teigas around various issues brought to light by Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, particularly those involving questions of methodology.

Chapter 2 investigates the field of phenomenology, which, along with structuralism and psychoanalysis, was given birth in the first decade of the 20th century. While it generally proves a challenge to hermeneutics by re-conceptualizing the very objective status of meaning itself, its greatest influence is undeniably felt after Martin Heidegger crosses these two fields in *Being and Time*. Section 2.1 first discusses Gottlob Frege before examining the founding texts of Edmund Husserl's original epistemological phenomenology and Heidegger's ontological version, which announced to the world that hermeneutical phenomenology had arrived. Section 2.2 takes up the diverse works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gaston Bachelard and Jean-Paul Sartre who are nevertheless united by sharing a Heideggerian concern for that which stands prior to the subject-object divide. Section 2.3 examines those men, who remain faithful to Husserlian methodology beginning with Roman Ingarden's phenomenology of reading

which influences both Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss, and then turns to Georges Poulet of the Geneva School of phenomenological criticism to conclude with Ricoeur.

Chapter 3 treats early structuralist thought as well as later post-structuralist developments as posing a significant challenge to previously unquestioned presuppositions regarding meaning. In general the (post)structuralist field turns to consider the meaningless mechanical operations of linguistic systems as forming a limit to the hermeneutical pursuit of meaning, for these operations are felt to generate the phenomenal meaning-effect. The work carried out in this field thus raises the possibility that meaning has a cause. Section 3.1 quite properly begins by discussing Ferdinand de Saussure to then turn to the structuralist work of Roman Jakobson and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Section 3.2 first articulates Jacques Derrida's deconstructive logic before turning to the post-structuralism of Michel Foucault and the work in intellectual history conducted by Dominick LaCapra and Hayden V. White.

Chapter 4 views contemporary aesthetic theory as having further broken away from a primary consideration for meaning than the break accomplished by (post)structuralism. It does so by opening up the domains of sense and nonsense as those which constitute the radical limit of meaning and it generally seeks to articulate their paradoxical logic through a descriptive phenomenological methodology. Section 4.1 takes up the diverse thought of Walter Benjamin, Jean Baudrillard and Alain Badiou in their efforts to delimit the spheres of truth and creativity in scripture and poetry over against meaning. Section 4.2 argues that the aesthetic work of Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Rancière, Gilles Deleuze and Nancy can fruitfully be examined with respect to the aesthetics of Immanuel Kant. Finishing the discussion with G. W. F. Hegel, the conclusion that a sublime object suspends the semantic field in the world of art broadly aligns itself with the overall project of the present study.

Chapter 5 considers psychoanalysis an embodiment of the entire path forged by the four previous chapters. Psychoanalysis is thus a privileged field as it can be read as hermeneutical phenomenological or as (post)structuralist. But at its most radical it also reveals a non-hermeneutical phenomenological dimension. This third level makes theoretically explicit the implicit conclusions of aesthetic theory and more rigorously articulates the production of meaning by identifying its cause as closely linked to the core of subjectivity. The cause of meaning and subjectivity is precisely the *nihilo* from which a non-hermeneutical phenomenological approach to meaning could spring, which is the subject of Part II. Section 5.1 first highlights Sigmund Freud's achievement in re-conceptualizing interpretation and then faults both C. G. Jung and Ernst Kris for failing to recognize his multi-leveled methodological approach. Section 5.2 reviews the critical work of Ricoeur, Frank and Julia Kristeva to find similar failures. Section 5.3 rigorously stresses the same triadic levels found in Lacan's seminars and papers to which his adherents

Jacques-Alain Miller, Roberto Harari, Monique David-Ménard, Paul Verhaeghe, Bruce Fink, Slavoj Žižek and Alenka Zupančič have variously put into play in their own work.

If an introduction is itself a hermeneutical exercise that establishes the horizon of the whole before the parts are analyzed, the same could be said of titles which similarly establish the space within which the text moves. This implies that a title may not be understandable until sometime after the content of the text it signifies has been reviewed. And sometimes not even then. Such is the present case where 'The Historical Struggle with Meaning' is readily understandable but its subtitle 'From the One to the Other' is not, as the reader must first work through Part II before its meaning can be retroactively established.

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CHAPTER 1

HERMENEUTICS

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> [E]verything that is no longer immediately situated in a world...is estranged from its original meaning and depends on the unlocking and mediating spirit that we, like the Greeks, name after Hermes: the messenger of the gods.[3]

Much of the work aiming to re-introduce or further advance hermeneutical theory in the forty-five years since Palmer (1969)[4] first introduced hermeneutics to the English-speaking world begins with what now seems an obligatory discussion of the term itself. In their opening pages we learn how the word hermeneutics carries an obvious relation to the wing-footed Hermes as its etymological roots lie with the Greek verb *hermēneuein* and noun *hermēneia*, generally translated as 'to interpret' and 'interpretation' by way of the Latin *interpretatio*. Although today this etymological connection to Hermes is questioned,[5] the associative link is still valuable as a heuristic device to illustrate the complexities of interpretation. For Hermes' task was anything but simple. In order to transmit the messages of the gods to the mortals, he had to be fully conversant in both idioms. Never a mere verbatim announcement, each expressed delivery of what the gods had to say effectively involved intertwining levels of explanation and translation in order to render their words intelligible. So while the aim of hermeneutic interpretation suggested here – to bring that which is strange and unfamiliar to meaningful understanding – may appear to be straightforward, exactly how this is accomplished proves much more difficult to grasp. The first chapter approaches this methodological question not by way of the history of the term itself but rather through what this term has come to designate since its initial appearance in the mid-17th century.

Section 1.1 sketches out the historical trajectory from the emergence of the three regional hermeneutics during the Renaissance to the first articulations of the hermeneutical circle and the dialectic of understanding and explanation by Ast at the close of the 18th century. Section 1.2 opens with a discussion of Schleiermacher's general hermeneutical model and traces its influence on 19th century hermeneutical thinking up through Dilthey who provides the first significant distinction between the human and natural sciences. Section 1.3 focuses on hermeneutical phenomenology and its impact on 20th century thought especially after Gadamer's popularization of its approach in 1960 kicked off in the

ensuing two decades a series of divisive and still relevant fundamental debates in the human sciences which drew in such diverse fields as modern philology, legal scholarship, American literary criticism, post-structuralism, and even Marxist discourse. At stake in these debates is methodology *as such*, whether it is a desirable tool in the appropriation of textual meaning or whether its conscious use should altogether be abandoned.

1.1 From Regional to General Hermeneutics

The earliest recorded occurrence of the word hermeneutics is apparently as part of the title of a book published by Dannhauer in 1654,[6] which suggests that already by this time interpretation had successfully reached a level of self-awareness so as to differentiate critical explanation and analysis of texts (exegesis) from the rules, methods and theory governing it (hermeneutics). Like the advent of any new term, once accepted as designating the theory of exegesis, the field it covers can retroactively be extended back in time as far as desired. Thus the extraction of a hermeneutic from Plato and Aristotle might even prove possible based on work done in the field of literary criticism regarding their respective textual approaches.[7] The survey undertaken in this chapter, however, begins with a cursory glance at those centuries immediately preceding Dannhauer, for the present concern is with what gave rise to modern hermeneutics[8] in its remarkably flexible form, able at once to guide jurisdiction, assist in discussions of the language of texts and facilitate the exegesis of Scripture. Corresponding to these three capacities are the three regional hermeneutics – namely, the juridical with its legal concerns, the philological with literary texts and the biblical with Scripture – each of which enjoyed its own separate and relatively isolated history until the early part of the 19th century when they could be reconceptualized as part of one complex discipline and indeed as aspects of a single faculty of man. It is during the Renaissance that these three disciplines initially emerged to define themselves distinctly, well before Schleiermacher merged them together into the first general hermeneutical framework centuries later.

For its part, juridical interpretation was revived during the so-called 12th century Italian Renaissance by a renewed interest in Roman law. As scholars endeavored to elucidate the 6th century Code of Justinian, a hermeneutics of jurisprudence emerged and eventually spread to the rest of Europe. But its very success created its own set of problems and the need arose to deal with the increasingly differing exegesis produced over the ensuing centuries over legal matters. In 1463 Rogerius answered this call not only by summarizing the main tenets of previous legal exegesis, but also by introducing a fourfold distinction to explicate and harmonize the various parts of the Code, an effort which remained in force until the historical school of Savigny replaced it in the early 19th century.[9]

Philological interpretation also emerged during the Renaissance through an equal resurgence of interest in the past, in this case with classical literary monuments from Greek and Roman antiquity. A

specific hermeneutics of philology was thus born, whose genealogy could also be traced back through the gradual merging of rhetoric and poetics into the art of textual verification. This hermeneutic tendency was largely driven by a practical interest, as Greek culture was seen to provide an aesthetic model for good living. Hence the overwhelming objective of humanist scholars was to establish the authenticity of these texts and to further reconstruct original versions from the fragments available to them. These early efforts provided a wealth of source material for the subsequent development of much more systematic approaches to textual interpretation beginning in the 18th century.

Yet these two regional hermeneutics were not without their interaction, for each lent the other certain ideas and concepts. For example, the mid-16th century humanist Hotomanus placed the basis of legal explication with the grammatical interpretation of philology; a hundred years later the pedagogue and jurist von Felde saw enough overlap with the two hermeneutical specialties that he endeavored to establish their shared interpretative principles and thus anticipated Chladenius; while in 1806 the jurist Thibaut would considered the purpose of the law and the intention of the lawgiver only when grammatical interpretation, directed at the literal sense of a given law, found its limit in the failure to understand its meaning from ordinary linguistic usage.[10]

Biblical exegesis remained much more isolated, at least prior to the Reformation, after which it underwent a profound formulation. It is by far the most important of the three regional hermeneutics owing to its longstanding concern with Sacred Scripture and thus provided the main impetus for the development of rules of interpretation in order to unearth the meaning of those texts. However, throughout the medieval period this impetus was virtually nonexistent as the Roman Catholic Church exercised a monopoly on biblical exegesis. Seriously unchallenged for centuries, the Church dominated the reading one could have of Scripture, a set of texts which it judged to have four levels of meaning.[11] This fourfold approach was especially important as a way for medieval clergy to relate the Old Testament to Christianity. The first level is the literal where meaning is judged simply from the letter of the text. The second is the allegorical level which holds meaning in the context of the salvation offered by Christ and the Church.[12] The third is the tropological level which can be grasped by applying Scripture to the soul and its virtues so as to produce a practical meaning as a guide to moral conduct. The fourth anagogical (or eschatological) level attends to Scriptural meaning in relation to God in His eternal and heavenly reality.

In contrast, for the Protestant Reformers thinking in terms of these four levels did not involve exegetical work which, etymologically speaking, aims to 'bring out' the meaning of the text, but rather simply produced eisegesis whereby meaning is 'read into' the text. This critique against the Church would prove profound. The earliest recorded use of the term hermeneutics in English, occurring in the *Oxford English Dictionary* of 1737, reflects what the Reformers must have had in mind in their protestation

against the monopoly exercised by the Church when it came to the meaning of Scripture: 'Taking such liberties with sacred writ, as are by no means allowable upon any known rules of just and sober hermeneutics.'[13] The importance of this early 16th century challenge to the authoritative readings of Scripture by the Church should not be underestimated and indeed with it the first great crisis of meaning arrives: biblical exegesis, once unified under the discourse of a single master, will now begin to fragment into a multiplicity of techniques increasingly governed by guidelines and provisional rules, resulting in a rapidly accumulating body of textual signification.

The response by the Church was swift. Inside thirty years of the first significant signs of protest, the Council of Trent (1545-63), perhaps the single most significant element in the Counter-Reformation,[14] was convoked which emerged unwaveringly to reaffirm the Catholic emphasis on authority and tradition in interpreting Scripture. Now formally cut off from recourse to Church authority to decide questions of interpretation, the Reformers were equally determined to pursue the independent path they themselves originally opened up. Shortly after Trent Flacius published his *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae*, which established him as the most important Protestant theorist and apologist. This work marks the first major formulation in biblical hermeneutics, putting forth two principal arguments[15] to be understood from a new point of view which takes Scripture as both perspicuous and self-sufficient. The first argument asserts the basic intelligibility and non-contradictory nature of Scripture so that if there is a failure in understanding, this is not be taken as an invitation to impose an external interpretation in order to render it intelligible as the Church had done for centuries; rather, such a situation merely reflects on the poor aptitude of the interpreters whose insufficient knowledge thus signals the need for thorough linguistic and hermeneutic training. The second argument forcefully re-asserts the thinking of the Reformers e*n masse* regarding the internal coherence and continuity of Scripture. This effectively meant that each individual passage was now to be read in light of the whole within which it is found.

While this anti-dogmatic self-understanding of the early Protestant hermeneutics can easily be criticized for harboring its own dogmatism in the form of a presupposition regarding the wholeness of Scripture[16] which, once accepted, would insure a high degree of consent in matters of Reformist interpretation for some time to come, we should not overlook what has been accomplished here. The two principles of perspicuity and of the self-sufficiency of Scripture acknowledge at a theoretical level for the first time the ambiguity of textual exegesis, along with the accompaniment of a proposed remedy. We might say that for Flacius, if the One-ness of Scripture somehow resists comprehension, then it is up to the interpreter to resolve this by falling back on the set of rules inscribed in the Other which accompanies this text, namely the *Clavis*. Granted, at this stage what resists is not deemed to be on the side of the textual object but rather as lying with the interpreter in the form of ignorance of proper interpretive

methods. Yet this is also a positive first, for it subtly brings a subjective element into the discussion of interpretive technique, if only in a negative sense as a deficiency to be overcome.

We should also pause at this point to reflect on the path we have hitherto been following and will largely continue to follow, if for nothing else than to explicitly acknowledge how it is – like most histories of hermeneutics – Diltheyan inspired. In his "The Rise of Hermeneutics" (1900) Dilthey tells us how he

> would now like to demonstrate this lawlike evolution through the history of hermeneutics: how philological virtuosity developed out of the need for insightful and universally valid understanding, whence a promulgation of rules, and the ordering of those rules toward a goal further defined by the development of the sciences at any given time, until finally an adequate foundation for the formation of rules was discovered in the analysis of understanding itself.[17]

As will be seen in Section 1.2 below, the discovery he speaks of was made by Schleiermacher and indeed Dilthey's entire teleological trajectory is colored by this culminating point. The rise of hermeneutics can thus be seen as an orderly progress from the particularity of exegetical practice to the universalizing of theory. More specifically, prior to the Reformation the exegete assessed texts with intuition and common sense; with Flacius such sense begins to be systematized into rules abstracted from its practice and as argued above it is only at this point hermeneutics can be said to have properly arrived; two and a half centuries later this process will reach its apogee as those rules dissolve into a universal notion, that of Schleiermacher's understanding.

Yet the idea that all roads lead up to Schleiermacher[18] is nevertheless too simple. The main problem is that Dilthey writes at the close of the 19th century and thus simultaneously views this trajectory as part of the general rise of historical consciousness. He presupposes that the regional hermeneutics were thoroughly ahistorical, that they simply lacked any historical sense. But this does not appear to be the case. As Szondi points out,[19] both medieval philology and biblical exegesis were keenly aware of the historical gap which distanced the reader from the author. Practitioners were therefore only ahistorically-minded in the sense that they worked to annul this historical distance rather than actively incorporate it into a conscious methodology as their counterparts began to do in the 19th century. The two competing interpretive practices of the Reformation period, however, did so in different ways. The orientation of the philologists was to attend to the *sensus litteralis* (or *sensus grammaticus*) to establish what a passage says, literally seeking to substitute the unintelligible words in an ancient Greek text with a word in current use. Without attempting to reflect on the significance of these historical changes, their aim was to simply eliminate this historical distance to preserve original authorial meaning. Likewise with the *sensus spiritualis* approach of the Church, whose allegorical exegesis worked to provide fixed formulations for what the Scriptural words *qua* signs pointed toward, with the clear goal to guarantee the authority and tradition of canonical literature. In this case historical distance was not so much eliminated as sublated in the sense of being 'preserved as the difference between promise and fulfillment, while at the same time it

is leveled in the preestablished harmony between the Old and New Testaments.'[20] But despite their shared tendencies to surmount historical gaps, during the Reformation the two interpretive approaches locked horns and as we saw above, the more grammatically-minded Reformers criticized the Church clergy for deriving the meaning of Scriptural signs in a way which was not properly constrained by the conceptual world of the text itself.

What additionally upsets Dilthey's notion of orderly progress besides this dialectic between grammatical and allegorical interpretation is the attitude of their respective stances towards the question of meaning. While it is true that Flacius initiated the progress towards a general methodology through his insistence on the possibility of universally valid interpretation through hermeneutical techniques, with respect to the question of textual meaning this progress appears rather regressive and limiting. Historically speaking, one should recall how grammatical precedes allegorical interpretation so the former cannot strictly be seen as a critique of an inferior latter approach. This helps one understand that while the Reformers were adherents of the *sensus litteralis* and thus desired to keep the original intention of authorial texts from being historicized, the 'conservative' Church had always rejected this more narrow approach, 'narrow' because allegorical interpretation was in fact based on the more favorable possibility of manifold Scriptural meanings. The paradox is that the authoritative interpretive strategy of the Church did not close down potential avenues of extracting meaning from Scripture but rather opened them up because of its concern with maintaining its authority through shifting historical contexts. So even though the principle of grammatical interpretation eventually emerges victorious over allegorical interpretation and thus confirms Dilthey's schematic, this should not overshadow the lesson sketched out here, *viz*., how any close examination of a particular period in history often disturbs the notion of the commonly accepted universal trajectory within which this period is supposedly embedded, which of course calls for a refinement of that universal notion.

If Flacius and the Reformers had aspirations for a general hermeneutics through their formalization and application of medieval philological techniques to Scripture, we do well to remember that this universalizing tendency only extended to biblical texts. The tension between the intention of achieving a universal hermeneutics and the absence of Sacred and secular hermeneutics coming together in a historical and general form continued to characterize the ensuing centuries and is most strikingly seen in the failed projects of the 18th century. Such empty intentions will soon find support in the transcendental idealism of Kantian epistemology which Schleiermacher will leverage; but in terms of the pre-critical Enlightenment period it is perhaps Chladenius who best illustrates the costs of failing to grasp universality as a regulative ideal which comes well before the empirical possibility of its own realization. For by dogmatically placing his faith with the rules of reason and logic he is driven to exclude biblical as well as

all other texts that are not deemed 'reasonable discourses and writings,' as the very title of his 1742 work[21] suggests. In general Chladenius holds a position entirely compatible with the overall tendency of Enlightenment rationality to depreciate tradition, 'a position hardly compatible with the project of a universal hermeneutics.'[22]

His rationalist hermeneutics leads him to consider the art of interpretation and its concern with the meaning of statements as secondary and wholly apart from the primary philosophical examination of their claims to truth.[23] Indeed hermeneutics was only to be used if the author failed to strictly utilize the rules of reason, which alone guarantee the stability of meaning of a text. In such cases what he calls unproductive and overly-productive texts produce obscure passages which could be clarified by acquiring the appropriate general concepts.[24] He thus envisages his role as pedagogical and pragmatic, instructing the uninitiated reader in the proper concepts not so much to reconstruct the intention of the author but rather to grasp the thing meant by his words. With this 'objectivity' lies Chladenius' notion of universal interpretation. If the Reformers identified, isolated and attempted to overcome a subjective moment they sensed in the authoritarian hermeneutics of the Church, likewise Enlightenment rationality delimited a similar moment and endeavored to achieve certainty with the object at stake in the text by separating it from non-universal subjective moments. Here lies the theoretical framework for grasping the notion Chladenius is best known for, *viz*., his Leibnizian-inspired notion of perspective. In no way to be equated to or even considered a distant precursor of (post)Nietzschean and Foucauldian perspectivism which signifies the non-existence of facts and the infinity of possible meanings of a given text, for Chladenius perspective is a relativity of the account given, never a relativity of meaning. His running example to illustrate this point is a battle, an insurrection.[25] *That* this historical event took place, and took place in a singular truthful way, is never in doubt. Such historical knowledge after all was initially confirmed by visual observation. If there is ambiguity after this fact, it lies simply in having been captured in conflicting textual accounts, and the duty of interpretation is thus to carry out a mediating role between the author with his perspective and the reader who has difficulty with the author's account. As with other Enlightenment hermeneutical theorists, difficulties for Chladenius always reside in the part of a given work as its rational whole is never in question. Since interpretation is here considered strictly a secondary representation of the primary event itself, it is little surprise the Enlightenment project failed to achieve a universal hermeneutics.[26]

It is only after the Kantian turn[27] that classical philological hermeneutics increasingly gives way to Romantic interests, which begin to attend to the historical changes in the understanding of texts and not just with accounting for differing points of view authors may have of the objects in their texts. Armed with a new critical grasp on the subjective element in hermeneutics, in Romanticism the focus begins to shift to

the understanding of the interpreter. Ast can be seen as a figure caught half-way between the Enlightenment and Romantic periods. An accomplished classical philologist, his philological hermeneutical examination of antiquity was innovatively combined with a notion of understanding which proved a formidable influence on Schleiermacher. Besides giving the first articulations of the importance of literary history and genre criticism, one of his key contributions was to take hermeneutics away from the limited task of clarifying obscure passages to more broadly consider understanding as a reproduction of the entire creative process of the author, inclusive of the latter's psychology, personality and spirit. Through properly orienting oneself in 'what is originally One,...[t]he original unity of all being we call *spirit*,'[28] Ast is able to overcome temporal distance in a way unimaginable to all previous philologists, since each age, each author in each age, and each work and part thereof participates in this whole *Geist*, including the interpreter himself. His historical and grammatical analysis of the texts of antiquity simultaneously points to and is guided by ever higher unities of *Geist* and thereby arouses a multiplicity of meanings for which the interpreter's own spirit is responsible. Plato and Pindar are thus examined through a complex dialectic of understanding (*subtilitas intelligendi*) and explanation (*subtilitas explicandi*). The three modes of understanding are thus the historical with respect to the content of the text (what the spirit formed there), the grammatical with respect to the language of the text (how the spirit formed it) and the merging of these two in the spiritual itself.[29] Corresponding to these modes are three levels of explanation which seeks to explicate the letter from the subject matter, the meaning from its form, and the spirit, that one guiding and foundational idea which provides a unity of form behind every work no matter the extent of its multiplicity of meanings.[30] Throughout his discussion of this dialectic Ast argues for a movement from the particular to the universal and vice versa, thus completing the circle Flacius only made half-way. That is, in explaining how the thought of a particular is said to posit the whole (*Geist*), while the former is deemed to be nothing but a manifestation of the latter, Ast in 1808 becomes the first to articulate the famous hermeneutical circle, which quite simply tells us that there is an oscillation from the comprehension of the particular through the whole and, conversely, the whole through the particular.[31] Over the next two centuries only the relation one is capable of taking to this circle will change, for virtually all thinkers on the question of meaning will consider this circle inescapable.

1.2 Schleiermacher and the Transcendental Turn to Hermeneutics

Schleiermacher opens his work[32] with the following declarative statement: '*Hermeneutics as* the art of understanding *does not yet exist* in a general manner, *there are instead only several forms* of specific hermeneutics,'[33] and indeed if this could also be considered a declaration of intent, by all measures he is successful. For Schleiermacher is universally credited for having overcome the difficulty of managing the dispersed network of lateral links which increasingly grew between philology, biblical interpretation and

jurisprudence in the centuries which preceded him. In a word, he combined the three regional hermeneutics into a general form. He does this by bringing the dialectic Ast uncovered to its logical conclusion, effectively absorbing the pedagogical practice of *subtilitas explicandi* by the proper application of *subtilitas intelligendi*. He thus goes further than his predecessor for whom the problem of understanding texts immediately negates itself in the philosophy of the original self-identical and self-forming One Spirit. In contrast, the philosophy of Schleiermacher is deeply influenced by Johann Gottlieb Fichte's notion of a productive and active I, which spurs the former's discovery of the relation between the particularities of authorship and the unity of a developing subject and thus helped make Schleiermacher's work one of the most consequential of Romantic hermeneutics with its hallmark focus on the relation between the individual and the totality.[34] Moreover, it allows him to recognize a foreign nature to the other which he reads as indexing the finite horizon of language, an obscurity which makes it impossible to exhaust the nature of the individual and condemns the interpreter to an asymptotic approach to the totality of meaning.[35] In order to grasp this pioneering turn towards language and its link with the thinking subject, Schleiermacher's development of hermeneutics as 'the art of understanding'[36] must be examined more closely.

The accomplishment of widening the scope of hermeneutics towards a greater universality seems unlikely given the fact that he is a Protestant theologian and preacher. Granted, like Ast he is an accomplished philologist, having translated the complete works of Plato,[37] but as any glance of his work will show his overriding concern is with understanding the New Testament. Yet it doing so he develops a theory of understanding in such a way as to allow future theorists to recognize its potential universal application not just to Scripture, but to any text and beyond. As we shall see, whether such a potential is ever actual will be a bone of contention for later hermeneutical thinkers and thus Schleiermacher can be said to operate as a touchstone of sorts for 20th century debates regarding methodology. For he reasons that the understanding is composed of two moments, the understanding of speech as taken from language and the understanding of speech as a fact in the thinking subject. The underlying presupposition here is how the act of understanding (moving from external expression to inner thought) is the reverse of the act of speaking (from thought to expression).[38] The first moment yields a kind of interpretation appropriately entitled the grammatical as it concerns the linguistic elements of a text whose meaning is discernible within its greater grammatical context and where the text itself is considered with respect to the language shared between the author and his reader. Here the rule-bound aspect of language is stressed whereby a 'person with their activity disappears and appears only as the organ of the language.' One could say that an individual is 'subject to' language. Yet a person is not merely inserted into language without a say-so. To the second moment of understanding corresponds what he calls psychological (or

oddly equivalent, the technical) interpretation. With the psychological the spontaneous aspect of language is stressed and further linked to a free subjectivity, for 'language with its determining power disappears and appears only as the organ of the person, in the service of their individuality.'[39] Thus an individual is simultaneously also the 'subject of' language. As he reiterates throughout his lectures, proper understanding can only come when both moments are considered together, for while 'every person is on the one hand a location in which a given language forms itself in an individual manner, on the other their discourse can only be understood via the totality of the language.'[40] Furthermore, both grammatical and psychological interpretation are equal, and he stresses how neither one can be thought of as grounding the other.[41]

However, this final point has not prevented disputes over the proper reading of Schleiermacher that very much concern which of the two moments of the understanding should be emphasized (and indeed, whether these moments are even part of a universal notion). Added to the difficulty in assessing a work which articulates a split running deep through its core theory of understanding is that this split is re-doubled. That is, it also runs diachronically and in a significant enough fashion so as to prove useful in broadly differentiating his career. Although the grammatical-psychological dichotomy is ever-present throughout his work, his early efforts clearly favor grammatical interpretation while he later increasingly turns to the psychological,[42] concomitant with the growing influence of psychologism (where meaning is explained by the structures of the human psyche) throughout the 19th century. For thinkers like Heidegger and Gadamer, Schleiermacher is to be critiqued for having backed away from his earlier identity between thought and language which allowed the hermeneutical (re-)construction of the mental processes of the author and the textual meaning in an intrinsically linguistic fashion. He is thus said to lapse back into Ast's psychologist notion of understanding as repeating the artist's process of creation so that the original experience represented by the text somehow rises again as an event for the interpreter. The aim of interpretation thus seems to be to understand as the author did and to recognize his style as an empirical and linguistic manifestation pointing back to the author's non-linguistic artistic genius. Yet Schleiermacher goes further, writing that the 'task is also to be expressed as follows, to understand the utterance at first just as well and then better than its author.'[43] This is possible since the author's knowledge of himself is immediate while the interpreter's knowledge is mediated which, potentially allows for making conscious those elements the author only unconsciously possessed. Hence the text can be understood better than its author had originally understood it. This famous assertion and its implication particularly disturbs Gadamer who sees its utterance as registering a lapse, in a German Idealist mode, back to classical philology and its 'subjective' concern with the intended meaning of the author.[44] While thinkers like Betti and Hirsch will celebrate Schleiermacher's contention that we are in psychological possession of certain

universal characteristics allowing us to divine the author and his work in its individuality which further permits subsuming them both under the proper general categories,[45] thinkers like Gadamer will much prefer the language-oriented efforts of the early Schleiermacher as they maintain grammatical interpretation holds a greater objectivity than the psychological.

This latter claim is questionable given that Schleiermacher's insistence on the equality between the two moments of understanding is ever present even in those late-lectures which do indeed turn to a greater emphasis on the activity of the individual subject in the constitution of textual meaning. It is thus too simple to pit an 'objective' grammatical interpretation over-against a 'subjective' psychological interpretation and thus champion or dismiss Schleiermacher according to where one feels his theory properly lies. Rather, the two moments of understanding and their corresponding interpretive strategies must be placed in a dialectic in which grammatical concerns (where textual elements must be situated within the text, within the author's wider work and with his literary community as a whole) interact with technical aspects (where the active role the author has in the non-grammatical creation of meaning must be considered along with the cultural and historical constitution of the subject and his text, all of which can only be grasped via a psychological approach) of a text. What Schleiermacher recognizes is that interpretive knowledge moves in an endless circle – a hermeneutical circle – within which meaning comes to stand.[46] This circle is precisely the 'objective' condition of our understanding. While, say, Heidegger and Gadamer recognize this condition and will more expressly consider how no meaning is separable from the act of understanding and is thus not a pre-existing entity, they will try to do so without the notion of modern subjectivity inherited from German Idealism. Indeed much of the confusion in the literature over Schleiermacher could be accounted for by tracing out the respective entry points into this circle and by considering which moments of understanding have been assigned the roles of the whole and the part. Again, neither the grammatical nor the psychological can be considered dominant, which is why the transcendental turn to hermeneutical thinking begins with a redefinition of hermeneutics as the *art* of understanding. The movement through Schleiermacher forever frees hermeneutics from its previous philological conception as a mere explanatory tool.

After Schleiermacher, this double-faceted notion of understanding is combined with a Kantian-inspired theory of transcendental synthesis of the historical manifold by Humboldt who, together with Droysen's investigative historical practice, laid a foundation for understanding the historical world. Humboldt appears to take the notion of the 'art' of understanding in a literal fashion, for his theory of history is based on the essential affinity he sees between the task of the historian endeavoring to depict what has taken place and the creativity of the poet. Both practitioners in their respective disciplines 'must take the scattered pieces he has gathered into himself and work them into a whole...by supplementing

and connecting what was incomplete and fragmented...through the imagination.'[47] This text is riddled with notions bearing the imprint of German Idealism and certainly his discussion of the 'spontaneous and even creative' imaginative act on the part of the historian in order to attain the truth of what has taken place cannot but bring to mind the Kantian faculty of imagination.[48] Through its synthetic power, the scattered historical manifold is not only given to the historian as a whole, but ideally reveals that which conditions historical events in a chain-like fashion. Hence the historian is also to uncover the inner succession of forces beneath accidental and superficial appearances, the necessity behind every contingency.[49] Like the artist, the historian accomplishes this by being guided by ideas arising from the events themselves and thus ideas are not to be seen as externally imposed but as originating from the already understood connection between the subject and its object. In reasoning which anticipates Heidegger and Gadamer, this is so because 'everything which is effective in world history is also active within man himself.'[50] Yet moving away from them, Humboldt bemoans a deficiency of complete knowledge of historical events and to compensate he further posits an ungraspable beyond, a noumenal realm of 'generative forces'[51] to explain what spontaneously initiates, intervenes and transforms the chain of accessible historical phenomena. We could say he places in this realm the Cause of the causal chain itself, the Necessity behind all contingently linked events. Thus holding out for a grand teleology, he tells us that the very 'goal of history can only be the realization of the idea.'[52] With this conception the hermeneutical circle has effectively broadened its scope and doubled itself outside itself: while the historian certainly plays his part, hermeneutically grasping the meaning of a particular event in a whole synthesized through his power of imagination, he only does so within the overall historical trajectory of the Idea. The proper understanding of history now has a much more complex set of conditions.

Droysen only adds to these conditions. Again bearing the stamp of Kant, Droysen presents his methodological approach to historical phenomena through a discussion of the sensible intuitions of time and space which lead up to his thesis that the 'data for historical investigation are not past things, for these have disappeared, but things which are still present here and now.'[53] The past is in a way present, or in contemporary terms it falls within our horizon, which leads to a conception of how 'every "I" [is] enclosed in itself...[how] the human being is, in essential nature, a totality in himself.'[54] Yet he is quick to add how this totality is only relative. In true hermeneutical fashion there is a circular nature to this understanding, for the individual's essential nature is only realized when understood by others in partnership with the absolute totality of historical forces which strive to actualize what he calls 'moral energy.'[55] This echoes Humboldt's noumenal Idea, yet the crucial difference is that Droysen categorically denies any teleological progression to historical events, for it 'is sheer abstraction and fallacious to believe' we can go beyond a relativity of origins.[56] In a word, without an origin there can be no organic

development. He further explains that to truly understand the historical object we must recognize how 'we are moving in a circle,' grasping the object at one moment 'as existing' and then in the next 'as having become.' The subject thus figures prominently in this process for Droysen, whose 'interpretation intends to enliven and analyze these dry, lifeless materials in the hopes of returning them to life and allowing them to speak again through the art of interpretation.'[57] Yet understanding is not without its pragmatic side, and he thus maps out an investigative practice inclusive of technological and psychological interpretation under the direction of an interpretive strategy guided by a non-teleological idea of moral forces.[58]

But to avoid a potential misunderstanding, it is not so much that Droysen and Humboldt feel that there is no such thing as objective history (as in some 20th century post-Nietzschean vein), but rather that it is simply forever inaccessible to us. Yet the recognition of this epistemological failure is not as disastrous as it would have been in previous centuries. For Romantic hermeneutics the investigation of historical phenomena cannot but bear the interpreter's subjective imprint, conditioned as he himself is by the forces and events of the historical past. Thus in a curious twist what is originally thought to be the object of investigation gives way to the true object, namely, these latter forces and events that shape the historian's investigative practice. For Droysen and Humboldt, recognizing this lends to an otherwise subjectively-appropriated historical understanding an objectivity entirely unimaginable to thinkers prior to the Kantian turn. What further suggests itself here is how it is no historical accident that the hermeneutical circle was first articulated as such only after German Idealist philosophy theorized the conditions of the possible experience of objects, for without this theorization the hermeneutical circle cannot be objectively experienced and thus would remain unarticulated. Only with this theorization does it first become possible to conceive the hermeneutical circle as the objective condition of understanding itself.

The break from the Enlightenment is also evident in Humboldt's notion of language. An accomplished linguist conversant in many languages, he shatters the Enlightenment view whereby language is conceived as a neutral means of transferring the meaning of a historical event from one subject to another. The presupposition that meaning is a transferable object works well for the hermeneutics of Chladenius, but not in the post-critical Romantic period. As Humboldt writes, since language 'is the formative organ of thought' and 'language develops only in social intercourse,' meaning is rather a coproduction between the speaker-author and listener-reader.[59] Language is at once that which binds society and is its product. Moreover, language itself cannot become an object for the mind since objects only attain complete substantiality through the medium of the concept and no concept is possible without language.[60] We could very well say that for Humboldt, language does not exist. Yet this does not

prevent language from embodying a view of the world it makes its own and within which it throws its speaker. Again, a circle can be seen by which a particular speaker is woven into the tissues of language through that very same act which spins out its linguistic thread. This circle appears closed. Even by learning another language with its alternative world-view offers no escape, as one's mother tongue and attendant viewpoint will continue to maintain its dominance.[61]

Boeckh much more directly challenges the Enlightenment by confronting its classical philology with the new methodological concerns of Romanticism. Having been a student of both Ast and Schleiermacher, he was ideally positioned to theorize the hermeneutical basis of philology, the latter of which he considered a universal human science dealing with all historical and cultural works communicated to us through language. Since the understanding of these works was also at stake and not simply a question of deciding on the meaning of original authorial intent, Boeckh finds Schleiermacher's general hermeneutics well suited to supplement the practical rules of philology so as to uncover the formal and material conditions of these linguistic phenomena. His efforts will result in a mid-19th century revival of a philological concern for language, persuasive enough that a century later his comprehensive interpretive schema will be partially revived and developed by Hirsch, who will be examined below.

In general, Boeckh reasons that the understanding has two ways[62] to reach its goal of bringing unconscious activity of literary works to a conscious level. The first is interpretation, which seeks to comprehend the meaning of the object intrinsically, without reference to anything else. The second is criticism, which predictably releases this restriction to understand the meaning of a work relationally, with respect to its immersion in its broader historical circumstances or the particular literary tradition or genre within which it sits. While the two serve different functions, both are needed to adequately understand a work, for 'in practice criticism and interpretation cannot be separated'[63] and thus both are obviously needed to articulate that general hermeneutical circle whereby the text (part) derives it meaning from its context (whole) and vice versa. Yet Boeckh further breaks down each of these two levels in a manner following Schleiermacher. For instance, there are four kinds of interpretation,[64] two of which operate as the objective conditions for the understanding (the grammatical interpretation focuses on the literal meaning of the words, and the historical interpretation focuses on that meaning with respect to the material relations and context of the work) and two as its subjective conditions (the individual interpretation focuses on the subject itself, and the generic interpretation takes the subject in relation to the wider aim and direction of the work). Boeckh illustrates the complexity of their interaction particularly through the medieval notion of the four levels of meaning, which harkens back to a discussion above in Section 1.1. This simultaneously serves as his critique of medieval exegetical thought. As he sees it, there are only two levels, the literal and the allegorical, since the tropological and anagogical are said to be only

subdivisions of the latter. Thus allegorical meaning is always at the expense of the literal meaning of the words; its meaning stands in metaphoric relation to the literal meaning. More specifically, to ascertain the appropriate allegorical-metaphorical meaning of a work from a series of potentials, it is important to use both individual and generic interpretation to assess authorial motivation. This sets up a proper interpretive boundary and helps prevent reading false meanings outside these limits. But equally so, one must also consider the actual conditions through an historical interpretation. The ostensible point here is that '[w]hile allegory is a particular and very important kind of representation, understanding it is by no means a separate kind of interpretation. It consists rather, like every other work, in the co-operation of the four kinds of hermeneutical activity: grammatical, historical, individual, and generic.'[65] The wider point is that for Boeckh there is not just one hermeneutical circle between interpretation and criticism but many[66] within which meaning comes to stand as a condition of understanding. The complexity of Boeckh's philological hermeneutics serves as a testament to the sophistication of mid-19th century thought on the question of textual meaning.

As this survey of historical thought on meaning is largely following scholars in chronological order, Nietzsche's scattered writings on the matter should be examined before a final discussion of Dilthey is made to close out this section. Yet by doing so, this trajectory takes an unexpected theoretical detour and thus also allows for an opportunity to reflect on the path taken so far. For Nietzsche offers up a challenge to the hermeneutical tradition as it stood at the close of the 19th century and given that the substance of this challenge was ignored for decades, this also confirms yet one more tradition in which Nietzsche could be said to have 'come too early.' Consider the implications when he asks what people

'want when they want "knowledge"? Nothing more than this: Something strange is to be reduced to something *familiar* [*etwas Bekanntes*]...What is familiar means what we are used to so that we no longer marvel at it, our everyday, some rule in which we are stuck, anything at all in which we feel at home. Look, isn't our need for knowledge precisely this need for the familiar, the will to uncover under everything strange, unusual, and questionable something that no longer disturbs us?'[67]

In reading these words it immediately becomes apparent that those scholars discussed up to now, from Flacius to Boeckh, so busied themselves with the formulation of rules and entire methodologies that they never once stopped to seriously question an operative presupposition they held, namely, the finitude of meaning. In stark contrast, Nietzsche holds that 'the world....has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings. – "Perspectivism."'[68] Where hermeneutics prior to the 20th century could hold *interpretation* to be an endless endeavor, this was either because of a subjective deficit of inadequate training, inexact methods, or failure to grasp the conditions of understanding, or because the text *qua* object failed to yield its meaning due to difficulties with its archaic language or because of authorial ineptitude. Yet the idea that the meaning was 'there' and could at least be approximated was never in doubt. Now Nietzsche professes that there potentially exists an infinity of meaning. This is because to each '*perspective*, the

basic condition of all life,'[69] there corresponds an interpretation, a will to truth which has the ability to lay meaning into things.[70] Because there are infinite perspectives (and there are only perspectives), there is a plurality of interpretations, but in no way is Nietzsche an updated version of Chladenius since it is sheer perversity to believe in a 'meaning-in-itself' just as equally as 'facts-in-themselves.'[71] No facts, everything is in flux and the ability to endure this fragmentation and disquietude is a sign of strength and cause for celebration.

The hermeneutical thinkers thus far examined were incapable of embracing such a conception. From Nietzsche's perspective, their hermeneutical rules ultimately had the design to mitigate and convert the strange, unusual and questionable into things which no longer prove disturbing. However, despite Nietzsche's introducing a certain conception which proves troublesome to hermeneutical thought, he does not seem to fully identity with this dimension he opens up, nor does he uncover its ontological conditions. More exactly, what Nietzsche lacks is a specific theorization and conceptualization of this disturbance, the particular resistance point which proves disturbing to the hermeneutical pursuit. *That* he recognizes a disturbance is commendable. Yet it may be that once any thought (even Nietzsche's) begins to entertain the question of meaning, objects which disturb the easy appropriation of meaning can only be registered at best on the subjective level, that is, *as disturbing to the subject* engaged in the hermeneutical pursuit; at this point any possibility of grasping such disturbances in their objective mode dissolves. Thus inclusive of the Nietzschean thesis regarding the infinity of meaning, if we could say that the presence of a disturbance in the field of meaning is nevertheless manifest in the trajectory of hermeneutical thought thus far reviewed, it only reveals itself symptomatically through the continuing efforts of formulation, dissatisfaction and re-formulation of rules, interpretive strategies and changing notions of understanding of these thinkers – efforts which have propelled their tradition through the centuries. We continue this historical trajectory with Dilthey.

Whatever lessons one ultimately takes from Nietzsche, not all is lost by turning to his contemporary. For Dilthey is very much also a philosopher for whom life itself forms the ultimate horizon for thought. This is evident everywhere in his final work of the first decade of the 20th century. He there quite expressly informs us of his aim to delimit a new human science [*Geisteswissenschaften*] from the natural sciences.[72] This is possible because the human sciences are said to be linked together by a common investigative object, the nexus of lived experience, expression and understanding by which the human race communicates, endures its artistic creations and objectifies its spirit in social formations.[73] Aware that this object's value, purpose and meaning can only be uncovered through interpretive technique, Dilthey can also be credited with expanding the scope of hermeneutics to its logical epistemic limit when he conceives it as the very foundation for this new science. But his departure from the heritage of

Romanticism lies precisely in conceiving this project as an epistemological problem.[74] As will be seen below in Section 1.3, any effort such as his which seeks to secure an objectively valid methodological basis for understanding in the *Geisteswissenschaften* on par with that of explanation in the natural sciences is critiqued in various guises in the decades which immediately follow his work. These critiques will presuppose that any modeling of the human sciences on the epistemological methodology of the natural sciences is a deeply flawed endeavor. Later, Dilthey's methodological concerns will be revived and expanded upon and since much of the debates which take place between these two factions in the latter half of the 20th century surround precisely this question of the (im)possibility of a sound methodology, Dilthey's project is worth a closer examination.

This project notably included a draft for a Critique of Historical Reason, whose first section expands on the triad of lived experience, expression and understanding, which can effectively be taken as forming Dilthey's hermeneutical formula. Obviously modeled on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Dilthey argues that the draft embodies an effort encompassing Kant's work (reason happens in life after all) and thus is to be considered the more fundamental undertaking. It even comes complete with its own set of historical categories, of which meaning is the most important, an 'all-inclusive category' on which all other categories depend and which designates 'the special relation that the parts have to the whole within life.'[75] Meaning is what the understanding of life looks for in the expressions of man, so the hermeneutical triad is ranked from the elementary and inner content of lived experience through its public expression to the higher levels of understanding, which provide the widest context. More specifically, Dilthey is interested in grasping the direct contact we are said to have with life, an experience which 'does not stand over against an observer as an object, but its existence for me is indistinguishable from what in it is there for me.'[76] It is a unitary meaning 'which forms a unity of presence in the flow of time...[and] is the smallest unit definable as a lived experience.'[77] Intrinsically temporal and never static, the unity of meaning encompasses both the memory of the past and the anticipation of the future and thus should be recognized as the basic historical unit which can form more comprehensive units linked by shared meanings. The method of the human sciences takes aim at these meanings communicated to us by others in their expressive manifestations of life. Of the three possible classes of these expressions,[78] those that express lived experience come closest to the spiritual meaning of the whole life-nexus. The example often given is great works of art, which strive to put forward their spiritual content in a way that does not misrepresent its author; such works stand fixed, truthful and mark a sphere in which life discloses itself at a depth inaccessible to theoretical reflection. Thus the understanding is not a cognitive operation of the mind like in the natural sciences, where the goal is to consciously acquire objects so as to explain to others what has been grasped. Rather, Diltheyan understanding seeks a glimpse at the overall

connectedness and unity of a person, an artwork or a text in its overall life-relationship, moving from particular to particular to try to grasp its meaning or else moving from particulars to try to establish a universal law. But higher understanding goes furthest, trying to establish a structure or ordering system that gathers individual cases as parts of a whole. Not only does the text embody the inner world of experience of its author, as had been the case for Schleiermacher. It is now said to also embody the socio-historical world itself. By seeing how the operations of understanding take place within an 'insoluble riddle,'[79] namely, the hermeneutical principle of the reciprocal relation between the part and the whole, Dilthey effectively renews and greatly expands the project of Schleiermacher's general hermeneutics by placing it at the cornerstone of the formation of the historical world in the human sciences. With the 20th century poised to give birth to new fields which will increasingly problematize the hermeneutical project as it further develops and to which it will be forced to react, Dilthey may be said to stand at the closure of classical thought on meaning.

1.3 The Rise and Debates over Hermeneutical Phenomenology

The truly irreversible turn for hermeneutics comes with the 1927 publication of *Being and Time*,[80] where Heidegger effectively crosses hermeneutical theory with phenomenology. What eventually results from this effort is the hermeneutical phenomenological approach which has come to dominate 20th century thinking on meaning. The urgency of examining this approach is thus great yet because it was originally constituted through the melding of two disciplines, one that was centuries old and the other mere decades old, systematically reviewing this approach proves difficult and especially so given the decision to deal with hermeneutics and phenomenology in separate chapters. Given this division, Heidegger will be formally examined in the following chapter where it will be made clear why he should be placed more in line with the great phenomenologists of the past century rather than within the hermeneutical tradition. Of course as the discussion in this section will be permeated with Heidegger's thought, it may prove useful to read Section 2.1 concurrently, where an account of his break from Husserl, the father of phenomenology, is provided.

One must also make a similar decision with respect to Bultmann. As a student and colleague of Heidegger's, we could equally consider him a phenomenologist, yet given that he is a Protestant theologian whose interest is more narrowly focused on the meaning of Scripture, it seems reasonable to treat Bultmann instead as a thinker who has primarily hermeneutical concerns. So he, along with Ebeling, will be examined in this section. He actually serves as an excellent introduction to hermeneutical phenomenology, directly and concisely addressing *the* theoretical problem Heidegger had with his teacher Husserl when the latter claimed to have discovered a presuppositionless methodological approach with his new school of phenomenology. Bultmann clearly agrees with Heidegger's demonstration of the

impossibility of this claim in his brief essay which fittingly asks 'Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?'[81] Even his provisionally positive response to this question is illuminating and demonstrates how his work as a whole has integrally and creatively restated the cumulative wisdom of classical Protestant theology. Critiqued numerous times above, the Roman Catholic Church's penchant for allegorical interpretation is here also rejected since such interpretation is said to amount to dogmatism whereby the results of exegesis are presupposed, for any 'exegesis that is guided by dogmatic prejudices does not hear what the texts says, but only lets the latter say what it wants to hear.'[82] What follows is the more proper answer to the essay's question, how '*no* exegesis is without presuppositions, inasmuch as the exegete is not a *tabula rasa*, but on the contrary, approaches the text with specific questions or with a specific way of raising questions and thus has a certain idea of the subject matter with which the text is concerned.'[83] Bultmann does not simply speak here of the commonsensical notion of individual biases and weaknesses which are brought inadvertently into interpretation, since these can be eliminated via education. In line with the thinkers examined in Section 1.2, he argues instead that one cannot dismiss the presupposition of the historical method of interrogating texts. For this allows for the possibility of exhibiting and connecting the causal forces, motives and consequences of events and to understand them as a closed unity embedded in the whole historical process.[84] Yet not only must these forces and events – the subject matter of history – be understood so as to serve as a presupposition for historical understanding; the further presupposition of historical understanding is the *relation* of the interpreter to this subject matter directly or indirectly expressed in texts. This 'actual life-context in which the interpreter stands' is what is presupposed by exegesis and the specific understanding of the subject matter of the text reached on the basis of this 'life-relation' to it is what Bultmann calls a 'preunderstanding.'[85]

It is with this notion (given different names by Heidegger, Gadamer and others) and its underlying logic that 20th century hermeneutical phenomenology expressly goes further than 19th century hermeneutical methodology. Texts now are thought to really begin to speak to us when we approach them alive with our own problems and in learning what they have to say we simultaneously gain knowledge of ourselves. Borrowing a term from Heidegger, he calls this type of encounter, which shares in responsibility for it, an *existentiell* encounter, a participation in history with one's whole existence and which invalidates the epistemological subject-object schema of natural science. The ramifications of this line of thinking are striking. Since the preunderstanding can never be closed, historical knowledge can never arrive at a definitive state. Certainly there are historical facts, such as the date of 'the assassination of Caesar or Luther's posting of the ninety-five theses. But what these events that can thus be dated *mean* as historical events cannot be definitively fixed. Hence one must say that a historical event is always first knowable for what it is – precisely as a historical event – in the future. And therefore one can also say that

the future of a historical event belongs to that event.'[86] This idea of a future orientation to historical events is a great theme in his work on the New Testament. We will turn to this momentarily, but for the moment it is important to note how the phenomena of history have something to say in the *hic et nunc*, opening themselves in their meaning only to the interpreter who approaches them alive with questions. Thus echoing Nietzsche's insight more than sixty years later, historical research is never finalized as each generation can expand upon the previous meaning taken from historical events since different meanings result from different questions posed as per different generational preunderstandings. Although Bultmann does suggest the above analysis concerns the interpretation of any text, he feels it is especially applicable to Scripture. This is so because the exegete is particularly moved by the *existentiell* question for God and the attendant demand for a decision regarding the claim encountered in Scripture, resulting in a confession of faith or the expression of unfaith. Either choice is legitimately met with an appropriate understanding of Scripture yet it is important to note that this understanding stays open, for the meaning it discloses must be realized anew in every future.[87]

Published in the same year as the above essay, *History and Eschatology: The Presence of Eternity* (1957)[88] takes the reader on a whirlwind historical tour from the ancient Greeks and biblical times to the present to lead up to the thesis that Christianity is peculiar in its conception of man as a being 'who understands his historicity radically...[and] who understands his genuine self as an ever-future one.'[89] Moreover, he argues that historical consciousness in large part arose *because* of Christianity. Indeed the two intertwining themes of future orientation and the proper grasp of historical meanings as both rooted in the Christian tradition are suggested by the very title of his book. Sketching the tour this book takes the reader through offers an opportunity to retrace our own path taken above but not without expanding its scope backward in time due to Bultmann's hermeneutical phenomenological reading of the ancient New Testament text.

He first sets up a problematic. Consistent with his Protestantism, in the first chapter he locates the beginnings of the modern striving for freedom with the Reformation's break from Church authority. Yet soon after man becomes the object of (or subject to) science. With the Romantic break from the Enlightenment, faith in universal reason vanishes and the quest for historical truth becomes meaningless. Man, at the mercy of history, is plunged into an historical relativity whose effects are still felt today. From the third chapter onward, it is argued that a return to Scripture offers salvation from this nihilism. Bultmann argues that the earliest writings of this ancient text in fact record the very first detections of meaning in history and human life. Yet early Christian thought only understands such meaning from the standpoint of eschatology, the end of the world; more specifically, the conscious meaning of both the past and the present world is swallowed up in the expected coming of Christ (parousia: the Second Coming),

which accompanies the eschatological moment. With St. Paul, however, Christianity achieves a maturity of thought whereby the meaning of history is understood *from* the eschatological point of view. This is so because 'for the believer who is "in Christ" *the decisive event has already happened*.' At the same time, Paul's proclamation that Christ has arisen sets aside any interest one could have in the history of any particular nation (Israel) or the world itself, as 'he brings to light another phenomenon, the historicity of man'[90] whose Christian 'life is a continuous being on the way, between the "no longer" and the "not yet."'[91] This achievement of conceiving the present as a time between the past (resurrection of Christ) and the future (parousia at the end of the world) could not be maintained as the expected future course failed to materialize. Bultmann argues that the developing Church compensated for this failure through sacramentalism, which effectively neutralized eschatology in its universal form; the Church, binding these sacraments to its office, opted instead to offer them as a guarantee for the salvation of the individual soul. The eschatological beyond, at once embodied in the sacramental object, is now also pushed into an indefinite future. In such circumstances, the Church naturally turned its gaze inward to examine its own history and in doing so eventually a general historical concern arose.

Bultmann's point here is that with the eventual secularization of the historical concern, whether in the guise of closely approximating the Church's view that historical events have meaning with respect to a divine teleology via the notion of scientific progress or else abandoning the quest for meaning of history altogether in a philosophy of historical relativism, the real subject of history is lost. This subject, the real core of history from which history ultimately gains its essential meaning, can be expressed in 'what Idealism has taken over from the Christian tradition, namely, the will of man who apprehends responsibility for himself,' the man who takes responsibility for the past as *his* past and for the future as *his* future.[92] Bultmann attempts to mark this loss by differentiating between his own revival of Pauline historicity, which began to re-emerge in Romanticism, from historicism, a poorer secularized version of historical consciousness. Whereas the latter 'misunderstands the determination [of the present] by the past as purely causal determination and...the future as determined by the past through causality instead of being open,' the former properly treats the present as 'the moment of decision' by which 'the yield of the past is gathered in and the meaning of the future is chosen. This is the character of every historical situation; in it the problem and the meaning of past and future are enclosed and are waiting, as it were, to be unveiled by human decisions.'[93] As these decisions are informed by the questions the interpreter puts to a text, which arise from his preunderstanding, the question which immediately arises for the otherwise uninitiated reader is whether objective historical knowledge is possible under his schematic. Indeed a series of thinkers are examined below who challenge Bultmann (along with Ebeling and Gadamer who hold logically homologous viewpoints) and who level the charge that the subjective element is simply too

high in this approach. Yet Bultmann offers what can be seen as the standard defense of this approach, turning what looks like a weakness into a strength. That is, although an absolute objective knowledge can never be reached as there is no Archimedean point outside history from which to assess the objective meaning of history as a whole, it is *because* of this that only the interpreter truly excited by his participation in history and his responsibility for the future can effectively grasp history. As he succinctly puts it: 'In this sense the most subjective interpretation of history is at the same time the most objective.'[94] His own twist on this defense is that he finds this logic peculiarly Christian. He argues that the freedom presupposed for historical decisions is not a simple possession of man but a gift 'by which man becomes free from himself in order to gain himself' via the revelation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, who is the eschatological event which ends the old world; this is not as an established fact of the past but is something repeatedly present and ever addressing man.[95] Each instant thus has the possibility of being an eschatological instant, but only in Christian faith can this possibility be further realized. Bultmann concludes that if '*the meaning in history lies always in the present*,' then only when this present is conceived as the eschatological present by Christian faith can this meaning be realized.[96] The exegete must hear the meaning of the word of Scripture anew each time as its historical meaning is only realized as lying in an eschatological present and is thus grasped only in a present moment by responsible decisions which orient this moment to the future.

When Bultmann writes how '[e]very moment is the *now* of responsibility, of decision' and further that '[i]n this responsibility, as responsibility over against the past as well as over against the future, the unity of history is grounded,'[97] it seems that a part of history (man) is argued to ground the whole of history. As might be expected this greatly problematizes the hermeneutical circle, for one can no longer neatly distinguish the whole from its parts. Ebeling, a student of Bultmann's, tackles such hermeneutical questions more directly. But again he does so within Protestant theology, for he is certainly driven, like Bultmann, by a compulsion to arrive at the saving meaningfulness of the Scriptural text. Yet the 'New Hermeneutic' with which Ebeling has come to be associated contains a discernible theoretical shift to a concern for language. This new approach is concisely articulated in his article "Word of God and Hermeneutic" (1959)[98] which also, like Bultmann, opens with an attempt to ground itself by re-contextualizing its historical precedents in light of its new discovery. Taking this 'light' in a somewhat literal sense, we can say Ebeling sees himself as the heir to the Reformers and their belief that 'Scripture possesses *claritas*, i.e., it has illuminating power, so that a clarifying light shines from it.'[99] Such a conception is in accordance with the Reformer's principle of *sola scriptura* which pits the sole authority of Scripture itself against the dogmatic insistence of tradition which constituted the answer of the Church to the hermeneutical problem of correct understanding of revelation as testified in Scripture. But Luther's

once promising doctrine of the *claritas scripturae* eventually gives way to an orthodoxy which 'identifies Scripture and the word of God without distinction' or else tones down its thesis to allow for hermeneutical work by considering distinctive meanings as standing behind or buried deep within Scriptural text.[100] Ebeling retorts that what is overlooked by orthodoxy is the real nature of the event in the process of this text becoming proclamation. Hermeneutics is to facilitate this proclamation, the *kerygma*, through a focus on the spoken word as event. Indeed the phrase 'word-event theology' is often used interchangeably with 'New Hermeneutic' when characterizing this approach.

But where exactly is the hermeneutical problem for Ebeling? Like for Bultmann and for all significant hermeneuts since Schleiermacher (who is discussed quite favorably by Ebeling), hermeneutics is a theory of the understanding. Yet he departs from this conception, taking a broader view than even Bultmann, for whom the ultimate horizon is man's existential self-understanding directed toward the future. With Ebeling, hermeneutics is now also a theory of words. In a sentence often cited in the secondary literature, he writes that '[t]*he primary phenomenon in the realm of understanding is not understanding* OF *language, but understanding* THROUGH *language*.'[101] He explains that the word is what opens up, mediates and brings something to understanding and when this word-event is hindered, hermeneutics is required. So hermeneutics has as its object the word-event and thus at once also attends to the subject matter brought to understanding; yet curiously the role Ebeling reserves for hermeneutics is the more traditional one of removing obstacles. However, this does not prevent him from holding to the more modern notion of denying the distinction between interpretation and hermeneutical methodology since the latter is ultimately an interpretation as well. Here lies 'the famous hermeneutical circle in its methodological significance for hermeneutic itself,' which touches upon the 'ultimate mysteries of the ground of understanding.'[102] Although much more complex, Ebeling reiterates here Schleiermacher's thesis of how the hermeneutical circle stands as the condition of understanding. But he articulates a further implication of this logic which certainly bears the mark of his former teacher. As he writes, 'it is part of the phenomenon of understanding that the ground of the understanding, being a point beyond which no further questioning is possible, confronts us with a decision.'[103] However, it seems that if this configuration opens a radical abyss of subjective freedom, it is nevertheless quickly filled since it is quite clear to Ebeling 'that God's word is the ultimate ground of understanding because it is here in the last analysis that word is encountered as word and understanding as understanding.'[104] If word in the New Hermeneutic is what unites God and man, word of God as inscribed in Scripture would even doubly perform this function. But God's word is always a spoken word for Ebeling. It is never the dead writing of the text itself that should interest us, but rather its transition to the spoken word during the sermon, which allows the proclamation 'that has taken place' to become 'proclamation that takes place.'[105] In this

way the sermon should be thought of as the execution of the aim of Scriptural text to bring this past proclamation into the present and the eminent function of hermeneutics is to aid this process, ideally removing any obstacles to the word-event so as to bring to the understanding a present experience of the past which, as he also notes, is also not without its futurity.

Yet despite the potential applicability of the methodological approach of Bultmann's existential theology or Ebeling's New Hermeneutic to any text, the theological vehicle it was delivered in virtually ensured it would remain in relative obscurity. These men argued that not only did hermeneutical phenomenology originally arise from Christian thought, but that its most consequential application was to the New Testament. While the secular world could perhaps live with these religious origins, it could not abide the limited applicability of this approach to the religious sphere and thus this type of methodology would accordingly be ignored. Nor could the first architect of hermeneutical phenomenology be counted on to popularize his own revolutionary hermeneutical technique. First, Heidegger's *Being and Time* was impenetrable to any interpreter unwilling to devote serious study to its subject matter. Second, Heidegger soon afterward turned away from hermeneutics only to briefly flirt with it again decades later. Thus it would take an event of some magnitude to put hermeneutical phenomenology on the map. From the benefit of hindsight over half a century later, that event was Gadamer's 1960 publication of *Truth and Method*. In a word, this landmark publication made Heidegger's crossing of hermeneutics with phenomenology widely accessible to researchers in the human sciences. But Gadamer's brand of hermeneutical phenomenology would prove divisive to say the least and would quickly find itself in a defensive position as scholars from diverse fields would take immediate issue with its methodology, or more precisely, its lack of methodology. For the title of his book is rather ironic and might read instead 'Truth, not Method.' As he writes in his Introduction, the 'hermeneutical phenomenon is basically not a problem of method at all' since what concerns us in the human sciences are 'modes of experience in which a truth is communicated that cannot be verified by the methodological means proper to science.'[106] This claim will provoke many methodological-minded scholars, and the debates which ensue over the next two decades[107] will accordingly engage this fundamental question as well as other issues which prove foundational for the human sciences. From the point of view of these debates as ultimately unresolved, one could say that Gadamer's work stands as that which continues to divide much of the subsequent interpretive work in the human sciences into two camps to this day. In terms of the debates themselves, on one side there is the spirited negative reaction to Gadamer by the likes of Betti, Hirsch, Apel and especially Habermas, who all effectively call for a return to a pre-Heideggerian use of hermeneutics to reestablish a general methodological textual approach. On the other side Palmer, Teigas and others are more receptive to Gadamer's approach. Ricoeur, however, seems to have gotten the last word in these

debates. From his 1960's staunch defense of hermeneutical phenomenology against the inroads made by structuralism and psychoanalysis regarding the status of meaning to his 1970's schematization of the respective histories and interaction of the hermeneutical and phenomenological fields, he sets down a series of binary terms (*e.g.* epistemology-ontology, explanation-understanding, subjectivity-objectivity and intuition-dialogue) that proves influential to contextualize future discussion. His overall call for a return to epistemological questions forgotten in the wake of the ontological turn of Heidegger and Gadamer is briefly reviewed below, along with other key players and peripheral figures with respect to their contribution to the so-called 'Gadamer debates.'

The massive undertaking that is *Truth and Method* begins with a critique of modern aesthetic consciousness (largely from Kant onward) to argue how the experience of truth happens in understanding art without reliance on an *a priori* method, to end with a discussion of the ontological turn to language and its implications for hermeneutics. Our present focus is on its longer second part, which begins with an historical review of hermeneutics from the Enlightenment of Chladenius, through Ast, Humboldt, Droysen, Boeckh, Nietzsche, but especially Schleiermacher[108] and Dilthey. As we saw above, Dilthey views expressions as the objectifications of life so he reasons that it should be possible to reach an objectively valid knowledge in the human sciences on par with that of the natural sciences. Yet this aim is in tension with Dilthey's insight into how our consciousness is historically conditioned. This for Gadamer is the fundamental conflict in Dilthey's methodological project, something 'Dilthey thought about...tirelessly. He was always attempting to legitimate the knowledge of what was historically conditioned as an achievement of objective science, despite the fact that the knower is himself conditioned.'[109] Over and over again Gadamer reiterates how Dilthey's epistemological aspirations for the human sciences are simply incompatible with his life philosophy since the former presumes the ability of the investigator to subtract himself from the historical flux, yet the occupation of such an Archimedean point proves impossible, as Dilthey himself is well aware. Yet it is important to note that Gadamer does not dismiss Dilthey for attempting to achieve objectivity for the human sciences, but only for his aspirations for *scientific* objectivity, which only proves his 'unresolved Cartesianism.'[110] As Gadamer writes,

> 'Dilthey's concept of inductive procedure, borrowed from the natural sciences, is inadequate. Fundamentally, historical experience...is not a procedure and does not have the anonymity of a method. Admittedly, one can derive general rules of experience from it, but their methodological value is not that of laws under which all cases could be clearly subsumed...In view of this situation it must be admitted that knowledge in the human sciences is not the same as in the inductive sciences, but has quite a different kind of objectivity and is acquired in a quite different way.'[111]

As the title of a key subsection in his book suggests, this different kind of objectivity is reached through 'Heidegger's Project of a Hermeneutic Phenomenology' where Heidegger builds on Husserl's phenomenology to conceive a kind of objectivity standing outside the subject-object dichotomy. More

specifically, it was Husserl's contention that all the beings in the subject's world stand within an intentional horizon of consciousness he called a 'life-world' and, together with his analysis 'of the anonymous creation of meaning that forms the ground of experience,' the objectivity of science came to be viewed as a special case of this intentionality of universal life. With the 'new and radical turn in light of the question of being,' scientific objectivity was equally demoted by Heidegger, this time articulated as a subspecies of that legitimate understanding which comprises 'the *original form of the realization of Dasein* [being-there], which is being-in-the-world.'[112] Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology effectively reverses all past approaches based on the way in which the world belongs to human subjects; instead, the trick is to conceive of the way in which human subjects belong to the world. This belongingness arises through the process of understanding, the process through which one exists as a human being and the process which underscores all scientific understandings. The interpretation of understanding is thus ontological, describing the process of being thrown into the world in a present which is oriented both toward the past and the future. In a word, 'the structure of Dasein is thrown projection' such that the realization of its own being is at once understanding.[113] This should sound familiar after the above discussions of Bultmann and Ebeling and as a fellow hermeneutical phenomenologist, Gadamer certainly also grasps the circular structure of understanding Heidegger derived from the temporality of *Dasein*. But what are Gadamer's particular contributions to this notion of understanding as a thrown projection?

The 'thrown' of this phrase indexes the temporal element of the past, indicating how we always already understand in some fashion. This is due to what Heidegger called the fore-structures of understanding or what Bultmann simply calls preunderstanding. Since all acts of understanding begin with these fore-structures, it is clear that one cannot escape the hermeneutical circle to attain direct knowledge, and for Gadamer this point of departure is inherited tradition. Gadamer provocatively uses the word 'prejudices' to collectively designate Heidegger's fore-structures and to put into question both the Enlightenment's too easy rejection of the authority of tradition in the name of reason as well as the Romantic overreaction which simply reversed this negative reception to blindly embrace the inherited prejudices of the past. As Gadamer uses it, prejudice is a prejudgment and has an intended neutral connotation until a final judgment is rendered. Moreover, he follows Heidegger's phenomenological path with respect to how this final judgment can be reached. As with Heidegger, who seeks to properly ground his fore-structures of understanding on the things themselves, so too with Gadamer, who is equally concerned with the productive possibility of the hermeneutical circle of understanding and thus seeks the ground for distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate prejudices.[114] This is important since not all of the interpreter's prejudices carried in with him when he engages with a text are legitimate, so there must be

some way to reject those undesirable prejudices acquired by chance or popular conception. In blatant opposition to the disposition of Enlightenment thinkers, Gadamer finds reason to acknowledge authority *qua* authority and thus a large part of his project can be seen as a rehabilitation of the authority of tradition so as to prove that it harbors legitimate prejudices. He reasons that we rightly acknowledge a teacher or expert 'as superior to oneself in judgment and insight and that for this reason his judgment takes precedence – i.e., it has priority over one's own.'[115] As well, tradition 'needs to be affirmed, embraced, cultivated. It is, essentially, preservation...[which] is an act of reason, though an inconspicuous one.'[116] If something has stood the test of time, it has most likely been judged as worthy and thus is a possible source for legitimate prejudices. Our interaction with a classic text is such a source and Gadamer often returns to it for the lessons it bestows. Passed down to us through tradition, the interpretation of a classic text illustrates how the '[*u*]*nderstanding is to be thought of less as a subjective act than as participating in an event of tradition*, a process of transmission in which past and present are constantly mediated. This is what must be validated by hermeneutical theory, which is far too dominated by the idea of a procedure, a method.'[117]

Yet understanding also has the temporal element of the future and the 'projection' part of the phrase 'thrown projection' captures just that. Here is the activity of the interpreter caught in the hermeneutical circle, involving a projection or 'anticipation of meaning in which the whole... envisaged becomes actual understanding when the parts that are determined by the whole themselves also determine this whole.'[118] Correct understanding is when all the particular details harmonize with the whole. Thus far this is just a more sophisticated articulation of the hermeneutical circle. But when this future oriented movement of the interpreter is combined with his thrown-ness into tradition, a much more sophisticated logic results, and Gadamer takes pains at demonstrating how tradition is not simply a static or permanent precondition but is itself something the interpreter co-determines. To see this we should recognize in Gadamer's 'fore-conception of completeness' the condensation of the two temporal elements whereby the interpreter prejudicially assumes or projects an immanent unity of meaning to the text before him. In this way 'the circle of understanding is not a "methodological" circle, but describes an element of the ontological structure of understanding'[119] whereby the interpreter could be said to pulsate between the strangeness of a traditionary text and its projected familiarity. This is a favorable situation as it enables the interpreter to call into question his prejudices, which otherwise would go unexamined. So too with temporal distance between the interpreter and the text, which classical hermeneutic thought struggled to overcome. In contrast, Gadamer recognizes the productive nature of this distance; in fact, the greater the distance the more likely it is that the interpreter will confront those other prejudices found in previous generational readings of the text which results in calling his own prejudices into question. This

favorable result opens up future projections of meanings and possibilities for the interpreter. History is thus effective in the event of understanding, and Gadamer calls upon us to become reflectively aware of this, of standing within the hermeneutical circle of understanding. This is possible due to our possession of a 'historically effected consciousness.'[120] To aid us in grasping this, he utilizes the term 'horizon' to designate one's inherited set of prejudices, which establishes one's sphere of possible meaning. The term as well suggests how this set can change, possibly contracting through the exclusion of a subset of prejudices or else expanding to encompass a larger set. Now for Gadamer, when the interpreter endeavors to understand a text, he actually projects the text's horizon and its attendant prejudices within his own initial horizon. And the interpreter is to become aware of this, to consciously use his fore-conception of completeness to fine-tune his horizon so as to fuse it with the projected historical horizon of the text itself. In other words, this latter horizon must be experienced as always already having been projected within one's inherited set of prejudices. Thus '*understanding is always the fusion of these horizons supposedly existing by themselves*.'[121] In this way the interpreter's encounter with a text allows for a new understanding to arise and for changes in the horizon of meaning.

In this manner Gadamer believes he has overcome the Diltheyan desire to establish an objective epistemological methodology for the human sciences. Through the extension of Heidegger's initial phenomenological break and the secularization of the theological projects of Bultmann and Ebeling, the adaptation of the new hermeneutical phenomenological approach to textual analysis in the human sciences is now accomplished and available in accessible form in *Truth and Method*. The response is swift. Within two years Betti publishes a booklet entitled "Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften*" (1962),[122] which not only specifically targets Gadamer, but as well Heidegger, Bultmann and Ebeling. The work laments in its opening lines their move away from Ast, Schleiermacher, Humboldt, Droysen, Boeckh and the rich hermeneutical heritage of the Romantic period in general. In a word Betti quite simply sees Gadamer et al. as a threat to the legitimacy of referring to objects of interpretation and thus to the objectivity of interpretation itself and this 'negation of objectivity we, as historians, have to oppose with all firmness.'[123]

As suggested by its title, his work seeks a return to the Diltheyan notion of mental objectifications, which Betti calls 'meaning-full forms,' to conceive interpretation as a triadic process in which the interpreter apprehends these forms so as to reconstruct the creative thought of the author and the original meaning of his text. So where Gadamer turns away from the subject-object schema, Betti sees in it a productive and indispensible vehicle for achieving objective standards for interpretation and accordingly offers four canons to reach these standards, two of which concern the object of interpretation and two with its subject. The first is the 'hermeneutical autonomy of the object,' which stresses how the

meaning-full forms in a text 'should be judged in relation to the standards immanent in the [author's] original intention.'[124] We are decidedly not to judge them according to their suitability for other purposes deemed relevant to the interpreter, which is what Betti sees Gadamer's approach encouraging. The second is the 'coherence of meaning' or 'the principle of totality' from which it is assumed that from a unitary mind will spring a whole textual meaning which can be derived from its individual elements, with the latter in turn only understandable with reference to the comprehensive whole of which it is a part – a clear articulation of the hermeneutical circle. He speaks favorably here of Schleiermacher, from whom he often takes his own measure, arguing that this Romantic is misread by Gadamer. On the subjective side, the third canon of the 'actuality of understanding' agrees in principle with Bultmann's preunderstanding inasmuch as it recognizes how the interpreter's own experience will impact his understanding of a text. Yet Bultmann goes too far to suggest that 'it is impossible to maintain a clear distinction between the knowing subject and his object.'[125] For Betti sees Bultmann completely overshadowing the object with the subjective side of interpretation. Likewise Gadamer's fore-conception of completeness equally 'rests on self-deception, i.e., it does not provide a reliable criterion for the correctness of understanding.'[126] In general, a fundamental reason why Gadamer et al. do not adhere to these canons is that these men all fail to adhere to the fundamental distinction between interpretation and understanding, a distinction held to for centuries prior to Heidegger.[127] Betti effectively argues that when interpretation is no longer thought of as an action and a procedure that aims for and results in the outcome of understanding, the very integrity of objective valid results in the human sciences is challenged. The subjectivism and relativism to which Gadamer has led the human sciences must be forcefully addressed.

But perhaps the fourth canon and its surrounding discussion provides the key to why this first response to Gadamer's work is the most polemic of all responses. In order to see this, recall how for Gadamer the projection of the text's meaning occurs within the interpreter's horizon so that understanding is always the fusion of these two horizons. We can now go further and introduce Gadamer's thesis that what is essential for projecting this historical horizon is application, something that must be considered 'as integral a part of the hermeneutical process as are understanding and interpretation.'[128] Gadamer explains that where Romantic hermeneutics absorbed *subtilitas explicandi* (interpretation or explanation) by *subtilitas intelligendi* (understanding) starting with the work of Schleiermacher (which Betti denies), we must now add to this a third element, *subtilitas applicandi* (application) to comprise one unified process of understanding (and thus adding insult to injury in Betti's mind). To show how application is just as much a phase in the process of understanding as interpretation, Gadamer uses the example of legal hermeneutics to consider two cases of understanding a law. On the one hand, a judge may need to understand how the law applies to a particular case in circumstances not

anticipated by the lawmakers and thus may need to establish a new precedent case that correctly realizes the original intent and meaning of the law. On the other hand is the case of the legal historian. If he is interested in explicating the true meaning of the law he is not to just consider its application when the law was first created; rather, he must also consider the history of its precedent cases since '[t]rying to understand the law in terms of its historical origin, the historian cannot disregard its continuing effect.'[129] In reading Betti's booklet it is clear Gadamer's argument vexes its author, especially when we learn Betti himself is an Italian jurist and legal historian by trade. At the theoretical level, Gadamer is effectively disregarding the fourth canon of the 'hermeneutical correspondence of meaning' or 'meaning-adequacy in understanding,' which says that since 'it is the case that mind alone can address mind, then it follows that only a mind of equal stature and congenial disposition can gain access to, and understand, another mind in a meaningfully adequate way. An actual interest in understanding is by itself not enough, however lively it may be.'[130] Certainly with Gadamer still in mind, Betti five pages later argues how one must be an expert and properly trained in his respective field to properly understand the meaning-content of texts in that field; so if that field is law, the historian of law must have expert familiarity with the conceptual tools of legal dogmatics. Only in this way can one reach the technical interpretation necessary to unearth the specific laws of formation underlying objectifications of mental life and turn to the structural analysis of meaning-full forms, which is necessary for their correct understanding. This, together with the three other hermeneutical canons, form for Betti the proper methodological focus for tackling our common hermeneutical problematic as it comes into focus in the field of the human sciences.

From an entirely different quarter, Hirsch follows Betti's critique of Gadamer's alleged subjectivism and relativism in an essay appended to his *Validity in Interpretation* (1967)[131] first published two years prior to this book. Properly speaking, this book is the first treatise in general hermeneutics written in English but its audience was rather confined to the isolated community of American literary criticism, whose cherished assumptions the book challenged by arguing that hermeneutics should serve as the foundational discipline for all literary interpretation – just not the hermeneutical phenomenological approach exemplified by Gadamer. For Gadamer's

> 'attack on the philological tradition in Germany and its "naïve" aspirations to objectivity...[and] the new hermeneutics Gadamer offers to replace the tradition of Schleiermacher, Humboldt, Droysen, Boeckh, Steinthal, Dilthey and Simmel may be more destructive in its implications than he had reckoned. In any case, this theory contains inner conflicts and inconsistencies which not one of the above masters would have allowed to pass into print.'[132]

To demonstrate this inconsistency, Hirsch quotes from *Truth and Method* to the effect that Gadamer too recognizes the dangers of the relativism implied by historicity. He then examines a few principle concepts said to have been designed by Gadamer to address this danger and judges them to be failures. For instance, with respect to tradition, Hirsch correctly states how for Gadamer the meaning of a text lies in

its subject matter, which is independent of its author and reader (though shared by both). Since Gadamer argues that understanding is not a reproductive but a productive activity, Hirsch reasons the text would then have an indeterminate meaning since 'the meaning of the text is a never-ending array of possible meanings lying in wait for a never-ending array of interpreters.'[133] Hence Gadamer is inconsistent, expressly rejecting relativism but accepting the productivity of interpretation, which can only lead to relativism. Hirsch also finds evidence of inconsistency when Gadamer seems to express meaning as self-identical through its repetitive reapplication to different interpretative horizons, yet more often backs away from this to expressly deny the existence of any such original meaning. Thirdly, Hirsch challenges Gadamer's notion of the fusion of horizons as secretly presupposing an understanding of the original text before a fusion takes place within interpretation. The implication here is that Gadamer's denial of a distinction between the activities of interpretation and understanding is a lapse into relativism and also inconsistent with his formal rejection of it. In general, Hirsch sees Gadamer's extension of Heidegger's doctrine of radical historicity as the source of relativism and thus something which cannot be maintained[134] along with his doctrine of prejudice, which forms his version of the hermeneutical circle. While the latter has merit, Hirsch concludes against Gadamer that neither prejudices nor the hermeneutical circle is fully inescapable as objectivity *can* be reached.

To better appreciate Hirsch's position, his overall theory of interpretation as embodied in his book must be outlined. As suggested by the title of this work, Hirsch lays down his principles within a belief that valid interpretations can be achieved. Yet he carefully emphasizes how validity is not the same as certainty. Consistent with his defense of philology, the primary source of valid interpretation is the original author, who must be seen as the determiner of the meaning of a text. However, Hirsch notes that since the mid-1920s there has been 'a heavy and largely victorious assault on the sensible belief that a text means what its author meant.'[135] The reasons for this 'banishment' of the author and the resulting rejection of 'the only compelling normative principle that could lend validity to an interpretation' are numerous and complex.[136] His stance is clearly influenced by the Husserlian theory of meaning which is examined in Chapter 2 below. Briefly, Hirsch holds that the author's meaning is 'universally compelling and generally sharable'[137] because it is a self-identical, determinant and unchanging object intended by the author's will which can be reproduced by 'a deliberate reconstruction of the author's subjective stance.'[138] Gadamer's theory of the projection of historical horizons and the notion of application of course rules out the doubling of consciousness, which would be needed to accomplish this reconstruction, but Hirsch, following Schleiermacher and Dilthey, believes consciousness can indeed be split into two: one which reconstructs the author's stance, and one which preserves its own stance. Hirsch is also influenced by Saussure, recognizing that the individual principle of willed authorial meaning is expressed in linguistic

signs. If so, he reasons there is a larger social principle at stake in the governance of meaning involving the subsumption of the text under its proper linguistic genre.[139] Thus an effort is made to systematically classify genres, types and traits to redefine 'the whole' and give to 'the part' an autonomy which 'not only describes more accurately the interpretative process but also resolves a troublesome paradox,' that is, it makes 'the hermeneutical circle...less mysterious and paradoxical than many in the German hermeneutical tradition have made it out to be.'[140] Another central thesis concerns a distinction he borrows from Boeckh. As seen above in Section 1.2, Boeckh's interpretation seeks to explicate textual meaning while criticism treats that textual meaning as a component within a larger context; Hirsch calls the object of the former meaning and the object of the latter the significance of the text.[141] So when Gadamer considers the series of changing contexts as integral to the complete meaning of a classic text, for Hirsch this is just the significance of the text's meaning to something else. In his eyes, Gadamer's failure to maintain this distinction makes him overlook how the meaning he purports to take from a text is only a name for the *relation* between the true meaning (as per authorial intent), and Gadamer's own personal valuation of the situation. For Hirsch, Gadamer at best deals in judgment and criticism. Perhaps most interestingly, Hirsch calls for making use of the scientific method of probability theory, that 'logic of uncertainty...fundamental to all the humane sciences as well,' to validate a true meaning since it also allows for qualitative judgments on whether a particular unknown is subsumable under a known class.[142]

Making use of procedures from the natural sciences takes on an even greater role in the work of Apel and Habermas, two similarly-minded German scholars who are equally dismayed with Gadamerian-styled research which expressly defies the need for methodology. This is obvious from the very descriptive title of Apel's essay "Scientistics, Hermeneutics, Critique of Ideology: An Outline of a Theory of Science from an Epistemological-Anthropological Point of View" (1968)[143] which will be discussed momentarily. But first there is an important difference to note between Betti-Hirsch and Apel-Habermas. Broadly speaking, while all four men endeavor to provide a solid methodological foundation for the human sciences in the spirit of Dilthey, Betti's and Hirsch's correctives to Gadamer are essentially a reactivation of Romantic hermeneutics. They thus lead us into a pre-Heideggerian position. In contrast, while Apel and Habermas are certainly not hermeneutical phenomenologists, they more fully confront the Heideggerian turn by taking the historicity of understanding as their point of departure. One way to recognize the difference between these two parties is by reference to Dilthey's notion of how meaning is embedded in the expressed objectifications of life. These are the objects of an objectively valid knowledge and form the basis of a methodology for all four men. Yet Apel and Habermas move one step further: they take this objectively understood meaning and confront it with the 'author's' self-understanding of the intentions underlying these expressions. Any gap between these two moments is then to be accounted for by

explanatory and interpretive procedures (of, say, psychoanalysis). From this perspective, while Betti and Hirsch's analysis of objectifications and authorial intent is done in a thorough enough fashion, they ultimately treat these two elements in relative isolation; whereas Apel and Habermas endeavor to think *objectivations* and authorial intent together as related dialectically. Given *this* object of the human sciences, the critical hermeneutics of Apel and Habermas should be considered empirical-materialist.[144]

In his essay Apel first establishes the need to radicalize and transform Kantian epistemology because 'a pure consciousness of objects, taken in itself, is not able to extract meaning from the world.'[145] He argues that we cannot meaningfully conceive any knowledge other than one which is meaningful *to us*, which is to say that if our cognitive consciousness is to constitute meaning, it must do so as 'bodily-engaged' in the *hic et nunc*. There is thus the need to supplement the reflective Kantian *a priori* of consciousness (*i.e.,* the inquiry into the conditions of the possibility of knowledge) with an engaged bodily *a priori* of knowledge.[146] These two stand in complementary relation with each other and give a more complete picture as to how we are practically interested beings even when we engage in highly theoretical pursuits. Having thus established what he means by the 'epistemological-anthropological point of view,' the remainder of the essay deals with the first three terms of its title. Roughly speaking, 'scientistics' is to the natural sciences as 'hermeneutics' is to the human sciences, and their dialectical interaction is called the 'critique of ideology.' On the one hand, Apel argues that although the natural sciences subordinate the understanding of the human sciences to its capacity for supplying explanations of causal forces, the former nevertheless needs the latter to fully account for the transmission of culture. Illustrating his reasoning through cases of historical events, it is clear that such events cannot simply be subsumed under general laws since the conditions for these events are not causes but rationales, the intentions of freely acting individuals. Citing Heidegger's 'being-in-the-world,'[147] the historian already belongs in history and herein lies the meaningful *a priori* transmission of history which, is just as relevant to the verification of scientific hypotheses as quantitative data. Moreover, as *a priori* it operates as a condition of possibility of natural science as well as its absolute limit. Yet Apel notes that this meaning-motivations dimension where the communication of tradition occurs can *itself* become a topic of scientific knowledge. But this 'possibility of a methodical-progressive objectivation of meaning in the hermeneutical sciences' is something which 'Gadamer disputes...[going] so far as to make the revocation of all methodical abstractions a precondition of the philosophical analysis of meaning in the hermeneutical sciences.'[148] On the other hand, Apel argues the reverse case: the human sciences need the methodology the natural sciences can provide since on its own the former is incapable of performing what it was originally meant to perform. He explains that the communication of tradition was institutionally established and socially binding for centuries. But after the Enlightenment fatally questioned the

immediacy of understanding tradition, the human sciences arose to address the deficit. Yet Apel judges that hermeneutics alone is incapable of performing the function of communicating tradition, as the fragmentation of what is to be understood is too great. He writes that '[i]f there is to be a rational integration of the results of the hermeneutical sciences at all, if this is not to be left to art or existential self-understanding, then this task...must also draw upon a further large group of sciences and a methodical way of thought which is reducible neither to scientific nor to hermeneutical inquiry.'[149] In contrast to Gadamer, what the model of psychoanalysis reveals to Apel is that we are not fully transparent to ourselves. Yet this can be overcome. When the psychoanalyst assumes a cognitive attitude of an objective distance from his patient, he is better positioned to understand the latter's 'nonunderstandable' personal history and analogously, historians can do the same with their objects of study. For example, by suspending the official motivations of politicians one can see that the true causal factors for World War I lay with imperialist desires to open new markets.[150] A psychoanalysis of human social history is thus called for, one which sets social-scientific explanation and historical-hermeneutical understanding of meaning-traditions into a dialectical mediation called the 'critique of ideology,' the latter of which serves 'to represent the only meaningful logical foundation and moral justification for the objectively explanatory sciences of man.'[151]

Habermas is also of the belief that hermeneutics and the scientific attitude are thoroughly complimentary in the human sciences. In the Preface to his *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1968) he states quite clearly how his aim is to reconstruct the prehistory of modern positivism so as to reclaim a theory of knowledge for human interests within a radical framework of self-reflection. In the initial chapters he explains how philosophy slowly abandoned its claims to epistemology and how the 'scientism' of the natural sciences – the positivist belief that its own methodology which lacks any capacity for self-reflection is knowledge itself – arose in its place.[152] He first provides an account of the demise of philosophy beginning with the failures of Kantian epistemology, which relied too heavily on empirical concepts from the physical sciences; then the promising critique of Kant by Hegelian reflection is examined, which also ends in failure since Hegel's philosophy of identity precludes epistemology (*i.e.*, the subject-object separation necessary for epistemology is ultimately denied by Hegel according to Habermas); to finally end up with Karl Marx's overcoming of Hegel, yet whose materialist approach proves too restrictive to prevent the positivist atrophy of epistemology since for Marx the human species' self-reflection is strictly conceived through labor alone. In the second part of this book the history of positivist thought, which replaced the abandoned concern for epistemology, is carefully examined. This is necessary because its illusory hold on us is so successful that it 'can no longer be dispelled by a return to Kant but only immanently – by forcing methodology to carry out a process of self-reflection in terms of its own

problems.'[153] This is a difficult undertaking since the effect of positivism has been to flatten out epistemology into methodology itself. In such a scenario the knowing subject is no longer the reference point and so the constitution of objects of possible experience is no longer problematic. And where there is no problem, the very enquiry into the meaning of these objects becomes superfluous and even appears to be an irrational pursuit. Habermas begins his historical analysis by first looking at the early positivism of Auguste Comte and Ernst Mach to trace back its removal of the knowing subject's capacity for reflection to their effacement of the metaphysical schema of essence and appearance. This effectively elevated and centered empirical facts as the only objects deemed worthy of its rule-bound methodological approach. However, the pragmatism of Charles Sanders Peirce fares better, being one of 'the first to gain clarity about the systematic meaning of [positivist] experience,'[154] yet Peirce ultimately did not grasp his own methodological investigation as a *self*-reflection of the sciences.

Nor did Dilthey. For Habermas, what Dilthey overlooks in his theory of the three classes of life expressions is their possible non-coordination with the intended meaning of its author, the case where objectivations do not effectively express the subject's meaning-intention. For example, the facial tick which unintentionally points to the fact that the speaker is lying. For Dilthey this type of scenario was a limiting case and was left unexamined. Instead, his hermeneutical analysis exclusively aimed at trying to understand conscious intentions that were completely objectified without distortion. But Dilthey's 'model, however, could be generally applicable only under the conditions of a non-repressive society. Therefore deviations from it are the normal case under all known social conditions.'[155] What was for Dilthey the norm is in fact a (non-existing) exception and so his hermeneutics, aiming as it does at conscious intentions, is at best inconsequential. At worst it is insufficient to repair the mutilations and restore the corrupted text to its integrity. Why? Because these 'mutilations have meaning *as such*. The meaning of a corrupt text of this sort can be adequately comprehended only after it has become possible to illuminate the meaning of the corruption itself.'[156] Habermas instead calls on the 'depth hermeneutics' of Freud to uncover this meaning since manifested distortions can be traced back to the self-deceptions of the subject. Here lies the rationale of his turn toward psychoanalysis as the discipline closest to harboring a model theory of self reflection. For the aim of this discipline is to release the subject from his self-deception and this favorably results in the dissolution of the symptomatic distortions linked to that deception. More specifically, psychoanalysis does this through adequately explaining the unconscious causal forces behind the self-deception and once the subject understands this, proper self-reflection is said to have been reached. Note here that in the classic terms of Dilthey, Habermas is prioritizing the explanatory function of the natural sciences over the understanding of the human sciences. Yet the understanding in turn has its moment, since once these causal forces are understood, it simultaneously

cancels their efficacy. To articulate Habermas' project in terms of textual technique, it is fair to say that for him the objectivity of hermeneutical understanding occurs when the interpreter reflects the object of a text and himself simultaneously as moments of an encompassing objective structure. This logic of an objective comprehension of itself in its own self-formative process is thus Habermas' version of the hermeneutical circle, which can theoretically close the gap between the incomplete objectivated meaning and that latent meaning of its author discernible from the larger context of life. In terms of Habermas' wider critical project, hermeneutics likewise figures large: since '[t]he process of inquiry in the [human] sciences moves at the transcendental level of communication, so that the explication of meaning structures is necessarily subject to the viewpoint of the possible maintenance of the intersubjectivity of mutual understanding,'[157] the hermeneutical methodological technique is to be used whenever a disturbance of consensus manifests itself. Its aim is to establish unconstrained agreement of expectations and move the participants toward a non-violent recognition. This is of course to be distinguished from the process of inquiry in the natural sciences, which is organized in a transcendental framework of instrumental action whereby nature objectifies itself into an object of knowledge for possible technical control. Yet Habermas nevertheless does strive to maintain the methodological standards of the natural sciences for the subject of the human sciences.

For someone like Palmer, Habermas is still too rooted in the Cartesian tradition with his concern for the subjective element in interpretation, which effectively treats the hermeneutical experience as conceptual knowledge. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, his *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (1969) should be considered the first proper introduction of hermeneutics to a wider English-speaking audience. While Hirsch's publication was two years earlier, it should be recalled that it had a limited target audience. But the greater distinction between the two works concerns their respective content. In contrast to Hirsch, Palmer's book is much broader in scope. Its first part contains lengthy discussions of the etymological roots of hermeneutics and of contending modern definitions, which prepare the reader for its substantive second part where a chapter or two is devoted to each of the four scholars named in its title. This is prefaced by discussions of important philologists of the past as well as an assessment of the contemporary state of affairs in hermeneutics inclusive of Betti and Hirsch himself, who are both critiqued from a decidedly hermeneutical phenomenological perspective. Indeed, this book unabashedly champions Heidegger and especially Gadamer,[158] whose perspective imprints itself on the content of this book at every turn as it builds up to its third and final part. Beyond his achievement of having first introduced hermeneutics and in particular, Gadamer's hermeneutical phenomenology to the English-speaking world, his 'Hermeneutical Manifesto to American Literary Interpretation,' which closes the book, is where he leaves his most original

mark on hermeneutical theory. There he pleads with American criticism to halt its search for new tools and to instead turn to a rigorous reexamination of the presuppositions of its interpretative approach through a bold exploration of Heidegger and Gadamer.[159] In general he finds this school overlooks the historical character of understanding literary texts, one of the unfortunate consequences of their employment of the subject-object schema which treats the text as an external aesthetic object. While not specifically mentioning Habermas in his work, Palmer would certainly include him in this critique despite Habermas' frequently expressed recognition of the historical nature of understanding. Palmer's point would be that he really does not recognize this, since by definition any critic who has a concern for methodology like Habermas (or Betti, Hirsch, Apel or any hermeneutical thinker prior to Heidegger) also has a need for presupposing a distance between the subject-interpreter and the object-text. And because of this the historical dimension of understanding, which always already undermines this distance, is overlooked. Palmer systematically formulates such hermeneutical phenomenological lessons in his programmatic final chapter entitled 'Thirty Theses on Interpretation.' Significantly, more than one third of these theses concern admonishments against the methodological way of thinking, which is said to lose the meaning of the text. For instance, Thesis 18 reverses the usual methodological framework of a passive object yielding to an active subject: 'It is not the interpreter who grasps the meaning of the text; the meaning of the text seizes him.'[160] For Palmer, as for Gadamer, there is no choice amongst competing methodologies to be made, for it is the very notion of method itself that must be questioned.

In discussing Habermas' critique of Hegel above it was suggested that epistemological pursuits necessitate thinking in terms of a separation between subject and object. Palmer is well aware of this connection. But where the hermeneutical project of Habermas seeks a critical knowledge of socio-cultural objects and thus very much wants to maintain this separation, Palmer follows Heidegger and Gadamer in continually stressing the ontological foundations of this subject-object separation, how the ontological function of understanding discloses the being encompassing both the subject and the object. This is concisely captured in Thesis 4: '*The hermeneutical experience is ontological*.'[161] In trying to make sense of these debates between the methodologically-minded advocates for epistemology and those who instead turn to ontology, we might examine Ricoeur's essay "The Task of Hermeneutics" (1973).[162] Ricoeur sketches there the historical trajectory of the central concern for epistemology in the 19th century to the increasing turn toward ontology in the 20th century. In light of this we might say the debates occurring in the 1960s are the first significant materialization of a clash precipitated by this larger historical process, one in which the newer ontological claims of hermeneutical phenomenology so forcefully asserted themselves in the popular *Truth and Method* that traditional epistemology was finally forced to respond.

Evidently by 1973 the camp of ontology had won enough major battles that for Ricoeur the 'task' was now to bring epistemology out from under Heidegger's philosophy and thus redeem for it a more dignified status. This might appear to mean that Ricoeur falls easily into the camp of epistemology in line with those working to establish an objective methodology. Yet his balanced, middle-of-the-road style everywhere prohibits a simple labeling of his approach – ironic given his penchant for well-crafted prosody which always comes complete with neat structural divisions and concepts to efficiently categorize and sort its subject matter. The present essay is no exception. While ultimately arguing for a return to epistemology, he does demonstrate a greater appreciation for Gadamer than any of the others examined above who take issue with the hermeneutical phenomenological approach of *Truth and Method*. The first part of the essay traces Schleiermacher's wish to incorporate into a general framework all regional hermeneutics up to Dilthey, who is said to have completed the project. Ricoeur perspicaciously argues how 'this movement of *deregionalisation* cannot be pressed to the end unless at the same time the properly *epistemological* concerns of hermeneutics – its efforts to achieve a scientific status – are subordinated to *ontological* preoccupations, whereby *understanding* ceases to appear as a simple *mode of knowing* in order to become a *way of being* and a way of relating to beings and to being.'[163] So really Dilthey only finished the epistemological project of a general hermeneutics. What remained to be done was the ontologization of this project and the attendant conception of hermeneutics not as a general technique, but as the fundamental thing itself. Heidegger and Gadamer effectively accomplish this ontologization by rejecting Dilthey's belief that the human sciences could compete with the natural sciences by means of its own methodology, which also meant understanding Dilthey's aporia between explanation and understanding as taking place within an epistemological framework. By rejecting this framework, Heidegger and Gadamer 'would subsume questions of method to the reign of a primordial ontology'[164] so that the question changes from 'how do we know?' to 'what is the mode of being of that being who understands this question?' Yet for Ricoeur, Heidegger's subordination of epistemology to ontology is no resolution to Dilthey's aporia but just its simple displacement to the aporia between epistemology and ontology. The question Ricoeur asks expresses a Diltheyan concern: if Heideggerian philosophy is 'always engaged in going back to the foundations...[are we not] left incapable of beginning the movement of return which would lead from the fundamental ontology to the properly epistemological question of the status of the human sciences'?[165] He fears that if this question is not addressed, such a philosophy is only in dialogue with itself and moreover, could not even achieve its stated intent to return to foundational matters. Additionally and in echo of Habermas, the question of critique also cannot be accounted for in such a philosophy.

Ricoeur contends that the new aporia Heidegger has created becomes the central problem of *Truth and Method* because Gadamer takes seriously Dilthey's question. But this is expressed in terms of Heideggerian ontology. As we saw above, Gadamer contends that the fundamental presupposition of the methodology of the natural sciences is an alienating distanciation between the subject and the object, which destroys the primordial relation of belonging, our relation to the historical as such. For Ricoeur, this signals that Gadamer does attempt the return movement to the epistemological question that the former wants to accomplish and further argues that what 'marks the summit of Gadamer's reflection on the foundation of the human sciences'[166] is his historically effected consciousness. This category is not a methodology but rather a reflective consciousness of this methodology, of being exposed to history and its effects in a way that cannot be objectified since it is a phenomenon of history itself. But Ricoeur sees a problem. Such a conception of consciousness expressly rejects any notion of distance and so cannot account for the critical capacity of consciousness. Thus Gadamer stands in need of correction. Firstly, Ricoeur contends there is a productive aspect to the element of distance, a general tension between the proximate and the remote, which is essential to the historical consciousness Gadamer places at the foundation of the human sciences. This productivity of distanciation can also paradoxically be seen as integral to the functioning of the fusion of horizons, which was also expressly conceived by Gadamer to overcome historical distance. Finally, Gadamer makes 'an impassioned apology for the *dialogue which we are* and for the prior understanding which supports us' via the mediation of language. This conception categorically denies any autonomous role for the author, the reader or the text. But for Ricoeur the mediation is rather through 'the *matter of the text*.' The difference from Gadamer is subtle but crucial, for when Ricoeur explains that this mediating function is only operational 'because the interlocutors fade away in face of the things said,' he nevertheless does retain a minimal notion of a subject and a text, even though for the moment of the encounter the matter of the text which directs the exchange 'belongs neither to its author nor to its reader.'[167] It is thus by retaining the subject-object distance that Ricoeur believes he can 're-regionalise' hermeneutics and grant to both explanation and epistemology an autonomy lost with Heidegger's ontological turn to understanding.[168]

Frank also effectively works with a subject-object matrix, interested as he is in maintaining the subject's autonomy in relation to the text. In his essay "The Interpretation of a Text" (1974)[169] he confronts contemporary tendencies to reduce individuals to structure while celebrating the existentialist emphasis on the individual in his ethical singularity. The discussion in this essay thus anticipates fields of scholarship covered in the next two chapters below. Interestingly, Frank returns to Schleiermacher to find that he is in a sense the father of both structuralism and existentialist phenomenology. On the one hand what Schleiermacher 'labeled *grammatical interpretation* anticipates, as Peter Szondi first observed, in

outline form the working hypothesis of structurization as it...has been developed and in part practiced in our own day above all by A. J. Greimas and R. Barthes.'[170] Once a text's structure is in place, neither dissenting declarations of meaning by the author nor individual prejudices of the interpreter can change the meaning its elements take in relation to their structural surroundings. For both grammatical interpretation and contemporary structuralism equally ignore extra-textual interventions by the author and the interpreter. Frank focuses his analysis on Roland Barthes, whose technique represents for him a supreme example of what Barthes in his own words describes as a commitment 'to the dream of "écriture [writing] without style."'[171] The problem with Barthes is that his scholarly rigor of codifying and providing quantitative categories to capture the significance of those textual signs constituted at the intersection of the sliding levels of expression and meaning results in 'an enormous impoverishment in the understanding of the meaning.'[172] With respect to Barthes' (post)structuralist turn, which breaks away from his previous attempt of providing sum totals of semantic units so as to grasp the transcendent Meaning which supposedly structures all the signs of a text, the result is equally disastrous. For his (post)structuralist codifying technique uncovers the text's ambiguity by endeavoring to multiply meaning, which again frustrates understanding.

On the other hand, Schleiermacher's psychological interpretation moves away from treating the text as if it had no author and instead appeals to the productivity of the subject so as to reestablish the connection to a living communication, which the piece of writing interrupted. This type of interpretation acknowledges style but by expressly following Boeckh and Humboldt, Frank argues how this is never exactly graspable or repeatable since the union of the general and individual components of style are unstable. Frank thus admits that no true meaning can be arrived at by being attentive to style due to the impossibility of assuming an Archimedean point outside of language. He uses Derrida's notion of *différance* in this respect, which pits a constant slippage of meaning against the grammatical interpretation of structuralism, which presupposes 'at least *one* meaning for and with itself;' instead, Frank recognizes how '[m]eaning has no anchor – in other words, no definitive, no certain interpretation – in the infinite text; it attests, as Derrida says, to "an irreducible and *creative* multiplicity."'[173] But neither Derrida's nor any other contemporary model of interpretation possesses the criteria for describing stylistic expression, criteria which Frank deems necessary to complete psychological interpretation. That is, with one exception, and '[t]his one exception is Sartre...Above all, this *chef-d'oeuvre* may stand in passing as the state's witness for enduring relevance of that which Schleiermacher had called the "technical [or psychological] interpretation: the complete understanding of style."'[174] For Sartre, the multiplicity which Derrida speaks of always unfolds on two relational planes, one which registers how epochal circumstances relate to the living totality of the author, and one which relates the author's

'fundamental project' to the totality of his particular textual output. These are of course circular relations, relating part to whole and whole to part, and Frank recognizes 'style' as that which names 'the break, the difference, by which the individual proceeds beyond the given.'[175] For Sartre, the style of the text calls its interpreter into creative collaboration, reminding him of his ability to move beyond structured meaning, of how '*we* ourselves are responsible for meaning...Judged by the methodological ideal of the exact natural sciences, the idea of the individual's irreducibility to the structure appears trivial or sentimental: the world will continue to exist without him. It is still easier for it – Sartre reminded us of this – to continue to exist without human beings at all.'[176] For Frank the subject-object schema must not be overshadowed by an underlying multiplicity in a way which would deny the irreplaceability and singularity of the individual subject.

The hermeneutical circle is only implicitly articulated in this article. But with Frank's reading of Sartre, which stresses how the constitution of meaning is due to a creative collaboration with the author, we see how Frank in no way considers meaning pre-existing in the hermeneutical circle. Nancy no more believes in such a pre-existence and much more directly takes on the issue of the relation between the individual, meaning and the hermeneutical circle in his essay "Sharing Voices" (1982).[177] Indeed its opening pages form a sustained discussion of the hermeneutical circle in its classic form, the ontological treatment it receives in *Being and Time* and the subsequent (mis)understanding of the latter. More specifically, his analysis aims to 'engender doubt regarding the existence of a simple correspondence between the hermeneutical circle and Heideggerian preunderstanding – and engender doubt, consequently, regarding the hermeneutic interpretation (Bultmannian or Gadamerian) of Heidegger.'[178] In a word, Nancy holds that Bultmann and Gadamer are in error thinking that Heidegger equates the hermeneutical circle with a meaning which is pre-given in the circular condition of the preunderstanding or the pre-judgment. What his two followers seem to be missing is the anticipatory gesture inherent in Heidegger's notion of interpretation and *Auslegung* [clarification] of expressions so that '[f]ar from *hermēneuein* being related to this pre-understanding, it consists in *Auslegung*, in which it announces what it comprehends.'[179] To appreciate Nancy's reading and emphasis on this aspect of Heidegger, we do well to remember that it is a decidedly *French* reading, which considers meaning in terms of the *futur antérieur*, marking what 'will have been' the case after a particular future moment has lapsed. This verbal declension concisely holds both a past and a future in a present understanding, and inasmuch as Bultmann and Gadamer are seen as focusing on a meaning which is always already understood, they overlook how 'hermeneutics anticipates meaning, whereas *hermēneuein* creates the anticipatory or "annunciative" structure of meaning itself. The first is possible only on the ground of the second. The latter does not define interpretation, nor in all rigor something like "pre-understanding." *Hermēneuein* defines this: understanding is possible only by the

anticipation of meaning which creates meaning itself.'[180] This paradoxical logic is perhaps clearer once Nancy turns to another key text by Heidegger, which is formally taken up in the following chapter below. For our present purposes, when Nancy stresses how for Heidegger the *staging* of a dialogue between two interlocutors is what is important and how the object of this dialogue is the dialogue itself, which can never be seized as an object, we can see how the 'hermeneut has, first of all and essentially – if not exclusively – a knowledge which is not about "content," nor about meaning, but which is nothing more than a "form."'[181] The dialogue *qua* form is the 'object' of dialogue which cannot be epistemologically brought to bear. Nevertheless, Nancy tells us that the strange thing is that this knowledge is indeed a complete meaning. Moreover such analysis is equally applicable to the reader of a poem, as this too is in the form of dialogue. Here also a circular exchange takes place, a 'divine sharing' whereby the Muse offers a gift which the poet hears and inscribes. The hermeneut then recognizes this sharing of a 'divine voice' which makes *hermēneia* nothing but the articulation and announcement of this sharing.[182] Nancy conceives of this sharing as chains of rings or hermeneutical circles in which the interpreter is the final link who does not so much provide interpretations of interpretations in the Nietzschean sense but gives, shares, announces and abandons himself in the multiplying and sharing of voices from which he draws his very existence.[183] With such a conception of hermeneutics we are very far indeed from the subject-object schema and a concern for objective methodology in the natural scientific sense.

In an endnote to the final page of this essay Nancy suggests his work provides a possible resolution to the debate between Gadamer and Habermas. He reasons that if the question of dialogue is also both a question of interpretation and communication, then 'the hermeneutic of Gadamer [which] culminates in a general theory of the dialogue as truth...can agree with, theoretically and politically, the "communicational" vision of J. Habermas. In the same way as interpretation is thought to be the reappropriation of a meaning, communication is, then, thought to be the – at least Utopian – appropriation of a rational consensus.'[184] Nothing more is said but Nancy's weighing in on these two men should not be surprising. Interest in the exchange which took place between Gadamer and Habermas steadily grew from the mid-1970s so that by 1990 some dozen or more journal articles existed which explicitly referenced the debate in their titles. This secondary literature falls into three broad categories. There are those that side with Habermas, a smaller group that sides with Gadamer, and those which attempt to meld the two views and declare them compatible. Nancy would no doubt fall into this last category. While interest seems to have waned after 1990, curiously in 1995 two full-length books appeared entirely dedicated to the debate. The subtitle of Alan How's *The Habermas-Gadamer Debate and the Nature of the Social: Back to Bedrock* (1995)[185] gives an indication of why this debate, which

contained the most lengthy and sustained exchange of all the Gadamer debates, was of such interest. In his own words,

> 'the issues generated by the debate speak to the most fundamental questions affecting not only my own discipline of sociology, but other social sciences and the humanities generally. Though neither author is a foundationalist in the philosophical sense, their debate was a kind of excavation, it dug down and revealed the foundations of the social world, and does, I think, provide the best context in which analysis and discussion of theoretical matters affecting these disciplines can take place.'[186]

Moreover, as foundational issues in the human sciences arise, so do fundamental questions regarding methodology, as we have seen. In terms of which category How falls into, it is most likely the second as he tells us he has been increasingly drawn to the complexities of Gadamer's responses to Habermas' criticisms, the latter of which are too quickly celebrated simply because they are critical.[187] Broadly speaking, in his *Knowledge and Hermeneutic Understanding: A Study of the Habermas-Gadamer Debate* (1995),[188] Teigas also feels more sympathetic to Gadamer in the face of the latter's treatment in the secondary literature. Yet he does seem to agree with Nancy's speculation that the two hermeneutical paradigms are compatible when he reviews his own analysis in the final chapter of his book to conclude 'that, in all cases, a mediation seemed to be possible between the two positions and none of them could claim superiority over the other.'[189] So in no way does Teigas (or How for that matter) declare a winner in the debate. Instead we are asked to grasp the two debaters in their conflict and distinguish the two contrasting roles they reserve for hermeneutics: where Gadamer thinks more in terms of the experience of the meaning of the text seizing the interpreter, Habermas in contrast utilizes hermeneutics to understand the meaning the interpreter actively seizes from the text. Yet according to Teigas, one of the reasons Gadamer and Habermas can be brought into productive dialogue where each is informed by the other's limitations is that they share the same underlying set of humanistic values inherited from the Enlightenment. So in an entirely different way than Nancy, Gadamer is also noted to deviate from Heidegger. For in the end, while Teigas judges how Gadamer and Habermas cannot be merged, he nevertheless feels they can be submitted together to a meta-critique by Heidegger's own critique of humanism as not truly challenging the technocratic rationality of the natural sciences.[190] A discussion of Heidegger is continued in Chapter 2 below to position his thought as that which splits the field of phenomenology into two trajectories across the 20th century.

Chapter 2

Phenomenology

Meanings inspired only by remote, confused, inauthentic intuitions – if by any intuitions at all – are not enough: we must go back to the 'things themselves.'[191]

With these words the dawn of the 20th century was greeted by the new field of research of phenomenology. As suggested by its etymological root in the Greek word *phainomenon* which means 'appearance,' taken as a philosophical attitude the call was now made to shift the emphasis of study away from the external world of objects to refocus attention on the way these objects appear to the subject, as well as to inquire into the role the subject plays in this process of appearing. Such an appeal has immediate ramifications on both sides of the subject-object divide. On the one hand, treating the object no longer as a simple fact but only as it appears (*i.e.*, as a phenomenon) poses a radical break not only from the way objects are regarded by the natural sciences but from Kantian epistemology as well. For no longer is the phenomenal appearance of an object to be considered a manifestation which fails to reach its essential nature in the noumenal realm, as it was for Kant. The supposed noumenal limitation on the constitution of phenomena, which proved a stumbling block for Kant, is effectively removed by phenomenology since the phenomenal world alone is now considered reality itself and not just the reality we can know. On the other hand, a new emphasis is placed on the subjective experience of these phenomena, as this new discipline finds the ultimate source of all meaning in the lived experience of the subject. Phenomenology might indeed be called the 'philosophy of experience'. Accordingly its task is to describe the structures of this experience, in particular at the level of consciousness, the imagination and the situatedness of the subject in society, history or the world at large. The second chapter undertakes an examination of significant thinkers in phenomenology and its various schools with a particular focus on their descriptive approaches to the text which, broadly speaking, is an object they either take as a mediator between the consciousnesses of its author and readers or as a mediated experience which attempts to disclose a meaningful relation to a world.

Section 2.1 sketches out the two main types of phenomenology, one established by its founding father Husserl, whose insistence on the univocality of meaning objects permitted the creation of a new philosophical approach deemed rigorously scientific, in contrast to Heidegger, whose acceptance of meaning as irreducibly non-univocal effectively grounded hermeneutics in a phenomenology which eschewed such methodology. Section 2.2 examines a few scholars who apply Heidegger's ontology of understanding to other realms of thought. Section 2.3 traces the path laid out by some scholars and schools which remain loyal to Husserl's original epistemology of interpretation.

2.1 The Two Types of Phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger

When discussing Schleiermacher in Section 1.2 above, it was mentioned that psychologism was a growing force throughout the 19th century. This is one facet of the strong empiricist and naturalist philosophies which had a defining influence on the latter half of that century. These philosophies purported that only physical objects truly exist, so accordingly non-physical phenomena like numbers, concepts or thought in general could only be understood as effects of the physicality of the human mind. The study of reasoning thus came to be seen as a province of psychology, the science of the psychical acts of the mind. For Husserl, the belief that psychology can account for rational thought and the laws of logic was in error. Psychologism not only meant that logical objects such as truths, propositions, relations – or meanings – were reducible to psychological states of affairs, but by extension the very foundations of the pure sciences of logic, mathematics, geometry and philosophy itself must be seen as ultimately grounded in psychology. If so, this would require concluding, among other things, that to different psychic structures correspond different logics, or that logic evolves along with the human species and its psyche. Husserl directly confronted such absurdities by taking on the task of refuting psychologism once and for all in his *Logical Investigations, Vol. 1*, aptly subtitled 'Prolegomena to Pure Logic' and it is generally agreed that he was successful. Yet as Husserl tells us in his foreword, this work actually breaks away from his own previously held psychologistic standpoint, and this is something for which he himself was criticized. That he accomplished this break is thus due in part by his building on previous work done by leading anti-psychologistic logicians of the day. One of these logicians was Frege, who indeed critiqued Husserl's early work precisely on these grounds. This is reason enough to briefly examine Frege before turning to *Logical Investigations*. But instead of examining Frege's foundational work in modern mathematics and logic which would actually not take us too far off course given the focus on logic in Part II, we turn to his best known work as it most directly addresses the subject matter at hand: meaning.

This article, "On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*" [On Sense and Meaning] (1892),¹⁹² could be seen as reflecting his frustration with his contemporaries' inexact talk regarding the meaning of an expression. To that end, he set out to make a rigorous distinction between sense and meaning, which has proved highly influential

to this day. To appreciate how he accomplished this, it should be noted that by the time of writing this article, he had already made his crucial move in extending the idea of function-argument analysis from mathematics to logic. This meant he no longer analyzed propositional statements as had traditionally been done. In simple terms, instead of treating these as of the apophantic form of 'S is P,' Frege now used the mathematical notion of argument to replace the subject term of the statement and the mathematical notion of function to replace the predicate term and in doing so he thus assured a certain mathematical rigor to his analysis of ordinary language. In terms of the distinction in question, the definite object referred to by an expression is what Frege calls its meaning. In his famous example, the meaning of 'Morning Star' is Venus. But it is clear that such an object can have many expressions, as in 'Evening Star' which refers to that same object. Frege concludes that '[t]he *Bedeutung* of "Evening Star" would be the same as that of "Morning Star," but not the sense.'[193] Simply said, the two expressions have the same meaning, but embody different senses. Through this simple distinction Frege is able to redefine other commonly used terms. For instance, he expands his analysis to entire assertoric sentences, such as 'The Morning Star is a body illuminated by the Sun' and asks whether the 'thought' contained therein is its sense or meaning. He concludes that this 'thought...cannot be the *Bedeutung* of the sentence, but must rather be considered as its sense'[194] for the simple reason that someone might hold the above sentence true and an identical sentence which substitutes 'Evening Star' for 'Morning Star' as false if they did not know the two arguments have the same meaning. Frege also assigns terms to the various connections to be had between the three levels of the sign, its sense and its meaning. For instance, 'judgment' is the step from the level of sense or thought to meaning. But his most controversial claim, already implied in the above, is his equating of the meaning of a sentence with its truth-value.[195] This allows Frege to cast upon any assertoric sentence which has a meaning a judgment regarding that meaning as either the True or the False. But despite his founding influence in analytic philosophy and the philosophy of language, Frege was met with dissenting opinion regarding many of his claims. One notable dissenter was Husserl, who effectively critiqued Frege's basic distinction of sense and meaning while sharing in the overall anti-psychologist project.

Husserl chooses to attack the psychologistic notion of meaning as a mental entity of the human mind by appealing to the existence of an objective domain of meanings which transcends the mental life of any thinker. Thus he admonishes us:

> 'If someone wished to argue from the fact that a true judgement, like any judgement, must spring from the constitution of the judging subject in virtue of appropriate natural laws, we should warn him not to confuse the "judgement," *qua* content of judgement, i.e. as an ideal unity, with the individual, real act of judgement. It is the former that we mean when we speak of the judgement $2 \times 2 = 4$, which is the same whoever passes it.'[196]

There are two points to be noted here. First, Husserl is accusing psychologism of conflating the logical object with the logical act. To illustrate this, we can use the apophantic judgment form of 'S is P,' the form Husserl always considered the basic structure of thinking and language and to which Heidegger criticizes. For Husserl, the sphere of meaning is the *content* of the judgment 'S(two times two) is P(equal to four)' and not the *act* or assertion of this judgment. Moreover, the laws of logic apply not to the act of judgment which is the domain of the psychological sphere, but to the meanings which make up the content of a judgment. Said in another way, let X = a logical proposition (*e.g.*, $2 \times 2 = 4$) and Y = a rational thinker. The psychologistic reading of 'Y thinks X' would consider X to be a *mental entity* of Y's mind, a real part of Y's mental life while Husserl's reading would consider X to be an *object* of Y's thinking. Husserl thus maintains a separation between the subject and the object and so works with a version of the epistemological subject-object schema. This leads to the second point discernible in the above quotation, which is the failure of psychologism to recognize logical objects as distinct from real objects. In contrast to psychologism, the content of $2 \times 2 = 4$, its meaning, is a logical object which should be treated as harboring a being and a truth despite its lack of physicality. Certainly there are individual assertions of $2 \times 2 = 4$, but to 'talk of a subjective truth, that [it] is one thing for one man and the opposite for another, must count as the purest nonsense.'[197] For Husserl, the singular truth of this proposition transcends all its individual assertions and without it the very idea of scientific knowledge is impossible.

Husserl expands on his treatment of meaning as a logical object as his investigations proceed, dividing all beings into the ideal and the real and then further dividing ideal objects into those that are meanings (*e.g.*, names, concepts, propositions, truths) and those that are not (*e.g.*, numbers, relations, essences).[198] But by the first investigation it is already clear that '[p]ure logic, wherever it deals with concepts, judgements, and syllogisms, is exclusively concerned with the *ideal* unities that we here call "meanings."'[199] Indeed the ideal object of meaning is so privileged over other ideal objects that logic itself is defined as the science of meanings. The danger with this notion of holding meanings to be ideal entities which qualify as objects just as much as the real objects of empirical science is that it immediately brings Plato to mind. However, even though Husserl considers meanings irreducible in their being and thus objective, transcendent, singular, unchanging, universal, sharable and standing outside time, they decidedly do not exist in some Platonic heaven; Husserl's opening remarks in the second chapter of the second investigation make this clear. So how exactly are we to conceive of Husserl's notion of the ideality of meaning? His use of metaphors often only adds to the mystery. For instance, in the fifth investigation he effectively tells us that meaning is to the expression as the soul is to the body so meanings, like souls, can animate the bodies of different expressions.[200] It is, however, far more likely the case that differing expressions harbor different meanings as in his famous example of 'the victor of Jena' and 'the

vanquished at Waterloo.' While we saw how Frege would declare these equivalent in terms of their meaning since the same object is referenced in both expressions, Husserl argues that they have different meaningful contents. Here is the basic distinction between Frege and Husserl, yet it does not answer our question. Again, how and from where do meanings come to embody expressions?

To answer this we must recognize how logical experience has two sides which parallel the subject-object divide, namely, the subjective objectivating act as well as the objective ideal meaning discussed above. As introduced in the fifth investigation, the two sides compose the two moments of his theory of consciousness as 'intentional.' For Husserl, the intentionality of consciousness means it is directed beyond itself to a vast array of objects both real and ideal. There are thus both acts of consciousness and objects of those acts, and so consciousness is always consciousness of something, or in his own words '[i]n perception something is perceived, in imagination, something imagined, in a statement something stated, in love something loved, in hate hated, in desire desired etc.'[201] Yet Husserl does not think of the object as 'out there' to which a consciousness must relate. Rather, it is the correlate or content or 'matter' of the act of consciousness, '*that element in an act which first gives it reference to an object, and reference so wholly definite that it not merely fixes the object meant in a general way, but also the precise way in which it is meant*.'[202] So the thing meant in a meaning-intentional act is the matter of that act and is to be taken as an ideal object of meaning. Certainly the constitution of meaning is encompassed in one intentional experience. But since Husserl nevertheless makes a distinction between subject and object in this one experience, this allows for a conceptualization of meaning-making as a process which takes place between them. If we inevitably resign ourselves to a Platonic vision to aid us in understanding Husserl's theory of meaning, as long as we do not hypostasize meanings 'up there,' this is acceptable. This moderate Platonic approach might envisage meaning in a Husserlian vein as a half-existing stuff in the Heavens, a *Gegenstand*, an object belonging to the domain of possible experience which designates a simple phenomenal entity. A subjective meaning-intentional act would then be required to transform that possibility into a fully existent actuality, to instantiate its universality into an objectivated instant through the conscious act of a subject intending a particular meaning.

Now, both interpretation and understanding are acts of consciousness and thus constitutive of meaning. But for Husserl so are perceiving, imagining, desiring, hoping and countless other conscious acts. Clearly his philosophy has departed from the classical field of hermeneutics and its privileging of interpretation and understanding as tools or mediums by which to grasp meaning. In truth his approach is not really concerned with meanings directly so much as their sense as meanings and accordingly his new epistemology is a methodological approach which primarily proceeds by asking how such a sense is constituted in the first place. It thus seems that the hermeneutical question as it was asked up through

the 19th century has been slightly demoted by Husserl's phenomenological method of inquiry. This is especially the case when we reflect on how Husserl insists on the univocality of meaning. For if meanings cannot be built out of other meanings, phenomenology as it stands in the *Logical Investigations* has no real need for hermeneutics to explicate that meaning since meaning comes already objectively known to the conscious subject. The only thing left at that point is to describe those processes which constituted that meaning. The crucial turn comes when Heidegger in contrast accepts meaning as irreducibly non-univocal and thus creates for phenomenology a need for hermeneutics to choose from among competing potentialities of meaning. Meaning once again and in an unheard of way suddenly takes center stage. His raising of *'the question of the meaning* of *being'* on the opening page of *Being and Time* effectively announces a crossing of phenomenology with hermeneutics. The phenomenological motto of 'back to the things themselves' takes on a decidedly hermeneutical flavor as the hermeneutical phenomenology which emerges from this work transforms what was once mere (hermeneutical) technique into the thing itself. Section 1.3 above considered hermeneutical phenomenology through some of its later adherents as well as through the eyes of some of its critics. In the remainder of the present section we examine its birthplace in the Heidegger of 1927 as well as a text of his a quarter of a century later, which provides commentary on his abandonment of hermeneutics soon after the publication of *Being and Time*.

Where Husserl's phenomenology was clearly epistemologically oriented, examining the relation between the subjective experience of knowing and the objectivity of the content known, Heidegger's phenomenology is ontological, primarily oriented to the being of that finite being, *Dasein*, which poses the question of the meaning of being since 'it is the being that always already in its being is related to *what is sought* in this question.'[203] Heidegger's approach has no need for method for 'hermeneutics, as the interpretation of the being of Da-sein,'[204] is to recover understanding not in the mode of knowledge but in the mode of being. Instead of making inquiries into the conditions needed for a subject to understand a text, history or the world at large, an ontological reversal is to take place so that the hermeneutical phenomenologist seeks the being of that being which consists of and exists through understanding. The essential being belonging to *Dasein* is found in the ontological structure of understanding, which stands prior to empirical understanding and accordingly what Heidegger calls 'the fore-structures of understanding' must be interrogated. This interrogation is found primarily in sections 31-34. The task as he sees it is not to simply reinstall interpretation and understanding back to the privileged place they enjoyed in the hermeneutical tradition but to reveal their primordial status in terms of *Dasein* expressed as understanding itself. More specifically, *Dasein* articulates meaning in the form of an interpretation 'of something as something...essentially grounded in fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception. Interpretation is never a presuppositionless grasping of something previously given.'[205] The

implication here that a presuppositionless interpretation is an illusion is an implicit critique of Husserl, who expressly articulates his phenomenology in such a way. Illustrating these fore-structures in terms of a textual approach, consider a text such as *Antigone*. Heidegger's point would be that we could never interpret it abstractly as we always already carry with us a certain involvement with such a task, *e.g.*, our levels of knowledge of Greek language and literature in general (fore-having); we also interpret from a particular point of view, *e.g.*, our Lacanian disposition might cause us to treat *Antigone* as the embodiment of a sublime ethical lesson (fore-sight); we further hold a conceptual reservoir in advance, *e.g.*, our familiarity of Sophocles and his other works (fore-conception). Analysis of these fore-structures frustrates a conception which situates meaning on the side of the object-text, for if '[*m*]*eaning, structured by fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception*...is an existential of Dasein, not a property which is attached to beings, which lies "behind" them or floats somewhere as a "realm between"....[then only] Da-sein "has" meaning,...*only Da-sein can be meaningful or meaningless*.'[206] Heidegger then goes on to ask whether this articulates a vicious circle since what interpretation can contribute to understanding has already been understood. Do not the premises (fore-structures) presuppose what appears in the conclusion? This question of course articulates the problematic of the classical hermeneutical circle, that in order to begin the hermeneutical task, one must either presuppose an understanding of the whole (which is immediately undermined by the fact that understanding the whole depends on the understanding of the part) or an understanding of the part (again undermined since the part is only understood through the understanding of the whole). Heidegger's famous solution is to recognize the inevitability of this circle in understanding, to recognize how we are always already involved in this circle which belongs to the structure of meaning:

> 'What is decisive is not to get out of the circle, but to get in it in the right way. This circle of understanding is not a circle in which any random kind of knowledge operates, but it is rather the expression of the existential *fore-structure* of Da-sein itself. The circle must not be degraded to a *vitiosum*, not even to a tolerated one. A positive possibility of the most primordial knowledge is hidden in it which, however, is only grasped in a genuine way when interpretation has understood that its first, constant, and last task is not to let fore-having, fore-sight, and fore-conception be given to it by chance ideas and popular conceptions, but to guarantee the scientific theme by developing these in terms of the things themselves.'[207]

What Heidegger has in mind when using the term scientific is certainly not in a natural scientific sense. Rather, he effectively asks us to avoid chance or popular conceptions by testing them on the things themselves. For example, one should not simply accept Lacan's word but read *Antigone* to see if it does indeed open up a new dimension of ethicality. More precisely instead of 'seeing' if this is the case, in Heideggerian terminology we would be asked to 'hear' and 'listen' to what the text has to say, for such hearing is said to constitute the authentic openness of *Dasein* for its own most possibility of being.

So an analysis of the particular statements which make up a text is precisely what is not to be done. Heidegger demonstrates that utilizing the apophantic propositional form of 'S is P' is not the best way to present what is understood and moreover does not involve interpretation. With Husserl implicitly in mind, he admonishes us to 'make no advance restriction on the concept of meaning which would confine it to a signification of a "content of judgment."'[208] His own analysis leads him to conclude that this 'apophantic as' is derivative and abstracted from the lived context of the 'existential-hermeneutical as' involved in interpretation and understanding. So in no way does Heidegger conceive of the content of 'S is P' as harboring meaning *qua* object to which a subject can square off against, which is another way of saying he does not utilize the subject-object schema. He often takes the time to criticize this fundamental presupposition of methodology and significantly does just that many pages later within the context of discussing the hermeneutical circle – the only other time he speaks of this circle in this work. This passage is also worth quoting at length:

> 'To deny the circle, to make a secret of it or even to wish to overcome it means to anchor this misunderstanding [viz., overlooking how understanding itself constitutes a basic kind of the being of *Dasein*] once and for all. Rather, our attempt must aim at leaping into this "circle" primordially and completely, so that even at the beginning of our analysis of Da-sein we make sure that we have a complete view of the circular being of Da-sein. Not too much, but *too little* is "presupposed" for the ontology of Da-sein, if one "starts out with" a worldless I in order then to provide that I with an object and an ontologically baseless relation to that object...The thematic objection is *artificially* and *dogmatically* cut out if one limits oneself "initially" to a "theoretical subject," and then complements it "on the practical side" with an additional "ethic."'[209]

The last line is clearly a reference to the Kantian subject in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), but Heidegger's overall critique of the epistemological subject-object schema is equally applicable to whoever fails to recognize its *a priori* ontological dimension. In the final section of his work, Heidegger provides us with 'a standard for every philosophical investigation: Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology, beginning with a hermeneutic of Da-sein which, as an analytic of *existence*, has made fast the guideline for all philosophical questioning at the point where it *arises* and to which it *returns*.'[210] If so, the question remains why Heidegger abandoned hermeneutics after *Being and Time*, to the point that he refrained from even using the term in all his subsequent texts with one notable exception.

That exception is his "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer" (1954).[211] The text is in dialogue form and along its course Heidegger and his Japanese friend often return to the topic of hermeneutics. In this way we are provided with multiple reasons why 'in my later writings I no longer employ the term "hermeneutics."'[212] As an initial explanation, he tells us that he had inherited the term from his early Christian theological studies, which he later supplemented with studies of Dilthey and Schleiermacher, who, as we have seen, broadened the term's applicable horizon away from its original

exclusive focus on Scripture. He reminds us that in *Being and Time* he extends this even further, attempting to define the nature of interpretation on hermeneutical grounds. As he writes, 'hermeneutics, used as an adjunct word to "phenomenology," does not have its usual meaning, methodology of interpretation, but means the interpretation itself.'[213] It was also an etymological focus on the term, particularly *hermēneuein* with its notion of bearing of messages and tidings, which allowed him to combine the two fields into the hermeneutical phenomenology that resulted from *Being and Time*. But although this approach does tend to 'leave the sphere of the subject-object relation behind us,'[214] ultimately Heidegger finds his former *use* of hermeneutics inadequate as it reflects the lack of proper focus on language which would completely dissolve any remnant of an active subjectivity. So where he previously believed that the necessary acceptance of the hermeneutical circle allowed for an originary experience of the hermeneutical relation, his current work abandons this view and avoids presenting the circle 'as resolutely as I would avoid speaking *about* language.'[215] Using terms that immediately reveal the debt owed to Heidegger by Ebeling's word-event theology, since speaking about language tends to turn it into an object we are instead to have an authentic dialogue *of* language which allows a 'saying' to take place, a 'showing' of the thing in the sense of 'letting appear' and 'letting shine.' While inexpressible and never an object of mental representation, a circle nevertheless stands with respect to the message and the message-bearer in dialogue. This 'hermeneutic relation to the two-fold of presence and present beings,' which dialogue places man into, is only graspable during its sway of usage, as the Japanese confesses: 'When I can follow you in the dialogue, I succeed. Left *alone*, I am helpless.'[216] This notion of dialogue of course could be extended to the experience of the well-intentioned reader who hears and understands what a difficult text like *Being and Time* has to say while actively engaged with it, but once it is set aside is often at a loss as to what was just read.

2.2 The Ontological Phenomenology of Understanding

The two types of phenomenology sketched out in Section 2.1 above from Husserl and Heidegger's first major works are clearly incompatible with respect to the question of meaning.[217] Yet given the many works and even entire schools of thought they both later spawned, their respective approaches appear equally persuasive. In this section we follow one of the two trajectories which emanate from these two men, *viz.*, the work of some French thinkers who effectively remain theoretically steadfast to Heideggerian ontological phenomenology as they nevertheless seek new avenues for its application.

As the title suggests, *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945)[218] extends the descriptive approach of phenomenology to perception. But from the preface onward Merleau-Ponty is at pains to stress how the perception he seeks to privilege is of a primal nature. Empirical perception is deemed derivative and relegated to a secondary status. He quite directly demonstrates this throughout the book by presenting

the findings of empirical studies conducted by psychology and other natural sciences to show how they either fail as adequate explanations or simply ignore significant phenomena surrounding their objects of inquiry. By doing so he clears the space for an originary perception said to address a pre-objective realm. The analysis of this latter perception is then offered up as a truer and more complete account of the phenomena involved in these studies. For instance, he problematizes the empirical analysis of a simple figure on a background, arguing that its indeterminacies (*e.g.*, those involving its outline, border and contrasting colors) harbor significance overlooked by an empirical perception, which takes the objective world as its object of analysis. The same is true of 'intellectualism,' which busies itself with casting judgments to subsume aspects of, say, an optical illusion under abstract concepts and so likewise overlooks the meaning of the whole. Both empiricism and intellectualism thus ignore how 'perception is just that act which creates at a stroke, along with the cluster of data, the meaning which unites them – indeed which not only discovers meaning *which they have*, but moreover sees to it *that they have a meaning*.'[219] This statement is easily misconstrued if one takes perception as a conscious attribute so that this process of meaning-creation is read as resulting from a subjective act. In contrast, for Merleau-Ponty, '[i]n trying to describe the phenomenon of...the specific act of meaning, we shall have the opportunity to leave behind us, once and for all, the traditional subject-object dichotomy.'[220] One of the ways he tries to do so is through his continual play with the French term *sens*, which has two distinct sides, translating both as meaning/sense and direction/way/manner. Never due to a conscious positing, it is rather that objects themselves give *sens* by directing our gaze to them. The mystery surrounding this is cleared up at once if the subject and its object are conceived as always already intimately connected in a world which encompasses both; in a word the world is *a priori* to the subject-object dichotomy. Such a notion of course bears the clear mark of Heidegger.[221] His most original contribution, however, certainly lies with his novel notion of the body through which the more derivative discussion topics he inherits from Heidegger are effectively restated. This body is not the empirical body but one *qua* field of potentialities said to be in immediate contact with the world and one which must be seen as the *a priori* backdrop to those determinant objects of science which thus appear within it. Again he utilizes psychologist studies, and he here supplements them with lengthy discussions of pathological cases to demonstrate the intimate link between the constitution of the body as object and the genesis of the objective world. By so withdrawing from the objective world of objective bodies, the body 'will carry with it the intentional threads linking it to its surrounding and finally reveal to us the perceiving subject as the perceived world.'[222] These intentional threads allow us, for example, to 'see' behind our heads or into other rooms with which we are familiar but not presently occupying. There is thus a knowledge known to us without consciously taking it up for consideration. His review of studies on motility and on bodily experience in

general allows Merleau-Ponty to discover 'a new meaning of the word "meaning"...[and] forces us to acknowledge an imposition of meaning which is not the work of a universal constituting consciousness, a meaning which clings to certain contents. My body is that meaningful core which behaves like a general function.'[223] Reflecting Heidegger's later concern with language, not only is one's body a nexus of living or lived-through meanings standing at the heart of the world, secreting and projecting out meaning upon its material surroundings, but it also comes equipped with a linguistic organ which attunes the body to the primordial meaning the world bestows upon us through the word. For Merleau-Ponty meaning is quite simply inseparable from language, and language for him is that which 'presents or rather it *is* the subject's taking up a position in the world of his meanings.'[224]

This notion of positioning can also be found in the work of Bachelard, who applies the Heideggerian approach to another realm and thus founds a new phenomenological school. His phenomenology of imagination is amply demonstrated in his *The Poetics of Space* (1957),[225] where he attempts to determine the poetic image in its emergence into consciousness as a product of the being of man. Given that Bachelard was once a philosopher of natural science and its methodology, this representative text of his later work is quite a radical turn from his earlier days. Yet although never rigorously formulated[226] there nevertheless is a discernible 'method' to the work, just as was the case with *Phenomenology of Perception*. While the latter utilizes the texts of empirical studies as vehicles for demonstrating how the ontological dimension stands prior to epistemological concerns, Bachelard mines literary texts for their poetic images to stimulate the imagination. He considers the imagination to be the primary and 'most natural of faculties,' whose actions are 'as real as those of perception.'[227] Whether or not Bachelard has in mind Merleau-Ponty's notion of perception or its derivative empirical version is beside the point, for it is clear he privileges the imagination as the only faculty capable of truly grasping the dynamism of the poetic image, that entity 'referable to a direct *ontology*.'[228] But despite their differences, they would both agree with Heidegger that ontology trumps epistemology and thereby relegates to all apophantic interpretive approaches to the being of a text a mere secondary status. In the case of Bachelard, we are specifically advised not to examine poetry as a literary critic who moves from text to reality. Rather, we are to find those select texts which back up reality, just not those that do so in a metaphoric sense for metaphor 'has no phenomenological value.'[229] Because he sees the poem as the written evidence of its author's imagination, the images contained therein are simply not subject to verification in reality and to do so would kill them. Verification would squander the opportunities they offer us, the chance to add our own images in a way completely independent of all knowledge of the outside world. Poets are therefore said to set traps in their poems and we are to let ourselves be caught in them, to position and orient ourselves according to their images or else outright seek a dwelling place in the spaces provided by the

'little houses' of their poetic words.[230] The phenomenology of the imagination does not reduce the image to a subordinate means of expression but designates it as an excess of the imagination demanding to be lived directly in life. Its microscopic focus on the detached, isolated, single image and not on the structural composition of images in a poem is argued to be its unique strength, giving 'fresh stimulus to the problem of phenomenology. By solving small problems, we teach ourselves to solve large ones. I have limited myself to proposing exercises conceived for an elementary phenomenology. I am moreover convinced that the human psyche contains nothing that is insignificant.'[231] Because this entity that is the poetic image is without causality, it escapes the natural science of psychology, and so psychology is accordingly condemned. Non-Jungian psychoanalysis fares no better since it equally seeks causal forces and focuses on the deep nature of the author at the expense of the autonomous image. In the final three chapters Bachelard often alludes to Heidegger's *Dasein* (in French, *être-là*) to suggest the close connection between the poetic image, language and being. For instance, he writes that '[w]hen we really live a poetic image, we learn to know, in one of its tiny fibres, a becoming of being that is an awareness of the *being's inner disturbance*. Here being is so sensitive that it is upset by a word.'[232] For Bachelard the expression of the word, however, must always enclose an actuality which issues forth as a poetic image so as to release the major productive power of his imagination. And without the exercise of his imagination, the being of man will remain veiled.

In stark contrast to this celebration of poetry, Sartre instead argues that when it comes to a question of releasing man, prose is the superior literary form since only it relates writing to the existential concerns of real-world praxis. Indeed the message of his essay "What is Literature?" (1947)[233] might be fruitfully paraphrased as 'Poets have only ever interpreted the world; however, the point for the prose writer is to change it.' This thesis is defended in the first section of the essay which asks 'What is Writing?' There the poet is criticized for his treatment of words as objects devoid of meaningful expression of our shared human condition. In the best case scenario, even if the poem represents this meaning, it nevertheless transmits it ambiguously and thus fails to meet the requirements of the type of political program Sartre wants to promote. For Bachelard, poetry's movement away from meaningful expression so as to better isolate the poetic image is its undeniable strength;[234] but for Sartre this is its fatal flaw. Poetry cannot provoke indignation or political enthusiasm in the reader like prose, which is direct and instrumental, reflecting its greater respect for language as a moment of action. Because words in prose are used as signs which point to things in the world, Sartre recognizes a great responsibility for the selection of these things. What exactly will one write and read about and who is responsible for these decisions? Sartre asks. The writer and reader, of course. He often reiterates this ethical dimension surrounding prose: 'But from this point on we may conclude that the writer has chosen to reveal the world and particularly to reveal

man to other men so that the latter may assume full responsibility before the object which has been thus laid bare.'[235] Even more so Sartre emphasizes the responsibility on the part of the writer, who must have a clear commitment to his writing, a writing to be seen as a cause which delivers an expressed message. In the second section of the essay, which asks 'Why Write?,' Sartre effectively provides an existential phenomenology of writing and reading to convey how the participants of these two activities must collaborate to produce the object of the work. He here argues against Kant's belief 'that the work of art first exists as fact and that it is then seen' and critiques Kant through the latter's own categorical imperative.[236] For Sartre the implication here is that you are perfectly free to ignore the book lying on the table, but once it is opened, you assume responsibility for it. The author for his part must freely project his writing toward that readership which will complete the concrete object of the work. Sartre thus supplements his emphasis on responsibility with an equal emphasis on freedom:

> 'For, since the one who writes recognizes, by the very fact that he takes the trouble to write, the freedom of his readers, and since the one who reads, by the mere fact of his opening the book, recognizes the freedom of the writer, the work of art, from whichever side you approach it, is an act of confidence in the freedom of men. And since readers, like the author, recognize this freedom only to demand that it manifest itself, the work can be defined as an imaginary presentation of the world in so far as it demands human freedom.'[237]

When a writer writes, he both discloses the world and offers it as a task to the generosity of the reader in a selfless appeal that is analogous to Christian passion, which obliges the reader to create what the writer discloses. This is done in mutually acknowledged freedom, free men addressing free men on the subject, ultimately, of freedom. In the third section which asks 'For Whom Does One Write?' the quick answer is that the writer, immersed in his situation, addresses his contemporaries with respect to class and race. This of course is not ideal. He cites 17th century French writers whose public was just slightly broader than the 12th century clerk-writers of the early Roman Church. Both reflected their own conservative ideals of faith and monarchy, which preserved the respective classical society from liberating change, back to a limited readership. However, with the rise of bourgeois freedom in the 18th century, which created an intellectual class of writers untied to classical institutions, while writing did continue to be directed toward the consolidation of class privilege, there were nevertheless those that began directing an abstract freedom against concrete oppression. The problem was and continues to be that this freedom is too abstract. Writing here concerns an abstract man for a timeless reader. So this era also falls short as the previous two did. It overlooks the essence of oppression and so its literature is alienated and fails to arrive at explicit consciousness of its autonomy. It conceives of itself as a means serving temporal or ideological powers and not as an unconditioned end in itself. Sartre thus calls for the writer of today to move away from abstractness to express instead the (Hegelian) 'concrete universality,' what he understands as the actual historical situation of 'the sum total of men living in a given society.'[238] Concrete

literature could then become conscious of itself, of how 'its end is to appeal to the freedom of men so that they may realize and maintain the reign of human freedom.'[239] For Sartre, the writer 'must write to the public which has the freedom of changing everything; which means, besides suppression of classes, abolition of all dictatorship, constant renewal of frameworks, and the continuous overthrowing of order once it tends to congeal. In short, literature is, in essence, the subjectivity of a society in permanent revolution.'[240] Concisely said, one writes to the proletariat or at least until that time when society is without classes and the formal freedom of saying at the level of the word is identical to the material freedom of doing found at the level of the act. In this ideal situation one level of freedom could be used to demand the other. And only prose can aim for this ideal, as it treats the word as a moment of action capable of engaging the writer and reader in the meanings it confers upon the objects in the world in mutually acknowledged freedom.

2.3 The Epistemological Phenomenology of Interpretation

While there are important differences between Merleau-Ponty, Bachelard and Sartre, they do share an approach that places understanding in the ontological or existential dimension standing *a priori* to the subject-object dichotomy. In this section we follow the other trajectory of phenomenological thought, one which instead respects this dichotomy as the proper point of departure and thus can be said to take its measure from Husserl's original epistemological method of investigating meaning.

Without question Ingarden falls in the Husserlian phenomenological camp. His *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* (1937)[241] bears the strong stamp of his former teacher on all its major notional elements. Above it was mentioned that Sartre had effectively developed the rudiments of an existential phenomenology of writing and reading. Ingarden's early work is much more complete on this score, striving for a theoretical rigor and without subsuming it under an explicit political program. His work can be seen as the first and still the best application of strict Husserlian phenomenology to aesthetics in general and to the reading of literary texts in particular. But it is important to note that Ingarden's phenomenological aesthetics is not interested in the *quaestio facti* of a reading experience so much as the discernment and methodical interpretation of the meaning of a text, which is concretized in that reading experience. The former is of interest to the psychologist. Yet focusing on the total effect of the reading experience too easily slips one into seriously considering the erroneous explanations of verbal meaning offered by the psychologistic school, which in general views the experiencing subject as forming the meanings of words in isolation. In such a view, Ingarden muses, 'the correct understanding of the meaning of a word (in short, the understanding of a word) used by another is almost a miracle.'[242] While Ingarden does challenge Husserl's division of all entities into the real and the ideal by saying that his own investigation into the mode of being of the aesthetic object reveals how it does not fall into either

category, he wholeheartedly embraces Husserl's notion that meaning is an ideal object 'out there,' 'external' to experiencing subjects and so something that remains identical and transcendent to all their experiences. Moreover, it is an intentional object whose 'successful immediate discovery...is basically an actualization of this intention. That is: when I understand a text, I think the meaning of the text. I extract the meaning from the text, so to speak, and change it into the actual intention of my mental act of understanding, into an intention identical with the word or sentence intention of the text. Then I really "understand" the text.'[243]

To grasp this last statement, consider how Ingarden's methodology finds no difficulty in utilizing the subject-object schema, in conceiving how cognition adapts to the basic structure of its object. On the object side is the literary work of art, whose essential and necessary structural properties must be sought in an analysis which, as he often stresses in true Husserlian fashion, makes no presuppositions. More specifically, Ingarden asserts that its structure is multi-layered, but its individual strata do form a unity for the work as a whole as well as being ordered sequentially. Nevertheless, 'the literary work itself is a schematic formation. That is: several of its strata, especially the stratum of portrayed objectivities and the stratum of aspects, contain "places of indeterminacy."'[244] To put it bluntly, the subject faces off with an object-text that is structurally full of holes, and his job is to 'fill them out' or to at least partially remove them through his individual reading of the literary work in a process Ingarden calls the 'concretization of the literary work.' In other words, we take writing to be expressions or carriers of meanings and reading it runs smoothly until we encounter an obstacle to meaning comprehension, at which point the reading process slows down or even halts. Helplessness ensues, and we attempt to guess at its meaning. Overall, there is 'a natural tendency in us to complete the act of understanding'[245] which, as said above, concerns an active extraction of meaning from the text. This does not occur if one ignores both the anticipation of the meaning in future sentences based on those that precede it and the retroactive effect whereby the meaning of preceding sentences are rethought in light of those that follow. Even worse, such 'passive reading,' which reads sentence by sentence and would struggle to provide an overall summary of the text if asked, is unable to make the meanings it takes from individual sentences into *objects* and thus remains in the *sphere of meaning*.[246] However, 'active reading' does complete the act of understanding and fully extracts the meaning from the text. For when we actively read, we recognize the objects appropriate to and projected by sentences. We also have a sort of intercourse with them and 'project ourselves in a cocreative attitude into the realm of the objects determined by the sentence meanings.'[247] Only with active reading does the extracted out meaning change into the actual intention of the reader's mental act of understanding and become identical to the intention of the sentence in the text itself. In this way the places of indeterminacy are filled, and the literary work of art becomes concretized.

As with Husserl, meaning remains half-constituted until a meaning-intentional act is committed by a subject. Ingarden just tailors Husserlian phenomenological theory to the experience of reading literary works of art, first by investigating the object-side of half-constituted meaning via the analysis of the essential structure of those works, then by examining the subject-side of the structured acts through which those works are understood, and finally by describing the convergence of the two sides in the active reading experience through which meaning is fully constituted and objectivated. This completes the concretization of the literary work. Like Husserl, the concern is more with the constitution of meaning than with the meaning of the text per se. The above cited text just before the last quotation already suggests how one is not to 'remain in the sphere of meaning' (in a phrase that certainly brings to mind the precise aim of Heidegger's hermeneutical phenomenology) but instead to attend to meaning *qua* object. Yet even this attention to the objective quality of meaning is slightly backed away from, for the quoted text immediately above continues:

> 'The meaning in this case creates an approach to the objects which are treated in the work. The meaning, as Husserl says, is only a passageway [*ein Durchgangsobjekt*] which one traverses in order to reach the object meant. In a strict sense the meaning is not an object at all. For, if we think a sentence actively, we attend, not to the meaning, but to what is determined or thought through it or in it. We can say, although not quite precisely, that in actively thinking a sentence we constitute or carry out its meaning and, in so doing, arrive at the objects of the sentence, that is, the states of affairs or other intentional sentence correlates. From this point we can grasp the things themselves which are indicated in the sentence correlates.'[248]

Husserl and Ingarden break with a need for hermeneutical technique to extract meaning as their phenomenological methodology is deemed sufficient for this task. Moreover, the constitution of meaning, not its understanding, is its objective, and their epistemological phenomenology accordingly seeks to describe the structures of meaning-intentional objects and subjective acts involved in that constitution process. In this extended citation Ingarden expressly considers meaning as a means of arriving at the thing meant of a text. For Ingarden this distinction between meaning *qua* means and the thing meant should be respected. Yet this does not imply that he considers meaning to be of a secondary nature – an assessment discernible in the projects of many thinkers in the fields to be examined in the remaining three chapters of Part I. Rather, epistemological phenomenology considers meaning intimately constitutive of the thing meant so it is still of primary interest. Ingarden's words above can thus be seen as a caution directed toward the more ontologically-minded phenomenologists, who precisely get bogged down in descriptions of the passageway of meaning and thereby disregard its distinction from the objectivated thing meant. From the perspective of Husserl and Ingarden, hermeneutical phenomenology errs in making what should remain at the level of a technical means into the thing itself.

Ingarden's establishment of a phenomenological aesthetics championing the reader's concretization of literary works of art through cognitive meaning-intentional acts which fill in those places of

indeterminacy in the essential structure of those works influences two key members of the Constance School of reception theory, which reached its highpoint in the 1970s. Both Iser and Jauss establish technical methods which also treat the subject as co-creator of the universal, irreducible and shareable meanings the text determines. This is particularly the case with Iser, who adds a level of complexity to Ingarden by no longer considering textual indeterminacies as stable. His essay "Interaction between Text and Reader" (1980)[249] describes the processes of a reader advancing through a text, chasing down its *shifting* indeterminacies so that an aesthetic object slowly emerges from the work. Iser begins by discussing the title of his essay, which provides us an opportunity to reflect on a point implicit in our discussion above. Effectively, he explains that there are not just two poles to consider in the phenomenological theory of art, but three: there is the artistic side of the actual text, the aesthetic side of the actions involved in responding to and thus realizing that text, and finally the work itself, which 'must inevitably be virtual in character, as it cannot be reduced to the reality of the text or to the subjectivity of the reader, and it is from this virtuality that it derives its dynamism.'[250] So when phenomenology in the style of Husserl is articulated as utilizing a subject-object matrix just as do, say, hermeneutical thinkers like Chladenius, Dilthey, Hirsch or any other so identified in Chapter 1 above, it must be remembered that for the latter group there essentially are only two poles while for the former meaning is a mediating third element not reducible to the subject- or the object-pole (but capable, of course, of itself being objectivated). As for those thinkers holding to hermeneutical phenomenology, again there is no need to utilize this matrix at all since it directly ontologizes this third element, thereby granting it priority status with respect to any subject-object split.

For Iser, however, 'if one loses sight of the relationship [between the two poles], one loses sight of the virtual work'[251] as well as its actualization since this can only occur through the interaction of the text and reader. This dyadic interaction is asymmetrical, giving rise to blanks or gaps since the text itself provides no feedback to the interpretive activity. Attempting to bridge these gaps is what spurs the reading process, to either confirm or negate the content imagined to fill in the blank through further textual evidence. Iser identifies many levels to this process, saying for instance that what is negated nevertheless remains in view and brings about modifications in the reader's attitude to the text, which gives rise to additional blanks. This means that the blanks are not so much pre-programmed by the author so as to appear the same for all readers (as it is for Ingarden) but is due to the *relation* the reader has to the text, the position he adopts as reader of the literary work. Yet the path he takes is, in the last instance, controlled by the text in a structured way. As Iser writes, these blanks 'are the unseen joints of the text...the unseen structure that regulates but does not formulate the connection or even the meaning'[252] the reader takes from the text. In other words, the text pivots around the shifting blank the reader

endeavors to fill and thus guides the constitutive activity of reading in a structured manner as a path is forged through the text. In this way, Iser concludes, '[t]he shifting blank is responsible for a sequence of colliding images, which condition each other in the time flow of reading. The discarded image imprints itself on its successor, even though the latter is meant to resolve the deficiencies of the former. In this respect the images hang together in a sequence, and it is by this sequence that the meaning of the text comes alive in the reader's imagination.'[253] So while Iser does increase the level of structural complexity on the object-side while perhaps considering the constituting activities on the subject-side more pragmatically, he nevertheless remains clearly aligned with Ingarden in articulating an intimate and constitutive connection between the structure of the text and the reading subject.

However, the debt owed by Jauss to Ingarden is not as clear. His article "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" (1970)[254] argues that a text should be interpreted with respect to its 'horizon of expectations' and thus in terminology that bears the distinctive stamp of Gadamer. Yet this resemblance to his former teacher is nominal. Certainly he makes the general 'attempt to bridge the gap between literature and history' as Gadamer might, specifically challenging literary studies to take up the problem of literary history, as the title suggests.[255] But he rigorously maintains, like Iser, the tertiary structure of author, work and the public. This last element is in the pole position of the subject and is privileged in his theory, which assesses a work strictly in terms of the reception it receives by the subjects who read it. While this makes it easy to see why the Constance School of reception theory is so named, it is simply not compatible with Gadamer's focus on the subject matter of the work itself, which is deemed to hold the key to meaning, as we saw in Section 1.3 above.

Jauss arranges his challenge in a series of seven theses,[256] the first of which simply asks that a text be placed into its proper context, to not take a literary work as embodying a timeless meaning in itself but to consider it in its aesthetic reception. The second defines this reception as the horizon of expectations which is essentially the set of cultural and literary expectations that readers have of a work. This allows Jauss to set up evaluative criteria with which to judge a work as per his third thesis, based on the distance between a work and its horizon of expectation. For instance, if that distance is small to nil so that the work cannot be said to have disappointed its public, the work is likely in 'the sphere of "culinary" or entertainment art;' but if the distance is so great as to register profound disappointment, this might later prove itself to be an initially misunderstood masterpiece.[257] This suggests the importance of establishing the original horizon of expectations of the work in the historical moment of its appearance, which is captured in thesis four. Jauss' notion of comparing the original and current receptions of the work to bring out the 'hermeneutic difference,' which frustrates the notion that meaning is objective and determined once and for all, is a development of Gadamer's fusion of horizons; yet he criticizes Gadamer's elevation

of 'the concept of the classical to the status of prototype for all historical mediation of past with present' since it conveniently overlooks how in its original reception there was not yet the timeless truth of the classical.[258] The fifth thesis thus demands an individual work be placed into the series of its historical reception (and not just consider its current reception as Gadamer does) to grasp its meaning most fully. This diachronic dimension is supplemented in the sixth thesis by the synchronic analysis of the receptions of the work and other works in the same time period. Jauss' final thesis embodies his boldest claim, that the gap between literature and history can be bridged if literary history does not simply describe and reflect general history; rather, this can be accomplished when it discovers 'that properly *socially formative* function that belongs to literature as it competes with other arts and social forces in the emancipation of mankind from its natural, religious, and social bonds.'[259] Simply said, his exclusive focus on how works have been subjectively received throughout history leads Jauss to conclude that literary history so conceived can influence the course of general history toward the liberation of man.

The subject-side of the subject-object dichotomy is emphasized to an even greater degree in the earlier Geneva School of phenomenological criticism which reached its high point in the 1940s-50s. Having roots with Ingarden as well, its most well-known member Poulet so emphasizes the subject that the object all but dissolves into a self-conscious work. This is best encapsulated in his essay "Phenomenology of Reading" (1969).[260] There he evaluates his fellow Geneva School members according to 'a critical method having as guiding principle the relation between subject and object...which is the principle of all creative work and of the understanding of it.'[261] He finds that their attempts to attain the subjective principle which upholds the objective structures of a literary work are as faulty as the opposite movement proceeding from the subject to the object since both strategies effectively move from the subject-reader to the subject-author through the literary object. Indeed this is the very mark of the Geneva School whose method of criticism in general seeks the coincidence of the mind of the critic with the mind of the author. Poulet distinguishes himself from this group by viewing criticism as *pure* identification, which he considers an end in itself. To understand this we can use the subject-object schema to guide us through his descriptive account of the subjective experience of reading. Already in the first moment the text *qua* object is problematized since 'books are not just objects among others' even when lying on a table unread but rather are 'aware that an act of man might suddenly transform their existence...They appear to be lit up with that hope. Read me, they seem to say.'[262] Once the subject actually commences the reading process, the book loses another aspect of objectivity as it seems to emit from its pages the consciousness of another rational being. No longer does the subject hold in his hands an object-book. Rather, a consciousness opens up to him with which empathy is possible as well as cognition of its thoughts. Slowly the subject recognizes that these thoughts are objects of its own thought. It is as if a 'strange invasion of

my person by the thought of another' has been effected which subjects the subject to thoughts other than its own.[263] Poulet examines a series of apophantic propositions in an attempt to assign to those predicated thoughts an I whose status is equally indeterminate and eventually concludes that the work itself is a pure consciousness presiding over the unfolding of the meaningful aspects of the work. He tells us that 'a work of literature becomes (at the expense of the reader whose own life it suspends) a sort of human being, that it is a mind conscious of itself and constituting itself in me as the subject of its own objects.'[264] Recourse to psychology and biography avail us nothing since the consciousness which invades the subject is not the author's consciousness but something ineffable and indeterminate in its transcendence and revelation to itself and the critic. He concludes that criticism then 'needs to annihilate, or at least momentarily forget, the objective elements of the work, and to elevate itself to the apprehension of a subjectivity without objectivity.'[265] To reach this consciousness of consciousness, this pure *cogito*, there is thus no need to consider the historical dimension since the text is not evidence of a prior experience but rather constitutes the very corpus of that experience in the *hic et nunc*. The subject need only confront an object-text to potentially experience the self-conscious mediating work which emerges from the collapse of a strictly held to subject-object matrix. A moment's reflection makes it clear how this mediating third element leads the subject right back to its own (self-)consciousness. This is what is meant by the text for Poulet, and his phenomenological method is to render this in an orderly and transparent fashion.

As the foregoing has stressed, Ingarden, Iser, Jauss and Poulet all utilize the type of phenomenology championed by Husserl, one which places the knowing subject at the center of a methodological approach which has little use for hermeneutics. So Ricoeur is quite correct in identifying subjectivity as the cornerstone of Husserlian phenomenology in his "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics" (1975).[266] As he also goes on to suggest ways in which phenomenology and hermeneutics presuppose one another, a discussion of this essay is thus a fitting way to conclude this chapter on phenomenology as it links it to the previous chapter on hermeneutics and thus provides an opportunity to review some notions which run across the two fields as well as those which prove contentious. In the first half of his essay he identifies five theses of Husserl all of which can be seen as grounded in subjectivity. Then he subjects each of these to a critique by hermeneutics. The point is to show that the critique of phenomenology by hermeneutics only damages this particular type of phenomenology. Heideggerian phenomenology emerges relatively unscathed as it already appropriates hermeneutics at its foundation. For instance, Husserl models his project on the self-grounding of a presuppositionless scientificity, couching his discoveries in 'the conceptuality of the subject-object relation.' Yet the fact that hermeneutics (which Ricoeur everywhere takes in its Heideggerian mode) recognizes 'that the problematic of objectivity presupposes a prior

relation of inclusion which encompasses the allegedly autonomous subject and the allegedly adverse object,' this means that Husserl's thesis 'encounters its fundamental limit in the ontological condition of understanding.'[267] Concisely said, the hermeneutical phenomenology of understanding of Heidegger and Gadamer trumps the phenomenological interpretive methodology of Husserl since the former recognizes the ontological priority of belonging as encompassing the latter's use of the epistemological subject-object schema. Without an operative notion of the fore-structures of understanding in his philosophy, Husserl overlooks the primordial dimension of meaning since meaning is structured precisely by these fore-structures. Moreover, if the objectivity of the subject-object relation is rendered doubtful so too is Husserl's reliance on a transcendental subjectivity whose capacity for intentional and intuitive activity implies a distance taken to its object. In contrast, Ricoeur stresses the Heideggerian notion of suddenly arriving in the middle of a dialogue with a text and thus being caught between the understanding we initiate and the proposals of meaning the text offers. Overlooking the fore-structures of understanding thus also implies overlooking the hermeneutical circle which is articulated there. So Ricoeur suggests that the Husserlian conception of meaning-intentional acts as constitutive of meaning be replaced by a conception which grants autonomy to the meaning of the text. This would move the essential question away from the recovery of the lost intention behind the text to the unfolding of the world which the text opens up and discloses.[268] Ricoeur also argues that hermeneutics adds a radical dimension to Husserl's claim that the foundational act of the subject tearing himself away from the natural scientific attitude is self-positing, supremely autonomous and thus the ultimate self-responsible and ethical act. Proposed instead is a recognition that subjectivity is a category which emerges from the understanding of the dialogue with the text and not that which initiates it without presuppositions. Hermeneutical self-understanding is the understanding of oneself in front of the text, in light of its subject matter and the proposals of meaning which it unfolds. With hermeneutics self-mastery is exchanged for self-discipline by the meaningful matter of the text. We could say that Husserl's transcendental subject becomes thoroughly awash with meaningful content. The argument here is that hermeneutical phenomenology registers a deeper ethicality than Husserlian subjectivity.

Once the demonstration of how Husserlian phenomenology succumbs to the critique of (Heideggerian) hermeneutics is completed, Ricoeur proceeds in the second half of the essay to argue how phenomenology and hermeneutics presuppose one another. Hence the term hermeneutical phenomenology. On the one hand, for instance, '[t]he reference of the linguistic order back to the structure of experience (which comes to language in the assertion) constitutes, in my view, the most important phenomenological presupposition of hermeneutics.'[269] Ricoeur effectively says here that a focus on the predicative and apophantic level of meaning, which both (pre-Heideggerian) hermeneutics

and Husserl share presupposes a pre-predicative, pre-linguistic level of phenomenological experience. This latter level is where hermeneutics knowingly (as in the case of *Truth and Method*) or unknowingly begins and, incidentally, is what allows Heidegger to famously say that 'language is the house of being.' On the other hand, phenomenology presupposes hermeneutics since *'Auslegung* [exegesis, explication, interpretation] is already at work in the reduction to the sphere of belonging.'[270] That is, the primordial antecedent dimension of experience is never given in itself but remains an interpretation. Effectively for Ricoeur, *Logical Investigations* as a methodological investigation into meaning is deficient as it overlooks its presupposed hermeneutical field. Hermeneutical phenomenology fares much better as it recognizes how the phenomenological experience of being can only be realized as hermeneutics. This is why *Being and Time* examines not the question of being but the question of the *meaning* of being.

CHAPTER 3

(POST)STRUCTURALISM

> The important thing in the word is not the sound alone but the phonic differences that make possible to distinguish this word from all others, for differences carry signification [meaning]. ...[I]n language there are only differences. Even more important: a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences *without positive terms*. Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system.[271]
>
> [*H*]*ermeneutics and semiology are two ferocious enemies*.[272]

This historical survey began in Chapter 1 with a discussion of hermeneutics from the medieval period onward as this field most directly concerns itself with the appropriation of meaning. Over the centuries hermeneutics made several notable turns but none more significant than the one made when it confronted phenomenology. Initially with Husserl this was inconsequential. Although Husserl was grossly interested in meaning, his interest had more to do with how the thing meant was constituted rather than with its appropriation so hermeneutics was safely set aside and left intact. But at the hands of Heidegger hermeneutical technique suddenly became the thing itself, and this problematized the status of hermeneutics as a distinct field. Moreover, in retrospect after Heidegger it is clear that despite their vastly different approaches to meaning, Husserl and hermeneutical theory were alike in their conception of meaning *qua* object. With the Heideggerian ontological turn, however, meaning could no longer be conceived as an object buried deep within a text in need of appropriate techniques for its unearthing but rather as that which subsists at the level of the experience of being. Hermeneutical phenomenology thus brought about a fundamental split in approaches to the problem of meaning: while some (*e.g.*, Betti, Hirsch, Apel, Habermas) sought a return to pre-Heideggerian epistemological methodology, others (*e.g.*, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Bachelard) understood that if meaning was no longer conceivable as a problematic object confronting a subject, this meant that no theory of meaning *per se* was possible. The latter could only then entertain the *quaestio facti* by offering endless descriptions of their particular phenomenological projects.

But with the advent of (post)structuralism in the 20th century a new crisis ensues. This new field implicitly challenges the primacy the question of meaning enjoys in hermeneutics, phenomenology and hermeneutical phenomenology. Like Husserl it investigates the constitution of meaning but unlike Husserl no subjective factor is considered. Indeed (post)structuralism is fervently anti-humanist and so does not place the source of textual meaning with its author or with the intentional acts of its readers. Its study of the structure of language and its elements is more attuned to functionality than to answering questions regarding causality. Essentially, (post)structuralism reasons that if meaning is tied up with language, language should be, in a first approach, scrutinized as a systematic whole since this whole is deemed greater than the sum of its parts. But such a systematic study also calls for a relational conception of these parts, where the basic elements of language are examined in relations of combination and contrast to one another. The further assumption that the resulting linguistic entities are arbitrary in nature forces a focus on the functions they serve. The (post)structuralist approach consequentially removes from consideration all outer stimuli, whether that be the spontaneity of the subjective act or the *claritas* of being, to undertake its primary task of revealing the inner laws of the system and the internal premises of its development. From the (post)structuralist perspective, the interpretive approach to unearth meaning is thus unproductive and subject to all the vagaries of *ad hoc* intuitive response which abandons any serious attempt to place criticism on sure methodological footing. For its scientific approach has it that it is not man who creates meaning through language but language which speaks man. So if man does have an interest in meaning, he does best to turn his attention away from directly entertaining this question to instead examine the relational aspects of linguistic elements which account for meaning. The problem is that the experience of meaning is bought only at the expense of overlooking the formal mechanism of the signifying structure; a moment's reflection confirms that while a text is being investigated in a structuralist fashion, the meaning-effect which comes from reading the text is lost. So by being primarily drawn to investigate the structural mechanics of language, the question of meaning becomes a secondary matter to (post)structuralism. Over-against the fields examined in the first two chapters, starting with this chapter we examine fields which open up the possibility of non-meaningful domains which, nevertheless, have an intimate connection to meaning.

Section 3.1 looks at a few theorists who fall into the classical era of structuralism, which roughly dates from Saussure through the 1950s. The overriding tendency of this group is to submit language to a synchronic analysis, which ignores the historical dimension in language constitution as well as foregoing any consideration of subjectivity. Section 3.2 discusses some theorists of post-structuralism from the 1960s onward who took from structuralism its essential insight into language as a system of signs. However, they reject the centrality of structure so as not to essentialize binary oppositions. They thus

supplement a static ahistorical analysis of language with a diachronic dimension. The result is an emphasis on the indeterminate and polysemic nature of semiotic codes and a new consideration for the relation of the subject to the signifying structure.

3.1 Structuralism

Certainly the question of meaning is still operative in structuralism and post-structuralism. But it is easily shown how even with Saussure, the father of structuralism, it is no longer the primary focus. His *Course in General Linguistics* (1916)[273] marks a distinct break from all previous theories of language. Whereas previously the predominant modes of analyzing language were philological and historical, Saussure turns instead to an analysis of language as if it were frozen in a moment of time. In later structuralist terminology Saussure thus opts for a synchronic rather than a diachronic approach to the analysis of language. Now if we recall how hermeneutics has deep roots in philology and how the historical analysis of language increasingly developed through the 19th and 20th centuries to reach its limit with hermeneutical phenomenology, we can already see how at this basic level Saussure begins to turn away from meaning. For Gadamer clearly showed how meaning is inseparable from the historical dimension. Saussure also breaks away from past thinking which assumed that the existing diversity of languages descended from one original language. Without an operative historical element in his theory, he refrains from offering yet another meaningful narration of this linguistic Fall. Instead he seeks to extract a principle from this fact of diversity, taking it as evidence of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign – what he considers the functional unit of language. The sign must be carefully distinguished from the meaning-packed 'symbol,' which 'is never wholly arbitrary; it is not empty, for there is the rudiment of a natural bond between the signifier and the signified.'[274] For Saussure, the linguistic sign is composed of these two entities, which he illustrates as an encircled ratio with the signified (or concept) on top and the signifier (or sound-image) on bottom. The arbitrary connection between them is based on societal convention and is not subject to change through individual intention. Nevertheless they are inseparable, like two sides of a sheet of paper and function as a unit to produce signification or meaning. But signification is not Saussure's primary focus. He turns instead to analyze 'value,' which he expressly distinguishes from signification.[275] Where the signified and signifier form a unit to express signification, each of these two elements has value only in its difference from other elements at its own level. There are thus two chains of differences which diverge from each other in parallel fashion without a perfect one-to-one correspondence between those terms which make up any individual unit. Extrapolating from this, we could call this the structuralist account of the ambiguity of meaning since the diverging chains effectively rend meaning so as to prevent its stable unity. At any rate, Saussure's explicit point captured in the lengthy citation which opens this chapter is that meaning is also defined by these differential chains. But

as any reading of his text makes plain, the accent of his analysis clearly falls on value and not meaning. Thus he continues examining how values emanate from the system from the viewpoint of the signified and then from the viewpoint of the signifier, both of which can be described as 'purely differential and defined not by their positive content but negatively by their relations with the other terms of the system. Their most precise characteristic is in being what the others are not.'[276] Simply said, the value of the signifier 'dog' is in being neither 'cat' nor 'house,' etc.

By simultaneously considering their associated signifieds, the meaning of 'dog' can likewise be defined although here a change in terminology is warranted. Strictly speaking, one must no longer speak of difference but of opposition. So at the level of its meaning, 'dog' is opposed to 'cat.' This is so because '[a]lthough both the signified and the signifier are purely differential and negative when considered separately, their combination is a positive fact; it is even the sole type of facts that language has, for maintaining the parallelism between the two classes of differences is the distinctive function of the linguistic institution.'[277] What we might call meaning-units are the only positive facts of language, holding together two differential chains of value at particular intervals. As we can see, Saussure's theory refrains from a direct examination of this positivity to analyze instead the prior level of negativity. This is a step back from a primary concern for substantive meanings and their oppositions to one another to the purely differential form which supports them. As he emphasizes, '*language is a form and not a substance*.'[278] He further analyses this form through his distinction between the syntagmatic relation (which refers signifieds and signifiers to other elements present in the articulated chain) and the associative relation (later called the paradigmatic relation, which refers these elements to others present in the mind but absent from the actual chain). A final notable move away from directly dealing with meaning is discernible in his overall focus on *la langue* [language] and not *la parole* [speech]. The former term names the theoretical object of Saussure's linguistic approach, one abstracted from the diversity of concrete languages. The latter, which delivers for Ebeling's word-event theology the meaningful proclamation, is not considered since individual utterances only execute possibilities already existing in *la langue*. The structural mechanisms of language interest Saussure the most, not carrying them out in expressions of meaning. With his work Saussure effectively sets the stage for all subsequent work in (post)structuralism, which will treat language as form and not as that which houses a mystical substance.

In the introduction to this chapter it was suggested that only by overlooking the formal mechanisms of the signifying structure is the phenomenal experience-of-meaning operative. This might be called a general truth of structuralism and is perhaps nowhere more confirmed than with Jakobson. In his essays "Linguistics and Poetics" (1958) and "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances" (1956)[279] he decomposes and categorizes language to a much greater extent than Saussure. In the latter

essay he for the first time discerns and sets in opposition two primordial principles of language use, metaphor and metonymy. Usually these both operate at once and are thus difficult to discern. But his analysis of aphasia (the total or partial loss of the power to use or understand words) made such discernment possible. In one type of aphasia the relation of similarity is suppressed, which makes metaphor an alien principle to those so afflicted. In another type the relation of contiguity is suppressed, which likewise results in failing to grasp the principle of metonymy.[280] He also develops other principles and oppositional terms in this essay such as substitution and combination. In the former essay, he first provides us with an outline of the six basic aspects of language, which he claims are 'the constitutive factors in any speech event, in any act of verbal communication.'[281] Concisely presented, through a point of CONTACT the ADDRESSER sends a MESSAGE to the ADDRESSEE within a CONTEXT using a CODE. The six basic functions of language, which correspond to these factors, are the PHATIC, the EMOTIVE, the POETIC, the CONATIVE, the REFERENTIAL and the METALINGUAL, respectively. Without entering into a discussion of each of these factors and functions, we could readily surmise the difficulties one might encounter if these categories were strictly adhered to when setting them to task on a text. As the textual content a category is meant to capture invariably slides imperceptibly into another category, the analyst might well ask himself if he has properly grasped the meaning of each of these categories in the first place. Such a question could be seen as symptomatic of how the experience of meaning is lost when the approach to the text attempts to examine its language in a strictly technical manner. However, such a question, which glosses the entire approach and asks for clarification to ensure the proper lexical code is being used, is *already* reflected in Jakobson's technical schema. For this question demonstrates the metalingual function of language.[282] But this is precisely the function of language with which he has the least interest. Jakobson privileges instead the poetic function, which at once reflects his deep structuralist interest in analytical descriptions of poetic language, without any concern for its evaluation, which would instead depend on the values of its meaning and creativity. We are informed that '[t]his function, by promoting the palpability of signs, deepens the fundamental dichotomy of signs and objects. Hence, when dealing with the poetic function, linguistics cannot limit itself to the field of poetry.'[283] So the name of this function is rather misleading, for it operationally extends to all textual forms. But what exactly is the poetic function? Its official definition reads: *'The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination*.'[284] The obscurity of this definition is slightly cleared up when he tells us there is a 'diametrical opposition' between poetry and metalanguage so that where the function of the latter questions the meaning of linguistic sequences, the function of the former directly builds such sequences. This bears witness to Jakobson's awareness of that general truth of structuralism stated above, since that truth is effectively accounted for and inscribed into his theoretical framework in the

form of this opposition whose privileged pole is the poetic function. By way of a general assessment, since it is never the poetic word but rather the poetic *function* that is at stake for Jakobson, we might say that if linguistics is to structuralism as poetics is to meaning, what is accomplished here is the annexation of poetics to linguistics. So as with Saussure there is also discernible in Jakobson a concerted effort to move away from signification toward the meaningless domain of structural mechanics.

Broadly speaking the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss also does the same as it sets aside the question of what myths mean to inquire instead on what they do and how they do it. But he has also recorded his thoughts on the status of writing and language. A case in point is chapter twenty-five of his *Tristes Tropiques* (1955), appropriately entitled "A Writing Lesson."[285] But as this text is largely written as a first-person account of the journey Lévi-Strauss took through the Brazilian tropics in the late 1930s with a local native population, it is initially unclear where the intended lesson lies. However, about one third of the way into his story Lévi-Strauss embeds a text written in the third-person which strikes a decidedly theoretical tone, in stark contrast to the more emotive narrative portion of the text.[286] No doubt the 'official' writing lesson lies with this two-page academic interlude, in which he covers everything from ancient civilizations (both East and West) to a Marxist analysis of the ideological role that writing plays in modern domestic and post-colonial governmental administrations. Indeed we are told that writing has historically been linked with political power from its initial days when it was used to facilitate slavery, to the modern development of compulsory education in the last centuries to better indoctrinate the proletariat into complying with the dictates of global Capital.[287] This lesson is presumably to extend to the narrative portion of his text so that his description of the symbolic exchanges he observes among native individuals and groups are to be understood as so many power struggles taking place within their primitive political economy.

One recorded incident directly concerns writing and intimately involves Lévi-Strauss himself. He explains how he had previously distributed paper and pencils to the illiterate native group but evidently only the chief grasped the purpose of writing. The incident occurs when Lévi-Strauss later suggests to the chief that the symbolic exchange of gifts scheduled to be done at a later date should proceed without further delay in order to ease the relations between him, a Westerner, and the native group. What happens is that the chief for two hours perpetrated a farce on his own people, pretending to both read and write as he mediated the exchange of gifts. If we abide by the official lesson which defines writing with respect to the political-economic structuralist level, we must conclude that its purpose is strictly to serve capital and those who benefit from it the most. In the present case we break through bourgeois ideology as soon as we recognize how the chief was attempting to strengthen his power and access to capital goods through his ruse over his people. But we might extract out an alternative lesson beyond this

official lesson. When the chief was originally introduced to writing, apparently he also made an effort to deceive Lévi-Strauss himself. As Lévi-Strauss recounts,

> 'when we were working together he did not give me his answers in words, but traced a wavy line or two on the paper and gave it to me, as if I could read what he had to say. He himself was all but deceived by his own play-acting. Each time he drew a line he would examine it with great care, as if meaning must suddenly leap to the eye; and every time a look of disappointment came over his face. But he would never give up trying, and there was an unspoken agreement between us that his scribblings had a meaning that I did my best to decipher; his own verbal commentary was so prompt in coming that I had no need to ask him to explain what he had written.'[288]

Lévi-Strauss clearly recognizes the breakdown of communication as one normally takes this notion, for at the level of meaning nothing is being exchanged. However, the 'unspoken agreement between us' signals that at another – structural – level the communication was indeed successful for they both did understand each other. In this way we could say that the pretense of understanding each other was *itself* only pretense. At any rate, the alternative lesson to take from this episode is that full meanings need not be exchanged for successful communication to occur, for there is also that understanding which takes place at the level of the symbolic exchange itself – in this case the act of exchanging pieces of paper with meaningless writing on them. Granted, this lesson is not expressly conveyed as such. But the point is that since Lévi-Strauss is a structurally-minded thinker, his text cannot but be rife with such lessons whereby the failure of communication at the level of the immediate understanding of meaning is demonstrated to be redeemed at the structural level.[289] Moreover, at an even less explicit level the chief's anxious expectation for meaning to 'suddenly leap to the eye' and his constant 'look of disappointment' when it failed to do so raises the troubling prospect that there is another level not yet accounted for by either the meaningful content of a text or the structural aspects of its formal language. This possibility will be seriously entertained towards the end of the next chapter but only theoretically articulated in an explicit fashion in Chapter 5.

3.2 Post-Structuralism

As post-structuralism is often identified with 'deconstruction,' it is quite appropriate to begin with a discussion of Derrida, who coined this term. In general deconstruction is a method of textual analysis which reveals incompatibilities within a text that the text itself attempts to assimilate. More specifically this method seeks out binary oppositions to show how the text structures them hierarchically, then overturns this hierarchy to make the text say the opposite of what it initially appeared to say, and finally re-inserts the opposition itself into a nonhierarchical relation of 'difference' which ultimately exposes the text as incapable of maintaining a univocal center of meaning. With his deconstructive technique Derrida calls on us to understand a text as that which simultaneously strives toward and defers that impossible

convergence between what it says and how it says it. The particular notion of difference that deconstruction makes use of is said to haunt every unity.

Derrida applies his reading approach to a few historically significant texts in his *Of Grammatology* (1967).[290] The first is none other than Saussure's *Course in General Linguistics*, through which he derives some of the terms that will later come to be strongly associated with his deconstructive technique. In a first step Derrida establishes the binary terms of speech and writing and tells us that Saussure falls well within the logocentric history of Western culture, from the pre-Socratics through Heidegger, which holds that written language is secondary to the presence to be had by the spoken word.[291] Accordingly Saussure makes speech the proper object of his linguistic investigation. Derrida then closely reads Saussure to confirm historically the privileging of the voice over the letter, for the voice has been said to give forth an immediate self-presence and authenticity to the speaker who hears and understands himself; in contrast, writing is held to be a mere derivative and delayed copy of speech. Yet while doing so Derrida shows that Saussure's text actually inverts this hierarchy to give priority to writing over speech. For as Derrida notes, Saussure is of course synchronically analyzing language as fixed in writing. By the end of his chapter on Saussure, the latter's text itself is shown to have subsumed speech and writing to a linguistic field characterized not by hierarchy but by difference.[292] Above in Section 3.1 we saw how for Saussure the signified and signifier, which make up the linguistic sign, are valued negatively as each is constituted on their own differential plane; but when combined into linguistic signs, they become positive units embodying the substance of meaning. What Derrida effectively does is add one more degree of complexity to Saussurean differentiality by removing from the linguistic sign this characteristic of positivity to have it also constituted on the differential plane. No longer just in opposition to other signs, the differentiality of the sign is now highlighted to be its most essential characteristic. This doubled notion of difference whereby the linguistic sign is constituted through its difference to other signs each of which is composed of two elements similarly constituted is designated by Derrida by the neologism *différance* (as opposed to simple *différence* [difference]). His overall project of investigation into 'the science of writing – *grammatology*'[293] is in fact a science of *différance* and is meant to demonstrate both the necessity and impossibility of such a science. The demonstration of *différance* brings to light what was only implicit in Saussure since he, as was seen above, favored the analysis of the value of signifieds and signifiers over-against their meaningful combination. But deconstruction does not so much shift the focus back to meaning as rather bring meaning down to the primary level of a structural analysis, one that is decidedly decentered. For the smallest meaningful unit in the semiotic system is unstable as each sign simultaneously confers and derives its meaning diachronically with respect to other signs. This implies that any given sign leaves its 'trace' in any other. The temporal process of deferring or postponing invoked

by *différance* thus frustrates the notion that the sign has the ability to embody a stable meaning. Deconstructive analysis rather demonstrates how meaning is dispersed across the semiotic system and is that which resists determination.

Another text Derrida analyzes is Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Confessions*, which demonstrates another technique at the disposal of deconstruction. If signs leave traces, it stands to reason that these traces might accumulate in certain signs, which would thereby mark them from other signs. We should thus be on alert for the text's own 'exorbitant' terms, whose statuses are undecidable and function to frustrate the unity of the text. In *Confessions* the term *supplément* 'is quite exorbitant, in every sense of the word.'[294] For Rousseau can only consciously use it in one of its two meanings of 'substitute' and 'addition' at any one time. But whichever meaning he intends to convey, the other meaning is nevertheless carried along with it. Picturing the text as a web of forces both unifying and unraveling, Derrida's strategy is to tarry along with the term to show how the unintended meaning draws together threads in Rousseau's text in a manner which threatens to unravel it. This instability and plurality of language is typical of textuality in general, for there is no transcendental meaning and, as he famously remarks, '[t]here is nothing outside of the text [there is no outside-text; *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*].' So instead of rushing to explicate the text's presumed meaning, one should remain at that point where the choice between incompatible readings renders the leap to an outside so tempting and endeavor to understand the textual tensions behind this choice. Moreover, the reader should recognize how his very reading produces the signifying structure which constitutes the difference between what the author 'commands and what he does not command of the patterns of the language that he uses.'[295] So not only does the text always subvert and exceed the author's intended meaning, but it is a perpetually self-deconstructing literary object whose meaning must be constituted from within the system as functions of difference. This is a long way from Frege's notion that the meaning of an expression lies with the definite object referred to, for deconstruction views linguistic representation not as a mimesis of the world but rather as a self-representation where the operations of *différance* both repress and foreground themselves to give off the illusion of referentiality. With deconstruction, meaning is exposed as being produced intertextually and arbitrarily as an effect of writing.

Prior to the analysis of *Confessions* Derrida also discusses at length *Tristes Tropiques*. The official Marxist writing lesson Lévi-Strauss hypothesizes 'is so quickly confirmed that it hardly merits its name. These facts are well known.'[296] The critique of this book and its views on writing lies elsewhere, and Derrida takes as his starting point Lévi-Strauss' suggestion that if the tribe possesses no writing, they somehow escape the violence which comes with writing. The suggestion here is that writing is an intrusion from without which disturbs the original presence of the voice. For Derrida this is simply not the

case, for writing troubles language from within as *différance*. Moreover, simply because the tribesmen do possess language is enough for Derrida to claim that they additionally possess an arche-writing as all speaking beings do. This arche-writing is an equivalent term for *différance*, and it comes with an even greater violence of its own. The empirically verifiable violence of writing spoken of by Lévi-Strauss can be safely set aside as it is once – even twice – removed from the more primordial violence which accompanies arche-writing. Concurrent with Derrida's critique is a parallel development of another thesis initiated by a curiosity that Lévi-Strauss reports, namely, that the customs of the natives included a strong prohibition regarding the use of proper names. Derrida claims '[f]rom the moment that the proper name is erased in a system, there is writing, there is a "subject" from the moment that this obliteration of the proper is produced, that is to say from the first appearing of the proper and from the first dawn of language. This proposition is universal in essence and can be produced *a priori*.'[297] What is suggested here is a link between arche-writing or *différance* and subjectivity. Where there is the former there is the latter and Derrida's return to a concern for subjectivity and its representation after its abandonment by classical structuralism is also characteristic of post-structuralism in general.

A more direct discussion of these issues is to be had in "Sending: On Representation" (1982).[298] There Derrida problematizes the term representation through a detailed and lengthy discussion of its etymological roots and the problems of its translation in an address to a congress of French-speaking philosophical societies. Well noted is the difficulty of fixing meanings to words, the impossibility of giving all meanings and the struggle to overcome the polysemy of a name. This is all linked to the use of the French term *représentation* (from the Latin *repraesentatio*) which gives the impression that what is present comes back as an image or copy of the thing in the absence of the thing for, by and in the subject.[299] While the German equivalent *Vorstellung* fares somewhat better, we are still in the Cartesian epoch by which an object presents itself behind its representation for a subject. Even further, representation has 'become the model of all thought of the subject...and modifies it in its relation to the object. The subject is no longer defined only in its essence as the place and the placing of its representations; it is also, as a subject and in its structure as *subjectum*, itself apprehended *as a representative*.'[300] This gives the impression that there is an original presence beneath the representative self, and this is precisely what is denied by Derrida. He will conclude his discussion by claiming that what lies beneath are traces of *différance*, but first he turns to discuss two examples of what is not represented in the program of the congress to consider what they have to offer towards this conclusion. Now he had earlier suggested that what cannot be represented is representation itself (*i.e.*, there is no representation of representation) and he correctly finds this in the Freudian *Vorstellungs-repräsentanz* and Lacan's reading of this conception as a binary signifier, which produces the *aphanisis* [disappearance] of the

subject. We might speculate that because this Freudian-Lacanian notion indexes primordial repression in contrast to secondary repression, Derrida sees it as possibly analogous to the primordial and secondary levels of violence associated with writing. But the reasons offered for his turn to psychoanalysis are slim and certainly calculated to provide a rationale for dismissal. For as he writes, both Freud and Lacan are 'thinkable only by reference to a fundamental semantic tradition, or again to a unifying epochal determination of representation.'[301] For Derrida this psychoanalytic notion evidently still carries too much meaning to primordially disturb representation, unlike the completely meaningless structural mechanism of *différance*. The second example he turns to is philosophical. Hegel and Heidegger are both briefly examined, two thinkers who seek the limit-question of the unrepresentable and place thought into the beyond of representation. However, they are judged not to adequately investigate the *prohibition* that bears on representation since they tend to dismiss it as derivative of the *impossibility* of adequate representation. For Derrida only the notion of *différance* fully removes from consideration the prospect of an original presence of Meaning or Self or any other transcendent essence beneath representations for interpretation to aim at in either a pre- or post-Heideggerian sense. Indeed Derrida expressly characterizes *différance* as pre-ontological. In more descriptive language *différance* is that which marks a primordial divide that cannot gather itself together; it is an *envoi* [sending] or 'so many different traces referring back to other traces and to traces of others...[I]t is altogether different from subject.'[302] Like hermeneutical phenomenology, the post-structuralism of Derrida posits a dimension prior to the subject-object schema, but unlike the former it does not imagine this to be a meaningful experience of being. For *différance* not only constitutes the very decentered core of language and subjectivity, it is a structural dimension prior to meaning itself. *Différance* frustrates our full grasp of meaning at its every turn.

In more polemical terms, Foucault also discovers a violence acknowledged by post-structuralist thought which pits it against the hermeneutical tradition in his paper "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx" (1964).[303] He at once contrasts the two fields by speculating that if one were to compile an encyclopedia of all interpretive techniques from the Greek grammarians to the present, its introduction might muse how language 'has always given rise to two kinds of suspicions. First of all, the suspicion that language does not say exactly what it means. The meaning that one grasps, and that is immediately manifest, is perhaps in reality only a lesser meaning that shields, restrains, and despite everything transmits another meaning, the meaning "underneath it." This is what the Greeks called *allegoria* and *hyponoïa*.'[304] This suspicion is the domain of hermeneutics and is contested by what Foucault will argue to be the more critical type of investigation which stems from the second suspicion, namely, that language overflows its proper verbal form so that even nonspeaking entities also speak. The original *semaïnon* of the Greeks, this latter suspicion leads to what we consider today the domain of semiology. This new field was only possible after

Nietzsche, Freud and Marx effectively made a break in the 19th century from the interpretive traditions which established themselves in the 16th century. Foucault groups the achievements of these three men under two themes. The first concerns the disposition and spatiality of signs. Where 16th century thinkers could dispose of signs uniformly since for them signs occupied a homogeneous space, the three 19th century thinkers accomplished a profound transformation of the distributive space of signs. From now on signs would stage themselves 'in a much more differentiated space, according to a dimension that we would call depth, on the condition that one understand by that not interiority but, on the contrary, exteriority.'[305] In other words, no longer should interpretation aim for a deep meaning which supposedly dwells in the pure interior of the object-text. Rather, interpretation should instead project itself out over the depth to expose the textual secret as absolutely superficial.

Without the possibility of arriving at a final meaning, there is nothing to draw the interpretative activity to a close. This insight is the second theme and is clearly an echo of Nietzsche. But the work of Freud and Marx also bear witness to the full recognition that interpretation is an endless task without deep meaning. Foucault notes how this is especially seen in Freud, where the acknowledgement of the interminability of analysis is aptly demonstrated and openly professed. All of these men further recognize how interpretive structures take precedence over the interpreting subject, for 'the further one goes in interpretation, the closer one approaches at the same time an absolutely dangerous region where interpretation is not only going to find its points of no return but where it is going to disappear itself as interpretation, bringing perhaps the disappearance of the interpreter himself.'[306] The essential incompleteness of interpretation has two additional postulates. The first reads how no sign presents itself passively without already being an interpretation of other signs, so any interpretation that interprets a sign is a violent seizure of an interpretation already there. For instance, Freudian interpretation aims at the patient's fantasy, which is already the result of the patient's own interpretative activity. Secondly, if interpretation precedes the sign, this implies that the sign has permanently lost its 16th century status as a simple benevolent being which proves the benevolence of God. After Nietzsche, Freud and Marx the sign's ambiguous, even malevolent status makes it suspect to its interpreter, and the positive space the sign once occupied is now deemed negatively infinite, without real content or reconciliation. Foucault concludes by highlighting the circularity of hermeneutics. That is, from the perspective of semiology ultimately the interpreter and his interpretation are made the true 'objects' of the interpretive activity. To believe otherwise is to profess a faith in the existence of original signs referring to objects standing outside the semiotic system and which are taken to be ultimate Meanings. This would submit semiology to hermeneutics and in fact would be the 'death of interpretation.'[307] In contrast, the life of interpretation begins by placing semiology prior to the hermeneutical field. For if it is the case that hermeneutics and

semiology are indeed ferocious enemies (as the second citation, which opens this chapter, states) then semiology clearly has the upper hand, as it does not forego the violence and madness which attends to incomplete and infinite interpretative activity deemed to be without subject or object.

We close this chapter with a brief discussion of some work by LaCapra and White, which investigates the limitation and production of meaning from the perspective of their 1980s post-structuralist thought and from within their overall project to rethink intellectual history. With respect to LaCapra, in the opening chapter of his *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language* (1983)[308] the notion of textuality is used to frustrate the commonsensical idea of reality by reminding us how we are always already implicated in problems associated with the use of language. These problems certainly extend to the historian's task of recovering past meaning, and to this end LaCapra offers a distinction 'between documentary and "worklike" aspects of the text.'[309] This distinction raises questions regarding the possibilities and limitations of the appropriation of past meaning. However, the terms of this binary are not on the same level. For while the documentary approach to reading texts has predominately characterized intellectual history by situating historical texts on the factual and literal plane so as to prepare them for empirical verification, the worklike aspects of the text register another dimension which can only be approached dialogically, that is, by considering the text relationally. This notion of a dialogue with the past is of course inspired by Heidegger, whom LaCapra discusses as often as he does Foucault. Indeed his project could be seen as an attempt to incorporate insights from hermeneutical phenomenology into his predominately post-structuralist project – we might say this makes his project as tense as the inherent tension he expressly recognizes between the documentary and worklike tendencies of texts. This latter tension finds a theoretical outlet through LaCapra's systematic discussion of the relation between texts and their various contexts.[310] These six contexts, which are potential causes or interpretive keys to the meaning of texts, are rejected one by one. At the one extreme, the context of the author's intention examined in the scientific style of Hirsch is rejected because of its unitary conception of meaning which lends itself to empirical verification. In this case the dialogical approach is sacrificed for an exclusive focus on the documentary aspects of the text. It succumbs to the erroneous belief 'that authorial intentions fully control the meaning or functioning of texts' and thus overlooks important dimensions of language use.[311] At the other extreme is the relation of the text to various modes of interpretive discourse, which champions instead the dialogical over the documentary aspects of the text. This contextual approach also fails to explore the proper post-structuralist question of how modes of discourse function *in* texts. In effect we find here a critique of Gadamer's hermeneutical phenomenology, for LaCapra argues that the act of interpretation 'is not an autonomous hermeneutic undertaking that moves on the level of pure meaning to establish a "fusion of horizons" assuring authoritative continuity

with the past,' as interpretive activity 'cannot be reduced to mere subjectivity.'[312] But this critique notwithstanding, evidently erring on the side of the dialogical is what is called for when faced with the two opposed tendencies of the human sciences which together form the extreme limits of the discipline. For LaCapra, there is the (intellectual) tendency to be too concerned with 'core meanings' and the tendency (of the historian) to easily slip into an 'uncontrolled plurality or dissemination of meanings.'[313] The intellectual historian is thus called on to make a performative approach to the historical text and to reflect on his dialogical relation to the past in order to place these two tendencies into a proper internalized dialogue. This type of inquiry not bound by rules of methodology is deemed best in coming to terms with the above limitations which establish themselves through language use.

White engages with many of the same issues as LaCapra in his *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (1987).[314] He also begins his discussion with how best to construe the way language relates to the world of objects, rejecting both its mimetic and symbolic functions to treat language instead as a system of signs or codes. The analysis here continues in the spirit of his earlier work, which defined the historiography of past time periods according to specific tropes. Yet although he makes use of the classical structuralist analysis of Saussure, Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss, he decidedly adds to them a diachronic dimension. This is demonstrated in the present book by his intense focus on the way these codes are said to 'shift' in a text. Such a focus leads to his conceptualizing a text as an internally self-propelling force, one which addresses a crucial concern for intellectual historians, namely, 'the problem of meaning and that of translating between different meaning systems, whether as between past and present or between the documents and those readers of history books who wish to know what these documents "really mean."'[315] But we should always be attentive to the fact that when structuralists or post-structuralists directly speak of meaning, its *problematic* nature is often highlighted and accordingly the accent tends to fall on how one is to account for its phenomenon and not with the meaning produced *per se*. So when a page later White takes up 'the question of meaning – or more precisely that of the meaning of meaning' once again, the inquiry is characteristically in the form of a meta-question which attends to the 'production, distribution, and consumption' of meaning[316] rather than with the simple experience of its content. As he takes pains to demonstrate with his detailed semiological analysis of the code switching which occurs in *The Education of Henry Adams*, it is the form and not the content of a text which holds the key to meaning production. This is what he calls 'typicality,' and its notion is to be defended from accusations by hermeneuts that this amounts to structuralist reduction. Incidentally, typicality is what makes the text-context problem 'resolvable from the semiological perspective to the extent that what conventional historians call the context is already in the text in the specific modalities of code shifting by which Adam's discourse produces its meanings.'[317] In other words, the context does not

shed hermeneutical light on the text; rather, the context itself is illuminated in its detailed operations by the structural moves made in the text at the level of its form. Simply said, White's semiological approach paradoxically reveals how the context is already *in* the text. Interestingly, this approach privileges the classic text but for reasons quite unimaginable for someone like Gadamer. For what makes the classic text intriguing from White's perspective is that it actively draws attention to and makes as its own subject matter its own processes of meaning production and thus provides us insight into processes universal and definitive of the human species. In true post-structuralist style, White also finds that the subjectivity of this species is in a sense actively produced by these semiotic processes. As he writes in a formulation which nicely captures his project both in terms of meaning and subjectivity:

> 'The more interesting question would be to ask, not What do Freud, Foucault, and so on, assert, allege, argue? but How do they establish, through the articulation of their texts, the plausibility of their discourse by referring to the "meaning" of these, not to other "facts" or "events," but rather to a complex sign system which is treated as "natural" rather than as a code specific to the praxis of a given social group, stratum, or class? This is to shift hermeneutic interest from the content of the texts being investigated to their formal properties, considered not in terms of the relatively vacuous notion of style but rather as a dynamic process of overt and covert code shifting by which a specific subjectivity is called up and established in the reader, who is supposed to entertain this representation of the world as a realistic one in virtue of its congeniality to the imaginary relationship the subject bears to his own social and cultural situation.'[318]

As White himself acknowledges, this notion of subjectivity is inspired by Louis Althusser. What he adds is some clarification to this process, suggesting how the materialization of the subject is tied up with the processes of code shifting, the discourse of which at the same time produces the meaning of the text.

Indeed the notion that meaning and subjectivity have their point of origin with the structural mechanics of texts could be said to be a general truth of (post)structuralism. By articulating the problematic in such a manner which brings to the forefront the question of a possible *cause* of meaning, the critics of (post)structuralism become that much easier to understand. From the standpoint of hermeneutics, (post)structuralism is easily construed as treating meaning as a product of positive determinism. For if meaning is said to emerge as the end result of a signifying chain, this seems to be a reversion to the reasoning of natural science and should accordingly be dismissed as naïvely mechanistic. Certainly (post)structuralists do not intend to reduce the hermeneutical problematic of the human sciences to the natural sciences. But their analysis tends to lead to such an understanding. This is quite possibly the inevitable outcome of a project that treats questions of meaning only tangentially, busy as it is with the structural form of language. The relation of meaning to language is taken up once again from the psychoanalytic perspective in Chapter 5 below. But first aesthetic theory is examined, which does not so much build on (post)structuralist work *per se* but does continue in its own way the trajectory that we have been slowly tracing out since the first chapter: ie, the general movement away from meaning toward the opening up of new senseless domains which, for all that, are not without their link to meaning.

CHAPTER 4

AESTHETIC THEORY

> The charms in beautiful nature, which we so often find fused, as it were, with beautiful form, belong either to the modifications of light (in coloring) or of sound (in tones). For these are the only sensations that allow not merely for a feeling of sense, but also for reflection on the form of these modifications of the senses, so that they contain, as it were, a language in which nature speaks to us and which seems to have a higher meaning.

> There is no science of the beautiful, but only critique.[319]

> The image suspends the course of the world and of meaning – of meaning as a course or current of sense (meaning in discourse, meaning that is current and valid): but it affirms all the more a *sense* (therefore an "insensible") that is *selfsame* with what it gives to be sensed (that is, itself). In the image, which, however, is without an "inside," there is a sense that is nonsignifying but not insignificant, a sense that is certain as its force (its form).[320]

As the discussion in the preceding chapter endeavored to demonstrate, (post)structuralist thought is aware how the hermeneutical pursuit of meaning has its limits and characteristically assigns these to the structural machinery of language itself. The present chapter on aesthetic theory also recognizes that meaning is not all there is, but further suspects that meaning is intimately linked to an even more senseless domain than the one occupied by those structural mechanisms which generate the phenomenal meaning-effect. Aesthetic theory further recognizes how this domain is not without its own phenomenal experience and if it is to access this domain, a methodology different from those thus far examined is required. The needed methodology would again turn to the experience of meaning, which was consciously abandoned as a primary pursuit by the (post)structuralist investigation into those structural mechanisms responsible for its phenomena. Without question the aesthetic theorist does use a phenomenology. Indeed the etymology of the very term aesthetic reflects this, having been derived from the Greek *aisthanomai*, which is translated as 'to apprehend through the senses.' However, this phenomenology is not a *hermeneutical* phenomenology but rather one that is decidedly *non-*hermeneutical. In this fourth chapter we examine aesthetic theorists who are keenly attentive to the ways in which the experience of meaning is disrupted and who actively seek to theorize these disruptions.

Section 4.1 briefly discusses three aesthetic theorists who find truthful and creative domains in the experience of the aesthetic object which disrupt our smooth relation to meaning. Section 4.2 centers on four contemporary French thinkers, who are discussed with respect to Kantian aesthetics. Through their work it is suggested how the aesthetic object itself can offer the possibility of containing and suspending meaning.

4.1 Truth without Meaning in Scripture and Poetry

Before turning to Baudrillard and Badiou, it is worthwhile to examine a text by Benjamin some three-quarters of a century prior to the formers' publications from the 1990s as it contains important insights regarding the translation of aesthetic works. Generally speaking, Benjamin would have us conceive the status of a translation as an afterlife of the original literary work of art in his "The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*" (1923).[321] What this afterlife demonstrates is not only how the original thereby undergoes a change but how '[e]ven words with a fixed meaning can undergo a maturing process.'[322] With expressed references to how words *intend* objects, which cannot but bring to mind Husserl, he explains that what translation shows is how meaning is not fixed in individual words or sentences but is in a constant state of flux, which translation perpetuates. These claims should all be seen as laying the groundwork for his thesis that the traditional approach to translation, which attempts to maintain fidelity to the word and literalness along with a faithful reproduction of meaning, must be abandoned. Impossible to accomplish at any rate, Benjamin argues how a proper 'translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification...so that it gives voice to the *intentio* of the original not as reproduction but as harmony, as a supplement to the language in which it expresses itself, as its own kind of *intentio*.'[323] What Benjamin is aiming at with his notion of free translation is the regaining of the expressionless creative Word that is the ultimate essence of the original, its 'pure language.' Moreover, discernible throughout this article is a minimal distinction between meaning and sense. Although not clearly defined or maintained, it is apparent that translators are not to strive to reproduce meaning so much as the sense and then only tangentially: 'Just as a tangent touches a circle lightly and at but one point...a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux.'[324] He continues to argue how translations themselves often prove untranslatable because of the 'looseness with which meaning attaches to them,' pointing us toward Friedrich Hölderlin's prototypical translations of Sophocles as evidence of this and as a general confirmation of all these claims regarding translation. Yet Benjamin acknowledges that the danger which always looms with his notion of translation is that meaning threatens to plunge irretrievably into the abyss of language. His solution is to shift the analysis to

the non-meaningful domain of truth. As he writes, '[t]here is, however, a stop. It is vouchsafed to Holy Writ alone, in which meaning has ceased to be the watershed for the flow of language and the flow of revelation. Where a text is identical with truth or dogma, where it is supposed to be "the true language" in all its literalness and without the mediation of meaning, this text is unconditionally translatable.'[325] Scripture is the greatest of all the great texts, the prototype of all translation as it contains its potential free translation between its literal lines. For Benjamin, proper translation should aim for the truth of the original text's creative Word as it alone puts a halt to the endless pursuit of the meaning in the original.

Where Benjamin wishes to overcome the threat of the void of language by an appeal to truth, we might say that for Baudrillard the only truth is that there is no truth to rescue us from this threat. But in contrast to the former, Baudrillard finds promise in such circumstances. The titular essay of his *Conspiracy of Art: Manifestos, Interviews, Essays* (1996)[326] scandalized the art world, provoking it with his claim that since art confiscated banality and mediocrity only to turn them into values, this licenses us to judge contemporary art as worthless. Moreover, that the art world thought this ruling scandalous was the true scandal. Here lies the duplicity of art: it asserts is nullity when it is *already* null. To understand this consider how the art world's bluff of nullity forces its consumers *a contrario* to give art work credence under the pretext that nothing could be so null, and accordingly they turn to contemplate its deep and hidden significance. Baudrillard is effectively arguing that it is precisely the art world's pretense of meaninglessness, which generates the meaning-effect to be had in the pursuit of the deep meaning of a particular piece of art. In contrast to this opposition between consumers' faith in the meaningfulness of art and artists feigning its meaninglessness, Baudrillard holds that true '[i]nsignificance – real insignificance, the victorious challenge to meaning – is the rare quality of a few exceptional works that never strive for it.'[327] Yet this insignificance is something we are to strive for in the hopes that such striving will reverse our present situation. He explains that whereas in the past the image was the way the subject could represent the world to itself which kicked off the power of illusion, today the value of art is linked to a pure circularity, a virtuality whereby those subjects who enter the image accordingly lose the capacity for illusion. This implies that today '[t]he subject is no longer the master of the game' since the object has become 'a strange attractor.'[328] However, this situation can be reversed and his entire project is in fact predicated on the belief that reversibility as such is indestructible. Accordingly the recovery of the illusion of language and of the world is what is called for and '[t]his passion for artifice, this passion for illusion is the seductive joy of undoing the all too beautiful constellation of meaning.'[329] Here we are to let ourselves be deceived once again with respect to the world and its enigmatic function, which has nothing to do with the validation of its meaning. How exactly? By putting into play radical thought which stands at the violent crossroads of sense and nonsense, truth and untruth, and something (meaning) and nothing.

This radical thought at the same time wagers on how the latter term runs underneath the former term in each of the foregoing binary pairs. Radical thought is a poetic thought, one which makes events unintelligible and makes that which is clear enigmatic. In poetical terms Baudrillard writes how 'meaning is unhappy' and critics who are 'unhappy by nature' are obsessed with it. By their focus on the unhappy content of language, critics overlook its 'happy form' on which radical thought focuses.[330] This thought aims for an excentering of reality by attracting the void to its periphery, a 'virtual void [that] could be turned into a creative space. A creation out of the energy of signs, not of the accumulation of meaning. In fact the contrary is true: we must aim to destroy it. We must create a void such that everything that exists would have to assume a concrete form. Then a pure event would come about: a total spectacle. By "spectacle" I mean here the exact opposite of a representative spectacle.'[331] For Baudrillard this pure event is one of form, a virtual void which disrupts the something of meaning and restores its illusory quality.

In an entirely different way the philosophy of Badiou centers upon notions of the event and the void. Although they are discussed throughout his *Handbook of Inaesthetics* (1998),[332] they are especially taken up in its final two chapters, where he analyzes a prose text of Samuel Beckett and a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé. This last chapter on poetry culminates a trajectory from chapters on lesser art forms like dance, theater and cinema. But it is the first chapter which sets the stage for this analysis, enumerating three ways in which the relationship between philosophy and art has been schematized historically since Plato. These can be articulated via two categories: '"Immanence" refers to the following question: Is truth really internal to the artistic effect of works of art? Or is the artwork instead nothing but the instrument of an external truth? "Singularity" points us to another question: Does the truth testified by art belong to it absolutely? Or can this truth circulate among other registers of work-producing thought?'[333] Four possible schemas result from these criteria. Both the classical schema (used by Aristotelian and psychoanalytic thought) and the didactic schema (likewise by Platonic and Marxist thought) hold art to be incapable of truth, but while the latter allows for its singular testimony of the external truth, the former does not. The third historically existing schema interests Badiou the most, as it does consider art capable of truth. It is here 'we find a pious devotion to art, a contrite prostration of the concept...before the poetic word, which is alone in offering the world up to that latent Openness of its own distress.'[334] If these words hearken back to discussions had in Chapter 1 and 2 above, it is with good reason. For Badiou argues how the romantic schema is best represented in the 20th century by Heideggerian hermeneutics. Interestingly, poetry is the privileged art form for both Heidegger and Badiou. However, the problem with hermeneutic romanticism

> 'is that between philosophy and art it is *the same truth that circulates*. The retreat of being comes to thought in the conjoining of the poem and its interpretation. Interpretation is in the end nothing but

the *delivery* of the poem over to the trembling of finitude in which thought strives to endure the retreat of being as clearing. Poet and thinker, relying on one another, embody within the word the opening out of its closure. In this respect, the poem, strictly speaking, cannot be equaled.'[335]

While Badiou agrees with Heidegger that art should be treated as rigorously coextensive with the truths it generates, against Heidegger he claims that these truths of art are not given elsewhere, even in other identifiable domains of truth such as politics, love or science. Simply said, the project of inaesthetics is to produce the missing fourth schema that the 20th century has failed to produce, one that upholds the truth of art in both its immanence and singularity.

This project can quite productively be seen in contrast to the Heideggerian interpretative strategy. The latter eschews the notion of truth only insofar as it does not adequately articulate the modern passing of the inaccessible meaning of being so as to fail to reestablish a link with this primordially lost semantic dimension. But within these parameters hermeneutical phenomenology does maintain a strong theoretical continuity between truth and meaning. In contrast, Badiou finds that meaning only comes forward after the question of truth is closed. From Badiou's perspective truth and meaning should be set in strict opposition. As he writes, philosophy should 'retain the conviction that, as strong as an interpretation may be, the meaning that the interpretation achieves will never ground the capacity for meaning itself. Or, in other words, that a truth can never reveal the meaning of meaning, the sense of sense.'[336] Philosophy demands of us that we not revel in the meaning of the poem, which cannot but foster interpretation, but rather seek instead the meaningless primacy of its truth which proceeds as a subtraction from meaning. As his analysis of Mallarmé demonstrates, Badiou does not conceive the poem as the disclosure of meaning but as an (axiomatic-mathematical) operation. Accordingly one is to declare the autonomy of the poem's specific artistic procedure as the self-sustaining prescription of (mathematical) manipulations of the void. Such a procedure is a condition of philosophy and has its generic type, which follows a particular path. In simple terms, the possibility of an artistic truth begins with an event which is sustained by a subject who engages in finite artistic investigations in the name of that event; such subjective fidelity to the event results in a sequence of particular works, composing an infinite truth called the artistic configuration which operates as the pertinent unit for a thinking of art.[337] Like (post)structuralist work, the phenomenal meaning-effect is equally lost when one follows the operations of the poem as it traces out this path, a path which provides the key to its syntactic, not its semantic, machinations. But what should further be taken away from the aesthetic theory of Badiou is how philosophy grasps truth as the interruption of the regime of meaning, as a break from all relations with poetic meaning. Semantic categories are external to the principles of truth's construction and so the poem's declaration of truth is entirely axiomatic. For Badiou, the turn of philosophy to truth and to the procedures of its production means it cannot be hermeneutical, for truths have no meaning but rather

only come to be through the failure of meaning, composed step by step by the subject pledging its fidelity to the event.

4.2 The Topology of the Kantian Sublime

If the overwhelming tendency today is to conceive our universe as a meaningful self-enclosure, then the foremost issue that confronts the student of the human sciences interested in a viable alternative vision concerns the development of an appropriate strategy to re-conceptualize the semantic field of interpretation so as to move it towards its suspension. The argument running through the present section[338] suggests one such way of doing so. It examines the aesthetic theories of four very different contemporary French thinkers – Lyotard, Rancière, Deleuze and Nancy – organized around Kant's conception of the sublime. Their explicit or implicit understanding, application and even rejection of certain aspects of Kant's logic of the sublime can be further brought out against the work of an outlier to this group: Heidegger. The discussion proceeds as follows. While always mindful of Kant's revolutionary achievement in breaking away from his sophist philosophical inheritance, the deficiencies of Kant's thinking are first indicated in regard to the sublime with respect to artworks and with the aesthetic field in general. Next a brief outline is provided demonstrating how it is possible to utilize the logic of the sublime found in the third *Critique* to re-read the first *Critique*. In this way, all objects – artworks and otherwise – may now be said to concern the sublime and not just those things which can never be objects of our possible experience, which Kant calls the Ideas of reason: God, the soul and the universe as a whole. With the notable exception of Heidegger, the claim is made that each of the contemporary thinkers examined here, at least implicitly, has accomplished this re-reading of the first *Critique* in light of the third *Critique* inasmuch as the truth they uncover with their respective aesthetic theory can be extended in a homologous fashion to non-aesthetic realms of objects.[339] But they each extend the implications of doing so in their own unique fashion. Two of the thinkers examined, Lyotard and Rancière, actually form a curious pair: while ostensibly at odds, their aesthetics are quite complimentary, almost necessitating each other. Here it is suggested how Lyotard's 'dynamical' or 'masculine' preoccupation and confrontation with the Thing can be seen as operating as a symptomatic point for Rancière's 'mathematical' or 'feminine' generation of that Thing. Between these two it is indicated where Heidegger goes wrong. Concluding the core argument with Deleuze and Nancy, it is claimed that their work fares much better as it attempts to articulate the 'collapse' of the schematic framework which discloses objects into a 'sublime object' whose singularity allows us to unlock the secret of the Thing as ultimately phantasmatic. This object they attempt to discern in painting. Such an object is the Lacanian *objet a*, or surplus-*jouissance*. It should be noted that although he has not developed a specific aesthetic theory, Žižek haunts the entire discussion and must be explicitly acknowledged, especially as his Hegelian-influenced reading of Kant's

transcendental schemata through the logic of the sublime forms the crucial theoretical backdrop for this section. A brief examination of Hegelian aesthetics brings this section to a close. If the sublime indexes the unsurpassable ethical limit in artworks and the aesthetic field in general, the sublime in art should be viewed as instantiating the same topology which supports a proper strategy to suspend meaning.

Crucial to this undertaking is presupposing the existence of what Lyotard in his *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time* (1988) calls the 'aesthetics of the sublime.'[340] Kant clearly understood that the sublime experience is intense, greatly affecting the subject and there is some evidence that he at least implicitly understood how this was an aesthetic affectation when he writes of the 'emotional effect from the magnitude of the pyramids' of Egypt or 'the bewilderment or kind of perplexity that is said to seize the spectator who for the first time enters St. Peter's Basilica in Rome.'[341] Further to this, it should also be mentioned that Kant does not completely deny a place to the sublime in fine art, though the three references are brief and rather incidental and it should be noted that his thinking here is not extended to art in general.[342] However, it must be stressed from the onset of this argument that Kant did not work out a specific *aesthetic* theory of the sublime. His interest was to establish a critique of the faculty of judgment and insofar as aesthetic feelings are concerned, this only involves a preoccupation with the role played by things like beauty and taste. So Rancière is quite right to note in his *Aesthetics and its Discontents* (2004) that when the sublime is experienced while standing before St. Peter's Basilica or the pyramids at Giza, for Kant this never points either to the work of Michelangelo or to some ancient Egyptian architect.[343] Rather, if such man-made objects trigger a sublime affect, this is simply due to their colossal size as approximating the impossible-to-grasp magnitude of nature, for only the latter involves a *pure* aesthetic (*i.e.*, non-teleological and non-rational) judgment, since the 'sublime [is] not in products of art (*e.g.*, buildings, columns, etc.), where both the form and the magnitude are determined by a human purpose, nor in natural things *whose very concept carries with it a determinate purpose* (*e.g.*, animals with a known determination in nature), but rather in crude nature… merely insofar as crude nature contains magnitude.'[344] As strange as this may seem to us, by privileging crude nature over art or even banal natural objects, Kant is attempting to preserve the aesthetic character of the *pure* judgment of sublimity.[345] By doing so, he is pointing out that if there is something of the sublime in St. Peter's Basilica, it is only because it so easily dwarfs the individual subject. So as far as Kant's third *Critique* is concerned, the sublimity of art is expressly linked to its size: if an artwork is to contain the sublime, it has to be really big.

In the 200 years since its initial publication, readers of Kant have suspected otherwise and the contemporary aesthetic thinkers examined here have recently made significant headway in reading Kant against himself. That is, regardless of whether the third *Critique* itself lacks a specific aesthetic theory of

the sublime, the underlying logic first articulated there can be re-read in conjunction with the first *Critique* such that even small artworks like paintings could be seen as triggering a sublime experience in the subject. We can consider certain passages in Nancy's *The Ground of the Image* (2000-4) as representative of the need to re-read Kant, which also give us an indication how this has recently been done. For instance, in a footnote to a chapter entitled 'Masked Imagination,' he tells us that '[i]t would not be a matter of indifference if Kant's own aesthetic analysis maintains a hidden but definite relation with that of the schematism' and proceeds to detail at length in this chapter the inner workings of the Kantian theory of the schema found in the first *Critique*[346] in order to evaluate Heidegger's *Kantbuch*[347] through the latter text's symptomatic point of the Death Mask.[348] It is, however, Žižek who has most clearly emphasized Kant's schema as the key link between the first and third *Critiques* with respect to the sublime. The precise manner in which this is done is beyond the scope of the present discussion. However, the general idea can be readily understood as the conception of the sublime as the (impossible) schema of the Ideas of reason. Through such a notion, one is retroactively made aware how the synthesis of imagination via the application of a schema is unproblematic only in the first *Critique*, while in the case of the Sublime, the imagination falters when it attempts to grasp really big objects like God, the soul and the universe as a whole.[349] Since the schema involves a 'pure image,' which Kant equates with time itself, such a faltering operates like an 'earthquake in being that opens the chasm or the fault of presence,' which is how Nancy quite vividly expresses the violence done by the imagination with respect to the image in general.[350] In this way, the 'normal' flow of time is disrupted and we can discern a certain potential crack in even our homogeneous, schematized temporal experience of 'normal' objects and their respective images, inclusive of artworks.

Moreover, Žižek reads the sublime experience as inherently involving a point of madness, of an excessive dimension of subjectivity *qua* void of negativity. Thus the claim made here is that this excessive point is indexed not only 'in what we usually call sublime in nature;' nor is it only 'in its chaos that nature most arouses our ideas of the sublime, or in its wildest and most ruleless disarray and devastation, provided it displays magnitude and might;'[351] rather, the sublime can also be experienced in the creative products of those individuals called artists. The French thinkers examined here may not all agree that the sublime experience of an artwork registers one's subjectivity. But they certainly have all extended, at least implicitly, Kant's initial logic of the sublime from its once exclusive domain of chaotic nature to the aesthetic realm and its objects. This, of course, will not be revealed to anyone who does not read both *Critiques* simultaneously, which is precisely the problem with Heidegger.[352] We return to Heidegger below.

Of the contemporary thinkers being examined, it is certainly Lyotard who has most forcefully put a logic of the sublime directly to work in the realm of art and has even entrusted a particular group, the avant-garde, with keeping the faith. Without question, Lyotard discerns a gap in the temporal order, so 'that it is always both too soon and too late to grasp anything like a "now" in an identifiable way,' such that we are forever wavering between a 'disappearing' and 'an excess with respect to what? To…the thing itself.'[353] The first thing to note is how Lyotard is operating with an excess of subjectivity where the subject is split in terms of its desire, a desire which cannot be satisfied under the secure terms of a demand for identity.[354] And often in expressed contrast to Heidegger, he speaks of a subject who lacks, but not one who is then exclusively preoccupied with communicating and interpreting that lack; rather, the question regarding the enunciating subject of any communication is and must be kept open.[355] The second thing to note is that Lyotard says the subject is split with respect to the thing. But what is this thing? It is Freud's *Das Ding,* Lacan's Thing and Kant's thing-in-itself, all of which he addresses in his second chapter, and it is certainly no coincidence that he evokes Sophocles' tragedies as further support for his argument. That is, Lyotard's discussion brings to mind the use Lacan made with the figure of Antigone, that exemplary figure who achieved a sublime status by elevating her subversive act against the state to the dignity of the Thing. This is not to say that Lyotard ventures as far as Lacan did with specifying Antigone or any other figure as a stand-in for the sublime object. On the contrary, the thesis here is that Lyotard got stuck in his fascination with the purely presupposed Thing and accordingly articulates an aesthetic project to keep the monstrous *jouissance* that it generates at bay.

To bring this out, we must consider how for Kant there are actually two sublimes, or rather one sublime that is divided into two with two different corresponding logics: the mathematical and the dynamical.[356] As we have known since Joan Copjec, these two logics directly map onto Lacan's feminine and masculine sexuated logic, respectively.[357] And as Žižek makes clear, the mathematical-feminine for Kant has logical primacy in that it '"dissolves" phenomenal reality in the direction of the monstrous Real' while the dynamical-masculine logic attempts to save phenomenal reality by transcending it and establishing the noumenal Law as its constitutive exception, thereby providing an external guarantee to phenomenal reality.[358] It is this secondary logic concerning the masculine gesture which Lyotard's theory is almost exclusively preoccupied with, although he is quite adept at articulating the underlying topology of the sublime experience in general and in terms similar to Kant. For instance, he tells us that when our minds are directed toward an object that is not of a possible experience, toward such an object that the imagination cannot hope to properly schematize as unproblematic, the failure to provide a representation corresponding to this object

'gives rise to a pain, a kind of cleavage within the subject between what can be conceived and what can be imagined or presented. But this pain in turn engenders a pleasure, in fact a double

pleasure…[and this] dislocation of the faculties among themselves gives rise to the extreme tension (Kant calls it agitation) that characterizes the pathos of the sublime, as opposed to the calm feeling of beauty.'[359]

There are two points to note here. First, with this formulation 'pleasure in pain' we have the elementary definition of Lacanian *jouissance*, which attends all sublime experiences and arises due to the subject's proximity to the Thing. Second, far from directly identifying with any sublime 'object' in this experience, Lyotard (much like Kant) views this experience as providing a 'negative presentation, or even a non-presentation' for the Thing .[360] That is, although the Thing is unapproachable and forever inaccessible, the sublime experience operates as a kind of guarantee that the Thing exists in some exceptional noumenal realm, which at the same time acts as the external guarantee and 'substantial' support for phenomenal reality. The point here is that the Thing *qua* being is disclosed completely within thought for Kant and Lyotard, while Lacan would contend that in truth it is only a phantasm that fills out the empty shell of the sublime object.

On missing this point, occupied as he is with granting the avant-garde guardianship over artistic approaches to the Thing, Lyotard reveals himself as operating within a masculine logic, concerned almost exclusively with Kant's dynamic disclosure of the sublime. This is quite explicitly brought out in the first chapter of *The Inhuman*, which is divided into two sections entitled 'HE' and 'SHE.' There is much promise in this chapter, as he uses wonderful metaphors of the eye to bring out the fact that the subject is split with respect to its field of vision and how the uncertainty of this experience results in a partial blurriness and incompleteness in the perception of objects.[361] But he reveals a theoretical failure in conceptualizing sexuation, which should be read as directly concerning a choice with respect to the two logics of the sublime when he asks 'I don't know whether sexual difference is ontological difference. How would a person *know*?'[362] That he italicizes the final word is indicative of his ultimate position, that this difference is one of only epistemological concern. Most tellingly at the end, he writes that 'gender difference' inscribes transcendence on the body, and this difference is what makes 'thought go on endlessly.' Such 'infinite thought' indicates the annihilation of the One.[363] But does not such a strong argument for the One's annihilation (the impossibility of completely determining the object seen; of perfect sexual union) silently presuppose its possibility, something that could be achieved in a kind of self-imposed endless task? If this is the case, what we have is the obsessive-compulsive (male's) fantasy *par excellence*, so it should be no surprise he talks of necessary recourses to 'bodily ascesis to understand and make understood a type of emptying of the mind, an emptying that is required if the mind is to think.'[364] What we have here, in terms of the two poles embedded in the title of the chapter (Can *Thought* Go On Without A *Body*?) is a clear choice on Lyotard's part for body or being over-against thought. Primordially speaking, the author of this text makes the 'masculine' choice of being, so thought becomes his elemental

symptom – thinking *hurts*, he reminds us[365] – and precisely one in which being becomes structured by a phantasmatic framework or in Kantian terms, how it is that any object is only disclosed to us through the transcendental schemata.

Thus for Lyotard, the Thing is a definite body, has substantial being and because of the *jouissance* that its 'monstrous' dimension generates, the advent of the 'aesthetics of the sublime' in the 19th and 20th centuries is obligated to bear 'witness to the fact that there is indeterminacy.'[366] Moreover, to represent this 'unpresentable' is the assigned job, even duty[367] of the avant-garde, whose work defines the very task of art today as that which must allude to a non-edifying 'immanent sublime.'[368] In a nod to the philosophical origins of his aesthetics, he tells us that 'we are incapable of so much as recognizing a work *of art'* without the radical dimension first opened up by Kant's transcendental critique.[369] What all this amounts to is the certainty on Lyotard's part of the absolute existence of the Thing and with instituting an aesthetic project to approximate our experience with respect to it. In the final analysis, it is not so much the logic that underpins his aesthetic theory that is faulty but rather that his analysis stops abruptly at this point and with such certitude. He ends a key chapter dedicated to today's 'state of aesthetics' in our supposed post-sublime condition with respect to matter with the following words: 'One cannot get rid of the Thing. Always forgotten, it is unforgettable.'[370] While Lyotard should certainly be applauded for telling us how it is 'indispensable to go back through the Analytic of the Sublime from Kant's *Critique of Judgement* in order to get an idea of what is at stake in modernism,' it seems that there really is no 'after the sublime' after all as his aesthetic theory appears eternally caught within the dynamical-masculine logic of the sublime.[371] This is precisely the reason why Lyotard is so disturbing for Rancière, as the latter ultimately opts for the other logic of the sublime that Kant articulated, the mathematical-feminine. But before turning to Rancière, the reasons for the absence of both logics from Heidegger's work is first discussed.

It was mentioned above how Žižek, who got his philosophical start as a young Heideggerian, argues that his former master refrained from reading Kant's first and third *Critiques* together. This is symptomatic of the fact that Heidegger's ontology has no discernible cracks – a fact which deeply informs his aesthetics and markedly distinguishes his thought from these French philosophers. Textually, we can trace Heidegger's halting point to the first *Critique* itself, for in §31 of his *Kantbuch* we read how Kant already 'shrank back' from the transcendental power of the imagination beginning with the second edition of the same book.[372] In Heidegger's work, there are only a scattering of references to the second *Critique*, still fewer to the third and absolutely no mention of the sublime. This is likewise the case with his aesthetic work on Nietzsche. Despite an entire chapter on Kant's doctrine of the beautiful, the word 'sublime' never occurs, nor does its logic appear in any form in this book. To understand why this is so, consider that his

entire analysis in Chapters 11 and 12 of his *Nietzsche: Volumes I and II: The Will to Power as Art; The Eternal Recurrence of the Same* (1961) regarding the 'will to power as art' is predicated on establishing a privileged link between the artistic being (not subject) with the ground of Being. It is the artist *qua* producer who is met with approval rather than those who 'enjoy' and 'experience' art.[373] Indeed, 'aesthetic man' is dismissed as a nihilistic notion.[374] Moreover, his language throughout the text emphasizes ontology over the more subjective realms of epistemology and thought. In general, the very existence of 'aesthetics' is an index of the inferiority of our situation today with respect to the magnificence of the pre-Socratic universe, which had no need of any such category.[375] What all this points to is Heidegger's attempt to traverse the horizon of modern subjectivity. As Žižek tells us, the modern subject is the Cartesian *cogito*, which Lacan dubbed the 'subject of the unconscious' and which concerns an excessive moment of madness philosophers have endeavored to account for ever since René Descartes first detected it as a crack in our ontological universe. The problem with Heidegger is that he simply does not account for this excess of subjectivity.[376]

This thesis appears well supported, as a few citations will show. For instance, it is clear Heidegger is not working with any modern notion of a subject *qua* abstract counterpart to every ontological disclosure of being (as most modern philosophers implicitly do) when he tells us how '[w]e do not dwell alongside the event as spectators; we ourselves remain within the [aesthetic] state.'[377] Perhaps Heidegger's anti-Cartesian stance is most revealing when he directly critiques 'Kant, who because of his transcendental method possessed a larger number of more highly refined possibilities for interpreting aesthetics, remained trapped within the limits of the modern concept of the subject. In spite of everything, we must try to make more explicit what is essential in Nietzsche as well, going beyond him.'[378] A page earlier he tells us what is worthwhile in Nietzsche in starkly negative terms: the schema of the 'subject-object relation,' which is the 'starting point for man as subject,' is never to be accepted, for such a 'schema simply casts aside what is worthy of question in Nietzsche's aesthetics.' The 'distinction between the subjective and the objective' simply has little to contribute to a proper aesthetic theory. In Heidegger's essay entitled "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935) he makes reference to his opus, *Being and Time*, to tell us that 'resoluteness… is not the decisive action of a subject,' nor is creating nor willing to be 'thought of as the achievement or action of a subject who sets himself a goal that he strives to achieve.'[379] In explicit contrast with Kant's autonomous ethical subject, '[m]odern subjectivism, of course, misinterprets creation as the product of the genius of the self-sovereign subject,' which again means that '"subject" and "object" are inappropriate terms, here' for they prevent our thinking of the essential nature, truth and origin of an artwork.[380] Rather, these terms are to be avoided as they encourage reflective contemplation of aesthetics and sensory apprehension of art. Far from this 'experience…[being] the standard-giving

source not only for the appreciation and enjoyment of art but also for its creation,' Heidegger suggests that 'experience is the element in which art dies.'[381] Thus, if we assume, as is the case in the present section, that the sublime of art is, at its most basic level, a sublime *experience* of art, we can make little use of Heidegger's aesthetic theory. And doubly so when we note the additional assumption of how the sublime experience indexes the fact of one's *excessive* subjectivity: what ultimately is experienced in the sublime is an abyss that *is* the radical autonomous freedom of a 'sovereign' subject. This concept is lacking in Heidegger. However, Heidegger's example is useful in providing a counterpoint to the other thinkers examined here (most notably Lyotard), bringing out the fact that they are all concerned with an indeterminacy which ultimately has to do with the modern subject. The excess of this subjectivity makes its ambiguous presence felt not only when contemplating the Ideas of reason and the massive and chaotic objects of nature, but also with regard to the objects of everyday experience, especially artworks.

Against Heidegger, Rancière presupposes the excessive gesture concomitant to split subjectivity much like Lyotard, although this is slightly harder to discern. For example, in his critique of Hannah Arendt and Giorgio Agamben and their suggestion of an 'ontological destiny of the human animal' found in his book *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics* (1996-2004), he argues that the true 'subject of politics' and of 'the Rights of Man' as the 'process of subjectivation' is that which bridges a particular gap in the existence of those rights and thus must be rethought 'were it out of its very lack.'[382] This '*dispostif* of subjectivation [is] constructed by subjects who rise up to contest the "naturalness" of [their assigned] places and functions by having counted what I call the part of those without part.'[383] However, does this not give rise to the question of whether his entire political and aesthetic project, concerned as it is with the 'part of no part,' of giving a voice to the voiceless and visibility to the unseen over-against the consensual Police, involves the elementary matrix of the hysterical gesture? If so, Rancière is clearly using a Cartesian subject, for Lacan's subject is nothing if not a *hysterical* subject (as Freud already knew when he conceptualized obsessional neurosis as a 'dialect' of hysteria). So it should not be surprising that against Heidegger, we find Rancière particularly focused on the *experience* of subjects in relation to art throughout his texts, especially when he articulates the revolutionary Aesthetic Regime of Art as an '[a]esthetic experience… of an unprecedented sensorium in which the hierarchies are abolished that structured sensory experience' but at the same time is that which isolates art's specificity and claims itself better suited than politics in promoting 'a new human community, united no longer by the abstract forms of the law but by the bonds of lived experience.'[384] Thus it is equally unsurprising that he has much to say on that most intense experience of the sublime, though this is as a general rule always introduced into his texts through another figure, almost as if a more 'direct' approach would betray his aesthetic theory. This figure is usually Lyotard, and suggested below is a reason why this might be the case.

Just as Lyotard's choice of the dynamical-masculine logic of the sublime could be said to act as the key to understanding Lyotard's aesthetic project, as something which deeply informs what we might call its 'ontological outlook at its zero-level' and thus provides its topological support, likewise with Rancière's choice of the mathematical-feminine logic. But it should be reiterated that claims made with respect to Rancière's aesthetics are more difficult to demonstrate than with Lyotard, for not only is the actual logic much more complicated, but as was said above, there is a primacy to such logic over the dynamical-masculine version. What this means is that any attempt to articulate just how the mathematical dissolves phenomenal reality toward the monstrous Real at once involves a dynamical gesture of establishing an exceptional point to bring out that articulation. It is for this reason that Kant much of the time lapses into a dynamical logic when speaking of the sublime, and this of course makes is rather easy to compare Lyotard with Kant since both are predominately using the same dynamical-masculine logic. However, by suggesting Rancière consciously makes the opposite choice of a feminine 'Not-all' logic to frustrate any masculine gestures toward establishing an 'All' field, we immediately gain insight into the non-engagement which many of his readers reportedly experience when engaging with the dispersive nature of his texts. As we see when we more closely contrast Kant's mathematical with his dynamical version of the sublime, Rancière's choice can be felt at the very level of his practice of writing. Indeed, his *Dissensus* editor contends the author consciously 'strives' to convey 'an egalitarian leveling out of discourses.'[385] Although calculated to break with any 'master's discourse' which would claim 'access to the thing itself,' this strategy of 'setting all discourses within the horizon of this common language' may have the unintended effect of flattening-out his 'poetics of knowledge' to the point that it becomes extremely difficult to discern what exactly Rancière seems to be claiming with his aesthetic project. As his editor further explains, '[t]he upshot is that every idea in these pages appears only as the *idea of someone*' and we might hasten to add '*else*.' Rancière's dissensual writing style no doubt comes from his situating philosophy in the 'intervals between discourses' and of conceiving political and artistic innovation as a '*multiplicity*.'[386] The point would be to consider how the lack of exceptional points to his system makes the articulation and extraction of an actual aesthetic or political project virtually impossible. To better see that his strategy is founded on the dispersive mathematical logic of the sublime, we can again look to Kant's text.

Returning to the third *Critique* is certainly not without Rancière's blessing, as he tells us that the first formula for his key operating notion of dissensus was given by none other than Kant himself, who thereby broke with the Representative Regime of Art's ground in human nature to establish aesthetic experience as that which lay between nature and humanity. Hence, the whole problem now becomes 'how to determine this relation without relation' for, to move 'from one humanity to another, the path can only

be forged by inhumanity.'[387] Although Rancière opts to explain this rather enigmatic statement by initially focusing on Kant's analysis of the aesthetic experience of the beautiful, a closer examination of Kant's logic of the mathematical sublime is instead advised, for there Kant does directly deal with Rancière's problem of a 'relation without relation' and implicitly links this with how such a dynamic may actually itself generate its own solution of movement through an 'inhumanity.' Kant tells us in §26 of the third *Critique* that whenever we try to grasp a really big object like the 'universe as a whole,' our imagination falters. This faltering can be explicated through the functioning of two key components of the imagination. On the one hand, there is the *apprehension* of our perceptions of the dispersed multitude with which the subject is bombarded and on the other, the synthetic act of the *comprehension* of the unity of this multitude. What happens is that the second forever lags behind the first, so a painful gap forever exists between the two. It is as if there is not enough time to synthesize all the apprehended units.[388]

In this way, Kant is theorizing an inherent imbalance in the imagination, between its two functions of apprehension and comprehension. But does this imbalance not immediately bring to mind the fissure associated with Rancière's key notion of dissensus? As he writes, the 'aesthetic rupture…relates to a disconnection between…sensory forms' the efficacy of which is called '*dissensus*, which is not a designation of conflict as such, but is a specific type thereof, a conflict between *sense* and *sense*. Dissensus is a conflict between a sensory presentation and a way of making sense of it.'[389] In contrast, 'consensus is an agreement between sense and sense, in other words between a mode of sensory presentation and a regime of meaning.'[390] As Rancière correctly states, '[i]n the Kantian analysis, free play and free appearance suspend the power of form over matter, of intelligence over sensibility' and this 'refutation within the sensible' thereby is able to disclose something new.[391] Therefore, in both Kant and Rancière the same Kantian faculty[392] is conceived as inherently split with itself, which means that it is self-relating and the answer to the problem of how to determine the 'relation without relation' may lie entirely within sensibility or imagination over against intelligibility. Inversely, this split with itself can be thought of as 'the putting of two worlds in one and the same world' so that dissensus is a division inserted into '"common sense": a dispute over what is given and about the frame within which we see something as given.'[393] What is important to notice here is that Rancière's frame is spoken of in strikingly similar terms to Kant's schema. Both seem to operate as transcendental frameworks of sorts which disclose objects we see as given. The crucial difference with Lyotard is that while he focuses on the phantasmatic Thing *qua* aspect of the object that is disclosed by the schematic frame, Rancière focuses on the frame *as such*. His project can be seen as the eternal task of articulating and specifying this frame, of providing accounts of how and what it has disclosed throughout history and of tracing the different forms (*i.e.*,

Regimes) it has taken in the past. Most importantly, Rancière is concerned with the 'specific distributions of space and time, of the visible and the invisible' as he wants to articulate the need to formulate new 'strategies…intended to make the invisible visible or to question the self-evidence of the visible; to rupture given relations between things and meanings and, inversely, to invent novel relationships between things and meanings that were previously unrelated…[This] involves the re-framing of the "real," or the framing of a dissensus.'[394] Of course, it should be clear by now that the schema is the Kantian name for Rancière's 'distribution of the sensible.' As the transcendental schemata is one of the most notoriously obscure components of Kant's idealist philosophy, no wonder Rancière's writing fails to excite, as the very epistemological field he endeavors to undertake is flattened and dispersed, busy as it is with specifying a 'relation without relation.'

In the citation above, Rancière indicates that the problem of forging a path through such a field devoid of all relation but relation itself can only be done by 'inhumanity.' Rancière informs us that this is also a problem which confronts many other works, including Deleuze's texts on art. As per usual with his thoughts which implicitly concern the logic proper to the sublime, his text is presented negatively through what it is not, so we only get a sense of what he means by 'inhumanity' through the failure of other attempts: Kant, Hegel, Friedrich von Schiller, Nietzsche, Theodor Adorno and of course Lyotard are all named as well and examined in turn. Instead of looking at what he has to say about each of these, we briefly return to Kant's text and then suggest how Lyotard may function for Rancière. The former's sharply dismissed work, *The Inhuman*, is so often cited by Rancière that one might almost on that basis alone conclude that it undoubtedly forms a source of much disavowed value for Rancière's own aesthetic theory.

Kant tells us that opposed to the experience of the beautiful as that which 'sustains the mind in *restful* contemplation, the feeling of the sublime carries with it, as its character, a mental *agitation*' and by way of the violence of the imagination specifically pertaining to the mathematical sublime, we are confronted with a 'monstrous' object.[395] As well, in his First Introduction to the third *Critique*, he speaks of how, beneath empirical laws, there exists 'natural forms' that are 'infinitely diverse and heterogeneous and [manifest] themselves to us as a crude chaotic aggregate without the slightest trace of a system. Yet, according to transcendental laws, we must presuppose such a system… a system of experience.'[396] Kant is saying that nature is a chaotic aggregate not subject to laws, but nevertheless must be presupposed as 'organized' in its own unique system, which should be read as precisely following the mathematical-feminine logic of Lacan's double negative gesture of the Not-all whose lack of any exceptional point infinitely flattens the field in question: there is no presupposition which is not previously posited. This 'no presupposition' of experience can come to haunt us in particular situations, inscribing itself in the sublime

(artwork) as a monstrous object-Thing, as a phantasm of sorts that perhaps 'fills in' the eternal gap between the apprehension and comprehension of the imagination if that gap becomes too wide. Consistent with this reading is a striking footnote where the mathematical logic is referred to as both primal and feminine. Kant tells us there that because of our finite temporal existence, we can never access nature as the totality of phenomena: 'Perhaps nothing more sublime has ever been said, or a thought ever been expressed more sublimely, than in that inscription above the temple of *Isis* (Mother Nature): "I am all that is, that was, and that will be, and no mortal has lifted my veil."'[397] Žižek points out other passages in which Kant refers to the first painful time in the experience of the sublime as having a '"stepmotherly nature," nature as a cruel mother not subject to any Law.' However,

> 'Kant gives a masculine twist to the secret behind the veil: "The hidden Goddess in front of whom…we fall on our knees, is none other than the moral Law in ourselves." Here, literally, woman (the primordial Mother Nature) appears as "one of the Names-of-the-Father" (Lacan): her true secret is the paternal moral Law. We are dealing here not with the totality of phenomena but with what is beyond phenomena, the noumenal Law. Of course, these two versions of what is behind the veil refer to the two modes of the Sublime (mathematical/dynamic).'[398]

The two sexuated logics of the sublime are paradoxically related. For his part, Rancière clearly understands how Lyotard chooses the masculine gesture in order to attest to the 'subject's misery' of its 'immemorial dependency of the human mind on the unmasterable presence that, following Lacan, he calls the "Thing."'[399] Although it is more difficult, we can also discern that Rancière makes the opposite gesture at the very level of the language he uses to articulate his aesthetics, his politics, and when he articulates his opposition to Lyotard.

First, consider that he has a rather flattened view of history which tends to de-emphasize exceptional turning points and eschews an overall historical trajectory. His concept of 'the ethical turn is not an historical necessity, for the simple reason that there is no such thing.'[400] As well, 'the concept of regimes of art undermines the idea of an historical rupture with respect to the constituent elements of art.'[401] Indeed, '[t]here is no "real world" that functions as the outside of art. Instead, there is a multiplicity of folds in the sensory fabric of the common, folds in which outside and inside take on a multiplicity of shifting forms, in which the topography of what is "in" and what is "out" are continually criss-crossed and displaced by the aesthetics of politics and the politics of aesthetics.'[402] Art here is explicitly defined as Not-all. And likewise with politics, as there is no possibility of rupturing the smooth operations of capitalism, since that system of organizing ourselves is a universal field constituted precisely through a lack of political alternatives: 'Capitalism only ever produces capitalism' and 'communism's heterogeneity cannot have its network framed in a place other than in the capitalist world; it has no place outside it.'[403] Thus, we should not be fooled when he tells us that 'everything is political,' for such a universal All would comparatively hold emancipatory promise as it is constituted precisely through the masculine logic of

establishing an exception to that field which could in turn play its part and act as noumenal rupture.[404] Rather, for Rancière 'politics expresses the nature of…the inseparate,' or the 'relation without relation' as above.[405] Indeed, because '[t]here is one distribution and a re-distribution' that he rightly understands involves a logic that is prior to every masculine noumenal suspension, this seems to justify his thinking that it is sufficient to suspend every univocal sensorial (masculine) consensus through '[p]olitical and artistic fictions [which] introduce dissensus by hollowing out that "real" and multiplying it in a polemical way.'[406] Although he is correct that shocks are never 'between worlds, but shocks between worlds in the same world'[407] so that the feminine gesture disrupts the masculine economy, Lyotard is also equally correct if we view his project of keeping a vigilant, avant-garde watch over the Thing as not only giving us a solid subjective 'ground' to withstand the violence of the imagination, but also to remind us of our duty to put such violence to emancipatory use. In the end, we need to be reminded how these two strategies are not simply opposed to one another, but are antinomies for both Kant and Lacan, which means that to properly delimit the sublime object, we must accomplish the impossible task of thinking them together.[408]

This is precisely what Rancière refuses to do in his dialog with Lyotard, busy as he is pointing out how his own manner of engagement with the Thing is logically prior to Lyotard's still too substantial notion of an external Thing.[409] More exactly, whenever Lyotard endeavors to delimit the unpresentable Thing, Rancière counters with how this can only be posited as the essence of art if 'art is submitted to a dominant regime in which everything is representable.'[410] Indeed, this is his standard argument to how even the Holocaust is representable, since nothing separates fictional representation from the presentation of reality.[411] What he rightly recognizes is that there is no-thing that is not unrepresentable, and this logic takes precedence over any claims by Lyotard that the representational field, precisely by being 'All there is,' nevertheless exceptionally misses the unpresentable Thing. However, what Rancière himself misses is that in order to represent, one must first presuppose *oneself* as representing; otherwise, there no way to account for why the representational field, the schema or the distribution of the sensible does not immediately collapse onto 'reality.' Such a paradoxical point concerns subjectivity and Rancière is quite clear that no such point exists, as there is 'no subject possessing a power of rupture or of unbinding, no subject that exercises an ontological power of exception. The exception is always ordinary. The attempt to attain the exception of the "proper" entails a process whereby the proper ends up disappearing in the indifferentiation of ethics.'[412] With this statement, Rancière implicitly announces his rejection of the Lacanian subject and its capacity for radical ethical acts. Contrary to Rancière, it is exactly the paradoxical embodiment of certain 'ordinary' exceptional objects which can be leveraged for rupturing the Police. But we should note in passing that even Rancière evidently cannot do away completely with an exceptional point, as he does conceptualize a 'sensory exception.'[413] But judging from

its description as 'a self-differing sensible that is inhabited by a self-differing thought,' it seems to be a mere 'use of distinction' (as per the chapter title) or perhaps a conceptual short-hand for his schema of a distribution of the sensible rather than the singular short-circuiting point operating between that schema and the field that it discloses (*i.e.*, in Kantian terms, that which 'touches' the two radically heterogeneous logics of the sublime). Since there is no such point for Rancière, he can ultimately equate Lacan, Žižek and others with Lyotard and critique them all for 'punching holes in the chain of knowledge' and for similarly remaining caught in a fatal relation to the Thing. The irony here is that the Thing's phantasms arise precisely through the articulation of a dispersed, critical egalitarian philosophy such as his, which endeavors to ensure all narratives and investigations are accorded equal status as originating from a common capacity in a common language.[414] But such an aesthetic project must nevertheless have an exceptional short-circuiting point to provide a minimal distance from and to keep it from collapsing into its 'aesthetic reality.' This point is certainly not the phantasmatic Thing, though it seems that in lieu of successfully articulating the necessity of the sublime object, Rancière's mathematical-feminine project finds its stand-in formation – quite symptomatically – in Lyotard's dynamical-masculine project of taking a measured distance from the Thing.

The two remaining thinkers, Deleuze and Nancy, have gone further than Lyotard and Rancière in attempting to delimit the sublime object in art. A brief demonstration is offered here that this is indeed the case, but it should be noted upfront how their texts have an additional degree of complexity as it builds on the analysis above. If Rancière's Kantian schema of the distribution of the sensible is difficult to discern, embedded as it is in a demanding text supported by the obscure mathematical logic of the sublime, then to further purport that another philosopher has theorized the 'collapse' of that schema into a point which it itself discloses is a difficulty of far greater magnitude. But there is at least one sense in which engaging with the texts of Deleuze and Nancy is easier than with those of Lyotard, Rancière, Heidegger or Kant: the former both have sustained and focused analyses of *particular* artworks. Thus, we have visual objects to keep in mind as we follow along with their theoretical commentary on them and in doing so, we cannot but see how these paintings function as more than mere exemplifications of their theoretical discourse; rather, these objects of analysis are *instantiations* of their theoretical projects so that it is no exaggeration to claim that a particular artwork *is* the theoretical commentary 'on' it. In a word, the gap between the two is precisely sustained by the sublime object. This is perhaps Deleuze's and Nancy's secret in having been more successful in specifying the elusive sublime object in the aesthetic field, for indeed it would be hard to overlook the 'stain' in one's field of vision, which necessarily accompanies any prolonged viewing of a painting. If such a gaze emanating from the artwork has to do with the sublime object, an intensive analysis of a particular painting would not only expose and localize

this object, but would reveal how it is identical with one's search for it. Sketched out below is how both Deleuze and Nancy theorize the sublime object as they discern it in paintings, particularly with respect to Francis Bacon in the case of Deleuze[415] and with respect to Pontormo's *Visitation* for Nancy. Fortunately, having already laid much of the conceptual groundwork with the discussions of Kant, Lyotard, Heidegger and Rancière above, the identification of the proper elements involved in their articulation of the sublime object in paintings is made that much easier.

We know that according to Rancière, what may come to pass is the occasional dissociation or 'rupture in the relationship between sense and sense' which arises due to 'a conflict between sense and sense' and which was seen as corresponding to the inherent imbalance in the Kantian faculty of imagination.[416] Rancière proceeds to argue that Deleuze reprises Kant's thinking by theorizing that through this process, some 'suprasensible element [is] encountered in the experience of the sublime…the pure sensible, the inhuman power of life.'[417] Such an element is perfectly unacceptable to Rancière. If Rancière's use of the term 'inhuman' brings to mind Lyotard, this is not merely coincidental, as Rancière at once sets out to compare them to each other with respect to the Thing and reluctantly concludes that although the consequences of Lyotard's aesthetics 'are assuredly less appealing…[I fear] however, that they are more logical.'[418] Without getting into the nuance of the comparison, Rancière would rather opt for Lyotard's externally reflected relationship to the Thing than for Deleuze's conceptualization of a 'pure sensible' element that indexes a transcendence from immanence. A compelling reason for Rancière's unease with this Deleuzian object is because it paradoxically at once condenses the Rancièrian schema of the distribution of the sensible to a singular point (in other words, it is an elusive object which necessarily 'drops out' of self-relating sense) and simultaneously transcends and unifies *sense itself* into a new state.[419] Such a scenario would spell ruin for Rancière's eternal project of shunning all such exceptional points and bring his project to its disastrous and hitherto disavowed truth. No wonder he opts for the comparatively safer Lyotardian externalized relation to the Thing rather than with a potentially fatal confrontation with the Thing. Thus Rancière is certainly correct to suspect that Deleuze's inhuman is not the same as Lyotard's inhuman, though for the wrong reasons. The Deleuzian Thing perceived by Rancière is only the sublime object viewed from a certain (Lyotardian or Rancièrian) perspective. In Deleuze's *Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation* (1981),[420] where do we find such an object?

This question can be approached by focusing on a key recurring theme announced in the opening pages and which underscore the entire work: the need to break the figural or Figure from mere figuration or narration. Deleuze approvingly points out how Bacon's paintings offer us 'two possible ways of escaping the figurative: toward pure form, through abstraction; or toward the purely figural, through extraction or isolation,' the latter of which is 'the simplest means, necessary though not sufficient, to

escape illustration, to liberate the Figure.'[421] In even stronger language, he tells us that 'Bacon's path' is one in which '[f]iguration and narration are only effects, but for that reason they are all the more intrusive in painting. They are what must be eliminated.'[422] Deleuze's interest with suspending these intrusive elements is linked with a suspension point concerning the subject. He writes that the 'painter must enter into the canvas' although paradoxically one in which 'he is already there…[and must] get out of,' all in order to '*extract the improbable Figure from the set of figurative probabilities*.'[423] Certainly a contradictory statement on the face of it, though it is just such an 'irrational logic, or this logic of sensation, that constitutes painting' that articulates just how 'the act of painting is always shifting…constantly oscillating between a beforehand and an afterward: the hysteria of painting' and in this shifting 'the Figure will emerge into view.'[424] This experience is notably expressed in terms of (free) choice versus (mechanical) probabilities such that there involves an unaccountable 'leap' between two figurations from which emerges the 'place of the Figure' due to the 'pictorial act.'[425] The artist as active subject is the central figure here and we can express how he is able to suspend the self-enclosing narrative field of painting in Kantian terms.

The artist accomplishes his suspension act with respect to the 'diagram,' and it is here that Deleuze comes closest to specifying an equivalent to the Kantian schema, for it is variously described as a grid or graph or 'the operative set of asignifying and nonrepresentative lines or zones' which suggests or introduces 'possibilities of fact' and is 'destined to give us the Figure.'[426] Just as Kant's schema is the 'impossible' mediating term between the chaotic faculty of sensibility and the pacifying and unifying conceptual functioning of the faculty of understanding, the diagram is a bit of two extremes but neither wholly one nor the other: 'The diagram is indeed a chaos, a catastrophe, but it is also a germ of order or rhythm. It is a violent chaos in relation to the figurative givens, but it is a germ of rhythm in relation to the new order of the painting.'[427] What Deleuze undeniably adds to the foregoing discussion of the Kantian schema is a stronger emphasis on the element of violence, on how there is a 'collapse of visual coordinates' whenever we experience this 'chaos-germ, this 'abyss,' this 'leap over itself,' as 'painting…necessarily, "hysterically," integrates its own catastrophe, and consequently is constituted as a flight in advance.'[428] It should be clear that with this notion of an abyss, we are dealing with the excessive dimension of subjectivity, whose 'presence' is most felt in the sublime, whether the sublime object is indexed to the experience of devastating, chaotic nature or when viewing a Bacon painting. What is extremely interesting in light of the previous discussion is Deleuze's response to this added dimension to Kant's own formal understanding of the schema. He theorizes three paths to deal with this abyss and the first two should be quite familiar: the first is reminiscent of Lyotard's own path, as it attempts to reduce the abyss to a minimum, transforming the abstract form into a visual transformation and it is no surprise

that Deleuze here makes an analogy to Kant's own 'ascetic' morality; the second path of expressionism is at the opposite extreme of abstraction and likewise should bring to mind Rancière's strategy, as the 'abyss is deployed to the maximum…[so that] the diagram merges with the totality of the painting; the entire painting is diagrammatic.'[429] Accordingly, this second path involves the 'abandonment of any visual sovereignty' and such a lack of exceptional points predictably leads to 'the unity of the catastrophe and the diagram' such that there is 'no longer an inner vision that gives us the infinite, but a manual power that is spread out "all over" from one edge of the painting to the other.'[430] In a word, we have the two options of Lyotardian abstraction and Rancièrian dispersion.

Both these paths are to be abandoned, or perhaps rather thought together for Bacon's own (third) path, which is precisely the path in which we find an approximation to the logic of the sublime object. Indeed, because the diagram must not remain a purely external abstraction or alternatively, must not be allowed to eat away at the entire painting, the only option left would be to specify a paradoxical 'object' that allows for the constitution of the Figure to 'produce the new resemblance inside the visual whole, where the diagram must operate and be realized.'[431] This realization of the schematic diagram is a 'stopping point in the painting…[though this is] not to say that it completes or constitutes the painting; indeed, on the contrary. It acts as a relay…[so] that something must *emerge* from the diagram.'[432] Thus, the diagram at the same time dismantles the optical world and re-injects something into the visual whole. And what is this something? 'Roughly speaking, the law of the diagram…is this: one starts with the figurative form, a diagram intervenes and scrambles it, and a form of a completely different nature emerges from the diagram, which is called the Figure.'[433] One would be hard pressed to find a more concise 'political' lesson from *Francis Bacon* on how to pass from one form to another, which underscores how true change is not gradual, nor that which results from an effort to introduce complete chaos, but one that 'invokes two contradictory ideas at the same time: a gradual series and a sudden whole.'[434] What is crucial to take out of Deleuze is how we can experience a stain of sorts in the visual field of a painting, as the diagram acts by 'imposing a zone of objective indiscernibility or indeterminabililty between two forms, one of which was no longer, and the other, not yet: it destroys the figuration of the first and neutralizes that of the second. And between the two, it imposes the Figure, through its original relations.'[435] In a word, the Figure delimits the sublime object, embodying the atemporal minimal gap between two forms. It is precisely this logic that allows one to overcome a fascination or preoccupation with the Thing, for the 'Figures seem to be monsters only from the viewpoint of a lingering figuration, but they cease to be so as soon as they are considered "figurally."'[436] The Thing is revealed here to be the result of a perspectival illusion; its truth is that it is a phantasm that fills out the empty shell of the sublime object.[437] Hence, the 'pure logic' of painting as a lesson for an interpretive strategy: 'The essential point

about the diagram is that it is made in order for something to *emerge* from it, and if nothing emerges from it, it fails. And what emerges from the diagram, the Figure, emerges both gradually and all at once… where the whole is given all at once, while the series is at the same time constructed gradually.'[438] As with the aesthetic universe, so with the interpretive: neither is a self-enclosed field of meaning for '[w]e thus see how everything can be done inside the same form' whereby one can introduce 'new distances and new relations' between existing relations in the same form.[439] This is possible because of the ex-sistence of a short-circuiting point, the sublime object of the Figure, that necessarily holds open our frame of the given whole of the field and prevents it from collapsing onto our piecemeal experience of the 'reality' of that field.[440] A formulation of such a paradoxical point can be found in Nancy's work as well.

Already noted above is how Nancy undertakes a detailed commentary of Kant's schema in *The Ground of the Image* in order to critique Heidegger's own reading of it, but his best formulations of the logic of the sublime are found peppered throughout the remainder of the book. By extracting out some of these formulations with his discussion of Kant in mind, considerable light can be shed on his reading of the *Visitation*. Now, one feature of Nancy's work that immediately strikes the eye is the reoccurring theme of the image *qua* monstrous (or alternatively as monstrative, monstrant and many other variations of the term) that is implicitly linked with the failure of the imagination to schematize the Kantian thing-in-itself. For instance, in the depths of photography 'there stalks – like a Minotaur – the monster…[so that the] encounter is always monstrous, or monstrating, ostensive and threatening, invasive and evasive in the same moment, straying in its capture, released in being grasped. This is not a dialectic, or else it is the point – the seed or grain – of madness that vibrates at the heart of every dialectic.'[441] So when he tells us that '[t]he image is of the order of the monster,' it is not a banal observation of the Thing's manifestation at the level of the image; rather, there is an underlying logic to consider and again we must keep in mind how this madness references the excess of subjectivity.[442] As with Deleuze, Nancy indicates the logic of how these monsters arise when he discusses the intimate link between the image and violence (of the Kantian imagination). The manifestation of the Thing again seems to be linked to a singular point *within* the image, for 'an image is detached from itself while also reframing itself as an image' and this is expressly linked with subjectivity as '[t]here is no image without my too being in its image, but also without passing into it, as long as I look at it, that is, as long as I show it *consideration*, maintain my regard for it.'[443] He further tells us that '[i]n this double operation, the ground disappears…[and thus] passes entirely into the image,' becoming a force of the 'impalpable non-place' and the 'insensible (intelligible) sense that *is sensed as such*.' Are we not compelled to read Nancy's conception of ground as the Kantian schema? Is he not further articulating the paradoxical collapse of the schema into a point that it itself discloses? If so, this would be precisely how '[t]he image suspends the course of the world and of

meaning:' it can only be due to that which '[i]n the image…is without an "inside"…a sense that is nonsignifying but not insignificant, a sense that is as certain as its force (its form).'[444] Nancy in effect argues how our experience of art reveals an image within which must ex-sist a bit of nonsense but which simultaneously also functions as the enigmatic 'unity buried under the ambivalence of violence.' By formulating in this manner, do we not thereby specify the ex-sistence of a sublime object in artworks? Indeed, in Nancy's own words art 'is not semblance, but, on the contrary…art touches the real.'[445] Consistent with the Lacanian notion of the *objet a* as real, Nancy writes that the true revelation of art is one that does not take place, but rather remains imminent '[o]r rather it is the revelation of this: that there is nothing to reveal…not even an abyss, and that the groundless is not the chasm of a conflagration, but imminence infinitely suspended over itself.'[446]

By thus revealing the secret of the Thing as a mere phantasm of an ambiguous object which condenses the operative logic of the ground of the image, Nancy has no need to speak of monstrosity with respect to Pontormo's *Visitation*. Rather, he uses another closely related term previously introduced concerning how the mark made by violence becomes (non-quantitatively) excessive due to the enjoyment [*jouissance*] embodied in that mark.[447] Elsewhere, this is formulated with respect to the 'thing *as* image' which reveals how such 'a force of the *same* – the same differing in itself from itself' – gives rise to 'the enjoyment [*jouissance*] we take in it.'[448] Evidently for Nancy as well there is ambivalence surrounding *jouissance* in the precise Lacanian sense noted above with respect to the experience of the sublime. But further, if the unmasked Thing is void, *jouissance* must index a paradoxical singular point. But does this point lie with the object, the subject, both or neither so as to be radically decentered with respect to each? This ambivalence carries over to Nancy's depiction of the *Visitation* as alternatively a painting which 'finds itself enjoying [*jouir*] itself' and at the same time *jouissance* indicates a subjective experience of the painting which proffers a 'veil beneath which no presence is hidden and no god is waiting except the place itself, here, and the singular touch of our own exposure.'[449] These statements can be understood only by conceiving them *together*, and this is instanced in Nancy's actual procedure in analyzing the painting. He indicates that the key to the painting is how its gazes seemingly ensnarl the subject into its web, so that '[t]he fixity of the servants' gazes…seek our own and await it…[so that] what the painting is seeking is the mutual visitation of a spectator and a painting, or a *subject* of painting.'[450] This subject is further linked directly to an element within the painting: 'the presence hidden in the womb.' There is an overlap of those gazes emanating from the painting with those of the viewer and this overlap condenses into an element within the painting itself. Just like in dream analysis, such elements suspend signification such that if extracted, the entire (dream) work is unwoven; these elements disclose how meaning *as such* is dependent on the work's nonsignifying elements. A page later Nancy's own subjective gaze settles on two

small indistinct figures and one could say that the mutual search for a subject again falls on an element in the painting which is equally as indiscernible as the Christ-child. This gesture is repeated many times where the only variation is with the settled-upon element (triangle areas, tufts of hair, folds of clothing, patches of light...). In each case and in each sublime object, one could say that the subjective framework used in analyzing the *Visitation* is itself re-framed or re-embodied. Such objects ground the schema by embodying its minimal gap with the artwork in question. In truth, it is only through such objects that the artwork could be said to have found a proper subject.

One important amendment to Nancy's text is that when he speaks of *jouissance*, he is really speaking of surplus *jouissance*. By using strict Lacanian terminology, one can see how he accomplished a defeat of the merely monstrous dimension of the image and moved on to theorize an object which embodies the inherent tension in the subjective experience of the sublime in artworks. Together with Deleuze, in these moments Nancy also occupies the position of agent in the analyst's discourse, and it is thus readily seen how full knowledge of a sublime painting is barred to them as they both confront its inherent split. Most importantly, by accomplishing the move to the sublime object, Deleuze and Nancy underscore how *objet a* as surplus enjoyment is the only enjoyment to be had, retroactively revealing how the presupposed field of 'full enjoyment' is illusory (what is truly revealed is *that there is nothing to reveal*) – just like the Thing itself. One thus recognizes how Deleuze and Nancy's aesthetic theories provide a better homology to re-conceptualize the presupposed self-enclosed semantic field of interpretation than either Lyotard or Rancière with their respective preoccupation and disavowal of the phantasmatic Thing and its associated illusion of total *jouissance*. The logic of the sublime object thus reveals how this field is Not-all and furthermore uncovers how it is necessarily tethered to a singularity which can be directly 'assumed' as such by those wishing to overturn this field.

The recent analysis of Zupančič[451] should be acknowledged for drawing attention to the fact that the subjective experience of the sublime domesticates the truly radical dimension of Kant's moral Law articulated in the second *Critique* which originally exposed an ethical dimension directly affecting the subject because it is *nothing but* its relation to the subject. This changes nothing of the above analysis but serves as a reminder that Kant's aesthetic thinking in the third *Critique* veils somewhat the possibility of accomplishing a radical subjective *act*. However, as the sublime object of art rests precisely on its own limits and can go no further, the lesson it extends to interpretive theory still stands.

By way of summary of the findings from this exploration of the foregoing aesthetic thinkers in this section, it is clear how certain concerns have led aesthetic theory to specify a suspension point to the semantic field by way of a re-conception of the sublime.[452] On the one hand, Lyotard's use of Kant's dynamical logic in specifying the sublime generates an indeterminate, unpresentable Thing we are

admonished not to rush in to fill with meaning as Ingarden and Iser would have it; rather, simple attestation to its existence is sufficient. On the other hand, Lyotard's obligating the avant-garde to keep vigilant watch over such meaninglessness is still too meaningful a project for Rancière. By using Kant's mathematical logic to articulate the schematic frame which discloses given relations between things and meanings, Rancière is able to introduce dissensus into every spatiotemporal regime of meaning. However, Deleuze and Nancy go further than Lyotard's preoccupation with the Thing disclosed by the Kantian schematic frame and Rancière's focus on articulating the frame itself, by effectively theorizing a collapse of this frame into a point which it itself discloses. Deleuze does so by detecting the object of the Figure which breaks from the secondary effects of meaningful narration in the 20th century paintings of Francis Bacon, while Nancy describes how the gazes emanating from Pontormo's *Visitation* ensnarl our own, overlapping with the indiscernible Christ-child, which re-grounds our analytical framework by embodying its minimal gap with the painting. This is nicely captured in the third quotation which opens the present chapter. There Nancy not only makes a distinction between meaning and sense as do all the aesthetic thinkers examined in this chapter, but goes further to specify a third 'insensible' point to the image which is thoroughly 'nonsignifying.' It is this point in the image that indexes the paradoxical object that suspends meaning.

Almost two centuries ago Hegel was already in line with these contemporary critiques of Kantian aesthetics. In fact, even though he does not expressly specify such an object or even specifically discuss the sublime in his *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics* (1842 posth),[453] there is evidence that he understood the logic behind its need. In one part of this work Kant's third *Critique* is discussed as a good starting point for aesthetic theory, but we are to overcome Kant's defects to grasp the true unity of the particular and the universal. Hegel recalls how 'Kant defines the power of judgement generally as "the power of thinking the particular as contained under the universal"' but finds Kant's reconciliation is 'purely [a] *subjective* one.'[454] The problem is that Kant feels their reconciliation takes place within the mind of the subject alone, whether this is the artist or audience, and so such reconciliation is not deemed intrinsic to the work of art or to natural objects themselves. According to Hegel, while Kant does lead the way to showing the lack of union between the particular and the universal, he cannot adequately resolve them because he always works with the subject-object or with the phenomenal-noumenal/thing-in-itself dichotomy in mind. So any resolution Kant can effect is too subjective and abstract. However, for Hegel there is a non-severance of sorts between the particular and the universal to any judgment of art. This is so because '[t]he universal need for expression in art lies...in man's rational impulse to exalt the inner and outer world into a spiritual consciousness for himself, as an object in which he recognizes his own self' and in this reduplication of himself lies the original ground and necessary origin of art.[455] Later Hegel

implies an analogy from the Christian Trinity (where the gap between God's universality and particularity is reconciled by the unity in Christ) to the aesthetic realm, which equally finds its abstract universality as appearing concretely among its particulars.[456] In other words, Hegel reverses the usual criticism that Kant is too formalist and needs to be more concrete. Rather, Kant is not yet 'formalist' enough to conceive the concrete as pure form, or in terms from the discussion above, as a sublime object which is nothing but the collapse of the schematic approach to it.

CHAPTER 5

PSYCHOANALYSIS

> [E]very dream has a meaning, though a hidden one.
>
> [E]very dream reveals itself as a psychical structure which has a meaning.
>
> There is at least one spot in every dream at which it is unplumbable – a navel, as it were, that is its point of contact with the unknown.[457]

In broad terms the argument of the previous chapter regarding meaning goes beyond the position taken by any one of the earlier chapters alone. Moreover, from the perspective of aesthetic theory and the dimension it opens up, the first two chapters on hermeneutics and phenomenology can be seen as paired in their concern with the meaningful content of texts of which the third chapter of (post)structuralism counters against with its own concern for the meaningless mechanistic aspects of the formal language of texts. Aesthetic theory, which widens the discussion of meaning to include notions of sense and nonsense, overcomes the simple opposition of form and content through a general investigative practice which seeks to delimit those dimensions it suspects is the cause of disturbances in the semantic field. By using the terminology of Kant – the founding father of modern aesthetic theory – it was seen how the most consequential of contemporary aesthetic thought places such disturbances with the collapse of the formal schematic framework into a paradoxical sublime object found disclosed within the content-matter of aesthetic works. However, such a nonsensical object, which embodies the impossible conjunction of form and content remains at best implicit in aesthetic theory. Its explicit articulation is first made with psychoanalysis, which thereby accomplishes its theorization in general, not just in art.

This final chapter on psychoanalysis is a fitting way to conclude Part I not so much because it goes further than any of the foregoing discussions but because it can be seen as simultaneously embodying all of them. Indeed psychoanalysis should be deemed privileged in that the entire historical trajectory traced out in the previous four chapters is reflected in its discipline at the theoretical and methodological level. This can be seen in many of the great works of psychoanalysis. Consider the three quotations above, all

taken from Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). If one holds the second quotation to be the key to psychoanalysis, its methodological requirements would necessitate a turn away from the hermeneutical phenomenological concerns for the deep meaning of the dream text called for by adhering to the first quotation, to examine instead the structural mechanics of the dream-work. Yet to identify the nonsensical 'navel' requires working through both of these two methodological approaches only to ultimately abandon a strict adherence to either of them. As this third quotation refers to the most radical dimension psychoanalysis has to offer in terms of a theory of meaning, we can begin to see how psychoanalytic theory might prove foundational for much of what the scholarly fields hitherto discussed have to offer. To this end Chapter 5 discusses the thought of Freud and Lacan and some significant contributions made to their work with an eye towards understanding how their field opened up a dimension which allows for radically suspending meaning from its nonsensical singular point.

Section 5.1 examines two texts from the founding father of psychoanalysis as well as texts from two of his early dissenters. Section 5.2 assesses three works from the 1960s-80s which are critical of both Freud and Lacan. Section 5.3 approaches major texts by Lacan which, like those of Freud, can often be read as encompassing more than just one methodology. This is followed by a discussion of some of his adherents who highlight and expand on his original *écrits* [writings] and seminar material.

5.1 Classical Psychoanalysis

Dreams have meaning. This is a point Freud reiterates often and well before he formally takes up his famous thesis that all dreams are fulfillments of wishes in his *The Interpretation of Dreams*. One tends to forget that in 1900 the demonstration of this claim was a major break from previous thinking. Just as today the well-educated more often than not purport dreams to be absurd, so too the predominant view of Freud's time held dreams to be unworthy of any serious study. He does nevertheless find enough material for a significant scientific literature review dealing with the phenomenon of dreams at the beginning of this text. But the chapter which immediately follows announces a methodology to be followed which is not directly concerned with solving the problems raised in his review. For his primary concern is to treat the dream in an unheard of way: as a text. As he writes,'[t]he title that I have chosen for my work makes plain which of the traditional approaches to the problem of dreams I am inclined to follow. The aim which I have set before myself is to show that dreams are capable of being interpreted...[and] "interpreting" a dream implies assigning a "meaning" to it.'[458] The traditional approach referred to is of course hermeneutical, and here is the first level at which one can read Freud. Like any other text, the dream has a hidden (or just as often, a 'secret' or 'concealed') meaning and is thus in need of interpretation to extract it. This level has been well appropriated by the academic and non-psychoanalytic community which accordingly turns to, for instance, Freud's great interpretations of

Hamlet and *Oedipus Rex* as two different literary manifestations of the universal scandal of man, *viz.*, his wish for father to be dead so as to clear a path for union with mother.[459]

It is at this level that many criticize Freud for his supposed intention to develop universal standards. Besides the Oedipus complex, other offending overreaches might include his interpretations in the fifth chapter of typical dreams or in the following chapter, which seems to set the meaning of a dream's symbolic imagery once and for all. However, what such criticisms overlook is how Freud always takes the subject's individual appropriation of a symbol that is culturally handed down to him. Indeed Freud 'should like to utter an express warning against over-estimating the importance of symbols in dream-interpretation, against restricting the work of translating dreams merely to translating symbols and against abandoning the technique of making use of the dreamer's associations.'[460] Symbolic interpretation is merely an auxiliary method to the primary method of following the chain of associations the dreamer himself makes upon waking and speaking of the dream. Here is an aspect of the second 'structuralist' level at which Freud can be read. For Freud admonishes us not to be seduced by the imagery of the manifest content of the dream but rather turn instead to its latent dream-thoughts if the disentanglement of its meaning is desired. To make this clear, he famously likens the dream to a rebus whose solution is only to be found by submitting its pictorial values to an analysis which takes place at the signifier level. He tells us quite directly to set aside relations of the whole composition and its parts to 'try to replace each separate element by a syllable or word that can be represented by that element in some way or other.'[461] The picture-puzzle will ultimately be deemed worthless if one treats it only as a pictorial composition. Anticipating discussion below, it might be countered that it is precisely the absurdity of dream images which triggers the questioning upon waking of what the dream means. However, a structuralist reading of Freud would point out that if one remains at this level of imaginary meaning, one is unable to approach the meaningless structural mechanism which generates the dream's phenomenal meaning-effect. Again a concern for meaning and structure do not stand on the same level. While the meaning-effect is easily accomplished by a simple pause in the analysis of the chain of signifiers, it takes considerable effort to move to that analysis from the level of meaning. Indeed '[i]t cannot be denied that to interpret and report one's dreams demands a high degree of self-discipline'[462] and he does lament across these pages how his discoveries are not widely accepted because so few actually attempt to analyze dreams as he advises. It is also his rigorous attention to this structural level of signification that can generally account for Freud's aspirations for scientificity.[463] Moreover, written during an intellectual climate that sees Dilthey attempt to model the human sciences on the natural sciences, *The Interpretation of Dreams* is a landmark book which also aspires to place the new discipline of psychoanalysis on a firm scientific foundation, much like the new disciplines of phenomenology and structuralism which also first arise during this time.

In an important footnote added a quarter of a century after the book's initial publication, Freud explains that the essence of dreams is not so much found in the latent dream-thoughts in distinction from the dream imagery of its manifest content; rather, the key distinction is between the former and the dream-work, which creates that particular form of thinking known as the dream.[464] What is at stake is how the dream-work strives to *transform* potentially troubling latent thoughts into innocuous manifest content so that the dreamer will not awake. It is here the larger dimension of Freud's structuralism reveals itself which, one should add, imperceptibly moves into a focused concern for a nonsensical object. What thereby opens up is a possible third level on which one can read Freud. Two of the four factors composing the mechanics of the dream-work's process of forming dreams are well-known. While condensation compresses the wealth of latent thoughts into the manifest content of dreams which are quite slight by comparison, displacement transforms latent thought elements of high psychical value into manifest content with lower, more acceptable intensities.[465] Along with considerations for representability and the secondary revision the dream undergoes by the awakened dreamer himself when he articulates it, a dream is formed whose overall status is effectively a distorted fulfillment of a wish. It follows that its hidden meaning can be revealed by working back through the transformation process of the dream-work. However, Freud notes how

> '[t]here is often a passage in even the most thoroughly interpreted dream which has to be left obscure; this is because we become aware during the work of interpretation that at that point there is a tangle of dream-thoughts which cannot be unravelled and which moreover adds nothing to our knowledge of the content of the dream. This is the dream's navel, the spot where it reaches down into the unknown. The dream-thoughts to which we are led by interpretation cannot, from the nature of things, have any definite endings; they are bound to branch out in every direction into the intricate network of our world of thought. It is at some point where this meshwork is particularly close that the dream-wish grows up, like a mushroom out of its mycelium.'[466]

Given the discussion from Section 4.2 above, the logic Freud is using should look familiar. All the elements of the dream can be accounted for by disentangling the meshwork of the latent dream-thoughts schematized by the dream-work. Yet an exceptional element nevertheless remains. Despite being disclosed by the dream-work, one cannot fully account for this most obscure and distorted element by tracing it back to an associated latent dream-thought. Here is why Freud explicitly expresses this element as a halting point to epistemological concerns, for its status is rather ontological. Its objective status comes precisely from paradoxically embodying the very dream-work which disclosed it.[467] Without such an object analysis would be interminable, as he states elsewhere, and there would be no accounting for why the latent dream-thoughts do not immediately collapse onto the manifest content of dreams. Using aesthetic terminology, what Freud effectively identifies with the navel is the sublime object of the dream such that if one extracts it, the entire dream and its meaningful content unravel.

Speaking of which, Freud does feel 'impelled to investigate the subject of aesthetics' on at least one occasion, *viz.*, in his essay "The 'Uncanny'" (1919).[468] We are told that this is so because the literature of aesthetics in his time has neglected to account for a particular experience, and this experience, we hasten to add, has something to do with encountering the paradoxical sublime object. The first part of the essay compares and contrasts entries of the term uncanny [*unheimlich*, literally 'unhomely'] across different dictionaries to demonstrate how its meaning is thoroughly ambivalent and ultimately coincides with its opposite, *heimlich* [homely, familiar]. The second part of the essay is more empirical, examining individual experiences of the uncanny in order to extract out the common theoretical thread. Phenomena like encountering one's 'double' or the simple reoccurrence of the same thing leads Freud to conclude that the factor of repetition is the source of uncanny feeling. For instance, 'if we come across the number 62 several times in a single day, or if we begin to notice that everything which has a number...invariably has the same one...[w]e do feel this to be uncanny. And unless a man is utterly hardened and proof against the lure of superstition, he will be tempted to ascribe a secret meaning to this obstinate recurrence of a number.'[469] The subjective gesture which assigns the possibility of a deep meaning to reoccurrence is of course logically secondary to the thoroughly contingent link between the individual occurrences. But the more critical issue is to identify exactly why this experience is uncanny. Freud explains that such a scenario reminds us of that 'compulsion to repeat' embedded in the unconscious, which is powerful enough to overrule the pleasure principle. This implies that the unpleasure which attends this compulsion stands in contrast to the pleasure of divining a hidden meaning in the empirical reoccurrence, making the total experience one of 'pained pleasure' or what the French might call *jouissance* [enjoyment]. For his part Freud provides accounts of how such experiences may lead the subject to narcissistically overvalue his own mental processes (which incidentally provides an explanation for primitive beliefs and superstition). In the end Freud's hypothesis is that the uncanny is 'something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light' or alternatively, is 'something which is secretly familiar, which has undergone repression and then returned from it.'[470] Using examples from literature, the essay concludes by demonstrating that while everything that is uncanny fulfils this condition, not everything that fulfils this condition is for that reason uncanny. For instance, the world of *Hamlet* with its ghostly returns of the dead is simply too imaginary to effect an uncanny feeling in its reader. Yet if the writer creates a setting consistent with material reality and the reader strongly sides with the character that has the uncanny experience in the storyline, this will provoke a similar experience in the reader. Freud maintains that in such literature more opportunities are created for the uncanny experience than are possible in real life.

Jung agrees with Freud on at least two counts. In the opening paragraphs of his essay "Dream Analysis in Its Practical Application" (1931)[471] he undeniably reaffirms not only Freud's discovery of the

existence of the unconscious but also the fact that dreams are meaningful. Yet from this point on differences with Freud abound, and at very basic levels. For instance, '[w]hen Freud speaks of the "dream-façade," he is really speaking, not of the dream itself, but of its obscurity, and in so doing is projecting upon the dream his own lack of understanding.'[472] Dreams are distorted and thus unintelligible not because of the dream-work but because we cannot properly read them. Contrary to Freud there is no need to seek underlying causal factors of a patient's neurosis in dreams, for dreams make rational, even factual, statements about the dreamer and do so at the level of its imagery. Free association and subsequent analysis at the signifier level will avail us nothing. According to Jung, the associations should instead proceed from the dream images themselves which are then interpreted in order to provide the proper context with which to read the objective state of the patient as conveyed by the dream. As per the title of his essay, dream analysis should have its practical application. Moreover, beyond their practicality, the facts conveyed by dreams are deemed to have predictive qualities for the dreamer. Already it should be clear that in terms of the three levels on which to read Freud discussed above, Jung does not move past the first with its predominate hermeneutical concerns. Essentially the reason for this lies with his belief that the unconscious is not the 'dangerous monster' Freud has made it out to be but is rather innocuous in its desire to compensate for the deficiencies of conscious thought.[473] In Jung's view, the conscious and the unconscious work together in a reciprocal fashion, the former providing the context for the unconsciously generated images of the dream which stand much closer to the primitive. The psychoanalyst's job is to assimilate unconscious contents with the conscious context so as to re-harmonize the subject with nature and thereby 'lead the patient to the rediscovery of the law of his own being.'[474] Despite his insistence that the content of relatively fixed symbols is actually indefinite as opposed to Freud's (erroneously attributed) own use of hard and fast sexual symbols, when it comes to questions surrounding the meaning of dreams it is in fact the Jungian approach which appears far less flexible than the original multi-leveled methodology of the founding father himself.

The flattening out of Freudian psychoanalysis is even more discernible with Kris, a co-founder of psychoanalytic ego psychology. His essay "Ego Psychology and Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Therapy" (1948)[475] bears the distinct mark of his early efforts to find rationale for what has become one of the most successful breaks from Freud. It effectively continues to provide the theoretical foundation for much of today's practice of psychiatry and psychotherapy in distinction to psychoanalysis proper. From the opening pages of this essay the emphasis is decidedly on practice and technique, which provides a justification for the new approach to interpretation in two ways. First he reasons that his new approach has historically emerged due to the long interaction between clinical observations and the development of psychoanalytic technique and theory. Second, since Freud himself is argued to have laid down the

principles of ego psychology, which champions technique over abstract formulations, there is also a theoretical rationale for focusing on technique. Through case studies Kris endeavors to illustrate how his approach addresses a central problem of technique, which 'consists in establishing the best way of communicating the full set of meanings to the patient.'[476] Such a statement is indicative of the restriction made by ego psychology to exclusively analyze and attempt to break through only the 'surface' defense mechanisms of the patient. Certainly a 'deeper' analysis of the patient's id, which might explore infantile fantasies is also made by ego psychology, but its claim is that whatever meaning that analysis holds will be lost to the patient if his ego continues to inhibit its full acceptance. The retreat from the richness of Freudian psychoanalysis becomes even clearer in the final pages of his essay, where the benefits of a methodology focused on the interaction between conscious 'planning' and preconscious 'intuition' to the exclusion of the unconscious are extolled.[477] Despite the contention by Kris that all advances in psychoanalysis come about by such interactions, these advances are effectively little more than a historical series of codified techniques which only attend to the patient's conscious demand to appropriate meaning. Much like Jung, consideration for the meaningless chain of signifiers is set aside as well as the possibility of a nonsensical suspension point to that chain and the meaning it carries in its network of differences.

5.2 Contemporary Psychoanalytic Thought

While Freudian psychoanalysis always had its faithful adherents, the dominating influence of dissenting schools such as ego psychology was undeniable. So much so that calls for a 'return to Freud' could be heard little more than a decade after his death. Section 5.3 examines the most consequential return to Freud initiated by Lacan beginning in the early 1950s. The current section begins with Ricoeur's own popularizing return to Freud's original texts and subsequently turns to Frank and Kristeva, who take into account Lacan when critically assessing Freud. These latter two discussions might therefore be read most productively in conjunction with the following section dealing with Lacan and his strict adherents.

As was mentioned in Section 1.3 above, Ricoeur's work in the 1960s took a defensive posture against structuralism and psychoanalysis in the name of hermeneutics, and his *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (1965)[478] is no exception. So one should not expect to find here a correction to Jung, Kris and all others who feel the particular hermeneutical levels of psychoanalysis are its key contributions to the human sciences. But the massive work that is *Freud and Philosophy* with its close reading of texts spanning Freud's entire career does not warrant an offhand dismissal of Ricoeur. His project, appropriately categorized at this time as hermeneutical phenomenological, has noteworthy nuances readily understandable given the path forged in the chapters above. The first and last parts of this book expressly articulate his project which, generally speaking, attempts to submit psychoanalysis to

philosophy to deepen its hermeneutical approach, whereas its middle part forms an analytic on Freud's texts. From the very first chapter Ricoeur invokes *The Interpretation of Dreams* to champion the 'double-meaning' of the symbol – not the signifier – as that which requires interpretation in a linguistic expression. For Ricoeur psychoanalysis is narrower than the area of symbols, what he calls the 'hermeneutic field.'[479] These symbols provide an impetus for a search for hidden meaning and what brings to light the double meanings of these symbols themselves is psychoanalytic interpretation, which takes place in symbolic and reflective thought. But is the double meaning thus shown a revelation of the sacred or a dissimulation of what desire means? This question forms the horizon or the two poles of Ricoeur's hermeneutical project. Believing in the former is to consider meaning as that which is addressed as a message or *kerygma*. Such interpretation as a recollection or restoration of meaning holds the hermeneutical circle as its maxim while engaging in a process of demythologization. This is to be contrasted with Freud, Nietzsche and Marx who view interpretation as an exercise of suspicion, reject the primacy of the sacred object and generally seek to reduce illusion. This type of interpretation does not aim for a consciousness of meaning but rather calls for the demystification of false consciousness through the deciphering of expressions originally ciphered by an unconscious work. Ricoeur contends that neither interpretive disposition can stand alone; rather, a proper hermeneutical philosophy such as his begins by 'placing the hermeneutic problem within the movement of reflection.'[480] The idea is that the conflict between these two poles can be grounded in a concrete reflection whereby one recognizes oneself in the work of expressed signs.

Having thus defined his project, Ricoeur proceeds in the second part of his book in a trajectory starting from what he feels are Freud's abstract and solipsistic earlier writings to the more concrete and intersubjective writings of his later period. This trajectory is placed within what Ricoeur calls the general tension of Freudian epistemology, a tension which makes 'Freud's writings present themselves as a mixed or even ambiguous discourse, which at times states conflicts of force subject to an energetics, at times relations of meaning subject to a hermeneutics;' yet despite his hope 'to overcome the gap between the two orders of discourse and to reach the point where one sees that the energetics implies a hermeneutics and the hermeneutics discloses an energetics,'[481] it is clear from the summary of his findings nearly two hundred pages later how the hermeneutical reading of Freud wins out. As he writes, 'we showed that the insight proper to psychoanalysis lies elsewhere, in the reciprocity between interpretation and explanation, between hermeneutics and the economics; but at the same time we had to recognize that the speculation based on the quantitative hypothesis is not in complete harmony with the actual nature of analytic discourse.'[482] So despite recognizing a structural component to Freud's work, a scientific model whose actual mechanistic movement is entirely meaningless, at every turn its importance is downplayed. For psychoanalytic interpretation should most properly be considered in its hermeneutical capacities.

The third part of his book can thus be seen as Ricoeur's attempt to expunge once and for all the scientific aspirations embedded in the more structural aspects of psychoanalysis. First he considers whether psychology or phenomenology can reformulate psychoanalysis, but deems them as not addressing the true issue. Psychology after all claims its own scientificity. Rather, psychoanalytic discourse is to be seen as governed by a 'semantics of desire' which defines psychoanalysis as 'an exegetical science dealing with the relationships of meaning between substitute objects and the primordial (and lost) instinctual objects.'[483] What is certainly useful is Freud's own often used metaphor of archeology, which evokes the idea of digging down to fundamental levels of the psyche. Ricoeur leverages this notion to give the sense that at stake here is an unearthing of the deep and unconscious meaning behind the apparent meanings of a false consciousness. Provided, of course, that it is specifically modified and appropriated to produce an 'archeology of the subject.' This would move us significantly toward the aforementioned notion of the concrete reflection needed to resolve the hermeneutical problematic. However, Ricoeur feels that this notion of archeology is inadequate. For it must be coupled with a teleological model of consciousness – one which is lacking in Freud's texts. Turning instead to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* to develop this notion, Ricoeur's idea is that teleology provides an important counterforce to the regressive direction of archeological interpretation by its progressive interpretative vector. These two, as dialectically related, lead 'reflection that understands its archeology to a symbolic understanding that would grasp the indivisible unity of its archeology and its teleology in the very origin of speech. The dialectic is not everything; it is only a procedure that reflection uses in order to overcome its abstraction and make itself concrete or complete.'[484] In this way Ricoeur proposes a general hermeneutics which would encompass the tension of the two interpretive poles, placing them within a concept of the symbol. Yet this symbol is predominantly one of faith which calls for a hermeneutics to try to grasp its possible call or *kerygma*. Quite revealing of his final position, Ricoeur considers the imprints of meaning left by Freudian conceptions of instincts and fantasies only to set these aside in its final pages to instead 'consider speech or the spoken word [*la parole*], for this is the element in which the advancement of meaning occurs.'[485] The following call is thus made in terms which evoke Heidegger, Bultmann and Ebeling (the former two having been explicitly discussed by Ricoeur himself): to supplement Freud's hermeneutics of suspicion with one that carries with it a mytho-poetic function and whose symbolic exploration of our relation to beings and to Being demands that we listen. Ricoeur's recognition of the meaningless structural aspects of psychoanalysis thus only serves in the end to champion the hermeneutical aspects of Freud. And it goes without saying that the further nonsensical domain which Freud opens up is not even a possibility for Ricoeur.

Before turning to Section 5.3 to demonstrate how Lacanian psychoanalysis can also be read according to the same three levels as with Freud (*viz*., with respect to its hermeneutical or structural aspects or to the nonsensical object), it is worthwhile to explore the choices made by Frank and Kristeva when reading Freud and Lacan. For his part Frank recognizes all three levels in his essay "The 'true subject' and its double: Jacques Lacan's hermeneutics" (1978).[486] Broadly speaking, this text offers up a defense of Lacan against both hermeneutical phenomenology and (post)structuralism. Discussing Heidegger, Gadamer, Habermas, Ricoeur and Sartre throughout, Frank provides us with '[t]he reason why I place such emphasis on this characteristic of existentialist-ontological hermeneutics...[*viz*.,] that, at least at first sight, it shows undeniable similarities to Lacan's psychoanalytical approach.'[487] He goes on to outline these similarities and the general indebtedness of Lacan to hermeneutics to which Derrida's critique of the former's own structuralism is argued to have overlooked. That is to say, Lacan effectively dodges the full brunt of Derrida's accusation, that his particular brand of structuralism is a reversion to a logo-phonocentrism, by relying on a hermeneutical approach which dissolves the reflexive self-certainty of a Cartesian *cogito*. So according to Frank this combination of hermeneutics and structuralism places Lacan at an advantage over Derrida. But the reverse is equally true. The structuralist component of Lacan allows him to depart from the flawed 'hermeneutics of the "merging of horizons"' of Gadamer.[488] Lacan is thus seen to enjoy the best of both worlds with little of the failures of either field. In terms of subjectivity the 'true subject' is not conceived as hermeneutical or structuralist; it is not the meaning-laden hermeneutical phenomenologist or the 'beyond of communication: it is by withdrawing itself from the linguistic happening that it invests the material signifiers with the meaning that is exchanged.'[489] Connections between subjectivity and meaning are further explored below but for now it should be recognized that Frank clearly identifies the third level of Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalysis. He writes: '"Interpretation is not open to all meanings." It isolates, as Freud says, a *core of non-meaning*, without wishing to free it from ambiguity.'[490] Unfortunately these words are written parenthetically, and thus this passing insight gives way to a double concern for the lack of adequate foundation to Lacan's theory of the subject as well as the more general failure of (post)structuralism to account for the phenomena of meaning and consciousness on the sole basis of the relationship between signifiers. To address these concerns, Frank feels the need to reach back to Schleiermacher and Humboldt and argue that Lacan's hermeneutics is effectively Romantic. He concludes by suggesting that today's (post-Heideggerian) hermeneutics and ((post)structuralist) theories of discourse should be reminded of the Lacanian-Romantic hermeneutical lessons regarding meaning.[491] So while Frank does Ricoeur one better in the identification of an additional level from which to read psychoanalytic texts, their conclusions nevertheless settle on the same hermeneutical plane.

In contrast Kristeva considers how psychoanalysis disrupts this hermeneutical plane of meaning in her essay "Psychoanalysis and the Polis" (1982).[492] Discernible throughout the essay are attempts to identify this disruptive force yet since she eschews any notion of objectivity, the results are rather mixed. Certainly starting from the Nietzschean-Foucauldian notion that conferring meaning upon an object presupposes a particular perspective, for Kristeva the question now becomes exactly how that object is identified. If she can show that such objects are delusions, then our desire to give them meaning is undercut. So on the one hand stands the subject's 'desire *to give meaning*...rooted in the speaking subject's need to reassure himself of his image and his identity faced with an object.'[493] This she identifies as a quintessential *political* desire whose apogee is the obsessive quest for the ultimate Meaning and whose most consequential representative is said to be Heidegger. On the other hand the '[b]reaking out of the enclosure of the presentness of meaning' is accomplished by the Freudian interpreter who no longer interprets so much as '"associates," because there is no longer an object to interpret; there is, instead, the setting off of semantic, logical, phantasmatic and indeterminable sequences.'[494] Although refraining from structuralist language in this essay, we can surmise that the potentially interminable signifying associative chain is the decisive mechanism in tipping the literary text-object 'toward the *unknown* of the interpretive theory,' as she writes a page earlier. But whatever the case, Kristeva's point is that there is something that removes the ability to confer meaning upon an object as that object always defers itself to ever new objects. One clinical practice she clearly identifies as frustrating and dissolving stable meanings is the suspension of interpretation effected by the silence of the analyst; this simple technique results in a demonstration of how 'meaninglessness *exists*' or alternatively, how there is meaning but one only known to the extent that it escapes the subject.[495] On the following page Kristeva refers to Freud's notion that there is an 'umbilical' [navel] to every dream and to every interpretation, which she describes as that 'unnameable' enclosed in every enigmatic object. Above this was identified as the sublime object which indexes the subversive third level of the Freudian field. But while Kristeva does recognize it as a condition of interpretation, she resists conceiving this unnameable as a singular point disclosed among interpretable objects to instead dismiss it as the 'primordial phantasm' of a return to the original archaic mother. Attempts to give it meaning merely grant the subject a fleeting phallic *jouissance*. Yet this is no small matter, for attending this matrix is what she calls on the last page a 'totalitarian Meaning,' which should threaten us as much, possibly, as the monstrous Thing threatens Lyotard. But by also failing to identify a singular suspension point to meaning, her mistrust of meaning can only be communicated by speaking of its incompleteness and in this essay declarations of its further heterogeneity and non-Totality abound. As seen in Section 4.2 above, such a state of meaning can only come from embracing, as she does and in true Rancièrean style, a dispersive interpretive logic out of

which an infinity of meaning grows. Indeed she seems to have purposively constructed her essay to reflect the chaos of free association in psychoanalytic interpretation.[496] With Kristeva we thus find an explicit recognition and demonstration of how any strict hermeneutical reading of psychoanalysis is disrupted by its actual practice. In contrast to Ricoeur and Frank this is accomplished by putting into play the most subversive object psychoanalysis has to offer. Yet this object remains here only implicitly articulated in its notion.

5.3 Lacanian Psychoanalysis

The official call made by Lacan to return to Freud is easily marked from his first seminar of 1953-54, a seminar he was to give yearly until his death in 1981. As the content of this seminar changed dramatically over the years to develop into its own unique set of psychoanalytic concepts, just as with Freud there are multiple levels with which to read Lacan. Add to this his difficult *écrits*, whose authoring also spans as many years, the obstacles encountered in concisely discussing Lacan are considerable. With the discussion of Freud this has been managed by condensing these levels into three, and the present discussion continues to mobilize these same three levels. This is in part done in order to concur with the underlying thesis of this chapter, *viz.*, that psychoanalysis as here discussed should be viewed as encompassing the entire trajectory leading up to it. Thus, as was seen with Freud, many concerns regarding meaning raised in the first two chapters are equally raised in the hermeneutical (and phenomenological) aspects of psychoanalysis; moreover, certain psychoanalytical techniques and the modeling of the structural dynamics of the psyche – entirely meaningless in and of themselves – utilize similar notions developed by (post)structuralism as discussed in the third chapter; while Freud's prospect of a nonsensical 'navel' begins to bring the conclusion drawn in the fourth chapter by some recent aesthetic theorists more fully to its notion. Of course actual chronology frustrates a naïve conception of this thesis. For the discussions above on aesthetic theory, (post)structuralism and hermeneutical phenomenology concern developments in these fields which historically take place well after Freud's actual writings. So in truth the entire historical trajectory of Part I was presented retroactively from a much later perspective, and that perspective is the work of early 1970s Lacan. Effectively the claim made in Part I is not only that the radical work undertaken by Lacan in his final decade allows us to discern his own career as a trajectory – one in which he eventually leaves both hermeneutical and structuralist concerns behind to ultimately embrace a more radical dimension – but to additionally see a similar trajectory entirely embodied in the work of Freud and Lacan specifically and in the field of psychoanalysis generally. While Part II employs a novel psychoanalytic approach to, among other things, further articulate how this radical third dimension is ever present in the other two, the remainder of this chapter undertakes a discussion of Lacan by examining texts from each of the three distinct periods of his career. First an *écrit* representative of his

hermeneutical phenomenological period (roughly 1933–mid 1950s) is discussed; then three *écrits* representing different aspects of his 'structuralist' period (mid 1950s–1960s) are considered; finally, two seminars are taken up which delimit Lacan's final non-hermeneutical phenomenological period (1960s–1981), one which first deals with the real object *qua* trauma and then with the real object *qua* impossible. Generally speaking these three periods correspond to his famous registers of Imaginary–Symbolic–Real respectively. This sampling of Lacan's texts is then supplemented with texts authored by a few Lacanian psychoanalysts who largely place the accent with late-Lacan and accordingly engage in efforts to expose the real dimension in his work by endeavoring to read it with all three levels simultaneously in mind.

The first period of Lacan's career culminates in his paper "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis" (1953),[497] popularly known as his 'Rome Discourse.' While using his name only twice, this text nevertheless bears the distinctive mark of Heidegger, as it generally links together the subject, language and speech on the basis of a reading of psychoanalysis that is undeniably hermeneutical phenomenological. As he writes, '[i]f psychoanalysis can become a science (for it is not yet one) and if it is not to degenerate in its technique (and perhaps this has already happened), we must discover the meaning of its experience.'[498] Like Heidegger's problematic of unveiling truth, the very psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious calls for a similar need for exegesis to reestablish the censored chapters of the subject's history. This is analogous to the hermeneutical task of clarifying obscure texts and just as for hermeneuts from the medieval period onward this task is linked to truth. But in the present case this is seen as taking place phenomenologically, through 'the Word realized in discourse that darts from mouth to mouth, conferring on the act of the subject who receives its message the meaning that makes this act an act of history and gives it its truth.'[499] But simply because Lacan stresses language and speech throughout this paper, one should not conclude that he can be considered a structuralist. In 1953 his use of the phrase 'symbolic order' still refers to the substantial matter and imponderable meaning of symbolic objects and not to the mechanics of signifiers. Thus the claim that the Freudian 'discovery was that of the field of the effects, in man's nature, of his relations to the symbolic order and the fact that their meaning goes all the way back to the most radical instances of symbolization in being' is a reading of psychoanalysis that wholly places the symbolic order *qua* system of signifiers behind a primary concern for a being grasped through meaning.[500] For Lacan the subject is thus alienated from its most primordial and meaningful being, and psychoanalysis endeavors to reestablish a link to it or else tries to compensate for its loss with a renarrativization of the subject's history. As noted above, the French use of the *futur antérieur* problematizes simple conceptions of meaning-conferment by adding a complex temporal dimension. This in large part accounts for Lacan's opposition to determinist lines of thinking which consider events in the subject's past as simple facts. On the contrary, for Lacan such events are always

already historicized so that what is important is how the subject today perceives them to have been experienced. Here is where the psychoanalyst can 'help him complete the current historicization of the facts.'[501] This implies that any event takes on its full meaning only at a future date; its present status is thus what it 'will have meant' to the subject. In terms of meaning the past is in a sense more flexible than the future. Given this understanding Lacan maintains that the psychoanalyst's most formidable technique is to 'punctuate' the speech of the patient. Utilizing terminology from an earlier paper on logical time, Lacan maintains that by so punctuating the text of the subject the psychoanalyst 'annuls the *times for understanding* in favor of the *moments of concluding* which precipitate the subject's meditation toward deciding the meaning to be attached to the early event.'[502] As Lacan moves into his structuralist period, the hermeneutical phenomenological shell of these insights is removed in order to expose and rearticulate their underlying logic into the pure language of signifiers.

However, Lacan's move away from hermeneutical phenomenology does not imply he regresses to explaining meaning through the determining forces of signifiers, at least not in terms of a naïve conception of meaning as factory-produced, like a finished product which emerges at the end of an assembly line of signifying chains. Readers of Lacan's work from his relatively brief second period might be tempted to conclude otherwise, since it is clear he has a strong interest in delimiting the causal forces at work in the very midst of the field of meaning. In his defense one must stress that while he finds himself in the company of those men who, like the (post)structuralists examined in Chapter 3 above, investigate the meaningless structural aspects of language as delimiting the field of meaning, he does depart from their company in his insistence that first, there is a cause of meaning; second, the cause of meaning is decentered; and third, this decentered cause is the very signifying structure itself. Such an understanding, to be explored in the following three texts, better accounts for that 'general truth of structuralism' identified above, which speaks of experiencing meaning-effects only when turning away from strict structural work. For Lacan, at the level of formal structural mechanisms stands a sense and performing structural analysis accesses that sense but not its meaning. This potential meaning is actualized only in a future moment which comes by releasing the signifiers from their analysis to allow their free and incessant sliding so as to produce the imaginary meaning-effect. At this point in Lacan's career sense and meaning are related roughly as cause and effect, articulated with respect to the symbolic *qua* formal mechanism of the signifying structure itself. In Lacan's third period meaning is still seen as an effect of sense, but the status of this cause is conceived as real rather than as symbolic. While issues raised in the next three texts from his structuralist period are more fully understood by taking into account the work from his third period, an adequate sense of Lacan's project at this time can nevertheless be had by endeavoring to strictly keep the discussion oriented towards its structural components.

There is perhaps no better work by Lacan which demonstrates his thesis of the existing parallel between the workings of the symbolic order and the functioning of the unconscious than his "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'" (1956).[503] This paper must have held a special importance for Lacan himself as he placed it at the very beginning of his *Écrits*, whose compiled papers are otherwise generally presented in chronological order. Such importance is indirectly confirmed by the attention it has received by literary criticism; the brilliant structural analysis of Poe's short story has easily made this the most popular of all of Lacan's papers for English departments across higher academia. Its main themes are well-known, like how the repetition of scenes in Poe's text proceeds according to which character possesses the feminizing letter (which in turn makes them possessed by its meaning),[504] a letter whose very possession further determines the spatial disposition of all the characters and dictates how much insight they can draw from each scene. Less known are the how and the why of these structural movements. To address the underlying mechanism which accounts for them, one must turn to the latter half of his paper. There Lacan supplements his English department-friendly literary analysis with a scientific exposition complete with strange diagrams and figures all inscribed in notational shorthand which, commented on in his usual confusingly laconic style, is sure to give initial pause to even those well-versed in mathematics and logic. What Lacan attempts to illustrate is how there is a certain autonomy to the workings of the symbolic order and thus to unconscious processes. This autonomy stems from the various degrees of ciphering involved in these workings, a ciphering which dictates in many respects the general direction a signifying system can proceed.[505] These exercises involving overlapping or overdetermined symbols are designed to mimic how natural language assigns more than a single meaning to any word or phrase such that a surplus of words is most often required to adequately represent one's intention. So one should seriously heed Lacan's warning against taking up his work here simply for its 'recreational character.'[506] The painstaking process of slowly working through these pages with paper and pencil in hand may or may not appeal to one's sensibilities. But only through such analytic work (properly speaking a *deciphering*) can one truly be convinced that if the unconscious does exist and that its processes are so ciphered, then these processes indeed have nothing to do with meaning. The realm of meaning is under the sole purview of conscious thought and can be safely set aside when discussing (the truth of) unconscious formations and productions. More strongly said, meaning *must* be set aside as it covers over unconscious processes. Lacanian interpretation does not so much aim to uncover meaning as rather seek to reduce the matter at hand to the meaningless movement of overdetermined signifiers.

But it is a year later that Lacan first works out a full theory of signifiers, as demonstrated in his paper "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud" (1957).[507] It is in this text that Lacan famously inverts the order of Saussure's linguistic sign, placing instead the signifier on top and the

signified on bottom with an intervening bar which quite literally bars any intimate relation between the two. In his algebraic shorthand,[508] it is represented as $\frac{S}{s}$. Generally speaking, the signified is another term for (the smallest unit of) meaning, so what Lacan now calls an algorithm still seems to retain the Saussurean notion that to every signifier stands a meaning. Yet Lacan breaks from Saussure by claiming how these algorithms should be considered as 'devoid of meaning.'[509] Indeed we can view this entire paper as an effort to set aside meaning for signifying structure, which here amounts to substituting for every signified a chain of signifiers.[510] A couple of illustrations are thus presented to help prepare us for his claim made a page later that 'the signifier in fact enters the signified.' Signifiers always problematize the signified from within, and upon close examination the signified reveals itself as nothing but a series of signifiers. It is thus the signifier that has logical priority, '[f]or the signifier, by its very nature, always anticipates meaning by deploying its dimension in some sense before it.' Interrupted phrases like 'I'll never...' and 'The fact remains...' which are missing their significant terms anticipate their meaning yet nevertheless make *sense* and one that 'is all the more oppressive in that it is content to make us wait for it.' In a sentence which nicely captures the problematic relation of meaning to the signifier whereby the former incessantly slides under the later, Lacan writes 'that it is in the chain of the signifier that meaning *insists*, but that none of the chain's elements *consists* in the signification it can provide at that very moment.'[511] Certainly the meaning of the sentence 'George Washington was the first president of the United States' insists in this series of signifiers, yet one would be hard pressed to localize exactly where it consists in that series. Nevertheless it is obvious that the potential sliding of meaning is (at least temporarily) stopped, and to explain this phenomenon Lacan uses the analogy of 'button ties' [*points de capiton*]. Literally designating upholstery buttons which prevent a shapeless mass of stuffing from freely moving about, the idea is that such anchoring points exist where the signifier and signified are knotted together. Initiated towards the end of sentences, this involves a retroactivity which should be seen as complementing the anticipatory nature of meaning noted above. Consider the interrupted sentence 'It was light...'. Here the sliding of meaning manifests itself in the uncertainty which arises in the mind of the reader as to the exact signification of the term light. At best this term anticipates a limited array of possible meanings. But it is only by actually completing the sentence with one of these possible meanings, say with '...outside,' '...so he could carry it' or even '...reading' that the meaning is buttoned-down. The anticipatory nature of signifiers at the start of sentences thus overlaps with the retroactive nature of those at the end to result in a tying down of meaning. However, a further aspect of the analogy should be clear: just as button ties are not permanent anchors, the meaning of sentences are not so fixed that they cannot later be called into question with future sentences.[512]

Another way to manage with what 'elusive ambiguity the ring of meaning flees from our grasp along the verbal string' is to recognize the 'fact that access to meaning is granted only to the double elbow of metaphor,...namely, the fact that the S and *s* of the Saussurian algorithm are not in the same plane, and man was deluding himself in believing he was situated in their common axis, which is nowhere.'[513] The actual arrangement of the algebraic ratio $\frac{S}{s}$ should provide a visual prop to help one recognize how the signifier S (*e.g.*, light) can come to mark the place of *s* (a series of signifiers, *e.g.*, It was light so he could carry it) such that the latter disappears while its meaning is in some sense preserved in the former. While this accounts for metaphor's poetic effect, whereby two or more meanings exist in one signifier, one should further recognize that since Lacan demotes meaning to the secondary structuring effects of signifiers alone he is driven to make a further distinction within the realm of the signifier. Thus his distinction between the signifier and the letter. When Lacan defines the letter as 'the localized structure of the signifier,'[514] this definitely makes it not of the realm of meaning but rather of sense, and one which provides direction to the movement of signifiers as they subvert the very place of meaning itself. In this way, by straddling the very instance of this letter in the unconscious with a signifier substituting a series of signifiers, we begin to see how Lacan can claim that the 'metaphor is situated at the precise point at which meaning is produced in nonmeaning.'[515] It should also be noted how Lacan's consideration of metaphor and metonymy (as well as an assortment of other obscure figures of speech and tropes, such as periphrasis, hyperbaton, catachresis, litotes, antonomasia and hypotyposis) as unconscious mechanisms distinguishes him from a linguist. In contrast to the traditional structuralist who eschews notions of subjectivity, Lacan is a psychoanalyst whose interest in subverting meaning at the textual level is calculated so as to discourage any further alienation of the subject in the field of meaning, which amounts to frustrating the subject's constitution of an imaginary and meaningful sense of self or ego.[516] Commenting on these obscure figures of speech, he asks: 'Can one see here mere manners of speaking, when it is the figures themselves that are at work in the rhetoric of the discourse the analysand actually utters?' So Lacan would agree with the common structuralist truth of how 'language speaks the subject.' But he would go much further to argue that 'we cannot confine ourselves to giving a new truth its rightful place, for the point is to take up our place in it.'[517] As seen more clearly in his third period, Lacan's subject actually *emerges* from a thoroughly meaningless structure whose being can thus be set in opposition to its meaning; in no way is Lacanian subjectivity a transcendent something which stands over-against this structure. But at this time Lacan's main message is clearly to turn our analytic gaze to the operations of signifiers, for signifiers so assembled into various linguistic structures hold the causal key to questions concerning meaning. His own writing style is consistent to these ends, as it is notably more performative and prescriptive than demonstrative. While this attests to the inscription of his own subjectivity in his

texts, it does make reading them difficult, but only if the reader stubbornly remains at the question of what Lacan *means* by this or that formulation and avoids the challenging demands of actually working through his texts. As he writes in the opening lines of this paper in a statement equally applicable to the entire *Écrits*, this text should be considered as 'situating...between writing and speech – it will be halfway between the two' and is so crafted as to 'leave the reader no other way out than the way in, which I prefer to be difficult. This, then, will not be a writing in my sense of the term.'[518] Papers such as these are only hindering and discouraging to those in search of readily appropriable meaning. But for the scholar willing to peek behind the imaginary veil to put the structures he finds there to productive and truthful ends, the difficulty of these texts merely signals the enormously flexible thought contained therein.

The relation Lacan finds between structure and the subject is further considered in "The Signification of the Phallus" (1958).[519] While Lacan will continually rework the underlying logic of this relation into his final decade, for the present review there are two key points to note in this paper. The first has to do with the distinction Lacan draws between the meaning (signification) of the phallus and the phallus *qua* signifier, which are nevertheless two aspects of the phallus that are paradoxically related.[520] The former concerns a subjective experience and thus notably adds a phenomenological dimension to Lacan's structuralist work. On the one hand this experience has to do with virility, the pleasurable feeling of potentially grasping *all* the signifiers (and thus all the meanings) in a structure, but on the other hand this experience is coupled with utter impotence, a painful realization that such an all (and the total meaning it potentially conveys) forever eludes the grasp of the subject. The overall experience is thus one of *jouissance*, the pleasured pain of a pulsation between everything and nothing, as when a friend unacquainted with one's area of expertise suddenly inquires after its meaning. Such an auspicious occasion is often simultaneously met with a feeling of helplessness or in psychoanalytic terms, an experience of symbolic castration.[521] But what should not be overlooked is how this experience of the impossible fullness of meaning is *itself* marked by a signifier and one that is entirely devoid of a signified. To explain this, consider how for any network of signifiers to operate as a differential system (*i.e.*, as a system of differences), it must contain a lack which cannot be filled so as to 'complete' the system. One could also conceptualize this as a system which sets in motion its signifiers in an endeavor to find the missing signifier. Either way the result is the same: its total completion and thus all of its meaning-effects are impossible to achieve. Yet this very notion of a lacking signifier is further marked by a signifier: a signifier of the lack of a signifier. However, this is not yet the phallic signifier. All one needs to do to grasp *this* signifier is reflect on the 'place' in which the lack of the signifier converts into the signifier of the lack. The signifier which marks this place is the phallus *qua* signifier, a paradoxical signifier-without-signified that 'sticks out' from the series of ordinary signifiers. It is an element in the symbolic order in which excess

and lack coincide. This provides for a much deeper understanding of the 'general truth of structuralism' spoken of numerous times above. For we see how the phallus *qua* signified and phallus *qua* signifier, while intimately related, are nevertheless distinct, such that the lack of possessing this signifier is the price to be paid for any meaningful experience. This leads to the second key point of this paper, the contention that

> 'one can indicate the structures that govern the relations between the sexes by referring simply to the phallus' function. These relations revolve around a being and a having which, since they refer to a signifier, the phallus, have contradictory effects: they give the subject reality in this signifier, on the one hand, but render unreal the relations to be signified, on the other. This is brought about by the intervention of a seeming [*paraître*] that replaces the having in order to protect it, in one case, and to mask the lack thereof, in the other.'[522]

Concisely said, man is defined as 'having' the phallus while woman is defined as 'being' the phallus. Here lies the origin of Lacan's earlier attempt to formulize sexual difference and as can be seen, it is one which is strictly conceived as internal to phallic economy. The sexual categorization of the subject simply proceeds according to which of the two possible relations it takes with respect to the phallus. It is a resounding truth that much of the criticism leveled at Lacan's notion of sexual difference is leveled at this particular conceptualization. What is thereby overlooked is how Lacan himself eventually recognized the deficiencies of conceiving sexual difference as a symbolic reality, to turn instead in the early 1970s to consider its *real* basis. Inscribed from that point on into what he calls the 'formulae of sexuation,' commentary in the literature on his final conception of sexual difference has only slowly been growing in recent years. The formulae of sexuation are extensively discussed and enlarged upon throughout Part II below.

If Lacan's second period establishes that the signifying structure operates as the decentered cause of meaning, the movement into his third and final period does not so much abandon this insight as ask a further question: does the signifying structure *itself* have a cause? By answering this question in the affirmative starting in the 1960s, Lacan for the remainder of his career effectively moves beyond both hermeneutics and structuralism. One sees this new concern in the second lecture of his *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1964), a lecture that day dedicated to the 'function of cause,' in which he is recorded to have said: 'Cause is to be distinguished from that which is determinate in a chain, in other words the *law*...In short, there is cause only in something that doesn't work.'[523] There are two notable aspects to these words. The first concerns how Lacan now holds there to be an indeterminate (capital 'C') Cause standing 'outside' the series of (little 'c') causes which make up the mechanistic movement of a chain of signifiers. This Cause is defined to be of the real which implies that the notion of the real has been radically reworked from the previous decade. Schematically said, the real for Lacan in the 1950s was largely equated with 'reality' regarded as the

sensory-laden background of the symbolic subject. But in the 1960s the real is elevated to a more dignified notion, as that which acts as the absent cause of the symbolic. The ultimate Cause of meaning is thus one further remove from his previous structuralist thinking so that a real, and not a symbolic, suspension point must be sought. However, this does not imply an abandonment of concerns for the symbolic order, for the real is only discernible through its effects on that order. This leads to the second notable aspect of the above citation, how the Cause *qua* real can never *directly* effectuate its causal power but can only register itself as a disturbance in the symbolic order. Such disturbances were seen above when the inconsistency inherent to the network of signifiers was discussed. What Lacan's new approach adds is an understanding that this structuralist deficiency (*i.e.*, the network's failure to complete itself due to an ever missing signifier) is the way the real manifests itself at the symbolic level, for it is precisely the non-symbolizable real that throws the symbolic order's potentially smooth signifying operations off course. At first Lacan considers these real effects in their traumatic impact on the subject. But then in the 1970s the real is seen as impossible, and such a conception is most strikingly evident in Lacan's declaration of the impossibility of the sexual relationship. Below two seminars from Lacan's non-hermeneutical phenomenological period are briefly discussed. Seminar XI is primarily taken up for its potential to radically suspend Heidegger's question of the meaning of being, while Lacan's novel discourse theory as articulated in Seminar XVII (a seminar given just prior to the introduction of the formulae of sexuation), is likewise considered for its theorizing of an end point to the interminable slide of meaning.

For present purposes the most pertinent section of Seminar XI is its last section which includes two Venn diagrams, reproduced in Figure 5.3 with slight modifications.[524]
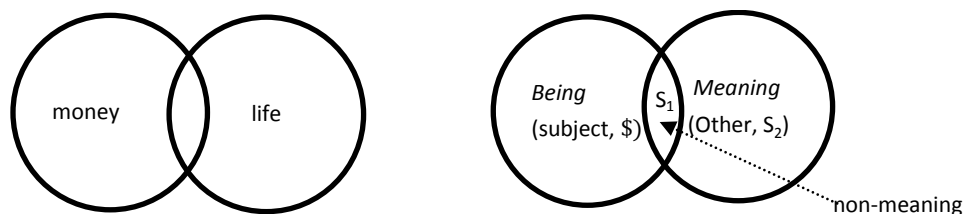

Figure 5.3: The *Vel* of Alienation

The diagram to the left is readily understandable, and Lacan uses it to explain the one to the right. Suppose you are walking down an alley and a robber jumps out, sticks a gun in your belly and offers you the following choice, a *vel* (Latin for 'or'): 'Your money or your life!' It is immediately evident that if you choose to keep your money the robber pulls the trigger, ending your life as well as relieving you of your money. The only way of retaining one of these options is to choose life, which is of course a life now diminished by a specific dollar amount. The choice of life is thus rather forced upon you[525] and Lacan's point is that so is meaning, for the subject faces a similar choice with respect to its being and its meaning.

While Heidegger is not expressly named in these pages, one cannot but recognize that where hermeneutical phenomenology holds meaning and being together in a single question that proves decisive for its very project (*i.e.*, the question of the meaning of being), Lacan's non-hermeneutical phenomenology posits a gap between the two, for 'the being of the subject [is] that which is there beneath the meaning.' He continues, summarizing the *vel* of alienation:

> 'If we choose being, the subject disappears, it eludes us, it falls into non-meaning. If we choose meaning, the meaning survives only deprived of that part of the non-meaning that is, strictly speaking, that which constitutes in the realization of the subject, the unconscious. In other words, it is of the nature of this meaning, as it emerges in the field of the Other, to be in a large part of its field, eclipsed by the disappearance of being, induced by the very function of the signifier…One of the consequences is that interpretation is not limited to providing us with the significations [meanings] of the way taken by the psyche that we have before us. This implication is no more than a prelude. Interpretation is directed not so much at the meaning as towards the non-meaning of the signifiers, so that we may rediscover the determinants of the subject's entire behaviour.'[526]

The subject, which Lacan algebraically represents by $, cannot but find itself immersed in the Other, the chain of signifiers represented here by S_2, which make up the language it speaks and within whose system of differences meaning stands. However, it was seen how there is a missing signifier in this chain, here represented by S_1, which if found would complete the system and allow the subject full access to the final Meaning (of its being). Yet this lack of a signifier is a condition for the differential signifying system itself and thus cannot be found. This is why Lacan characterizes this *vel* as *alienation*, as it condemns the subject to the field of the Other which provides meaning to the loss of its being.[527] But unlike Heidegger who calls for a deeper hermeneutic to reestablish a connection to this being, Lacan paradoxically calls for a further *separation* of the subject *from this entire scenario*, as in Figure 5.4.
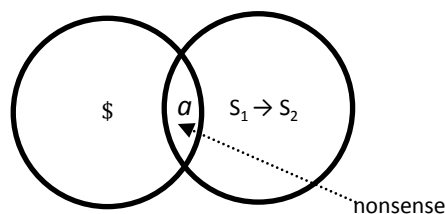

Figure 5.4: Separation

Separation occurs not when the subject realizes how there is a missing signifier which prevents grasping the full meaning of being; such an insight is readily known in structuralism. Rather, separation is the further phenomenological experience of how the missing S_1 is *primordially* lost, how there is a lack which precedes that secondary lack manifesting itself at the structural level to which one may or may not hold out hope of filling in with a final signifier. Graphically this movement away from vacillating between the hope of finding the missing signifier and the recognition of the impossibility of doing so amounts to shifting S_1 entirely over to the field of the Other so that all that is left is the empty place S_1 previously

occupied at the intersection of the subject and the Other. This place was seen above as marked by the phallus *qua* signifier. But what is important to recognize here is how Lacan now conceives the place of the intersection as the overlap of two lacks, a point which coincides with the lack in the subject and the lack in the other. Lacan thus breaks away from set theory, which treats elements of intersections as belonging to both circles; rather, Lacan considers it a *negative* intersection so that the nonsensical object *a* which embodies it belongs to neither the subject nor the Other. This quintessential Lacanian object is what was identified above as the sublime object, a paradoxical object offered up from Section 4.2 onward as a suspension point to meaning, and Lacan effectively theorizes the same when he says that '[t]hrough the function of the *objet a*, the subject separates himself off [and] ceases to be linked to the vacillation of being, in the sense that it forms the essence of alienation.'[528] At the phenomenological level, the alienated subject cannot but meaningfully vacillate with its being, while the separated subject gains an 'empty' distance towards this meaningful existence precisely by identifying with an object which embodies the *jouissance* that supports this experience of alienation. At the theoretical level, this is 'the object that cannot be swallowed, as it were, which remains stuck in the gullet of the signifier.'[529] And in terms of interpretation, Lacan contends that the proper strategy is to aim for this object, for 'the effect of interpretation is to isolate in the subject a kernel, a *kern*, to use Freud's own term, of *non-sense*'[530] which for all that does not make this type of interpretation itself nonsensical.

This *objet a*, also called the 'object-cause,' thus accounts for the real Cause which disturbs the signifiers of the symbolic order. Moreover, Lacan considers this object the objectal correlate to a subject that only exists in the differential signifying system as a pure difference, as per his often repeated tautological definition of the signifier as 'that which represents a subject for another signifier.'[531] What Lacan now adds to this structuralist understanding is the further insight that the subject can only recognize this truth insofar as 'the subject sees himself caused as a lack by *a*.'[532] Thus what makes the object-cause characteristically traumatic to the subject is the discovery that the Cause of meaning has something to do with his own subjectivity. Correlative to his belief that one attains the agility needed for the interpretation of logico-mathematical unconscious thought processes by working through ciphered matrices, Lacan increasingly recommends examining topological figures to gain similar insights into the logic of the real. In the present seminar a favored figure is often invoked – the möbius strip[533] – which illustrates the existence of a structure whose limit separating its inside from its outside coincides with its internal limit. Such a model is precisely what is needed to explain how the Cause *qua* real disturbing the signifying system from 'outside' the structure is in fact the retroactive product of its own effects. That is, trying to grasp the entire logic of the structure and its relation to the real cannot be done with a single glance;[534] rather, the subject must permit itself to get caught up in the structure with its attending illusion

of a substantive Cause of meaning in order to discover how that Cause is nothing more than the subject's own path towards it. It is as if the entire path the subject forges through chains of signifiers and their meanings collapses into a nonsensical singular point suspending the need for further attempts to meaningfully appropriate a loss of being in the signifying field of the Other.

While these conclusions do find textual support in Seminar XI, it is true that Lacan articulates alienation and separation not so much in terms of *objet a* as rather with reference to the primordially repressed binary signifier mentioned during the discussion of Derrida in Section 3.2 above. But as Lacan continues to clarify the subject's relation to the system of signifiers throughout the second half of the 1960s, he will increasingly recognize the need to specifically address the question of how the signifier and *jouissance* are related. This eventually becomes a question of establishing a link between *objet a* (or surplus-*jouissance*) and the chain of signifiers, and this is first articulated in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis* (1969-70).[535] This seminar is well-known for having presented Lacan's Theory of the Four Discourses (of the Master, Hysteric, Analyst and University), which is extensively utilized in Chapter 7 below. For present purposes only a minimal grasp of this theory is required in order to recognize its applicability to the issue of meaning. Fortunately much of this theory can be introduced and applied by building on the preceding discussion. Recall how for Lacan meaning is retroactively 'buttoned-down' as the signifying chain proceeds from left to right, from an earlier signifier (S_1) to later signifiers (S_2). This is visually captured in Figure 5.6.

Figure 5.6: Retroactive Trajectory of Meaning

Now, the four discourses are based on the original definition of the signifier (S_1) as that which represents a subject ($\$$) for another signifier (S_2). What Lacan does is identify each of these three places, as well as the hitherto unidentified fourth place, as in Figure 5.7.

$$\text{Definition of a signifier:} \quad \frac{S1}{\$} \to \frac{S2}{} \qquad \text{Places of discourse:} \quad \frac{\text{agent}}{\text{truth}} \to \frac{\text{other}}{\text{product/loss}}$$

Figure 5.7: Definition of a Signifier and the Places of Discourse

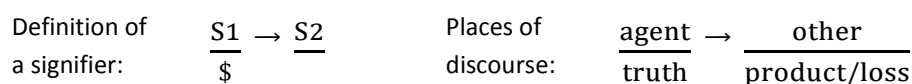By superimposing the schema of Figure 5.6 onto the definition of a signifier in Figure 5.7, we can visualize Lacan's idea that the subject emerges from the meaningless symbolic chain. Lacan tells us as much in the very first session of Seminar XVII, for 'it is at the very instant at which S_1 intervenes in the already constituted field of the other signifiers, insofar as they are already articulated with one another as such, that, by intervening in another system, this $, which I have called the subject as divided, emerges. Its entire status, in the strongest sense of this term, is to be reconsidered this year.'[536] One aspect of this reconsidered subject can be seen through the distinction between what might be called the 'subjectivization' of the subject and the pure subject. The former is the emergence of the subject into the field of meaning, a subject imbued with meaningful content (visually confirmed with the $ emerging at the tail end of the retroactive trajectory of meaning production); the latter is the empty lack between signifiers, a subject of the signifier devoid of any substantive meaning.[537] Lacan's effort here can productively be viewed as understanding the subject in its move from the alienation of subjectivization to the subject proper. How? Immediately following the citation above is Lacan's reminder of how he has 'always stressed that something defined as a loss emerges from this trajectory. This is what the letter to be read as object *a* designates.' As mentioned above, it is through the subject's identification with this lost object that the subject sees itself as a lack. In terms of discourse theory, we now have the final element that occupies the fourth place of product/loss in the elemental discourse which Lacan calls the Master's discourse (M_d). This is seen in Figure 5.8.

$$M_d: \quad \frac{S1}{\$} \rightarrow \frac{S2}{a} \qquad\qquad A_d: \quad \frac{a}{S2} \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S1}$$

Figure 5.8: The Master's and the Analyst's Discourse

Recall how Lacan in the 1970s re-conceptualizes the status of the real, no longer considering it primarily in its traumatic aspect. This is a direct result of his new theory of discourses, for 'in supposing the formalization of discourse and in granting oneself some rules within this formalization that are destined to put it to the test, we encounter an element of impossibility. This is what is at the base, the root, of an effect of structure.'[538] This element of impossibility is the *objet a* which Lacan articulates from the perspective of the Master's discourse in various ways including how that discourse uncovers the fact that there is no sexual relation as well as the 'futile search for meaning' that is involved in seeking the origins of language.[539] Yet despite uncovering it, the Master's discourse cannot grasp this impossibility. Only the Analyst's discourse (A_d) can do so. As can be seen in Figure 5.8, the order of elements (S_1, S_2, *a*, $) is constant from M_d to A_d, having been but rotated (counter)clockwise half a turn to fall into new places which do not themselves rotate. So S_1 in the place of agency in the M_d is now in the place of product/loss

in the A_d. These two discourses are inversions of each other and it is in this sense that the M_d is the 'other side of psychoanalysis.' The two are at opposite poles of each other but connected nevertheless. As Lacan reminds us,

> 'I am a little analyst, a rejected stone initially, even if in my analyses I become the cornerstone. As soon as I get up off my chair I have the right to go for a walk. That is reversed, the rejected stone which becomes a cornerstone. It may also be, inversely, that the cornerstone goes for a walk. It's even like that that I will perhaps have some chance that things will change. If the cornerstone left, the entire edifice would collapse. There are some who are tempted by this.'[540]

Certainly cryptic, but if one understands that for Lacan the analyst is to embody *objet a*, his words are readily understandable. The rejected stone is *objet a* in the place of loss in the M_d which becomes a cornerstone by assuming the place of agency in the A_d. As rejected, it is that which falls out of the signifying chain as it proceeds from S_1 to S_2, retroactively producing meaning for 'we feeble beings...[who] will keep on discovering for ourselves at every turning point...[how] we need meaning.'[541] But this interminable slide of signifiers and meaning has its limits. In fact it is the *objet a* that embodies this very limit and when it becomes the agent of its own discourse it can radically change the subject's coordinates. The A_d is thus a truly subversive practice, placing at its cornerstone a nonsensical object which embodies its own disappearance and in this way is a discourse harboring the capacity to *collapse* the entire edifice of the subject, *i.e.*, his life-world and all the meaning it entails. The M_d is the essential discourse retroactively producing meaning without restraint and the A_d reverses this process, putting an end to meaning production through identification with a nonsensical object.[542] For the M_d simultaneously also produces the object of its own demise such that if appropriated can suspend the subject's need to further inquire upon the meaning of phenomena.

If one takes Lacan's written and spoken word as the authoritative discourse of a master, as his adherents no doubt do, a striking example of elevating what that discourse produced to a new universal conception is to be had with Miller's paper entitled "Suture (elements of the logic of the signifier)" (1966).[543] For Miller there takes 'a casual word that occurs once in Lacan'[544] and uses it to unite many of the points made above under a single concept. Indeed this is consistent with the general thesis of the paper itself, one that raises awareness of how a singular point exists in any signifying system which is directly linked to that system's aspirations for universality (*i.e.*, the relative autonomy of the symbolic order). In order to understand this, Miller's project to develop 'the logic of the signifier' as that which unpins psychoanalysis can in no way be taken as a structuralist project. Given the preceding discussions one can immediately recognize from his very definition of suture, as that which 'names the subject to the chain of its discourse...[and which] figures there as the element which is lacking, in the form of a stand-in,' that at every turn Miller has his eye on the real.[545] In fact, many of the arguments made above regarding Lacan's notion of overdetermined structure fall under the purview of suture. For instance the overlap in a

structure between its external difference and its internal one, which was brought to bear using the möbius strip, can be expressed as the sutured point. The overlapping of two lacks, the lack of the subject and the lack of the other, that is *objet a* is another way to express the suture. As well, Miller makes use of Lacan's distinction between the signifier and the letter, for '[i]n order to grasp suture we must cut across what a discourse makes explicit of itself, and distinguish from its meaning, its letter. This paper is concerned with the letter – a dead letter. It should come as no surprise if the meaning then dies.'[546] In general, what suture designates is in no way an operation which covers its own tracks to produce an illusory self-enclosed totality (of meaning) since such an operation always leaves its trace 'in the form of a stand-in.' The suture is thus phallic, registering an excessive element which sticks out from the ordinary series of signifiers precisely as an exception. It has a sublime quality, an element of the formal schema found amongst the disclosed content yet marking the part of that content that is excluded from explicit and meaningful understanding. However one expresses it, suture designates a nonsensical element where excess and lack coincide. Recognizing how suture directly links the universal aspect of a signifying system with its exception is to see how the singularity of suture allows one to bypass the middle term of particularity in the classic philosophical triad of universal–particular–singular. Thus as long as one acknowledges how the relation between the universal and the particular is the philosophical version of the classical hermeneutical circle of whole and part, this permits yet another way to conceive the undermining of this circle which acts as the condition of understanding in hermeneutical phenomenology. For the logic of suture dictates that the whole signifying field must paradoxically disclose a singular element amongst its particulars which simultaneously embodies the very circle itself, thus suspending the hermeneutical framework of meaning.

A leading representative of the great reception Lacan has received in South America, Harari focuses on the phenomenological experience of anxiety which arises from drawing too close to the paradoxical *object a* in his *Lacan's Seminar on "Anxiety:" An Introduction* (1987).[547] By utilizing Lacan's readings of Kris' article (discussed in Section 5.1 above),[548] of Plato and of other works, Harari expounds on Lacan's tenth seminar, which was dedicated to the phenomenon of anxiety. For instance, Harari explains that the analyst should not isolate the manifest demands of the patient, for this simply encourages imaginary healing. This is still the mistaken aim of psychotherapy today. In contrast, 'psychoanalysis seeks to arrive at the central question of lack and not to apply makeup to it or cover it up with various meanings. This kind of demand is directed toward plugging lack; what the analysand [patient] is asking for neurotically is an imaginary cover for constitutive lack.'[549] Providing meaning is thus seen as that which simply plugs lack and stifles desire, since lack and desire are coextensive. Can one not recognize in this the elemental disposition of hermeneutics whose very abhorrence of any lack encountered in the text has driven it to

devise better and better strategies over the centuries to signify that lack? Recalling the discussion of Ingarden and Iser in Section 2.3 above, epistemological phenomenology fares no better on this score since it quite explicitly speaks of structural 'holes,' 'gaps' and 'blanks' to be addressed and thus also moves too quickly to cover over the desire of the text. Yet the Lacanian approach has its own perils. As Harari recognizes, at the very moment desire is about to be smothered anxiety arises in the subject. Anxiety thus has an indicative function. Its experience registers a phenomenological encounter with *objet a* which, as seen above, is the very embodiment of the 'lack of the lack,' the situation in which the lack defining the subject *itself* lacks. So in contrast to the deceptions of imaginary meaning and of symbolic signifying chains, the claim that '*anxiety cannot deceive*' places this phenomenon squarely with the register of the real.[550] This raises the possibility that when anxiety is experienced with a text, the reader has encountered a point of nonsense which suspends the ability of the text to supply meaning and effectively ends the interpretive gesture. The broader lesson is that one runs the risk of overlooking this place of truth by ignoring one's own subjective engagement with the text. It should be repeated how this truth is a *place* and not a long sought after, finally re-found object. In terms which bring to mind hermeneutical phenomenology and the forgetting of being, Harari writes of the psychoanalytical school of the Kleinians and of their 'belief that, in the first place, there is an object and second, the object departs, which is how Kleinianism nourishes itself. For Kleinians, first there is co-presence of subject and object with which a relation is maintained, and then the problem arises, when the object is lost.' But in contrast, 'Lacan maintains the inverse of this: the outline of the object can only be delineated and obtain quiddity at the moment of the loss,' or in other words, '*the object is constituted specifically at the moment at which it is lost; that is, when it is cut off as fallen, separated*.'[551] The anxious encounter with *this* object – the *object a* – marks the moment when the direct pursuit of meaning by the hermeneutical phenomenologist, or the more measured efforts to delimit meaning by the (post)structuralist, reaches its limit.

Representative of Lacanian psychoanalysis in the German-speaking world, which strongly emphasizes the real and Lacan's philosophical roots in Kant, Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger, David-Ménard in her paper "The Act of Interpretation: Its Conditions and its Consequences" (1988)[552] further considers questions surrounding clinical interpretation. Indeed from its opening lines David-Ménard takes her distance from the dispositions of both (post)structuralism and hermeneutical phenomenology by stressing how 'interpretation is an act because it is never merely a matter of listening to the signifiers of desire or to the meaning of the discourse, but rather a more or less profound transformation of the relationship between the conscious and the unconscious.'[553] As a listening, interpretation is thus never passive but active. This is certainly the case for Heideggerian phenomenology as well. But Lacanian interpretation goes further since it is to be conceived as actively intervening in the world of the patient in order to effect radical change.

This amounts to the opening move of the paper, which goes on to consider the conditions the analyst must meet as well as the consequences she must tolerate if she aims for a real interpretation *qua* act. The very title of this paper thus functions as a sort of map to its overall structure which can even further be condensed by making use of the matheme for the analyst's discourse, $A_d: \frac{a}{S2} \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S1}$. The top terms have already been identified: the *a* is the analyst in her successful act of interpretation which profoundly transforms the \$, the analysand. Now, through presenting three or four partial case histories David-Ménard demonstrates how 'interpretation remains abstract, ineffective, as long as what the analyst says or emphasizes in the analysand's assertions, that is, something insisting on expression, is not immediately linked to the relation between the signifier of desire and precise transferential elements.'[554] The prerequisite for successful interpretation is that it must make reference to the transference, which can be thought of as the space within which the signifying structure of the analysand's history constitutes itself. This space is marked by a unique (phallic) signifier which 'sticks out' from all these other signifiers (*i.e.*, this signifier represents the subject for all other signifiers) and in terms of discourse theory this is S_1 which in the A_d occupies the place of product/loss. A successful interpretation references this S_1, producing the world of the analysand *as a waste* and thus thoroughly suspending its meaning-effects. As might be expected such an act carries a strong element of contingency, for the analyst never knows exactly how the analysand will react to the interpretation. This implies that the analyst must accept 'the fact that an interpretation which takes effect as act always means for the analyst a relative loss of control over the transferential effect of his or her words.'[555] David-Ménard thus acknowledges a truth of analytic discourse whereby the analyst is barred from making full use of psychoanalytic knowledge, visually confirmed by the fact that *a* is barred from S_2 which occupies the place of truth in $A_d: \frac{a}{S2} \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S1}$.[556] Adapting clinical for textual interpretation, this might serve to remind the reader to allow for a transference to take place so that her interpretation can transform the relation of the conscious and unconscious elements of the text. Whether this takes the form of a transference with the author or in some other way is relatively unimportant, so long as there is identification with an element which marks the very space within which the interpretative discourse operates. Such an approach rules out the customary liberal-academic attitude of striking a cynical distance towards the text, as this overlooks the necessity of 'buying into' the text before it can be subverted and moreover, absolves the interpreter of personally taking responsibility for the consequential loss of control over the effects of her interpretation. The implicit lesson of David-Ménard's paper is a reminder of how the clinical interpreter can never relieve herself of taking responsibility for the unintended consequences of her interpretation and the meaning-effects (or lack thereof) it bestows upon her analysand. Likewise with textual interpretation, one cannot scapegoat the text for one's reading of it.[557]

The psychoanalyst Verhaeghe writes in summary fashion at the end of his book *Does the Woman Exist? From Freud's Hysteric to Lacan's Feminine* (1996) that 'The Woman, the becoming of a woman, is a meaningful process which is based on metaphor. Hysteria, on the contrary, is a fixation which refuses meaning, based on metonymy.'[558] Setting aside his notion of Woman, his remaining claim regarding hysteria provides an opportunity to introduce a third discourse, the Hysteric's discourse (H_d). This is seen in Figure 5.9.

$$H_d: \quad \frac{\$ \;\to\; S1}{a \quad\;\; S2} \qquad\qquad U_d: \quad \frac{S2 \;\to\; a}{S1 \quad\;\; \$}$$

Figure 5.9: The Hysteric's and the University Discourse

Verhaeghe's claim is easily confirmed by recognizing how $\$$, the subject *qua* hysteric, stands in metonymic relation to the meaning-effects of S_2, the chain of signifiers: $\frac{\$}{} \to \frac{}{S2}$. But he further implies that this is an imaginary solution and thus one to be avoided. We might surmise that a simple refusal of meaning, however consistently undertaken, is still too meaningful a project for the subject; accordingly, psychoanalysis should aim to suspend such a subjective stance. In the preface and introduction to this book it is noted that by following the path of hysterical desire Freud discovered psychoanalysis. But not to be overlooked is how such a path begins by duplicity of which Freud was certainly the first victim. To understand this, consider how knowledge (S_2) is produced in the hysteric's discourse. Historically, it was the demand of the hysteric which put Freud to *work*, and his texts bear witness to the construction of numerous theories which, at least initially, he was all too willing to *explain* to his patients. Armed with this academic knowledge, his initial move was thus to assume the place of agency in a final discourse to be introduced, the University discourse (U_d) which, as can be seen in Figure 5.9, does nothing but further maintain the patient in his hysterical mode (*i.e.*, what is produced in the U_d is $\$$). But addressing the demands of the patient in this fashion satisfies only his request for meaning. It never fully patches over the underlying desire and ultimately results in antagonizing the lack constitutive of the patient. At best it can offer the patient a temporary relief. This is why Verhaeghe says the analyst must listen to the underlying causality, the *a* in the place of truth in the H_d, which he even elevates to a duty. As he writes, 'the discourse of the analyst...[is] supported by an ethical imperative: to open the unconscious, which is always closing, at the point of cause and effect: $a \to \$$. Interpretation is not limited to an ever shifting desire; full attention must be paid to that around which desire circles in the fundamental fantasy: object *a*.'[559] It should be clear that this $a \to \$$ is the top half of the A_d: $\frac{a}{S2} \to \frac{\$}{S1}$ and thus nicely supplements the discussion above of David-Ménard. Verhaeghe feels that Freud accomplishes this shift in focus (from U_d to

A$_d$) starting after 1914, which roughly corresponds to Lacan's own shift into his third period of the real beginning in the 1960s. In either case, the result is the same: once positioned as the object-cause of the patient's desire, the analyst can potentially stop the incessant slide of meaning which covers over that constitutive lack in subjectivity. The task is thus the 'impossible' one of positioning oneself at that real point which was previously seen by Lacan only in its 'traumatic' aspect and one of the strengths of Verhaeghe's great focus on discourse theory – indeed he even organizes his book into parts according to the various discourses – is that he highlights pertinent facets of this theory. He thus reminds us that in terms of discourse theory, the real *qua* impossible is how Lacan characterizes the relation between the agent and the other in any of the four discourses. Moreover, this is effectively equivalent to his famous claim of '*Il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel*' [There is no such thing as a sexual relation].[560] These claims are explored in more detail in Part II below, but for now a further point should be made as to how Lacan's discourse theory radically undermines Heideggerian-styled dialogue with its three elements (*viz.*, a subject facing-off with another subject or object-text in the medium of language) through the addition of a nonsensical fourth element, the *objet a*.[561] Through this addition of *objet a*, hermeneutical phenomenology effectively transforms into a non-hermeneutical phenomenology.

As the translator of the first complete English edition of *Écrits* as well as one of the seminars, Fink is well positioned to cast judgment on the public reception of Lacan's textual legacy. But while conceding that Lacan often deserves his notorious reputation for being an obscure writer, it is also true 'that he comes right out and says what he means in many cases.'[562] This is the wager of Fink's book *Lacan to the Letter: Reading Écrits Closely* (2004) which, true to its title, endeavors to read Lacan literally, *à la lettre*, in order to demonstrate that his writings are not as absurd as so often claimed. To this end Fink undertakes an intensive exegesis of a few texts by Lacan,[563] inclusive of chapters devoted to "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious," the phallus and the critique of Kris' ego psychology. As Fink's own writing is didactic, what results is highly instructional commentary.[564] But this may initially strike one as suspicious, for the question arises as to whether Fink's concerted effort to clearly explain Lacan does not move too quickly to fill in with meaning certain elements which would better be served as preserved in their nonsensical dimension.[565] Yet then again he does occasionally offer his own interpretation which borders on the nonsensical, as when he slowly develops the thesis that 'on my reading...the phallus is the very "relationship" between the signifier and the signified' to conclude that 'Lacan equates the phallus with the bar between the signifier and signified ($\frac{S}{s}$).'[566] Lacan nowhere literally says this, but Fink's reading quite effectively frustrates assigning an easy meaning to the phallus. Another instance of preserving the nonsensical domain comes about rather inadvertently. At the end of his book Fink struggles to make sense of certain aspects of Lacan's notion of sexual difference to conclude in a footnote how '[w]e need

not assume there is some sort of complete consistency to Lacan's work in this regard...[It] seems to remain something of a work in progress.'[567] This effectively amounts to confessing a lack of understanding of sexuation and thus 'negatively' preserves the nonsensical domain sexuation delimits. These reservations aside, Fink's intense focus on the 'literality' of Lacan's texts reminds us to look there for manifestations of the real, for this impossible dimension is unveiled not through a deep hermeneutic but is rather found much closer to the surface than one might first suspect.

Fink's popularizing of Lacanian psychoanalysis in the English-speaking world is only overshadowed by Žižek who, from his very first book in English entitled *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (1989), has done the most to elaborate the distance taken by late-Lacan from both hermeneutical phenomenology and (post)structuralism.[568] Indeed the first half of its fifth chapter wraps up one of the threads running throughout this first book, which strongly argues against viewing Lacan as a (post)structuralist. Although Žižek will later write that this book was a failure in some important respects,[569] embedded therein are undeniable successes which have earned it a favored status among his readers – no small feat given his many publications. Utilizing historical material and popular culture to explain many key psychoanalytic concepts, Žižek also leads his reader through some of Lacan's graphical analysis[570] in a presentation which proves as equally instructional to the neophyte as Fink's own work, but with the addition of irreverent humor. However, a brief passage[571] in which Žižek applies Hegel's logic of reflection to 'the eternal hermeneutical question of how to read a text' stands out for its originality. As per this logic, the proper reading of, say, *Antigone* occurs in three stages, the most naïve of which is 'positing reflection' which claims an immediate grasp of its true meaning. 'External reflection' solves the obvious dilemma of mutually exclusive readings by transposing the true meaning of *Antigone* into the inaccessible beyond. Whether this takes the form of the unapproachable question of why Sophocles wrote the play or more abstractly by viewing it as a transcendent Thing-in-self beyond considerations of authorial intention, the result is the same: the finite interpreter can at best only partially grasp its true meaning. With this external reflexive stance the interpreter must not only weigh the differing readings which exist at the present time, but must also contend with significant historical readings like those given by Hegel, Heidegger and Lacan, all of which can only approximate the essence of *Antigone*. However, 'determinate reflection' is said to resolve this impasse. Passing to this final stage requires an awareness of

> 'how *this very externality of the external reflexive determinations of the "essence"* (the series of distorted, partial reflections of the true meaning of the text) *is already internal to this "essence" itself*, how the internal 'essence' is already in itself "decentered"...[The Thing-in-itself] is constituted *afterwards*, though a certain structural *delay*. We achieve the "determinate reflection" when we become aware of the fact that this delay is immanent, internal to the "Thing-in-itself:" *the Thing-in-itself is found in its Truth through the loss of its immediacy*. In other words, what appears, to 'external reflection,' as an *impediment* is in fact a *positive condition* of our access to Truth: the Truth of a thing emerges because the thing is not accessible to us in its immediate self-identity.'

To gain some understanding of Žižek's speculative Hegelian formulation, one might recall here Lacan's insight into how meaning insists, but our search is in vain for that one element in which meaning consists. However, this does not imply we should heroically accept the failure to grasp final meanings. Doing so would be to take on an external reflexive stance which places such finality into a beyond (perhaps, in a hermeneutical phenomenological gesture, with a forgotten being). Instead, determinate reflection would have it that the truth of this endeavor is found precisely through the experience of the loss of meaning's immediacy. It is here that the subject recognizes that nonsensical surplus-*jouissance* which lends it support in its very search for meaning.

Žižek's second effort, a series of lectures compiled as *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (1991), is self-described as 'a more substantial achievement: it is a book of theoretical *work*' which elaborates its basic insight on how 'Hegelian dialectics and the Lacanian "logic of the signifier" are two versions of the same matrix.'[572] Again such a statement regarding the affinity between Hegel and Lacan can be taken as expanding upon the thesis that Lacan should not be considered a (post)structuralist, since Žižek feels that Hegel's work at its most consequential also touches the real. This is seen above with determinate reflection and its logic is once again applied with respect to textual analysis. What is now stressed is the (impossible) experience of

> 'how, through our interpretations, the Text itself is in a way "in search of itself," reconstructs itself, acquires new dimensions. The "meaning of a Text" is not some hidden kernel, given in advance and waiting to be unearthed; it constitutes itself through the series of its historical "effectualities." To use ''deconstructivist" jargon: by means of our reading the Text, the Text itself reads and (re)writes itself.'[573]

Again, the very movement of reflecting on a text is what produces the retroactive illusion that there is an immediacy of meaning given in advance but forever lost. What is to be experienced is how loss precedes what is being lost, how presence is derivative of absence or in classical structuralist terms, how difference is prior to those signifiers between which it is a difference. Žižek expands on this by way of demonstrating the necessity of a notion like Lévi-Strauss' *mana* (described as a signifier which reflexively signifies meaning as such) to any differential signifying system. Now, if it is true that in every human language there is nothing that cannot be said despite being composed of a finite set of signifiers, then it is clear how this set must necessarily contain a signifier which signifies all future meanings to come. The crucial reflexive turn arrives when this marking of the empirical limitation of a system of signifiers (a limitation because such a finite set of signifiers falls short of the potential wealth of the universe to be signified) is also conceived as the transcendental condition of the system's capacity to provide meaning. That is, in order for a signifier to be nothing but a bundle of differences from other signifiers (as one learns from Saussure onward), a pure signifier must exist which stands for difference as such; analogously, 'in order for any given signifier to mean something, there has to be another signifier which reflexively signifies

simply the fact of meaning as such. So the ultimate difference is not between (the opposed meaning of) two signifiers, but between the signifier which means something (determinate) and the "empty" signifier which means meaning as such.'[574] In this way Žižek introduces the phallus, as this empty signifier is precisely the signifier of symbolic castration. Additional Lacanian concepts are introduced in equally novel ways, like with an analysis of Ludwig Wittgenstein, which suddenly dovetails into a discussion of the 'big Other' and the distance psychoanalysis takes from hermeneutics. For we are told how this big Other is effectively equated with the 'hermeneutical horizon of meaning,' since both are seen as 'always-already present as the inherent background of our operations – and, as such, constitutes the very place *from which* we speak and which therefore cannot be called into question in a consistent way;' however, 'the field of psychoanalysis is not confined to this dimension of the big Other – witness the crucial role the interpretation of *slips of the tongue* plays in it: they cannot be accounted for by the hermeneutical horizon.' So while Lacan in his first hermeneutical period may have confined the psychoanalytic field to the big Other, 'Lacan's late thesis [is] that "the big Other doesn't exist"...The consistency of our language, of our field of meaning, on which we rely in our everyday life, is always a precarious, contingent *bricolage* that can, at any given moment, explode into a lawless series of singularities.'[575] Thus Žižek from his earliest texts takes the perspective of psychoanalysis offered from Lacan's third period, from which he assesses the successes and failures of other theories while also using those theories to instantiate that perspective. Below two additional texts by Žižek are briefly discussed, one which challenges hermeneutical phenomenology by way of a critique of Habermas and one which poses a challenge to Derrida's post-structuralism.

The essay whose title asks "Is There a Cause of the Subject?" (1994)[576] is itself contextualized by a series of questions in its opening paragraph which effectively boil down to a choice: should one take psychoanalysis as a structuralism (since Freud recognized how we are the playthings of unconscious determinism) or a hermeneutics (since Freud's interpretations equally fall within the domain of meaning). But since '[w]e can no more conceive the notion of a causal determinism of the psyche as the paradigmatic case of objectivist "reification," of a positivist misrecognition of the proper subjective dialectic of meaning, than we can reduce the domain of meaning to an illusory self-experience regulated by hidden causal mechanisms,' the very opposition should be put into question.[577] Žižek finds that the Frankfurt School has done just that and promptly turns to a lengthy discussion of Adorno's examination of Freudian psychoanalysis as a possible undermining of this opposition. But the deficiencies of Adorno's own theory ultimately cause him to overlook the radical dimension of Freud, which Lacan most fully articulated.[578] Habermas, however, fares better, as he views psychoanalysis as a theory of self-reflection. In contrast to Adorno, who places truth on the side of psychoanalytic theory, Habermas instead places the

crucial accent on its practice (*i.e.*, on the phenomenological experience of its subject). As noted in Section 1.3 above, Habermas turns to Dilthey and Žižek reminds us that this is so because Freud's theory is deemed by Habermas to lag behind its practice. Habermas thus 'accomplishes his own "return to Freud" by reinterpreting Freud's entire theoretical framework from the perspective of language.'[579] Recall how Habermas critiques Dilthey's model as only being applicable under the conditions of a non-repressive society. But since our society is repressed, there are distortions which manifest themselves in our communication with others and with ourselves. According to Žižek, psychoanalysis functions for Habermas as unearthing the true and meaningful link between the subject and his symptom (where a symptom is viewed here as a fragment of the public text which has been excluded from public communication). The reestablishment of this link amounts to full self-recognition in what were formerly censured chapters of self-expression. This allows the subject to narrate a new personal history. Hence self-reflection for Habermas amounts to a prioritizing of epistemology over ontology, for interpretation not only provides adequate knowledge of the unconscious causal chain which leads to the symptom but this knowledge simultaneously cancels its efficacy. With full self-knowledge the symptom dissolves and the subject is reconciled with himself. So while Habermas does not conceive psychoanalysis strictly as a hermeneutic or as a structuralist account of the unconscious causal chain determining our motivations, neither does he properly overcome their opposition. For he seems to opt for the best of both worlds without concern for their real common ground. Thus Žižek is quite right to critique Habermas for reducing the ontological weight of the historical real to a contingent force troubling the supposedly 'neutral' transcendental grid of language from the outside. For in truth this real is the beyond of these two options, constituting that 'traumatic kernel' resisting symbolization and inscription into the language of intersubjective communication. As seen above, Habermas' assertion that distortions have meaning *as such* cause him to ultimately resort to a 'depth hermeneutics' to unlock their mystery, to which Žižek counters by writing that 'what remains unthinkable for him is that *meaning as such results from a certain distortion*, that is, that the emergence of meaning is based on a disavowal of some "primordially repressed" traumatic kernel. This traumatic kernel, this remainder which resists subjectivization-symbolization, is *stricto sensu* the *cause* of the subject.'[580] The answer to the essay's titular question is a resounding 'yes,' and here we clearly see how this same *objet a* which Lacan links to the subject also functions as the object-cause of meaning.

Having previously been asked to clarify the complex relation between Lacanian psychoanalysis and Derridean deconstruction, Žižek responds with his essay "The Eclipse of Meaning: on Lacan and Deconstruction" (1995),[581] in which he endeavors to precisely articulate their difference via Derrida's own oppositional couples. For instance, we are told how Derrida 'likes to indulge heavily' on deconstructing

the 'center' by pointing out how the 'supplement' is an excessive element sticking out of the series it belongs to while simultaneously completing it, so that it cannot be said to be wholly inside or outside the system in question.[582] Such an element should look familiar given the foregoing discussion in this section, but this in no way makes Derrida a Lacanian. As Žižek points out, the two aspects of this structural ambiguity are held apart by Derrida while Lacan unites them into the single notion of the (phallic) S_1. But we do well to note how this equating of S_1 with the supplement does not domesticate its tension with the center so much as expose the supplement as that which acts as both the condition of possibility and the condition of impossibility of the center. The tension which S_1 marks ultimately testifies to that object which cannot be swallowed, stuck as it is in the gullet of this signifier. This nonsensical object is directly taken up in Žižek's subversion of Derrida's couple voice/writing, which is anything but a simple reversal of the thesis of the latter.[583] As seen in Section 3.2 above, Derrida judges that Western metaphysics is logocentrist, founded on the illusion of the immediacy of the voice. But he argues that a transparent self-presence always fails to be delivered because writing always already taints voice by introducing a gap into it. In contrast to Derrida, once we know that voice for Lacan is a 'partial object' and thus an embodiment of *objet a* which, as was seen, is the nonsensical remainder of the signifying operation which buttons-down meaning in the M_d: $\frac{S1}{\$} \rightarrow \frac{S2}{a}$, we can begin to understand Žižek's Lacanian claim that voice is that foreign body which most radically undermines the subject's self-presence. There is thus no need to posit writing as disrupting voice from without, for the uttering of the word by the voice *itself* provides its own internal disruption. This makes Derrida's tension between voice and writing secondary to the inner friction of the voice. As Žižek writes,

> '*voice is that which, in the signifier, resists meaning*: it stands for the opaque inertia which cannot be recuperated by meaning. It is only the dimension of writing which accounts for the stability of meaning...As such, voice is neither dead nor alive: its status is, rather, that of a "living dead," of a spectral apparition which somehow survives its own death, i.e., the eclipse of meaning. In other words, it is true that the life of a voice can be opposed to the dead letter of a writing, but this life is the uncanny life of an "undead" monster, not a "healthy" living self-presence of Meaning.'[584]

On the printed page one finds 'objective' chains of written signs transparently designating their signified. Yet this meaning will remain merely the lifeless denotative meaning examined by the linguist until that moment the chain 'subjectivizes' itself through the addition of the nonsensical vocal object which thereby transforms it into expressive sense.[585] At this point 'meaning slides into *jouis-sense* [enjoyment-in-meaning],' which is a self-consuming enjoyment no longer anchored in meaning. Žižek helpfully provides a concise equation to summarize this argument: '*Sense = meaning + nonsense*.'[586] In a certain way meaning never stands a chance: not yet fully constituted prior to *objet a*, it is thoroughly suspended after its addition.

Zupančič has also written on the relation of the Lacanian subject and meaning. At one point in the last chapter of her book *The Odd One In: On Comedy* (2008)[587] the reader is taken back to the Lacanian idea of the forced choice of meaning. What this text can add to the explication of the *vel* of alienation undertaken above is an account of its emergence, which at the same time serves as an account of the very surfacing of the subject itself. For as Zupančič reminds us, alienation as constitutive of subjectivity does not imply it is the cause of the subject; rather, alienation is itself the effect of primary repression. She neatly explains the process of this emergence as taking place in three stages. First is the level of the prememorial signifier where there is as yet no subject and no signifying dyad. But contrary to what might seem the case, the dyad does not emerge by adding another signifier to the first; rather, it emerges at the place cleared by the repression of this first signifier, at which point the newly emerged dyad gives form to alienation constitutive of subjectivity. We might imagine this movement to the second stage as the expulsion or transformation of the antagonism inherent to the signifier into an external difference. Now, such differences are of course the defining feature of the signifying chain said to occupy the third level. But while this chain is already implied in one of the two terms of the dyad, it is

> 'activated only with the forced choice of this term. This is why, when the subject comes to exist, she exists only in the Other, through the signifying chain, which is to say as metonymic meaning(s) of the originally missing signifier. This is the level of interpretation (in analysis, as well as in general): since the subject emerges [as] pure difference in relation to her own being, she then strives to appropriate the latter by way of meaning constituted in the Other, and of its endless metonymy. Interpretation leads us to and through different forms/meanings developed around the subject's singular lack of being.'[588]

This explanation of the final stage should be readily comprehensible given the foregoing discussion in this section. But an additional contribution of Zupančič lies with her relating common experiences to illustrate this logic. For instance, she asks us to consider what makes a small child insist that the bedtime story she is being told *must* be told *exactly* as it was the night before. What makes her become a little officer of the law quick to catch the adult taking shortcuts, skipping pages and not reciting the story *to the letter*? Zupančič explains that '[t]extual, mechanical, stereotyped repetition is the mode in which the young subject, behind the scenes of the seemingly monotonous story, repeats the exciting story of a fundamental split or incongruity in her own being and meaning.'[589] Each textual repetition repeats the emergence of the signifying dyad of alienation whereby the subject is forced to meaningfully make sense of the loss of her being. Yet nevertheless a separation does briefly occur here, for *objet a* is produced as a loss or in more poetic terms, 'as the subject's own shooting star in the Real, the object via which, for a moment, the subject sees herself on the outside.'[590] In this case textual repetition is not dull but actually fulfills the child's expectation of a surprise. This notion of surprise is also the underlying rationale of comedy, the main topic of this book. For comedy also produces the nonsensical object which Zupančič

cautions us not to take as a mere absence of sense. Rather, the encountering of nonsense occurs when a sense surprises us, as in the case of the comedic effect which she describes 'as a moment of disorientation, a momentary suspension in which the subject vacillates between his being and his meaning.'[591] And just like the previous example, here too there is a deeper level at stake. For comic findings repetitively produce the schism of the subject and *objet a* at the very limit of their incongruence. In the concluding line of this book Zupančič asks us to recognize how this 'is not a reduction of ourselves (and all that we are) to a nonbeing, not the destruction of our being, but its *emergence* – its emergence outside meaning, yet inextricably from it.'[592] Žižek aside, the fact that Lacanians are not renowned for their sense of humor is no excuse for overlooking the structural affinities between psychoanalysis and the comedic stance. The lesson here is that comedy affords ample opportunity for the subject to fully assume the suspension of meaning.

Part II

Sexuated Topology and Textual Analysis

> In effect, a discourse like analytic discourse aims at meaning. By way of meaning, it is clear
> that I can only deliver to you, to each of you, what you are already on the verge of absorbing.
> That has a limit, a limit provided by the meaning in which you live. I wouldn't be exaggerating
> if I said that that doesn't go very far. What analytic discourse brings out is precisely the idea
> that that meaning is based on semblance. If analytic discourse indicates that that meaning is
> sexual, that can only be by explaining its limit...Meaning indicates the direction toward which
> it fails.[593]

These words were spoken by Lacan moments after he placed his famous formulae of sexuation on the blackboard during a session of his well-known twentieth seminar. The excerpt is telling. Its last sentence thoroughly frustrates reading the first as somehow advocating analytic discourse be taken as meaningful discourse. Indeed, given that meaning (*sens*) indicates the direction (*sens*) toward which it fails, a less charitable reading of the 'aim' of analytic discourse suggests itself. It is perhaps rather like the way in which a sharpshooter lines up his target into the crosshairs of his scope. Yet if this new reading nevertheless goes too far (and it does), this is not so much for having elevated meaning into the position of foe as it is for treating meaning as an object to which the subject of the analyst's discourse might externally oppose himself. This is not to say that reverting to the spontaneous understanding of the first sentence fares any better. True, treating meaning as a substance which mediates the subject-object divide seems to be encouraged by Lacan himself who tells us his teachings only succeed 'by way of meaning.' Yet the further statement that there are nevertheless limits implies that this substance is not without a structure. This at once allows for meaning to be demoted from the realm of being to the status of mere semblance. But meaning takes an even greater hit at the hands of Lacan. From the perspective of analytic discourse which embodies such structural limits, meaning is neither to be conceived strictly as an object nor as an imaginary substance which mediates the subject's engagement with the object. Rather, what analytic discourse ultimately reveals is nothing short of a real understanding: *meaning is sexual*. Coming to terms with this rather surprising claim is the major undertaking of the next two chapters which compose this Part II of the present study.

In general terms, what is being proposed is that the formulae of sexuation be directly used to demonstrate how meaning is sexual. More specifically, the contention here is that these formulae are not only able to revealingly articulate the hermeneutical circle but can further be used to demonstrate the ultimate suspension of meaning and thus free the subject from its alienating grip. This thesis is put forward in the firm belief that these formulae not only inscribe the real of the sexual relation but equally the real of any relation struck by the speaking subject. If Lacan's words above are to be believed, the relation the subject strikes with meaning is hardly an exception, and by unraveling its logic with the help of these formulae it will be shown that important considerations for interpretive theory arise. These considerations may be especially appreciated in light of issues raised in Part I and in the following two chapters frequent pauses are accordingly made to address them and to suggest further applications of the formulae to other textual matters.

This approach already raises a question worth addressing from the onset, one which concerns its contextualization. Expressed in terms of Part I, the answer is had by reflecting on how Lacan's very use of the matheme effectively bears witness to his agreement with the original Husserlian break from psychologism, which establishes an independent and objective realm of logic. Part II will demonstrate that his articulation of sexual difference in strict logical terms provides an even stronger reason for placing his late project in the scientific tradition; indeed, such an articulation aligns his thought with those of Frege and Bertrand Russell, two of the founding fathers of analytic philosophy. Thus the choice here to make direct use of the formulae of sexuation to demonstrate the proposed thesis at once positions the present study within the scientific tradition as well. Yet more to the point, this logical object of study seems to inspire its own movement towards it so that what results is a textual approach, which itself proceeds in a logical and structured manner. This fact alone seems to cast a vote in favor of those scholars seeking to reestablish a general methodological approach against those who would instead eschew all use of method. While there is certainly something to be said for the efforts of Betti, Hirsch, Apel and Habermas to turn back the clock after the turn away from method began in earnest with Gadamer over half a century ago, the development here of a methodology grounded in the formulae of sexuation clearly departs from their own revival of hermeneutical tools to appropriate meaning. Instead, the approach in play here fully acknowledges Gadamer's insight into how any conscious use of method loses the meaning of the text, yet since the present aim is to ultimately suspend meaning this insight is enthusiastically embraced as a positive prospect. Contra-Gadamer, this is a case where the subject can have his cake and eat it too, for truth is seen to proceed (only) by way of method. Needless to say this approach favors the Husserlian brand of phenomenology, since, in contrast to the Heideggerian, it harbors a systematic method of inquiry and one which places the accent more with sense than with meaning. However, this

should not imply that epistemology is to be simply championed over ontology, for Heidegger is held to be correct in arguing for the ontological *a priori* to any epistemological endeavor. Ricoeur's self-appointed task to reverse the historical trajectory of the past century so as to regain the epistemological question is therefore itself to be reversed, although the ontology that is thereby unearthed is hardly Heideggerian. For in seeking a suspension point to meaning, what the non-hermeneutical phenomenological approach finds instead is a being whose singular existence is entirely without essence and which in no way strikes an equivalency between sense and meaning but is, rather, a bit of nonsense.

Chapter 6 is in many ways a preparatory chapter which primarily seeks to demonstrate the relevance of the formulae of sexuation to textual theory. However, since these formulae are difficult to understand for a variety of reasons, a significant amount of space is devoted simply to their explication. The scope of this difficulty is initially managed by way of an account of Lacan's original derivation of the formulae from established schools of classical and modern logic. Section 6.1 accordingly begins with a discussion of the logical system of Aristotle, which functions as the historical basis for the formulae of sexuation. This provides an opportunity to inquire into whether the classical Aristotelian logical square could itself serve to articulate the hermeneutical circle. Section 6.2 offers an account of Lacan's revision of Aristotle with the conceptual tools of modern logic to arrive at his own logical square, a set of four logical propositions identical to the formulae of sexuation. Section 6.3 continues to suggest applications of the Lacanian logical square to rudimentary textual practices while intimating that doing so is a subversive practice.

Chapter 7 takes the groundwork already laid and adds additional structure to set the formulae into motion. This is necessary since the static analysis of the previous chapter is inadequate to capture the rotation of the hermeneutical circle of meaning. Yet too much motion works against the overall thesis since what is ultimately sought is its suspension point. Thus the challenge is to show how this very motion is embodied in a singular point which it itself discloses. Section 7.1 introduces this overall trajectory by way of the logic of negation and the Kantian table of nothings. Section 7.2 integrates the four discourses into the Lacanian logical square which effectively places the formulae into motion. This establishes both its relevance to the hermeneutical circle and the breakdown of the relation the subject strikes with meaning. Section 7.3 supplements the use of set theory in the previous chapter with the use of topology as per Lacan's *L'étourdit*. The overall contention here is that method is neither to be conceived as a tool to be consciously wielded nor something to be altogether abandoned. Rather, it is held that by actively following the topological cuts and sutures which are the specific manipulations of sexuated space, the subject not only gains an appreciation for the sexual nature of meaning but is additionally led to its suspension point.

CHAPTER 6

DERIVATION OF THE FORMULAE OF SEXUATION AND STASIS

> I posed the question of what one could call a matheme, positing already that it is the pivotal
> point of any teaching. In other words that the only teaching is mathematical, the rest is a
> joke.[594]

Lacan spoke these words near the end of the year he spent devising his formulae of sexuation, a set of four logical propositions written in his own unique logico-mathematical shorthand. They represent a high point in Lacan's thinking that the matheme conveys something essential and in the case of sexuation this something most obviously has to do with sexual difference. His controversial claims regarding this difference have repeatedly been examined in the decades since his death. But what is often overlooked is how these formulae readily lend themselves to other fields of thought precisely because they are written as logical propositions. Since they bear no preconceived notion regarding this difference – indeed they deal with the very notion of notion, with the notion *as such* – this difference has fruitfully been used in the past to characterize the fields of philosophy and politics by the likes of Copjec and Žižek. By directly identifying the elements of the hermeneutical circle with the formulae themselves, the present chapter endeavors to begin demonstrating how the field of meaning undergoes a fatal disruption as it too similarly harbors this difference. Even less considered in the literature has been the fact that Lacan did not write his formulae in isolation but developed them from Aristotle by way of an influential contemporary commentary. A notable exception is Le Gaufey. This chapter makes extensive use of his recent work and further argues for a reading of these formulae that prove fruitful for interpretive theory.

Section 6.1 is a schematic presentation of the logical system of Aristotle leading up to a discussion of the classical Aristotelian logical square. Under specific consideration is whether this logical square could legitimately be conceived as a hermeneutical circle. Section 6.2 examines Lacan's decision to read the Aristotelian propositions in a more natural (and less logical) way which completely subverts the classical square and eventually leads to his own logical square – an arrangement effectively equivalent to the formulae of sexuation. Section 6.3 continues to provide a reading of the propositions in both the classical and Lacanian logical squares together with their differing consequences for textually analysis. The thesis

throughout this chapter that the Lacanian logical square offers the potential to radically suspend meaning is more fully considered in the following chapter.

6.1 The Aristotelian Hermeneutical Circle?

Aristotle was the first thinker to formulate a logical system. The treatises which comprise this system were later compiled into what is known as the *Organon* (4th c. BC)[595] and broadly speaking, the thought contained therein casted a dominating influence over philosophy from its immediate reception on through the medieval period until the 19th century. It succeeded in tying together all aspects and fields of philosophy because logic for Aristotle and his followers was not viewed as a separate and self-sufficient academic field to be considered in isolation from other fields of inquiry. Indeed that it was seen as a preliminary requirement for the study of every branch of knowledge is reflected in the very term *organon* [Greek, for tool or instrument] itself which suggests that careful thinking should proceed along its rigorous methodological path. We focus here on the first two treatises which make up Aristotle's logical system, *viz.*, *Categories* and *De interpretatione*.

In his *Categories*, Aristotle describes the world as composed of separate yet unified whole things called substances to which various properties can be ascribed. Substances are of two kinds, primary and secondary. A primary substance is an independent object composed of matter and characterized by form. An example would be an individual man. A secondary substance is the larger group to which these primary substances belong, say, man *qua* species. Aristotle's logic endeavors to correctly ascribe specific properties to secondary substances, which then indirectly ascribes these same properties to primary substances. Along with the category of substance (or essence), two additional ways to describe what is in the world would be with respect to the categories of quantity and quality. It is with these three categories that Aristotelian logic evaluates arguments in the form of statements composed of words of which the most basic is the proposition. A proposition is a complete sentence that asserts something and is a complex involving two terms: a subject (a word naming a substance), a predicate (a word naming a property) and a copula [Latin, for connection or link]. The generalized logical form of a proposition is thus 'Subject is Predicate' or in traditional symbolic shorthand 'S is P' where S stands for the Subject and P for the Predicate. Following this schema, simple assertions can be analyzed accordingly. Consider the statement 'Gadamer is Heideggerian.' Gadamer is the subject (S), the property of being Heideggerian is the predicate (P) and the verb 'is' (the copula) links Gadamer and this property together in a single affirmation which claims a truth about the world. Of course asserting a truth about the world resounds more deeply if the subject in the proposition is a (secondary) substance to which an essential property is attributed, as in the case 'Triangles have interior angles which sum to 180°.' But Aristotle is flexible

enough to consider propositions involving primary substances (as in the above example regarding Gadamer) and even properties of substances in the subject position.

After having fixed the proper logical form of a proposition, Aristotle in *De Interpretatione* makes two distinctions which have allowed logicians to classify his propositions into four different kinds. One distinction is between particular and universal terms. The particular terms refers to individual things, like the name Gadamer, while the universal term refers to groups of things (*e.g.*, man) and so is said to be universally applicable to all members of a group. But as his own examples make clear, Aristotle does treat propositions with an individual subject as universal propositions. The other distinction made follows from Aristotle's suggestion that all propositions must either be an affirmation or a negation. With these two distinctions each different categorical proposition asserts a relationship between two categories along two lines. On the one hand a categorical proposition possesses a quantity insofar as it represents a universal or a particular predication which is denoted by the adjectives 'all' or 'some' (where 'some' is to be understood as 'at least one'), respectively. On the other hand a categorical proposition possesses a quality insofar as it affirms or denies the specified predication and this is determined by an affirmed or a negated verb. This allows one to reduce every categorical proposition to one of four logical forms:

(1) The Universal Affirmative (the so-called 'A' statement) takes the form of 'All S are P.'
(2) The Universal Negative (E) is 'All S are not P.'
(3) The Particular Affirmative (I) is 'Some S are P.'
(4) The Particular Negative (O) is 'Some S are not P.'

Aristotle discusses the way these four categorical propositions are related to one another. As he writes,

> 'I call an affirmation and a negation *contradictory* opposites when what one signifies universally the other signifies not universally, e.g. every man is white—not every man is white, no man is white—some man is white. But I call the universal affirmation and the universal negation contrary opposites, e.g. every man is just—no man is just. So these cannot be true together, but their opposites may both be true with respect to the same thing, e.g. not every man is white—some man is white.'[596]

The claims Aristotle makes here (that A and O are contradictories, that E and I are contradictories and that A and E are contraries) are captured in Figure 6.1. This figure reproduces the classical Aristotelian logical square but inverts its traditional presentation which places the universal and particular affirmatives on the left side with their negative counterparts to the right. The reasoning for this modification (a cosmetic change only which alters nothing substantial) is explained further below.
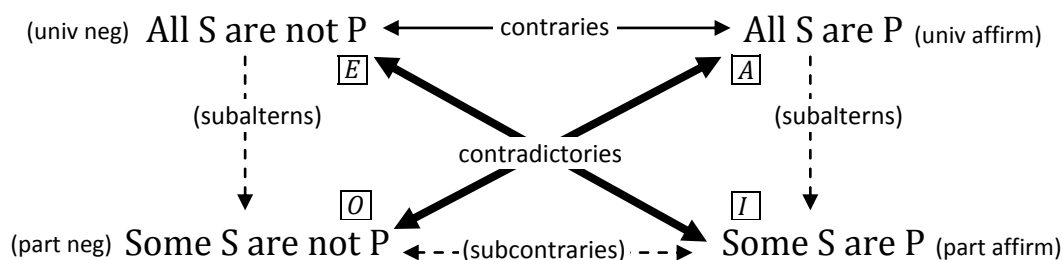
Figure 6.1: The Classical Aristotelian Logical Square (modified)

Aristotle's own examples are often confusing and differing translations, particularly with the choice of words like 'every' and 'no' to capture the two universal propositions, only compound the matter. In the present discussion the endeavor is thus made to use 'All' and 'Some' as per Figure 6.1, although with the license to omit the term 'All' when is it clearly implied in its opposition to 'Some.'

The two logical relationships Aristotle explicitly expresses as existing among the four logical forms can easily be illustrated by returning to the proposition 'Gadamer is Heideggerian.' As said above, although Gadamer is an individual man occupying the subject position, such a proposition is to be treated as a universal proposition. Reflecting on the standard practice in academia that the invocation of a scholar's name is often tacitly understood to refer to his body of work and not to his actual existence as a man should make this practice in Aristotelian logic equally acceptable. Thus 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' effectively says something like 'All of Gadamer's texts are Heideggerian' and does not refer to that man whose remarkably long life touched on three different centuries. It is also clear that this universal proposition is in the affirmative form as the verb affirms the predicate. Now, in considering Aristotle's first claim that such universal affirmative propositions stand in contradiction to propositions in the particular negative logical form, one finds that this is clearly the case. For if the (A) proposition 'All of Gadamer is Heideggerian' is true, then the (O) proposition 'Some of Gadamer is not Heideggerian' must be false. The relation of contradiction equally holds for the reverse case, for if it is true that 'Some of Gadamer is not Heideggerian, then 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' is obviously false. The same contradictory relationship holds as well between (E) propositions like 'Gadamer is not Heideggerian' and (I) propositions like 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian.' Generally speaking, two propositions stand in contradictory relationship if (and only if) they cannot both be true and both be false. Aristotle's second claim is that the universal affirmative and the universal negative propositions are related as contraries. Contrary propositions cannot both be true. For example, it cannot both be true that 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' and 'Gadamer is not Heideggerian,' for the truth of either of these contrary propositions excludes the truth of the other. However, contrary propositions are not contradictories because it is possible that both of them may be

false. This would arise when it is indeed the case that 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian' and 'Some of Gadamer is not Heideggerian.' Generally speaking, two propositions are contraries if (and only if) they cannot both be true but can both be false.

But while Aristotle only explicitly articulates the two logical relationships of contradictoriness and contrariety (indicated in Figure 6.1 by the solid arrows), logicians since the medieval period have traditionally extended the discussion of the possible logical relationships to be had between these four categorical propositions by two others. It is usually noted that these two additional logical relationships (indicated by dotted arrows), which thereby 'complete' the logical square, are wholly in keeping with Aristotle's original analysis. One of these relationships exists between the two particular propositions occupying the lower half of the logical square. As subcontrary propositions, they cannot both be false. To demonstrate this, suppose that (I) 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian' is false. Then its contradictory, (E) 'Gadamer is not Heideggerian,' is true. This makes (E)'s contrary, (A) 'Gadamer is Heideggerian,' false. So (A)'s contradictory, (O) 'Some of Gadamer is not Heideggerian,' is true. This refutes the possibility that the propositions 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian' and 'Some of Gadamer is not Heideggerian' are both false. Said in another way, since every proposition has a contradictory opposite and since a contradictory is true when its opposite is false, it follows that while the opposites of contraries can both be true, they cannot both be false. Generally speaking, two propositions are subcontraries if (and only if) they cannot both be false but can both be true.

The other logical relationship not explicitly mentioned by Aristotle but that traditional logicians find implicit in his treatise is subalternation. As seen in Figure 6.1, subalternation is a logical relation between a particular proposition (the subaltern) and a universal proposition (the superaltern) of the same quality such that the former is implied by the latter. To demonstrate this, suppose that (A) 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' is true. Then its contrary (E) 'Gadamer is not Heideggerian' must be false. But then (E)'s contradictory, (I) 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian,' must be true. Thus if (A) 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' is true, then (I) 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian' is also true. A parallel argument establishes subalternation from (E) 'Gadamer is not Heideggerian' to (O) 'Some of Gadamer is not Heideggerian.' Generally speaking, a proposition is a subaltern of another if (and only if) it must be true if its superaltern is true, and the superaltern must be false if the subaltern is false. Traditional logicians after Aristotle have also noted that drawing the logical conclusion of subalternation can proceed without argument as it is immediately inferred from universal propositions. This does seem to be the case, for if all elements of an existent group possess (or do not possess) a specific property, it must follow that any smaller subset of that group must possess (or not possess) that specific property. So if it is true that (A) 'All of Gadamer's texts are Heideggerian,' this immediately implies that (I) 'At least one of Gadamer's texts is Heideggerian'

must be true. Reformulating as a negation, the truth of (E) 'Gadamer is not Heideggerian' entails the truth of (O) 'Some of Gadamer's texts are not Heideggerian.' But it is important to recognize that subalternation is a logical relation which only proceeds from the universal to the particular proposition and does not work in the opposite direction (as indicated in Figure 6.1 where the subaltern arrow is distinct from the others by its uni-directionality). So if it is the case that 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian,' clearly it need not follow that 'All of Gadamer is Heideggerian.' However, note that if 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian' is false, it does follow that 'All of Gadamer is Heideggerian' is also false. These immediate inferences proceed in a likewise manner with the negations of these propositions.[597]

Traditional logicians have of course drawn other immediate inferences from these propositions as well as extending Aristotle's analyses in many other directions. But for present purposes it is enough to reflect on how the supplementation of subcontrariety and subalternation completes the fragment of the logical square Aristotle initially provided. Whereas Aristotle only explicitly commented on the logical relationships of contradictoriness and contrariety which exist among the four propositions, with the subsequent supplementation each of the four propositions can be seen as standing minimally opposed to each of the others. Taken as a whole, this gives the impression that the logical square is a rigorously defined network of relations. This network of oppositional relations between its four corners is a crucial characteristic of the 'square of opposition,' as the classical logical square is more commonly known. As has been already seen in the foregoing discussion of the logical relations themselves, the path one follows is in large part dependent on where one chooses to enter this logical network and with what purpose. So on the one hand the path once entered does indeed necessitate following a well-defined and restrictive trajectory, yet on the other the network does retain an element of contingency regarding the choice of an entry point. This fact alone may give one pause to consider how the corners of the logical square may not be as sharp as one might initially suspect so that even in such a tightly structured system there is room yet for an element of subjectivity. However, the analysis made thus far is incapable of demonstrating the inscription of the subject into such a logical structure. For the moment one must be content with contemplating a more modest possibility. Namely, the analogy to be had between the relation of the universal and particular propositional levels of Aristotle's classical logical square and the relation between the whole and the part of the classical hermeneutical circle. So articulated, it becomes evident how the discipline of the humanities generally manages its own internal rift between its traditional ground in the classical thought of the ancients and its strong hermeneutical roots in Romanticism. Today it seems to every self-assured declaration grounded in Aristotelian logic, the tendency is to quickly counter with 'Yes, but there is meaning there!' This recourse to meaning, caught up as it is in the supportive structure of language, is what begins to round out the sharp corners of any logical square into a welcoming circle.

To illustrate the legitimacy of thinking of the classical logical square as a hermeneutical circle, consider the options available to the academic who decides to make a study of Gadamer with no prior knowledge of his thought. One strategy would be to first read secondary texts which provide introductions to Gadamer's theory, or else to inquire with colleagues who have already engaged with his work.[598] In both these cases he may very well initially approach the set of primary texts having learned that 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' and initially encounter particular passages which do nothing but confirm this expectation. In hermeneutical terms, the meaning he extracts from these particular passages are seen through the lens of the whole which is here taken as a proposition universally applicable to all of Gadamer's work. By the logical relationship of subalternation this is really a foregone conclusion. For if it is true that 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' as the academic assumes, then it is certainly the case that 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian.' But in retrospect these particular passages which confirm the universal may have just been a fortuitous encounter, for in continuing his reading of Gadamer the academic may encounter a passage in which Gadamer comes across much like the empirically minded Hirsch who has very little in common with Heidegger. This, however, does not give the academic license to now say 'Gadamer is Hirschian' (by subalternation again). Rather, he may only make the particular claim that 'Some of Gadamer is not Heideggerian,' which, of course, contradicts the claim that 'Gadamer is Heideggerian.' Related as subcontraries, both these particular (affirmative and negative) passages can be true, but both cannot be false, which further leads to the falsity of the two universal propositions of 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' and 'Gadamer is not Heideggerian' (as per the logical relationship of contrariety). Either way the academic is obligated to formulate a new universal proposition which, on the basis of these particulars, is perhaps something like 'Gadamer is Heideggerian subject to proviso X.' In hermeneutical terms, the meaning of Gadamer's work as a whole is conditioned through the approach of some of its textual parts. With this new universal affirmative in mind the reading may continue untroubled or at least until the time that enough textual evidence has mounted to again trigger this process which ends in the reformulation of a new universal; this new universal in turn places passages to come and those already read into yet another light. It is obvious this process can continue *ad infinitum*, ever fine-tuning the universal through which nuanced meaning is continuously unearthed from its particular passages. It should also be clear that the complex web of logical relationships travelled, *viz*., from subalternation and subcontrariety through contradictoriness and contrariety, is nothing more than a rigorously articulated version of the interdependent relations which exist between the whole and the part in the hermeneutical circle, that circle which hermeneuts have expressed in various fashions from Ast and Schleiermacher onward.

The foregoing analysis demonstrates how the circular path in the classical logical square is initialized with the universal affirmative proposition. But instead of repeating the exercise to demonstrate how the circular path is equally set in motion with the three remaining logical forms, we do better to note how the classical logical square harbors a certain equivocation which potentially upsets its definitiveness. The problem concerns the status of the particular proposition and can be raised by inquiring into the source of its truth whenever such a claim is asserted. Illustrating this problem with the particular affirmative, note how this logical form is connected to all the others in one of three different logical relationships (as is the case with each of the four propositions). This is readily seen in Figure 6.1 where three arrows emanate to the proposition 'Some S are P'. Now, which of the three other propositions may be said to account for the truth of the particular affirmative? More generally, what are the implications of affirming the particular proposition? To use the ongoing example, say the academic eschews a preliminary investigation of Gadamer through secondary sources to instead immediately dive into his primary texts; moreover, suppose he there finds evidence to affirm the proposition 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian.' The truth of this particular proposition could, of course, contradict the *falsity* of the universal negative 'Gadamer is not Heideggerian,' but this conclusion is rather inconsequential. The two remaining possibilities are much more significant as they provide a source of this truth by way of their *own truth*. On the one hand, by subalternation the source of the truth of 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian' could be the universal affirmative 'Gadamer is Heideggerian,' for if *all* of Gadamer's texts are Heideggerian, then it is also true, *a fortiori*, about *some* of his texts. On the other hand, by subcontrariety the source of its truth could be the situation in which the particular negative proposition is also true. In this case the propositions 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian' and 'Some of Gadamer is not Heideggerian' are both true and *this simultaneously sets aside the truth of the universal affirmative*. Why? Because the truth of the particular negative stands in contradiction to the universal affirmative. Generally speaking, the two relations of subalternation and subcontrariety are thoroughly incompatible from the perspective of the particular in the sense that the propositions which they connect cannot be affirmed together. Clearly a choice must be made as to how particular propositions should be interpreted: if one chooses to proceed as per the first case, the meaning of the particular will be in agreement with the universal of the same quality. But if one makes the alternate choice, the meaning of the particular will exclude the truth of the universal of the same quality through the affirmation of the particular of the opposite quality.

The importance of this choice should not be underestimated, for it has crucial consequences in terms of textual exegesis. For instance, overly-eager scholarly work which rushes to cast universal judgment on a text or author on the basis of scant readings of particular passages is no doubt symptomatic of having settled with the former option. But the theoretical consequences of this choice are potentially far graver.

Recall in the discussion above how the logical relation of subalternation only proceeds in one direction, from the universal to its particular proposition. Yet if the affirmation of 'some' simultaneously affirms 'all,' the logical relation now proceeds in both directions. That is, it is no longer just the case that the truth of the universal implies its particular, for the truth of the particular implies the universal as well. The uni-directional arrow in Figure 6.1 now becomes a doubled arrow to indicate how the logical relation between the universal and particular levels of the same quality is no longer one of subalternation. Their once rigorously defined opposition has now been relaxed and one becomes hard pressed to distinguish the two levels. Most importantly, if the particular and the universal levels risk collapsing into one another, the analogy to be had between the classical logical square and the hermeneutical circle is no longer operative, just as would be the case if it was shown how there is effectively no difference between the whole and the part.

But did Aristotle choose this option? Ultimately, yes. Section 6.2 below further discusses these matters within the context of Lacan's decision to follow the alternative option, which excludes the universal. It also begins to explore some of the consequences of this decision, which is one way of characterizing the undertaking of Part II. But before turning to this discussion, it should be repeated how Aristotle only explicitly articulated contradictoriness and contrariety whereas it was later logicians who 'implicitly' found in his treatises additional logical relations like subcontrariety and subalternation to produce the classical logical square which often bears his name. This raises the possibility that Aristotle was himself unsure of the proper course to follow which may have in turn set these later logicians to work to construct a complete and unequivocal logical system to resolve the ambiguity they found harboring in Aristotle's original texts. But after the work of Lacan and those Aristotelian scholars he followed in the 1960s, it is now known that Aristotle's uncertainty was for good reason. For no amount of work can ever remove the equivocation which roots itself at the formal level of any articulated system of logic. Such a system could, however, theoretically inscribe *that very equivocation itself* into its set of logical formulae. This is precisely what Lacan endeavored to do with his formulae of sexuation.

6.2 From the Aristotelian to the Lacanian Logical Square

One of the undeniable strengths of Le Gaufey's book *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences* (2006)[599] is to provide an account of the debt Lacan owes to Jacques Brunschwig's 1969 article on Aristotle. The discussion begins at the exact mid-point of the second chapter of Le Gaufey's text, and there we learn how this article effectively initiated Lacan's complete revision of the classical logical square. The article in question concerns Brunschwig's analysis of problems encountered by Aristotle when he tries to specify the meaning of particular propositions used in deductive or syllogistic reasoning. The overall contention of Brunschwig is that Aristotle significantly shifts his approach over the course of the

Prior Analytics. At first relying on the equivocal quality of 'natural language,' this position is eventually found to compromise his logical system so that by the end of the text Aristotle's quest for definitiveness compels him to reject his initial position for one that is better able to control the troubling equivocations. The two positions Aristotle implicitly takes concur with the two options discussed above regarding the reading of the particular and the shift he undergoes is precisely a move from option two to option one. Brunschwig calls these two the 'maximal' and the 'minimal' readings of the particular, respectively. Restated in simple terms, the particular affirmative 'Some S are P' in its maximal sense concurs most closely to natural language, as in the case when someone says 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian.' Very few people, if any at all, would conclude from this statement that 'All of Gadamer is Heideggerian.' Yet a logician having chosen a minimal reading would do just that and accordingly would ask us to consider how this statement is only a particular instantiation of the universal affirmative. The contention of Brunschwig is that in the end Aristotle favors exactly this minimal reading of the particular (whereby 'At least one S is P' does not eliminate the possibility that 'All S are P'), and one might add that logicians since the *Organon* have even more consistently excluded its maximal reading (whereby 'At least one S is P' implies *no more than* one S having the property P). However, in retrospect it is evident that its exclusion was not absolute. Indeed the possibility is raised that the exclusion in question concerns an element which haunts any effort to construct a complete and universal logical system.[600] It is against this backdrop that Lacan's project of formulizing sexual difference most clearly surfaces. As Le Gaufey writes, 'Lacan is striving to pick up the challenge of what Aristotle, according to Brunschwig, had to drop in order to make his proofs of non-conclusiveness consistent.'[601] By the early 1970s the time had finally come to work through the consequences of choosing the maximal particular.

The immediate consequences of this choice are paradoxical. To express this in terms already developed, by choosing to read the particular in the maximal or restrictive sense (*i.e.*, 'some, not all'), Lacan completely undermines the logical relations of the classical logical square to the point which strains common sense. Recalling the above discussion, it is clear how the logical relation of subalternation is replaced by contradiction whenever the truth of a particular is affirmed. That is, 'Some S are P' excludes 'All S are P.' But the former must now be said to be parallel to 'Some S are not P.' In slightly different words, if 'Some (but not All) S are P,' then it is also the case that 'Some (but not All) S are not P.' With the removal of subalternation, the particular affirmative and particular negative are no longer logically related as subcontraries but should rather be thought of as effectively equivalent. It follows from this that since the two universals contradict their opposing particulars and since the latter are equivalent, the universals are equivalent as well. The logical relation of contrariety, just like subcontrariety, is replaced by equivalence. In the end, Lacan has simplified the classical logical square with respect to its logical

relationships, reducing the logician's task from thinking with four (contradictoriness, contrariety, subcontrariety and subalternation) to only two (contradictoriness and equivalence). But the claims Lacan effectively makes here seem entirely unreasonable. How can 'All S are P' be considered the equivalent of 'All S are not P,' both of which are, moreover, said to stand in contradiction to 'Some S are P' and 'Some S are not P?' Expressed in these terms, this cannot be defended. But they do become defensible through Lacan's proposed changes to the *writing* of each of these propositions.

Before turning to examine these changes it should be acknowledged briefly how the choice of the maximal particular reopens the prospect of using the structure of a logical square to better articulate the dynamics of the hermeneutical circle within which meaning stands. Recall how the choice of the minimal particular closed down this potential in the classical logical square. But Lacan's choice of the maximal particular initiates the development of a new logical square in which the objection of the particular to its universal reestablishes a distance between these two levels that otherwise threaten to collapse into each other with the choice of the minimal particular. Such a distance is obviously necessary to effectuate the desired analogy between the universal and the particular of the logical square to the whole and the part of the hermeneutical circle. The possibility of using Lacan's new logical square to articulate (and ultimately to suspend) the hermeneutical circle is a thesis that is returned to time and again below.

Le Gaufey locates the precise date at which Lacan introduces his first writing of the four formulae of sexuation which replace Aristotle's four propositions to compose the new logical square. This occurs during his March 17, 1971 session of his eighteenth seminar. These formulae continue to be rewritten over subsequent sessions and only reach their finalized state a year later on March 3, 1972. The intriguing question of how these changing formulae precisely capture the topological transformations of Lacan's thought during these twelve months must be set aside to instead focus on the final set of formulae which most closely inscribe his position in the early 1970s. Now, even a cursory glance of these formulae confirms how Lacan 'is proposing to rewrite Aristotle...with the function and the quantification invented by Frege.'[602] What Le Gaufey is referring to rather unclearly is Lacan's annexation for his own devices of what has been called 'Frege's most remarkable and indisputable achievement,...the revolution that he effected in logic, which for over 2000 years, ever since its origins in Aristotle's *Prior Analytics*, had been dominated by syllogistic theory...[This real logical breakthrough occurs] in his creation of what we now know as predicate logic, through his invention of quantifier notation.'[603] This achievement essentially proceeds from Frege's novel 'mathematical' approach to the analysis of sentences in ordinary language. That is, he replaces the subject and predicate terms of a sentence with the mathematical notions of argument and function, respectively. Applying this approach to the familiar sentence 'Gadamer is Heideggerian,' as was seen Aristotle and traditional grammar would take 'Gadamer' to be the subject (S)

and 'is Heideggerian' the predicate (P), so that the sentence takes the form 'S is P.' In contrast, Frege would consider the subject term 'Gadamer' an argument and 'is Heideggerian' a function. Yet this is far from simply an alternative terminology, for this introduces a significant change in the understanding of how sentences are constructed. To see this, suppose one substituted 'Badiou' for 'Gadamer' in the sentence 'Gadamer is Heideggerian.' Doing so proceeds from a claim that is possibly true to one that would be much more contentious in its 'obvious' falseness. In this way sentences can be seen as consisting of two components, one that is constant like '( ) is Heideggerian,' and one that is potentially replaceable like 'Gadamer.' What Frege has done is to make an extension of mathematical terminology by which, for example, 8 is the value of the function x X 4 for the argument 2, and 12 is the value of the same function for the argument 3. In this way 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' is the value of the function '( ) is Heideggerian' for the argument 'Gadamer' just as 'Badiou is Heideggerian' is the value of the same function for the argument 'Badiou.' And what Lacan does is apply this Fregean approach to the classical logical square. So what argument(s) and function(s) does Lacan use and how does he write them?

One symbol used in both the argument and function components of each of the four new logical propositions is x which is most 'naturally' read as the human being who is to be classified as either 'man' or 'woman' according to these propositions. These four propositions are the four formulae of *sexuation* after all. But Lacan frustrates this simple understanding precisely by using this symbol x which he borrows from algebra where (as seen above) it traditionally operates as a variable ready to be filled in with different object-terms. This alone greatly extends the applicableness of Lacan's propositions to fields other than those which entertain the question of sexual difference or alternatively, extends the notion of sexual difference to more abstract fields like hermeneutics and phenomenology. So this x is best considered an 'element' which may (or may not) be grouped together and which may (or may not) exist. These possibilities are determined in part by the quantifiers Lacan chooses to modify x. One such quantifier is the universal quantifier, marked by the symbol $\forall$, and which reads as 'for All' or simply 'All.' Thus the argument $\forall x$ can be read 'All x.' The other quantifier Lacan uses is the existential quantifier, marked by the symbol $\exists$, and which reads as 'at least one.' Thus the argument $\exists x$ can be read as 'There is at least one x.' These two are, respectively, Lacan's versions of 'All S' and 'Some S' in the classical logical square. Lacan also follows the Aristotelian manner of determining the quality of a proposition through affirmation or negation. But he departs from classical practice, which only entertains the affirmation or denial of the specified predication, by further allowing for the direct negation of the argument component of a proposition. The method he chooses is to place a bar over the component of the proposition to be negated. Thus the argument $\overline{\exists x}$ can be read as 'There is no x' and the argument $\overline{\forall x}$ can be read as 'Not-all x.' A component which remains unmarked in this manner signifies affirmation. To

produce the four propositions, each of these four arguments of $\forall x$, $\exists x$, $\overline{\exists x}$ and $\overline{\forall x}$ are placed in relation to a function which together determines its value. Given Lacan's use of x, one might expect that the function will take the traditional mathematical form of $f(x)$, and this is indeed the case, although he drops the parentheses and replaces the f with Φ so that the function to which the four arguments are (or are not) submitted to becomes Φx. This Φ is the symbol Lacan has long used for the phallic signifier discussed in Section 5.3 above and when it is graphically combined with x it produces Φx which can be read as 'the phallic function.' What allows Lacan to think of the phallic signifier as a function stems from Frege. As implied above, after Frege functions are no longer strictly numerical, for through his mathematical understanding of language the concept itself can now be taken to be a function which maps objects on to truth-values. Generally speaking then, the phallic function Φx can be taken to be the concept of the phallic signifier Φ reconceived as a function. As per Frege, we could then consider Φx in its capacity to submit an x under the concept of Φ. More specifically and insofar as the latter is a quasi-transcendental signifier, the signifier of the symbolic order as such, this amounts to saying that Φx has the ability to include this x in the symbolic order which simultaneously makes x subject to all the limitations of the signifying system, or in psychoanalytical speak, subject to symbolic castration.[604] But as was seen, an x stands in relation to a function like Φx as per one of the four arguments of $\forall x$, $\exists x$, $\overline{\exists x}$ and $\overline{\forall x}$, and what makes this even more complex is that Lacan allows for the placement of the bar of negation over this function so that these four arguments can potentially be combined with either Φx or $\overline{\Phi x}$ to produce the four propositions. Lacan's final decision on these combinations are reflected in Figure 6.2, the Lacanian logical square.

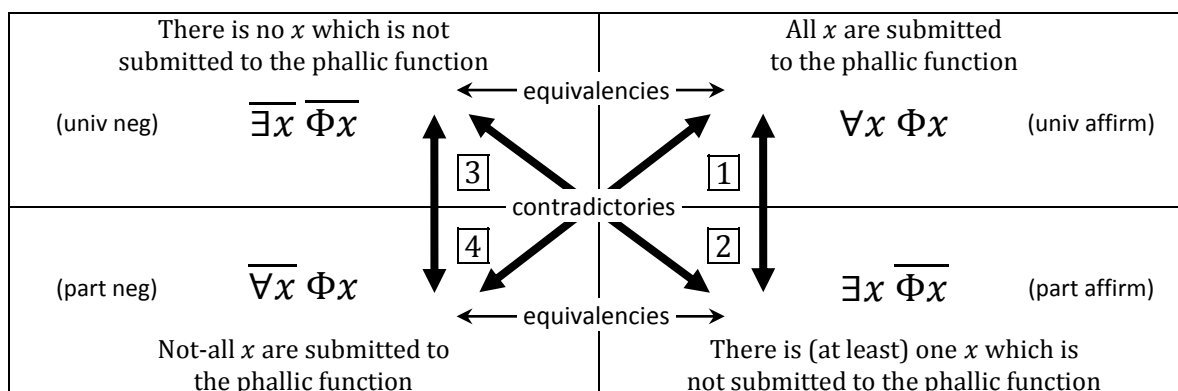| There is no x which is not submitted to the phallic function	All x are submitted to the phallic function
$\leftarrow$ equivalencies $\rightarrow$	
(univ neg) $\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$	$\forall x\ \Phi x$ (univ affirm)
3	1
contradictories	
4	2
(part neg) $\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$	$\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$ (part affirm)
$\leftarrow$ equivalencies $\rightarrow$	
Not-all x are submitted to the phallic function	There is (at least) one x which is not submitted to the phallic function

Figure 6.2: The Lacanian Logical Square

Before a more detailed discussion of these propositions is begun, there are a number of general points which should be made. The most obvious is that Lacan does not present a logical square in any of

his seminars or published writings. But as Le Gaufey suggests, nothing prevents its construction.[605] In fact, its construction is rather straightforward given that these four propositions appear without modification in the upper portion of the table of sexuation presented at the beginning of the March 13, 1973 session of Lacan's well-known twentieth seminar *Encore* (1972-3).[606] These four propositions form what is usually referred to as the formulae of sexuation. Grouped together in two pairs, one pair is said to define 'man' and the other 'woman.' More specifically, the universal and particular affirmative propositions occupy the man side of the table while the universal and particular negative propositions occupy the woman side of the table. But in this table Lacan does not strictly observe the vertical ordering of the two pairs of propositions of the classical logical square from which they are originally derived. As can be seen in Figure 6.1 or 6.2, the universal propositions appear on top of the particulars. With Lacan's arrangement however, while the two 'feminine' formulae do indeed follow this format, he does reverse the ordering with the 'masculine' formulae so that the particular appears on top. So constructing a Lacanian logical square, which allows for a direct comparison to the classical Aristotelian logical square, merely involves reversing the ordering of the formulae on the masculine side. A further point to be noted is that Le Gaufey constructs his Lacanian logical square so as to preserve the horizontal ordering found in both Lacan and Aristotle whereby the affirmative propositions (or masculine formulae) are placed on the left side of the square and the negative propositions (or feminine formulae) are placed on the right. Yet Figures 6.1 and 6.2 reverse this ordering. As has already been noted, this is only a minor change in presentation. The main reason for doing so is rather strategic: to better reflect the fact that the feminine formulae are more primordial than the masculine formulae. Thus, to serve as a reminder of this logical ordering the negative propositions have been placed on the left side where the reader's eye first takes them up before moving onto the affirmative propositions which occupy the right side; this approach thus harmonizes with the customary reading practice which moves across the written page from left to right. Yet this logical ordering whereby negation rightly precedes affirmation conflicts with the ordered sequence of numbers their quadrants have been assigned. That is, the symbols of A, I, E, O traditionally used to concisely refer to the propositions of the classical Aristotelian logical square of Figure 6.1 have been substituted by $\boxed{1}$, $\boxed{2}$, $\boxed{3}$ and $\boxed{4}$, respectively, in Figure 6.2. This has been done to capture the fact that despite the logical precedence of the elements inscribed by the propositions occupying quadrants $\boxed{3}$ and $\boxed{4}$, they nevertheless paradoxically come after those of $\boxed{1}$ and $\boxed{2}$. One of the endeavors of Part II is to explicate these and other similar claims.

Setting aside the ramifications of substituting these specific arguments and single function for subject and predicate for the moment, a cursory comparison of Figures 6.2 and 6.1 shows that Lacan apparently makes a change to the writing of each proposition in some respect except for the universal affirmative. At

least in terms of quantity and quality, it appears to be the case that $\boxed{1}$ $\forall x\ \Phi x$ does not represent any change over 'All S are P.' But Lacan clearly makes changes to the writing of the other three propositions by modifying their quantity or quality (or both). Beginning with the classical proposition 'Some S are P,' it is now seen to be written as $\boxed{2}$ $\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$. In both squares these are considered particular *affirmative* propositions yet Lacan's writing *negates* the phallic function. So while both squares have an 'official' negative left side or deixis,[607] negation does appear on the affirmative right side of the Lacanian square in stark contrast to the classical square. This captures Lacan's claim that the particular affirmative stands in contradiction to its universal. Moreover, contradiction occurs within the other deixis, for this same relation is to be had between the universal and the particular negative propositions. That is to say, where the classical square articulates 'All S are not P,' Lacan counters with his own universal negative proposition which he formulates with a double negation: $\boxed{3}$ $\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$. Very broadly speaking (and indeed at this point only summary observations are being made at the level of the apparent differences in the writing of the propositions in each of the two squares) a double negative returns the proposition to a qualitative status effectively equivalent to the universal affirmative. This double negative thus places it in contradiction to its particular which, for its own part, retains a single negation of its argument (and not of the phallic function which would be the case had Lacan strictly followed the format of 'Some S are not P' in the classical square): $\boxed{4}$ $\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$. Here is the proposition said to retain an equivalency to the similarly singly-negated particular affirmative proposition. The negative deixis also has a further curiosity in that the quantifiers of their arguments are reversed from those of the affirmative deixis, the latter of which seem to better accord to those of the classical square.

A high-level comparison between the two squares thus reveals how the general layout of the classical square is retained in the new square: both operate with the same two (universal and the particular) levels and the same two (affirmative and negative) sides. But set aside these formal similarities between the two logical squares and the differences rapidly begin to mount, both at the level of the individual propositions and by extension to the relationships between them. The question which now must be asked is why Lacan choose these specific argument-function combinations. Or more simply said, what does each proposition *say*?

It was said above that $\boxed{1}$ $\forall x\ \Phi x$ does not represent any change over 'All S are P.' This is true enough at the level of its two-component format, but by considering its writing especially in terms of argument and function this assessment alters considerably. As Le Gaufey reminds us, by early 1971 the name of Peirce begins to frequently appear in Lacan's seminars[608] whose own work in logic casts a formidable influence on how Lacan reads the quantifier $\forall$. The issue at stake takes up a problem known for centuries which concerns the existential assumptions of the classical logical square. Suppose that the S of 'All S are

P' is an empty term. By subalternation 'Some S are P' is also false which makes 'All S are not P' true by contradiction. But by subalternation again 'Some S are not P' is also true, which must be wrong since there are no S terms in existence. The traditional solution to this problem was to insist either that the logical interrelations of the square unobjectionably hold even for empty S terms, which would then make 'All S are not P' (vacuously) true but not false, or to not even consider empty terms at all. Most traditional logicians opted for the former solution, which rigorously upholds the logical relationships; they could thus easily hold the truth of a universal affirmative statement like 'All unicorns have one horn' as leading to the truth of its subaltern 'Some unicorns have one horn' despite the fictional status of the S term unicorn. However, modern logicians like Peirce refocused the problem onto a question of the existential import of particular propositions. Surely by saying 'Some man is white' is to imply that at least one thing is a man who has to be white if this proposition is to be true; likewise with 'Some man is not white.' Since the classical logical square requires that one of these propositions is necessarily true as both cannot be false and since both imply that some thing is a man, it therefore necessarily follows that men exist. Such reasoning has lead to the modern assumption that for a particular proposition to be true there must be at least one case in which the subject term exists. More broadly speaking, the modern assumption which Lacan thoroughly follows is to take universal claims referencing non-existent objects like 'All unicorns have one horn' to be true even if there are no unicorns, while the particular claims about them like 'Some unicorns have one horn' are seen as false since this claim requires that at least one unicorn exists for it to be true. Generalizing these assumptions, the truth of $\forall x \ \Phi x$ does not imply the existence of a term to which x refers, so it can be true even if there is no x (*i.e.*, even if x is empty, an element of the empty set: $x \in \emptyset$); yet for $\boxed{2}$ $\exists x \ \overline{\Phi x}$ to be true, at least one x must exist. Hence the reason for Lacan's choice of the existential quantifier $\exists x$.

The universal and particular levels precariously held apart by subalternation is now replaced by a logical relation which more radically maintains their opposition. Žižek's own discussion of the universal and particular affirmative propositions is illustrated by a citation from Lacan's ninth seminar,[609] a fact which allows one to see how Lacan was already aware of the relation between these two propositions despite not yet formalizing this relation at a logical level – an achievement which only comes a full ten years later. The citation in question concerns how every existing father stands as an exception to the universal notion of father captured by the proposition 'All fathers are $f(x)$' as Žižek generically expresses it. That is, despite how the universal paternal function determines all fathers, this in no way implies that there exists a particular individual which exemplifies its truth. For each individual is either deficient or overbearing as a father such that the only father who fully exists at the level of his notion is the mythical 'primordial father' standing precisely as a particular exception to all the other fathers who waver between

a too little and a too much. Le Gaufey's own illustration entails what is arguably the most elemental universal affirmative: 'All men are mortal.'[610] If this proposition does not imply existence, to aspire to belong to it as a man simultaneously coincides with an abstraction from it. In other words, a particular man who says 'All men are mortal' arrogantly assumes his ability to draw a line over his own existence while he is alive. With these illustrations it begins to be seen that while the two propositions contradict each other, the existential declaration of $\exists x\, \overline{\Phi x}$ has the potential to undermine from within the universal notion $\forall x\, \Phi x$. In terms of textual exegesis, if the notion is initially held that 'All of Gadamer is Heideggerian,' this in no way presumes that there exist particular passages of Gadamer which exemplify this truth. What will actually be found are passages which fall short of Heidegger or alternatively, which parody him to ridiculous excess. These existing passages problematize the notion they were intended to illustrate and thus call for its revision which in turn will re-initiate the search for its own (non-existent) exemplification. In this way the hermeneutical circle turns for the individual interpreter while a larger circle operates at the level of the secondary literature itself where the following strategy is quite often employed: scholar A effectively critiques scholar B by targeting what the former views as the latter's 'poor choice' of supportive textual material. But what Lacan's two propositions articulate is how this is really a foregone conclusion, for any use of existing textual material cannot but undermine the interpretive thesis it is meant to illustrate.

Such a conclusion ultimately stems from Lacan's privileging of the maximal form of the particular which objects to the universal. He affirms that if $\exists x\, \overline{\Phi x}$, then one cannot conclude that $\forall x\, \Phi x$. In terms of the above examples, if at least one x possesses some property like the paternal function or mortality or falls under the concept 'Heideggerian,' it is wrong to conclude All x do, that is, that all fathers, all men and all of Gadamer's texts submit to their respective function. Rather, what must be concluded is that Not-all do, or $\boxed{4}\ \overline{\forall x}\, \Phi x$. In this sense the Not-all is an affirmation of the setting aside of $\forall x\, \Phi x$ by $\exists x\, \overline{\Phi x}$ and thus can be seen as mediating between these two propositions. In doing so its own status is highly undecidable, for it operates as a sort of index to the discord between the universal and existence: to the $\forall x\, \Phi x$ which opens up the field of existence without implying anything regarding the existence of the x it universally affirms, it links $\exists x\, \overline{\Phi x}$ which affirms the existence of at least one x able to sustain the negation brought to bear on the phallic function. That $\overline{\forall x}\, \Phi x$ stands between the universal and existence (and thus troubles a simple opposition between existence and inexistence) can already be seen in Lacan's choice to use the negation of the *universal* quantifier $\forall x$ to express the negative of a proposition dwelling at the particular level assumed to carry *existential* weight. But if by affirming $\exists x\, \overline{\Phi x}$ one concludes that $\overline{\forall x}\, \Phi x$, this still leaves open a potential for misunderstanding. If some x do not possess the property and simultaneously Not-all x possess it, traditional logical would conclude that their conjunction brings back

the whole of the universal such that All x may be said to possess it. To prevent this from happening (which at once shows his concerted effort to undermine the universal), Lacan recognizes how the particular negative proposition cannot stand alone but must be supplemented by the universal negative $\boxed{3}$ $\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$. The relation between these two propositions occupying the negative deixis of the Lacanian logical square can be classically read from top to bottom (so that $\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$ is a necessary condition of $\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$) or from bottom to top (so that the latter is the sufficient condition of the former): if Not-all x possess it, then this implies that there is no x that does not possess it. But the difficulty of understanding this is immense. For how exactly can it be that while there is no x that does not satisfy Φx, these x nevertheless do not totalize themselves into an All set?

Addressing this difficulty provides an opportunity to raise awareness of the fact that these formulae make use of set theory, which is that field of mathematics lying at its very foundation. Discussing how set theory relates to the Lacanian logical square is important, if for no other reason than to lay the groundwork for understanding Lacan's further usage of a branch of set theory called topology to better articulate how these formulae interrelate. Topology is a topic that is discussed in Chapter 7 below. Basically, the Lacanian logical square involves set theory precisely at the level of the universal proposition where the quantifier $\forall$ becomes operational by referring the x that follows it to some thing which is then written as belonging to a determined set. Above it was implied that x was a variable ready to be filled in with any one of an array of different object-terms which have a determinate status. But since the universal affirmative does not imply existence, strictly speaking this is inaccurate. As Le Gaufey suggests, Lacan is following Frege's notion of how the 'indeterminacy' of x 'is not a descriptive epitaph of "number," it is rather an adverb modifying 'indicate." We will not say that [x] designates an indeterminate number, but that it indicates numbers in an indeterminate manner.'[611] This notion raises the question of sets. More specifically, the use of $\forall x$ is effectively the hypothesis that a set which covers the range of values of x truly exists such that an element can be extracted from it given the employment of the proper function the x satisfies. In terms of the distinction Russell draws between the 'intensional' and 'extensional' approaches to the set,[612] Lacan here seems to opt for the former. For the proposition $\forall x\ \Phi x$ collects $\forall x$ corresponding to Φx, which is consistent with the intensional or rule-governed understanding of a set as a collection of objects corresponding to a predicate or concept, an approach which presumes that the concept takes logical priority over its application. But it should be carefully noted how intensional set theory is strictly applicable only to the right deixis of the Lacanian logical square, for the left deixis undeniably inscribes the extensional or combinatorial understanding of a set which eschews proceeding along such strictly defined lines. In contrast to the intensional conception, any set that results from the extensional approach is built from the bottom up by a simple bundling together of elements and what

solidifies the priority this approach enjoys over its counterpart is that it avoids the fatal limitation of holding to the rule-governance theory of set formation. The limitation in question is none other than the one exposed by Russell to Frege's great disappointment. Frege had defended the intensional approach, but Russell's famous paradox pointed out that the former's system allows for the distinction between properties that include and do not include themselves within their intensional grasp and so leads to sets which include themselves and others which do not. This is perfectly acceptable, but it further suggests that the formation of a set of all sets that are not members of themselves is possible. Yet it is easily shown how the attempted formation of such a set leads to a paradox, for if it is a member of itself then it is not a member of itself and if it is not a member of itself, then it is a member of itself – a paradox because it conflicts with Frege's sensible view that any coherent condition determines a set. Simply said, this set of all sets that are not members of themselves does not exist. Restating Russell's paradox in concise existential terms: if it exists, it is a member of itself if (and only if) it is not a member of itself; this is a contradiction and so it does not exist.[613] Given that Frege's system leads to such a paradox, the conclusion must be that it cannot be logically sound. So the extensional approach must be seen as taking logical priority to the intensional approach and what makes the Lacanian logical square that much more 'complete' is that it inscribes *both* these approaches. In contrast to the right deixis where sets exist, the left deixis has priority through its inscription of the 'deeper' truth that some sets do not exist.

To relate these results back to the propositions of the logical square, to think that there is no exception to the satisfaction of a function ($\overline{\exists x \ \overline{\Phi x}}$) does not reunite those which do satisfy this function under the aegis of a universal set ($\forall x \ \Phi x$) from which one could indeterminately draw an element and inscribe it into the existential order of the particular ($\exists x \ \overline{\Phi x}$); rather, a *domain* results ($\overline{\forall x} \ \Phi x$) which refuses to collectivize into a set. Žižek privileges 'politics' from the series of other terms he has employed throughout his career to helpfully illustrate this paradoxical domain. As he recently writes: 'Politics which occurs in this in-between space is non-All: its formula is not "everything is political," but "there is nothing which is not political," which means that "not-all is political." The field of the political cannot be totalized...there is no meta-language in which we can "objectively" describe the whole political field, every such description is already partial.'[614] Reading these words closely, one sees how Žižek effectively makes reference to the logics of each of the four propositions. Thus we are admonished not to move too quickly to declare how 'everything is political' [$\forall x \ \Phi x$]. Such a declaration seems rather naïve given the series of examples that immediately spring to mind which surely countermand its assertion [$\exists x \ \overline{\Phi x}$]. Sex perhaps is such an exception, providing a meta-language position from which an objective assessment of the field of the political might be possible. But then again as feminist discourse endeavors to prove, a closer examination reveals how 'there is nothing (not even sex) which is not political' [$\overline{\exists x} \ \overline{\Phi x}$]. That is,

taking each of these contradictory examples one by one will reveal that they do not hold any exceptional status to the function in question. This, however, does not re-submit them to the universal All but rather demonstrates how the political field can only be described in a partial manner. Here one must avoid thinking that this is so because this field is simply too vast to grasp all at once and thus only permits a piecemeal approach. For although the results of such partial analysis can be gathered together, their sum must be conceived as a loosely grouped and non-totalized domain (rather than a determinate set) such that it is only permissible to say 'not-all is political' [$\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$]. This illustration by Žižek makes it more clear why Lacan has paradoxically chosen to write the universal negative proposition by negating the existential quantifier ($\overline{\exists x}$) which in the right deixis affirms the existence of an exception to the universal All; while the particular negative proposition is written by negating the universal quantifier ($\overline{\forall x}$), which stands as a reminder not to conceive it as 'some' or 'at least one' with a determinate and essential existence. The two propositions in the left deixis thus work in unison just as those of the right. If we begin by claiming Not-all satisfy the function, this of course rules out that All should do so, but also that there should be one that does not since the universal negative compliments the Not-all claim by affirming that there is no one who does not satisfy the function.

Now that the propositional components, their specific combinations and the relations held between the two propositions in each pair have been introduced, a greater appreciation for how each proposition relates to all the others is needed. The example from Žižek above already suggests how the two pairs of propositions do not stand in simple opposition to each other but do seem to enter into an interplay of mutual relations just as do the propositions of the Aristotelian logical square. So while it is perfectly legitimate to speak of elements in the left or the right deixis of the Lacanian logical square, care must always be taken not to slip into thinking that this reflects a bi-partition which somehow occurs 'within' the universal. To do so is to precisely take up the meta-position offered by the particular affirmative (which the universal negative denies). In contrast, by continually approaching the global consistency of these four propositions which respects their interplay, the desire to comprehend them 'all at once' is frustrated. It also becomes clear that what is at stake in each deixis is the conception of the exception, affirmed on one side ($\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$) and denied on the other ($\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$).

Making use of Le Gaufey's occasional practice of generically referencing the propositions in a convenient shorthand (whereby $\forall x\ \Phi x$ = all say yes; $\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$ = one says no; $\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$ = no one says no; $\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$ = not-all say yes), the logical relations between the four propositions can be concisely articulated. If all say yes, then it is false that one says no and that not-all say yes (as seen in Figure 6.2, $\boxed{1}$ enters into contradiction with both $\boxed{2}$ and $\boxed{4}$) and if no one says no, then it is false that one says no and that not-all say yes ($\boxed{3}$ enters into contradiction with both $\boxed{2}$ and $\boxed{4}$). In addition to contradiction, there is also the

relation of equivalency. For if all say yes, no contradiction ensues with the fact that no one says no (the two universals $\boxed{1}$ and $\boxed{3}$ imply each other and are effectively equivalent), as is the case with the two particulars, for if one says no, this does not contradict with the fact that not-all say yes (an equivalency between $\boxed{2}$ and $\boxed{4}$).

Concerning the question of equivalency it will be noticed how the last sentence of the previous paragraph seems to stand in tension to the conclusions drawn in the immediately foregoing paragraphs. For if those conclusions forewarn us not to conceive of the Lacanian logical square as neatly partitioned into two sides, how are we to make sense of the equivalent relations between the universals and the particulars which cannot but give the sense of a perfect symmetry between the two sides? Le Gaufey would suggest that the answer lay with Lacan's conception of the universal negative, which is 'undeniably...the high point of his invention, much more than on the side of the "not-all"'[615] The general contention that Lacan wants to preserve the equivocation of the maximal particular is here specifically translated into ensuring that the universal negative vacillates so that if the two universals are said to be equivalent, this 'equivalence' is nevertheless conceived in a way which harbors an internal rift. To understand this, consider how one might begin the movement of the writing of the four propositions with the universal affirmative $\forall x\, \Phi x$. As seen above, Lacan's choice of the maximal particular immediately excludes this universal, which he affirms through the particular negative $\overline{\forall x}\, \Phi x$ in a writing both denying the universal operator while sustaining the existence of Not-all. But if not-all illustrate the universal, on the right deixis the particular affirmative $\exists x\, \overline{\Phi x}$ is obligated to say that some do not illustrate it. The movement just traced out proceeds as $\boxed{1} \rightarrow \boxed{4} \rightarrow \boxed{2}$, and at this point Le Gaufey notes that it becomes clear how Lacan has taken his departure from the Aristotelian conception of the maximal particular. This latter conception would read Not-all as 'some' and so the maximal particular of 'some, but not all' in quadrant $\boxed{2}$ would read as " $\overline{\forall x}\, \overline{\Phi x}$ "as per the logician's choice of reading each proposition as per the *relations* of the logical square. In contrast, Lacan transforms the negation of the universal quantifier $\overline{\forall x}$ into the existential quantifier $\exists x$ since he has chosen to write each proposition *at its place*.[616] These places are made available for writing because of the universal negative, which logicians for their part might well read as " $\forall x\, \overline{\Phi x}.$ " But to ensure the universal is well evacuated from the left deixis Lacan instead writes the universal quantifier by negating the existential quantifier, that is, he substitutes $\overline{\exists x}$ for $\forall x$. In doing so, Lacan captures an essential ambiguity which complements the ambiguity attending the claim that the negation of universality produces existence. More specifically, $\boxed{3}$ is as ambiguous ('if not some, then all' but it is equally sustainable that 'if not some, then no one') as the ambiguity of $\boxed{4}$ ('if not-all' then either 'some' or 'no one'). If Lacan's propositions are an ambiguous read, it is with good reason for his intention all along has been to capture the equivocation of language in a logical manner and his

writing here does just that. For while the 'not some' of $\overline{\exists x}$ is equivalent to 'all,' it must simultaneously be read as 'no one' or 'none' or 'the place of all.' To speak more broadly so as to capture its relation to all the other propositions, the universal negative $\overline{\exists x}\,\overline{\Phi x}$ can be conceived not only classically as the set of elements not satisfying the function, but also as a locus or space devoid of any element. In Le Gaufey's words, 'with this writing [Lacan] secures a sort of bolting down of his battery of formulae which, otherwise, would go down the tubes.'[617] Yet as strange as it sounds, it is the 'nothing' inscribed by $\overline{\exists x}\,\overline{\Phi x}$ that does the bolting down. An understanding of this might be gained by conceiving of this proposition as a *subjective* gesture, precisely the one described above as taking elements 'one by one.' That is, the subjective activity of submitting each x for closer analysis is simultaneously the very operation which 'clears the space' in each of the other quadrants so that a place is made available for the determinate writing of their propositions. The complete movement is thus $\boxed{1} \to \boxed{4} \to \boxed{2} \to \boxed{3}$ and the paradox is that what clears the space for the propositions to be written into their places comes 'after' the propositions themselves have actually been inscribed.[618]

So in contrast to the logician's choice to read the Not-all of the particular negative as a partitive 'some' so that if 'some say yes' the right deixis balances things out with a 'some say no,' Lacan's writing of the universal negative inscribes his desire to break with such a neat symmetry: there, where no one says no, not-all say yes. Thus this Not-all should not be seen as partitive but as affirming that those elements present in the left deixis (and having been taken one by one) are each subject to the same function but without becoming elements of an All. Each element in the left deixis has an existence under the regime of the function but in a way which cannot be made into a determinate set. In this manner the existence of these elements remains unattached to any essence within which they would be subsumed. Because of this one must speak of the asymmetry of the Lacanian logical square. This must always be kept in mind when utilizing Figure 6.2, for despite the equivalencies running horizontally across the square which suggest symmetry there is an internal rift in this relation which is even more troubling than the formally acknowledged contradictory relation running vertically between the universal and the particular in each deixis. Moreover, Lacan's writing has effectively redoubled the logical rift, supplementing the one running *between* propositions by the one now discernible *within* the writing of the propositions due to the inversion of the universal and existential quantifiers in the left deixis. This not only leaves the classical Aristotelian logical square far behind but even takes its distance from the logician's reading of the maximal particular, for the latter can only register such rifts through the unfolding of the relations internal to the logical square. In contrast Lacan's writing thoroughly ensures that the left deixis is not treated as a mirror image of the right which would symmetrically oppose each to the other. For now each deixis must be taken as contributing reciprocally to one another as both obstacle and support.

Now that a certain 'global' understanding of the Lacanian logical square has been reached, a momentary pause in the analysis is warranted to take stock of the fact that Lacan is not simply a skilled logician. It is of course undeniable that Lacan thoroughly acts the part, masterfully commandeering both classical and modern logic to develop his own logical square. This general truth the present section has made plain and more specifically the immediate foregoing analysis has shown that Lacan retains in the left deixis the central lesson of Russell's paradox, *viz*, that there are well defined sets which do not exist, as opposed to the right where this paradox is not taken into account. However, these logical moves are made by Lacan the *psychoanalyst*, whose predominant interests lay outside the strict realm of logic. In the present case Lacan has turned to logic to search for a way to best articulate the difference between the sexes. One might say that his goal is to emulate the accomplishment of Russell. Where the latter's paradox caused a crisis at the level of the once certain foundation of mathematics, Lacan hopes to similarly articulate a radical break with the traditional binary logic of the sexes, which places man and woman on opposite sides of the sexual divide as per some pertinent universal feature. Recalling that each deixis of the Lacanian logical square is also a 'sexual side' whereby the left represents woman and the right man, the foregoing analysis already demonstrates certain successes of his project. For instance, Lacan's infamous claim that 'Woman does not exist' is reflective of the fact that in the left deixis, while individual women certainly exist, they nevertheless resist forming themselves into the set Woman. In a word, Woman is Not-all. This alone ensures that the irreducible asymmetry of the sexes remains entirely independent of any feature one might presume to impose on their relation in an attempt to bridge – or even define – the sexual rift which separates them. Moreover, this sexual rift thoroughly maps onto the logical rift(s) articulated above. As Le Gaufey correctly stresses, for Lacan sex and logic thoroughly intertwine.[619]

One further point should be made. The operating assumption of the present chapter has been that Lacan's formulae, written as they are in logical script, are flexible enough to be adapted to other realms. Thus both the Aristotelian and Lacanian logical squares have proven useful in discussing and articulating the hermeneutical circle. But it will be noted that those demonstrations largely proceeded from the affirmative deixis. This was not simply to keep the discussion relatively free of negating terms which might otherwise have added an avoidable level of complexity; rather, this anticipated the asymmetry of the Lacanian logical square whereby the negative deixis stands to the 'subversive left' of the affirmative deixis. Such a square suggests that if the hermeneutical circle is confined to the space of the right, the space of the left is where the suspension of meaning is accomplished. In these terms the current chapter has been laying the groundwork for Chapter 7, which seeks to more expressly demonstrate this possibility.

To gain a deeper appreciation of what has been accomplished in the left deixis, one might turn to the right to enquire how Lacan understands the status of the 'exception,' a term that has hitherto been used without complication. Above it was said that the elements to the left do not collectivize into a determinate set since their existence is without essence. Lacan's concern to maintain a distinction between existence and essence is not unrelated to the 'at least one' element to the right, that is, the particular exception to the universal affirmative. Consider that Lacan takes the universal quantifier ∀ as an ontological marker and so one directed toward being and essence as opposed to existence, just as do Aristotelian logicians. For instance, by saying 'All of Gadamer' it is understood that these signifiers have a denotative status which awaits effectuation, for they do not establish any existence by themselves but merely produce a being which could be qualified and thus produce an essence. Inversely, the existential quantifier ∃ directly asserts the existence of the element that it writes, as in the case of asserting 'There is (at least) one text of Gadamer.' Here is where Lacan begins to take his departure from Aristotelian logic. For the latter has it that this existence corresponds to an essence and so always relates to the supposed being of the universal. That existence is nothing more than the particular actualization of a being always universal in its category is reflected in the classical choice of the minimal particular. The approach of the minimal particular would, moreover, maintain a consistent universal which would unproblematically span the entire logical square so as to develop an essence for each deixis. But this is precisely what Lacan wants to deny, preferring instead 'to make existence prevail over essence'[620] so as to contravene the Aristotelian derivation of existence from essence and make the universal vacillate.

To this end Lacan would have us conceive how the universal $\forall x \, \Phi x$ finds its true foundation in the existence of the exception $\exists x \, \overline{\Phi x}$ which opposes it. If this is the case it certainly lends support to Lacan's decision to include negation in the right deixis so that its particular enters into contradiction with its universal just as is the case in the left deixis. Now, if existence is placed with the two particulars and existence trumps the essence to be had in the universals, for Lacan the truth would lie with the particulars, which in turn would make the two universals necessarily false. But while the conception of a universal thus grounded certainly distinguishes itself from the Aristotelian conception, one is hard pressed to understand such a claim. Le Gaufey quotes Lacan, who suggests the proverb 'the exception proves the rule' illustrates the claim, but one would have to agree with his assessment that this sheds little light on how the exception provides support for the universal.[621] The further suggestion is made to look to the other deixis and generally speaking this is good advice when difficulties arise in comprehending aspects of a specific deixis; for if the logical square comprises both classical logic and its subversion, indeed there is no other gesture to make than a tautological one. In the present case it is thus pertinent to ask what would occur to the universal if there was no exception. This in effect is the claim of the universal negative

$\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$, which negates the exception and it has been seen that Not-all results or $\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$, precisely the proposition which negates the universal quantifier. Again, while the logic of the right deixis places elements into a set, the logic of the left concerns only a domain of elements whose existence is indeed affirmed (recall how $\overline{\forall x}$ acts as an existential quantifier) but nevertheless cannot be collectivized into a universal set precisely because no element escapes it. Through the contradictory writings of the two propositions in the left deixis, the existing domain of elements thus also escapes having an essence produced of them.[622] Here something exists which does not belong to a universal and so is devoid of essence yet at the same time cannot be conceived as an exception. So to the right deixis where an All is founded on the existence of the exception of at least one, the left deixis professes that insofar as no exception exists, those that do exist do not form an All. In contrast to the classical logical square, running across the top of the Lacanian square are propositions which deeply damage the universal, for in *both* partitions the universal simply cannot collectivize all the elements which would give rise to a homogeneous unity without exception. Le Gaufey is quite right that one must strive to hold together the two types of contradiction which run *within* and *between* each deixis or else the entire project easily reverts to a symmetrical square reflecting traditional bipolar thinking subsumed under a grand universal. For his part the key to doing so is to specify the relationship that the universal maintains with the exception better than Lacan himself has done.[623] Following the results of his analysis is valuable for its introduction of the term 'limitation' into the vocabulary of the Lacanian logical square.

Not finding what he needs from Lacan's seminars, Le Gaufey turns instead to *L'étourdit* [1972][624] to find a passage suggesting that the exception be conceived as a limit. There Lacan writes of the universal affirmative $\forall x\ \Phi x$ that for all x, Φx is satisfied. But with regard to this very same proposition he further writes how 'there is by exception the case, familiar in mathematics (the argument $x = 0$ in the exponential [*sic*] function $\frac{1}{x}$), the case where there exists an x for which Φx, the function, is not satisfied, namely, by not functioning, is in effect excluded.'[625] The exception he speaks of is the particular affirmative $\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$ and Lacan's point is that it operates precisely like how $x = 0$ creates a limit for the function $(x) = \frac{1}{x}$, which here stands in for the universal affirmative. This is visually confirmed by examining Figure 6.3 which presents the graph of this hyperbolic function.
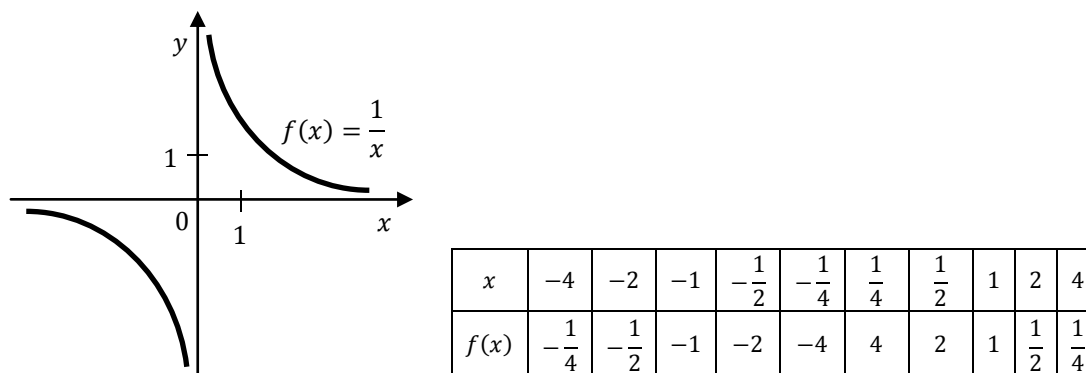
Figure 6.3: A Hyperbolic Function

x	-4	-2	-1	$-\dfrac{1}{2}$	$-\dfrac{1}{4}$	$\dfrac{1}{4}$	$\dfrac{1}{2}$	1	2	4
$f(x)$	$-\dfrac{1}{4}$	$-\dfrac{1}{2}$	-1	-2	-4	4	2	1	$\dfrac{1}{2}$	$\dfrac{1}{4}$

The table determines several points $(x, f(x))$ on the graph of f. Reading from left to right, it can be seen that for $x < 0$, $f(x)$ increases towards infinity as x decreases towards 0; while for $x > 0$, $f(x)$ decreases towards 0 as x increases towards infinity. However, $f(x)$ presents no value if $x = 0$. Mathematically speaking, $x = 0$ is not in the domain of f. That is, it is impossible to divide a real number like 1 by 0, for dividing 1 by 0 is to effectively ask 'Which number multiplied by 0 gives 1?' There is no such number because the product of any real number like 1 and 0 is 0. In a word, division by 0 is undefined. This is visually confirmed by the sloping curves of the graph which will never cross its asymptotes. The asymptotes are the lines that the branches of the hyperbola approach as they recede farther and farther from the origin; that is, as the absolute value of x becomes greater and greater. For such an (equilateral) hyperbolic function as $(x) = \frac{1}{x}$, the coordinate axes (*i.e.*, $x = 0$ and $y = 0$) act as its asymptotes and it is precisely at this locus or place of 0 where Lacan situates $\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$. This graph quite nicely provides a visual representation of how the universal takes its support on the exception, but as seen, this foundation is anything but solid. There is an undecidability here: if the submission of All x under the $f(x)$ is conditioned by the fact that at least one escapes it, should this escaped $x = 0$ be counted amongst the All or not?

While noting how this example is quite useful in illustrating this undecidability, Le Gaufey is right to suggest how the graph tempts one to favor a 'transcendent' reading of the exception, one that is wholly in line with St. Augustine's God *qua* superior element to the worldly series.[626] That is, since there is a stark disparity observable between the graph and its asymptotes, the temptation is to read the function as founded on a perfect exteriority. This reading is to be rejected because if accepted, it becomes legitimate to ask the subject *from where* he has made such an assessment. To the believer such a reading is authorized by faith, but for the non-believer well-versed in the impossibility of taking up a meta-position or bird's eye view from which a neutral assessment of the function and its limit could be made (*i.e.*, there is no meta-language), this assessment must be abandoned. The analysis here is perfectly sound and Le

Gaufey strengthens the argument by noting how no meta-position is available in the left deixis as well, although in this case the assessment would concern the status of the *absence* of the exception. In the end he proposes to think the exception as effectively starting from the series of x of $f(x)$, which would allow one to resist thinking of both the series and its exception or limit as occupying a common space. This is thoroughly in line with the impossibility of taking up a meta-position. But the problem with this solution lies with its very endeavor to provide the 'correct' way of reading the relationship between the universal and its exception. In contrast, one should instead approach the right deixis in a way which *preserves* its undecidability and, moreover, allows one to 'wrongly' choose the meta-position reading of the relationship in a first move. For this 'incorrect' reading is part and parcel of what Lacan intends to capture with the two propositions in the right deixis. More precisely the exception *is* the meta-position, the point from which man audaciously claims to be able to assess it All. To clarify Le Gaufey's failing on this issue along different lines, certainly his reading of the right deixis and the status of the existing exception is *ultimately* correct, but what is overlooked is how this reading is done from the vantage point of the left deixis which stands logically prior to the right. Here is the reason for his recourse to the left deixis when articulating his solution and no wonder, since it is this very deixis which inscribes the impossibility of taking up a meta-position. Hence his further specific advisement that one tarry along with the series of x (*i.e.*, one by one) in order to break the spell of the meta-position. His failing here also explains his misreading of Lacan on this score. Had Le Gaufey consciously recognized how the spell of the right deixis is only broken by reading it from the more subversive left, he would not doubt that Lacan intends to capture 'a wish, religious in style, clearly worthy of...hope for an eternal life' with the exception.[627] His denial that this is the case leads to a general confusion over what exactly is being inscribed in the right deixis. Broadly speaking, what is missed is how Lacan places the secondary and more phantasmatical dimension of subjectivity (inclusive of the field of meaning, as is seen below) in the right deixis while reserving the space to the left for its subversion.

6.3 Additional Interpretive Consequences of the Minimal-Maximal Distinction

The third chapter of Le Gaufey's work recommends itself for more deeply specifying the relationships which adhere between the propositions in the Lacanian logical square. Ostensibly the chapter is an attack on the cherished clinical practice of the vignette in psychoanalysis, to which he counters by arguing for a clinical practice that might instead be modeled on the logic of the maximal particular. But this effort is so favorably peppered with insights into how the particular undermines the universal that they easily form their own separate theme and so permit the text to be more broadly applicable. Thus this work could easily be adapted to counter the 'cookie-cutter' approach to textual analysis which begins with a universal framework and subsequently cuts out textual material into readily digestible morsels or failing that,

otherwise submits the uncooperative text to the Procrustean bed of a well-constructed theory. More pertinently and to prepare better for Chapter 7 below, insofar as hermeneutics has established itself as a universal field since Schleiermacher (and with important renewals of its universality coming from different directions by the likes of Dilthey, Heidegger, Bultmann and Gadamer), for a project interested in suspending this supposed universal field, the insights of Le Gaufey prove invaluable. This is especially the case given that his thematic aims towards demonstrating the overall non-relationship which adheres between the two sides of the bipartite structure of the Lacanian logical square in such a way that one can additionally recognize how the crucial accent falls on the left deixis whenever it is a question of parting company with the common notion of the universal on the right.

To say that the Lacanian logical square inscribes a non-relationship is at once to say that its two sides cannot be reduced to a binary, even one in its most primitive form. Yet the analysis in the previous section might suggest otherwise. For clearly the right deixis supports the existence of an essence, which develops a symbolic value of the element x, which contrasts with the left deixis where it is affirmed that there is no essence for those elements which do exist and therefore cannot be so symbolically mapped out. It thus seems the logical square inscribes the most elemental binary whereby the right deixis bears a symbolic mark while the left deixis does not. This can be seen in the very writing of the propositions. On the right there is at least one x sticking out from all the others,[628] and its exceptional status presents itself with the mark of a bar over the phallic function $\exists x \, \overline{\Phi x}$, while on the left the absence of this mark is denoted by negating the existential quantifier $\overline{\exists x} \, \overline{\Phi x}$. But can the logical square be reduced to the oppositional couple of presence/absence of a distinctive mark? To answer in the affirmative is to conceive the relationship between the two sides as one of complementary difference whereby absence simply responds to presence and vice versa. Yet the writing of the two propositions indicates that the actual relationship is thoroughly asymmetrical since what is at stake is a relationship of quality which founds absolutely separate terms. Consider that one can deny the presence of the given mark of $\exists x \, \overline{\Phi x}$ to arrive at its absence $\overline{\exists x} \, \overline{\Phi x}$. But there is no certainty that this vector can be reversed, for by denying its absence one *might* return to the same mark but it is also possible that another mark will appear or perhaps none at all. The same mark would be returned to if the relationship were a matter of simple difference where what is not in one deixis is in the other. But being absent in one in no way obligates its presence in the other, for the absence of the mark in the left deixis provides no reference point as would its presence in the right.[629] Those elements without a place in the latter must be content to find themselves without complement in the strange space of the former. Again the difficulty is conceiving of the equivalencies to be had between the two sides (as seen in Figure 6.2 above) without generating from this equilibrium a

symmetry whereby the mark present on the right grounding the All and the absence of the mark on the left requiring the Not-all share an already circumscribed space.

If there are two global choices regarding how to read the Lacanian logical square, one which naturally slips into positioning all four propositions into a common space and one which endeavors to resist this tendency, it is important to realize how these are not choices made somehow independent of the logical square but are already inscribed into the two sides by the writing of the propositions themselves.[630] As is often the case with Lacan, the subject should not move so quickly so as to overlook his own subjectivity in the matter being examined and the topic of the logical square is no exception. For the notion that this square operates in a single space is only had through a strict reading of it from the right deixis which forgoes supplementing with a reading from the other deixis; the inclusion of the latter would reveal a true spatial asymmetry to the logical square. If this is the case it would be clear how the space of the One to the right is troubled by the space of the Other to the left, 'that no *heteros* encloses the *allos*; that no *alter* subsumes the *alius*' and that the right and left sides are not aliquot parts but instead aliquant.[631] To begin gaining an appreciation of this, it is advisable to rearticulate the four propositions of the logical square as a maximal particular choice to limit the range of the universal notion.

It was seen in the previous two sections how classical logicians followed Aristotle in setting aside the maximal understanding of the particular so as to better provide for logical consistency and how Lacan, through Brunschwig's analysis, directly confronts the ambiguity that nevertheless remains. This ambiguity can be expressed at the level of the two universals, which are related as contraries in the classical logical square. The two different understandings of contrariety determine the two different approaches to the particular (minimal and maximal), which at once map onto the two ways of conceiving the spatiality of the logical square. On the one hand the two universals can be seen as marking the extreme points of a common space so that the relation between them is one of continuity; standing in contrast, they oppose (without entirely excluding) each other so that they might be said to be reciprocally complementary. On the other hand they manifest themselves in terms which cannot unite and so must be said to occupy mutually exclusive spaces which are minimally separated; contrariety is defined here by incompatibility rather than by contrast. These two senses of contrariety are admittedly difficult to distinguish but the defective nature of the perfectly ordered logical square this distinction is designed to illustrate becomes more transparent by approaching the problematic through the level of the particular. Now, what differences are there between the particular affirmative $\exists x\, \overline{\Phi x}$ and the particular negative $\overline{\forall x}\, \Phi x$ despite being equivalencies in the Lacanian logical square? As equivalent the former lends the partitive term 'some' and from the latter the restrictive 'not-all' so that together either of the propositions reads as 'some, but not-all.' This is to read in the maximal sense that takes the partitive as a restrictive and such a

reading thoroughly corresponds to the 'natural ear,' which hears the particular 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian' as a statement excluding the universal statement 'All of Gadamer is Heideggerian.' In contrast, the classical logician drops the restrictive so that the propositions would read as 'some, because not all' (recall that through subalternation 'some' is implied by All). In this case 'Some of Gadamer' is taken against the way it is naturally heard by considering it only a partial instantiation of 'All of Gadamer.' Here it becomes possible to see how the logical square has no perfect order. Recall that both the classical and Lacanian versions of this square are identical in having grouped each particular to its universal according to quality (affirmatives to the right and negatives to the left) and also hold that a relation of contradiction runs diagonally between each universal and its opposite particular according to quality. The problem is that the single word 'some' is utilized for both the existential particular affirmative and the restrictive particular negative. A choice must be made, and for their part Aristotle and classical logicians privileged the 'some' of the particular affirmative, which denies the 'nothing' of the universal negative without restriction, whereby leaving the field free to the dictates of the All since their choice of the minimal particular has it that 'some, because not all.' This choice places the restrictive particular negative into a secondary slot since its equivocation is only removed by adding the restrictive 'some, but not-all' of the maximal reading which for them has been ruled out.

So despite its apparent symmetry the classical Aristotelian logical square nevertheless leans to the right deixis, favoring the particular affirmative for its agreement with the universal affirmative and for the ontological weight it carries through its contradiction with the universal negative. Thoroughly remaining within the limits of the classical framework (though inverting its values as has been seen), Lacan instead leans to the left deixis by giving priority to the Not-all of the particular negative $\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$.[632] This move acknowledges the difficulty discussed above in conceiving the particular affirmative $\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$ as the negation of the universal negative $\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$ and allows it to enter into contradiction with the universal affirmative $\forall x\ \Phi x$ in a manner which removes the need to conceive the particular as an exception to the rule of the universal; instead, the particular affirmative stands in contradiction to the universal affirmative through the prior affirmation of the Not-all which denies the universal affirmative and thus leaves to it the space of the right deixis. This privileging of the restrictive aspect of the particular negative which restrains both the universal affirmative and universal negative again better accords to the way the ear naturally hears the particular proposition and moreover, empties the universal of any ontology remaining from its Aristotelian heritage. For with the classical logicians, the universal quantifier $\forall x$ does possess some existence through its existential subaltern which stands in agreement with it. But with the Lacanian logical square, while $\forall x$ is as predicable as it is with the classicals it is now to be considered strictly a symbolic element without any assured existence. The symbolic status of the universal is even more pronounced

with the universal negative, which allows for predication in the absence of a subject. And the validity of the two particular existentials no longer stems from being partial instantiations of a universal truth which claims to govern the logical square within a single space. Seen as working in tandem, they both directly object to such universality by a common disagreement: for those that say no ($\exists x \ \overline{\Phi x}$) and those that say yes ($\overline{\forall x} \ \Phi x$) reject the equivalent universal suppositions that all say yes ($\forall x \ \Phi x$) and that there is none to say no ($\overline{\exists x \ \Phi x}$) and thus also the single spatiality of the logical square.

By evacuating any assured existence from the universal so that only its symbolic dimension remains, the logical arrangement of the Lacanian square creates a new epistemological situation for textual interpretation.[633] Consider an academic text which sets out to demonstrate that 'Gadamer is Heideggerian.' This is called its 'thesis' and as per standard academic practice this is usually declared openly at the beginning of the text. Such an intention effectively operates as an articulated universal statement which delimits the common space within which the text subsists. As the text proceeds, particular passages will be pointed out and perhaps explicitly cited as demonstrative of the thesis. In this sense the academic text appears as the locus of a deictics charged with drawing links between the theoretical knowledge embodied by the thesis where the parts making up its subject are only rationally described and the opaque presence of the actual passages selected by the author. The ideal is for a significant passage not so selected to nevertheless find its place in the epistemological edifice, yet too often it is the case that the reader simply defers to the authority of the author's good name and believes his thesis stands or fails on the passages actually selected. Moreover, the thematics of classic texts are often authoritatively established by their first commentators and considerable time must pass before radical deviations from these norms become tolerable. Thus the assessments of Gadamer by Betti, Hirsch, Habermas, Palmer and Ricoeur establish an interpretive horizon within which the following generations of commentators are obligated to remain. In large part they are content to expand on the common narrative but forego any seriously attempt to escape from its grasp.

This style of textual interpretation is not the prerogative of a method of textual analysis which would instead follow the inner relations of the Lacanian logical square. To begin to see this, the standard operating procedure of the interpretive text seeking to impart its thesis upon the reader must be more closely examined. What is at stake here concerns the basic operation by which particular elements of primary texts are used to impress upon the reader the truth of the interpretive hypothesis. As already stated, the interpreter may refer to primary textual material through direct citation and in such a case it becomes quite clear how the reference stands to the secondary text in much the same fashion as the vignette does for the psychoanalytic case study. After providing a brief etymological analysis of the word itself whose history from the medieval period onward indicates 'the difference of workmanship in these

vignettes that ornament, decorate, garland, enhance, embellish, adorn remarks that one fears lack some flesh,' Le Gaufey notes how 'it is remarkable that they all accomplish the same task, which moreover justifies their appellation: *to illustrate*, by a demonstrative example, some statement that is too arid and because of this is qualified as "theoretical."'[634] On a very basic perceptual level, is not the citation an adornment to the interpreter's text and one made especially obvious not only by its frame of quotation marks but when length demands that it stand apart from the surrounding text with its own distinct set of margins, line spacing and font size or when made to stand in even greater isolation at the masthead of a chapter? More importantly and as already noted, these citations read in isolation are often nonsensical, but as embedded within the surrounding text (their context), they become completely understandable and ideally serve to illustrate the intended thesis. Yet when some passages of Gadamer are referenced, this is not simply an invitation to enter into interpretive debate. For what is at stake is not whether the author is correct to have selected *these* particular passages to illustrate the thesis 'Gadamer is Heideggerian.' Indeed it may very well be generally acknowledged that the particular passages referenced satisfactorily fall into the abstract category of 'being Heideggerian.' But what the foregoing analyses of the minimal and the maximal particular underscore is the collection of hypotheses accompanying even this noncontroversial case by which a particular is straightforwardly subsumed under a universal.

To produce a thesis is effectively to produce a concept or notion which holds that a certain number of elements correspond to its definition. The notion is a basic component of (scientific) knowledge, providing the elements under its purview a link to other notions and their associated elements and thus opens up new avenues with which to potentially expand the epistemological field. Defined this way it is clear how the notion is similar to the universal as both subsume in a common space elements according to a similar feature. This allows the plurality of elements to be treated as a unity since each element bears the same mark and so is valid for all, which in turn makes of the universal notion the bearer of a truth liable to enter into relations with other similar unities. The universal 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' may very well supply the correct notion for reading a particular passage by Gadamer. But note how the universal implies the reading of the particular in this case. Opposed to this minimal reading is the maximal, which is just as legitimate and logically rigorous despite its objection to the universal of the same (and different) quality. This reading resists a certain rationalist approach which reduces using the notion to subsume positive occurrences to instead consider its contradictory relationship to every existence. Rejecting subalternation and embracing active refusal, the maximal reading of the particular recognizes that the mark a particular element presents which allows it to be subsumed under a universal notion is not of the same nature as the mark present in the universal notion. With the minimal particular such a prospect is absurd, since by definition the particular is only subsumed under the universal notion to the extent that the mark is

identical in both. But with the maximal particular, affirming that elements exist which do not fall under the notion ('There exist some passages of Gadamer that are not Heideggerian' in the face of 'All of Gadamer is Heideggerian') gives precedence instead to existence. This, however, does not so much attack the notional order itself as 'offer it on the contrary a possibility of consisting otherwise than as the map of a country that is already there' and thus one which comes complete with a navigable set of organized signs.[635] In sum, the two readings of the particular are radically opposed perspectives on how knowledge operates with respect to the phenomena it structures. Yet they stop short of being *diametrically* opposed because while the minimal reading is recognizable within the horizon of the maximal (though it is rejected), such recognition does not hold in the reverse. This may help dispel the impression that there is a simple technical choice to be made between the two readings. For we can hardly do without the minimal reading which acknowledges how the notional architecture expresses the structured order of the world. Yet the phenomenologist reminds us that we daily experience how this architecture nevertheless misses the wealth of the world so that we are forced to conclude that the notion is wholly blind to the brute fact of existence. Far from reconciling these two readings, they should be further distinguished along their divergent paths to better assess the consequences for textual analysis.

With respect to the minimal reading, if the predominant rationale for utilizing particular textual evidence is to illustrate a larger thesis, a certain false rigor is lent to the overall project. For even when the intent is critique, such evidence is never used in so radical a manner that it would seriously jeopardize its critical stance; if it did, the minimal reading of the particular would simply call for a change at the theoretical level to resynchronize it with the evidence presented and so ensure that the critical thesis achieves the highest possible reality coefficient. This latter possibility, whereby the textual evidence necessitates adjustments to the notional architecture, is actually a secondary movement under the minimal reading. As seen in foregoing discussions, in theory it is possible to begin the inner movement of the hermeneutical circle with the particular. But this happens precisely only *in theory*, for it is always already the case that the notion organizes the experience of particular existences even when one 'starts' with the latter level. In this sense the minimal reading does not take the notion in its simple symbolic dimension but rather views it as an accurate reflection of reality. Here it is fair to associate, as Le Gaufey has done, the notion with the Platonic Idea according to which existence is but its shadow.[636] Certainly academic standards dictate that the judgment of a text proceed according to whether its use of referenced textual material from primary sources is in line with its intended thesis. This paradigm, firmly entrenched in academia for some time now, quite simply judges a work of interpretation a success if it demonstrates through textual evidence what it says it will demonstrate. Here it becomes clear that cited textual material is much more than a mere adornment for an interpretation. Through its recourse to

authoritative texts, both primary and historically significant secondary ones, the interpretation gains a certain legitimacy. Moreover, along with this greater legitimacy comes an assurance that these references index the essential core of the matter, thus reflecting the interpreter's treatment of the reference as a sign which indexes the real. In this sense references act as anchoring points for the entire interpretive venture, lending it both credence and an authoritative weight. So an interpretation, making ample references to passages where Gadamer utilizes Heideggerian phraseology, effectively says to the reader 'See, it's really like I purport it to be: Gadamer is Heideggerian!' The reader leaves with the distinct impression that the entire opus of Gadamer so reflects this thesis that, as per the law of large numbers, even a *randomly* selected set of references would suffice to demonstrate it. Thus the minimal approach to interpretation severely restricts the relation one can strike with the text, for the victor seems to be thoroughly determined in advance, it being ruled out that a passage might be presented that would contradict the thesis. The suspicion here that the 'deck has been stacked' thus already works against its own aims, but the minimal approach suffers another setback in the other direction. To this 'too much' stands a 'too little' whereby the thesis cannot be made to account for the wealth of details which begin to mount as the number of references increase. On this point the strategy of the minimal approach might be captured by the motto 'less is more' so as to counter the suspicion that the interpretive effort is grossly inadequate to the task at hand.

These problems with the minimal approach to textual interpretation become much more severe when the lessons of the maximal particular are reintroduced back into the discussion. The terms above were intentionally kept as simple as possible to ease the discussion and to better distinguish the two approaches. To this end it should already be suspected how the potential suspension of meaning in textual analysis as reflected in the asymmetrical space of the Lacanian logical square is only obtained by starting from the maximal particular which invalidates the universal affirmative. This right away problematizes the use of textual material for the sole purpose of illustrating the veracity of theoretical statements such as an interpretive thesis. If an existent textual passage does inadvertently confirm the universal notion, it is at the cost of the loss of the emergence of the Not-all as a particular which maintains a minimal separation between its existence and essence. So utilizing the maximal particular reflects a far greater mistrust of theory than the one held by the more minimal-minded hermeneutical phenomenological approach; this is the case despite the latter's well-vocalized call to move away from theory toward the immediacy of meaningful experience. In contrast to the maximal, it is the minimal approach of the classical logical square which quite rigidly points to reality in its attempt to seamlessly connect its knowledge to such experiences without a gap. Here lies the conception of an all encompassing common space, much like what is had in the right deixis of the Lacanian logical square in contrast to the

reading by the left which purports instead an asymmetrical spatiality. This discontinuity between the two logical squares, which in large part is reflected *within* the Lacanian version itself, must be maintained if interpretive theory in its maximal setting is to be understood.

With respect to the Lacanian logical square, the affirmation of existence at the level of the two particulars each contradicts the two universals. What must be better appreciated is the precise status of the universal without considering (its relation to) the actual existence of the particular, and this can be approached by recognizing how the existent constitutes an exception to the universal only in the qualitative, not quantitative, sense. To think in terms of the latter would make of the particular affirmative a rarity and this is simply not warranted, for the universal affirmative does not imply any existence. In other words, it is not the case that we are dealing with an existing minority *qua* detracting exception to the existing majority subsumed under a common law. Le Gaufey discusses the graph of the hyperbolic function once again (*cf*. Figure 6.3) to demonstrate this point.[637] The reservations noted above concerning his criticism of Lacan's invoking of this function aside, Le Gaufey is correct to note how the graph is misleading as it reverses the expected existential weightings of the two propositions in the right deixis. That is, the particular affirmative is what should carry such weight, yet in the graph this is the zero of the ordinate axis; while the curve representing the universal affirmative has determinate values for all its points when these values should not be so easily implied.[638] In light of these failings and to resist the temptation to quantitatively treat the universal and the particular on the same existential footing, it is worthwhile to follow one or two of Le Gaufey's alternative recommendations on how to conceive the dislocation of the universal from existence. One enlightening way comes by considering the valid elemental inference from traditional propositional calculus called *modus ponens* [Latin, 'mode of placing']. Often called a hypothetical syllogism, the first of its three lines begins with a hypothetical proposition usually written in the form 'If p then q' where p is held to be in the position of the antecedent and q in the position of the consequent. But precisely as a hypothetical, nothing else follows until a subject affirms the antecedent p, at which point the proposition unfolds its truth and allows for the concluding line 'therefore q' to be written. The point here is that if the existence of p is not affirmed, the implication remains inert.[639] It does express a certain knowledge at the level of the conditional relations between the two terms or elements, but without the actualization of the antecedent this knowledge remains unrealized.

This same epistemological status can be seen in Frege's revolutionary move to predicate logic, which Lacan follows as discussed in Section 6.2 above. Recall that with Frege the function takes logical precedence as it presents an empty place for an object-term which might later come to fill it. But it is important to understand that it must be so filled for the function to take on its value and give birth to a

meaning. To reach an understanding of the universal as such, the task here is to ask what the mode of subsistence is of the Fregean function prior to its being filled by an object-term. Just like with the inference of *modus ponens*, the answer is that until the function is so endowed by an object-term it possesses a not-yet-full existence. Le Gaufey cites W. V. Quine to provide a poetic sense to this precarious status, referring to 'functions waiting for their objects as "semi-twilight entities."'[640] We can move a step further in this analysis to also enquire after the status of the object-term apart from the function. Certainly it has existence but not yet an essence, as essence is only granted to it when it comes to fill the empty place in the function. Here is yet another way to understand how existence takes precedence over its essence. Moreover, affirming the existent object-term and thus submitting it under the semi-twilight function also brings to mind Husserl's moderate Platonic notion of the ideality of meaning whose creation is similarly had through the meeting of two. In a comparable fashion, for Husserl a subjective meaning-intentional act is needed to instantiate the possible universal into a fully existent particularity complete with a meaning and with what Frege would call a truth-value. To this series of traditional logic, Frege, Quine and Husserl, one may add the Lacanian notion of the symbolic which similarly provides a way to conceive the status of the universal *sans* the particular. As the internally fractured treasure-trove of signifiers, the symbolic prescribes a knowledge of inferences, conditional relations and rules of validation in a way which also grants to this epistemological realm a certain independence. In this sense it enjoys a sovereignty from both the register of the real and the imaginary order of meaning.

It now becomes clearer that the maximal reading allows for universal notions to go their own way and interact with one another in a relatively independent fashion from the reality of existing objects. They can thus be read, as the foregoing has shown, without the need to precipitate one's own subjectivity so as to offer them an existential grounding. For the lifeless meaning they convey at the denotative level momentarily suffices in its promise of full expressive sense to come once subjectivization occurs by an affirmation of a p or the performance of a meaning-intentional act. At this level the notion *qua* spoken word is a pure declaring about something outside itself which nevertheless escapes its designation. Here is the basis of life philosophy's romantic complaint about the limits of representation. But what this theoretical disposition itself misses is how that which refuses to be subsumed under a universal notion has to do with the Not-all particular. It is towards this understanding the maximal particular invites its reader. Already the right deixis clearly separates out the exception of the particular affirmative $\exists x \, \overline{\Phi x}$ as that which contests the universal affirmative $\forall x \, \Phi x$. But this is to consider it qualitatively as the manifested existence which gives form to the function. In contrast, with the minimal particular affirmative the function takes precedence over the existence of this form " $\exists x \, \Phi x$ " since it blends in with its universal model. Thus the universalized mark of 'being Heideggerian' takes a position of ascendency over

the existence of the passages in which they are found when it comes to minimally affirming 'Some of Gadamer is Heideggerian.' But with the maximal particular affirmative this ranking is reversed since the affirmation of existence finds its way to the foreground without the need to justify itself by bearing the universalized mark. Yet nothing can be said about this exception. Consider the affirmation of existing passages of Gadamer which form an exception to the universal claim 'All of Gadamer is Heideggerian.' Because it negates the function 'being Heideggerian,' it is only permissible to affirm this exception in the form of the proposition 'Some of Gadamer is not Heideggerian' and nothing more.

The decision by Lacan to clearly distinguish existence from the function has its historical roots again with Frege and this can be appreciated by clarifying and expanding the discussion originally had in Section 6.2 above. There it was seen how the function '( ) is Heideggerian' takes on its value when an object-term like 'Gadamer' comes to occupy its empty place. Now, the discussion in the present chapter has consistently treated 'Gadamer' not as a proper name designating the actual existence of a singular man who once went by that name; rather, 'Gadamer' has effectively been treated as equivalent to 'the texts of Gadamer.'[641] But the presentation moved too fast by overlooking how Frege's first move was precisely to make this distinction. In doing so, his solution effectively lead to a conception which eliminates the singular from consideration. Taking the second of the two designations above, the universal affirmative can be written as 'All the texts of Gadamer are Heideggerian.' What Frege does is treat this as a complex proposition involving two functions, '( ) is a text of Gadamer' and '( ) is Heideggerian,' between which a certain relation is stated to have been obtained: whatever truthfully satisfies the former also satisfies the latter. If this is represented as 'For all x, if x is a text of Gadamer, then x is Heideggerian,' the two propositions can be regarded as 'x is a text of Gadamer' and 'x is Heideggerian' and further linked together by a propositional connective and bound by the universal quantifier $\forall x$. This reasoning can similarly be applied with respect to the singular designation which considers Gadamer as a man, as in the proposition 'Gadamer was Jauss' teacher.' But the affirmation of such a proposition confuses in the name 'Gadamer' a conviction about his existence and the fact that he was Jauss' teacher. This duality is what concerns Frege and thus what comes to pass is the distinction of the *factum brutum* of existence from the predicates which might be attributed to it. In order to help conceive of this existential *a priori* without further consideration, the proposition could be placed into a form like 'There exists an x such that x is Gadamer and such that this x was Jauss' teacher' which would formally be written with the existential quantifier $\exists x$. With Lacan's division of the right deixis into two propositions, one written with the universal quantifier and one with the existential quantifier, this distinction becomes clearly expressed. For the work of the maximal particular affirmative $\exists x \, \overline{\Phi x}$ distinguishes the existent (with its propositional connectives to the symbolic mark and the function) from their negation. In this way the existent is posited

separately from the symbolic determinations that it supports, yet finds itself submitted to their determination. This is similar to how the asymptotes support the hyperbolic function through a point where its calculation is undefined; yet nevertheless this precise point is what determines the graphical position of the asymptotes. In a maximal reading, textual references in an interpretation would be treated asymptotically, in contrast to the more forced minimal reading which fails almost in principle. For if the x *qua* textual reference is only so summoned because of the relevant symbolic marks it displays, it is nothing more than the shadow cast by the notion whose affirmation it defends. Such an existent would no longer find itself in the position of an ambiguous outlier; rather, it would be entirely determined as a well-defined point on the graph of a function whose domain is continuous. Between the 'done deal' of the minimal particular and the romantic bemoaning (or celebration) of the failure of every representation of reality stands the maximal particular interpretative strategy. But what exactly does such an interpretation look like?

As will be appreciated from the foregoing, this strategy cannot be directly 'illustrated,' as it would then readily slip into the minimal order of the particular. That in some sense it can only be approached through what it is not is indeed readily seen in the very writing of the particular proposition at the level of its quality, for it negates the function affirmed in its universal. Thus it is quite appropriate that Le Gaufey would have us study a case from classical Freudian psychoanalysis only as a first approximation to the maximal approach: in the end he rules it as indirectly endorsing the minimal approach of the clinical vignette and so it is accordingly rejected.[642] But as it does provide a case where Freud takes up the challenge of evidence that directly contradicts one of his theories, it does bear brief examination if only to underscore the falsity of the notion that a maximal approach seeks only to realign the theoretical to better account for the existence of contradictory evidence. In simple terms and without entering into the specific details of the case, Freud theorized paranoia to have a homosexual foundation, and this implied that the persecutor must be of the same sex as the persecuted paranoiac. All cases which Freud came across confirmed this theoretical notion but one: he became acquainted with a female patient whose persecutor was a man. The existence of this exception for Freud takes precedence over his theory and he accordingly investigates further. What he eventually finds is that the true persecutor is in fact a woman. So this case only appeared to form an exception, for in the end it was compatible with his thesis on paranoia. The lesson here seems to be the same lesson imparted by an aspect of hermeneutical phenomenology which teaches that harmony is found if one simply digs deep enough beneath the apparent opposition. In terms of Freudian dream analysis, this lesson amounts to the recognition of how the manifest face of the text hides another latent text beneath it. But as seen in Section 5.1 above, Freud does not halt his interpretation after the manifest content yields up its latent content but further inquires

after this very displacement, endeavoring to account for the structured passage from the latent to the manifest which indexes the real and also allows for adjustments to the theory predicting the manifest content.[643] In the present case he does follow that passage and makes appropriate adjustments to his theory. So as Le Gaufey points out, the temptation is to read this case as do his usual critics who accuse him of harboring theories so sophisticated that they can always be maneuvered out from any contradiction. Yet we do well to note that the universal affirmation of the theory was initially put into question not only through contradictory manifest content, but through the subordinate (and, unfortunately, subalternate) role Freud assigns to the latent content found 'beneath' it, for he treats that latent content as only a stage in deciphering the text. This alone makes Freud's technique superior to the strict minimal approach that deals only with non-contradictory textual evidence confirming the thesis. However, at least with respect to the present case Freud does not deal with an existent fact resistant to *all* theoretical explanations which on that basis alone would be able to negate the theory. Such an exceptional point is what $\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$ makes plain with its writing in its opposition to $\forall x\ \Phi x$.

Yet on this basis alone one cannot conclude that every existence eludes the set of notions which frame it. Believing otherwise might lead to interpretive practices which simply point out those textual passages that remain resistant to the commonly accepted understanding of the primary source material. What stops such a simplistic demonstration of the failing of the universal notion is that $\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$ does not stand alone in its contradictory opposition. In fact, without factoring in the contribution played by the two propositions in the left deixis of the logical square of the maximal particular, it becomes rather difficult to make full sense of the contradiction inherent in the right. For his part Le Gaufey takes up the contradiction in the right deixis through the traditional 'liar paradox' Lacan himself raised on the November 11, 1961 session of his ninth seminar. Le Gaufey's discussion[644] presents a way to conceive of this contradiction that aids in understanding the discussion first had in Section 6.2 above with respect to the elemental universal affirmative 'All men are mortal.' But it is interesting that while his discussion begins by strictly making use of the two propositions in the right deixis, there is an eventual turn to those of the left in order to better reveal the true status of the exception. Again this must be read as a move which demonstrates how the left deixis takes logical priority over the right.

Often simply conveyed by the statement 'I am now speaking falsely,'[645] the liar paradox has been known since antiquity and has traditionally been attributed to Epimenides the Cretan in the form 'All Cretans are liars.' If Epimenides affirms that all Cretans are liars, what are we to make of his assertion given the fact that he himself is a Cretan? It seems this is precisely the dilemma inscribed by the two propositions in the right deixis. The universal affirmative 'All Cretans are liars' ($\forall x\ \Phi x$) is a theoretical statement purporting a truth about a generic All of Cretans ($\forall x$) stated by Epimenides (x), who does not

claim to escape from either the All to which he belongs or from the law (Φx) he states is true and according to which he is also a liar. In so stating, his full intention is to tell the truth in this respect. Yet in doing so he positions himself in direct contradiction to this universal as soon as he states it ($\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$). While it suffices for many to simply mention these paradoxes, treating them little better than amusements in logic, the advantage of Lacan's formulae is that it allows for a better understanding of the mechanism which structures them. This concerns a certain redoubling at the level of quality in propositions which generate such a paradox over-against what is had in classical logic. With respect to the latter it has been seen that a logical proposition claims to be either true or false according to whether its subject bears the predicate or not and since Frege this has been called its truth-value. Here truth is taken as strictly subsisting at the level of the entire statement regardless of whether one affirms, say, the Heideggerian-like quality of All or Some passages by Gadamer or whether one denies that they bear this mark. That is, all four propositional cases have a truth-value: in the first two cases the truth-value is true and in the second two cases it is false. But it has also been seen that while Lacan's version of the logical square maintains a classical structure, his interests have lead him to thoroughly subvert it. In the terms of the present discussion this subversion is understood as an endeavor to inscribe the paradox which results when the question of truth itself takes up the position of predicate in the classical framework. This is the situation of Epimenides who, by telling us that 'All Cretans are liars,' in effect also claims 'At least one Cretan (Epimenides) is not a liar (is truthful).' The paradox results because truth is doubled, for a mode of relationship of Cretans to the truth is affirmed in an assertion which itself also bears a truth-value. If the predicate were instead 'tall,' no such paradox would result if Epimenides were in fact short and had said 'All Cretans are tall.' In such a case he would constitute an exception by simple contradiction which would not at all trouble the formation of the set of Cretans composed of those who bear the predicate and those who do not. But with truth split between its position of truth-value subsisting at the level of the statement ('S is P') *and* its position of predicate ('S is truthful') in the very same statement, it seems a choice must be made between the two poles. In which position should one consider the truth of a statement? Classical logicians have opted to consider truth only as truth-value. They of course recognize the paradox that results by also positioning truth in the position of predicate yet only seem to invoke this paradox as an interesting logical exercise. Faced with this same choice, Lacan's answer is a resounding 'Yes, please!' which acknowledges how the *choice itself* must be chosen. It is *this* choice that is inscribed into the writing of his logical square.

But exactly where in the logical square this inscription ultimately lies is rather vague. If anything it appears that suddenly what is at stake concerns the *a priori* logic inscribed in the left deixis despite the fact that the analysis of this paradox was initiated in the right. That this analysis effected a movement

from right to left is confirmed by Le Gaufey's own conclusion that this paradox is 'the paradox formally presented by the structure of Russell's paradox,'[646] which was located in discussions above as subsisting in the left deixis. To see this, consider that if Epimenides tells the truth, his exclusion from the universal proposition makes it false ($\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$ and $\forall x\ \Phi x$ are contradictories), and so he is telling a falsehood when he is being truthful; but if he tells a falsehood, he rejoins the lying Cretans which makes the universal proposition true and so he is telling the truth when he is lying.[647] In a word, by telling the truth, he lies and by lying he tells the truth. The source of the difficultly lies with how truth designates the nature of the link between subject (or argument) and predicate (or function), just as in the case of the paradoxical 'set of all sets that are not members of themselves' where 'membership' is taken as a noun designating the link between sets and their elements. In most cases no issues arise. Sets that are not members of themselves certainly exist[648] and it is perfectly acceptable to utter how 'All Cretans are liars' when one is not in fact a Cretan. But fold the properties of membership and truth back onto themselves and paradoxes result.[649] Through its ultimate recourse to the left deixis where no set can be determined, this analysis thus unmasks the ultimately phantasmatical dimension of the particular affirmative $\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$ to the right. This proposition alone simply cannot form an acceptable exception by refusing to submit to the function in question, for All are so submitted.

To reemphasize, the proper (maximal) understanding of the particular affirmative $\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$ is arrived at by taking into consideration those propositions subsisting in the more radical deixis of the left. It should therefore not be conceived as a singular exception (there is no meta-language), nor quantitatively as if it forms a minority to a majority of elements in the universal affirmative $\forall x\ \Phi x$ which it contradicts. Rather, it should be thought of as arriving on the scene of the logical square through its contradiction to the universal negative $\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$, whose writing has been shown to inscribe a 'nothing,' an absence of any predicable subject. The particular affirmative thus affirms what exists with respect to the predicate (or function) without bearing its mark (or satisfying it). What the logical paradox of Epimenides shows is not a rare aberration (as classical logic would consider it) but the much more common regime every speaking being finds himself within whenever he lends his voice to the establishment of an All to which he is a member but whose completeness he prevents by this very declaration – although he will not do so without simultaneously arranging for himself the exceptional point of a meta-language to occupy *sub rosa* and to which we must judge from the left as ultimately phantasmatic. If this phantasmatical dimension to the declaration of the All is taken into account, it is better appreciated how the status of that entity collectivizing elements into an All carries no existential weight, subsisting as it does more on the side of the signifier than on any ontologized thing (contrary to what the hermeneutical phenomenologist would have us believe). The paradox of Epimenides also underscores the ambiguity of the term 'membership' in

the formation of a set. Using the universal quantifier $\forall x$ necessitates a set populated with elements said to be members of this set. But if it is affirmed that (at least) one x exists which does not satisfy the function and thus forms an exception to the All of the universal, an ambiguity immediately arises as to whether it ceases to be a member of this All or not. Classical logic cannot tolerate such an ambiguity and on this point Lacan *seems* to concur, constructing his maximal logical square in such a fashion so that either the universals are true or the particulars are true while the contradictory relation linking them appear to assure that they cannot be true at the same time. However, a proper reading of the particular and the universal as inscribed in the right deixis reveals that the very ambiguity in question is actually preserved there in such a way that the contradiction between them does not strictly imply that the truth of one level annihilates the truth of the other. Rather, since the particular affirmative establishes the universal affirmative precisely through its objection to it (providing it as it does with the existent that declares it), the possibility is raised that these two propositions in the right deixis can be simultaneously true *despite* their contradictory relation.[650] Such an inscription clearly departs from classical logic.

A fuller picture emerges by looking to the top proposition of the left deixis where the exception in the right finds itself denied, at once shutting down any lingering aspirations to be the One. The very writing of the universal negative $\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$ exposes the charade of a meta-language, affirming as it does through its use of a double negative that there does not exist any x which does not satisfy the function. Coupling this with the bottom proposition of the particular negative $\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$, the paradoxical result is that the x elements which do satisfy the function nevertheless do not collectivize into any All set. Based as it is on this All, the universality of the notion takes its first hit from the right (as it is founded on the existence of exceptions), but is then delivered a fatal blow from the left (insofar as there is no exception and what does exist cannot form into an All). Pitting the All against the Not-all, the latter emerges as the clear victor. It could be said that the Lacanian logical square is the square of the Not-all in the sense that the exigencies of this left-leaning proposition have guided the writing of each of the other propositions to optimize the attack directed against any universal notion that would presume to possess existential weight. In its most consequential reading the notion is thoroughly split. However, this does not imply that the universal notion is thereby rendered entirely ineffectual, for its symbolic status does carry a certain interpretive weight by readily consigning elements to its sphere – indeed interpretation could not proceed without this initial send-off by its minimal particular reading. But the move to an interpretation based on the maximal particular that would break free of the hermeneutical circle would recognize that what ultimately effectuates such interpretive weight is the Not-all which thoroughly resists being subsumed under any universal thesis. Maintaining itself instead as an existence without essence, it is the Not-all

which proves itself decisive in the interpretive endeavor by raising the possibility that meaning can be suspended. This claim is a central thesis of Chapter 7 below.

To help prepare for that discussion, some concluding remarks would be welcomed regarding the different global stances assumed by the minimal and maximal logical squares towards the interpretive endeavor. In hermeneutical terms, what assures that the two sides of the classical Aristotelian logical square are harmonized is meaning. The interpretive process begins by gaining entry into the hermeneutical circle by assuming a universal thesis such as 'Gadamer is Heideggerian.' Particular passages of Gadamer are then read and found to either affirm or deny this thesis. If affirmed, the meaning of Gadamer is firmly established: he is Heideggerian and this meaning encompasses both sides of the square. Or more accurately the left deixis effectively collapses into the right, for if Gadamer is not 'not Heideggerian,' the left deixis is removed from consideration. The hegemony of meaning is not tapered in the slightest if the particular passages are found instead to deny the universal thesis. In fact it is arguably strengthened in this case. For judging Gadamer to be 'not Heideggerian' equally unites the two sides although this time under the authority of the left deixis. But since this judgment comes in the form of a negation, it amounts to an abrupt 'No' which plays the part of a scansion that precipitates concluding moments in the mind of every reader. If Gadamer is not Heideggerian, then what is he? How should his work be positively characterized? Opening infinite avenues for future exploration, this meaning-to-come for the present moment nevertheless stabilizes any inherent tension in the minimal logical square by removing all affirmative stances to be had in the right deixis to favor instead the left. The analysis here that only a single deixis is put into play during any single turn of the hermeneutical circle, so that this circle could be said to nourish itself across both sides, confirms the findings above that the minimal logical square operates within a singular, symmetrical and unified space.

With the asymmetrical space of the maximal particular logical square, this harmonization through meaning thoroughly breaks down. For each side is not to be treated as one pole of a binary couple so that the choice of one simply equates with the negation of the other. This is not to say that meaning does not subsist in this square altogether but rather that it seems to be confined to just one of its sides, that of the right. But already the hermeneutical circle is problematized in the right deixis in that it is no longer clear which level, the universal or the particular, initiates its circular movement. Keeping to the discussion of Epimenides above, one could issue an existential challenge to the always already status of the universal notion by arguing that such a notion must always be articulated with respect to a particular existence. In this case the voice which a particular passage of Gadamer lends to the interpretive proceedings becomes the necessary condition for the declaration of any universal thesis such as 'Gadamer is Heideggerian.' But in so doing this textual passage withdraws itself so as not to be swept up in this universal. As seen above,

the particular declaration supports this universal by its own defection at this level. This would produce the essence of the being of the text while simultaneously maintaining its objection by its very existence. The castrating 'No' isolated to the left deixis of the classical square thus has a presence in the right deixis of the Lacanian square, but in the latter case the negation does produce a determinate meaning at the level of the universal. This donation of the meaning of Gadamer as Heideggerian might be brought about by a lengthy citation from one of his texts. Its special handling (indicated by changes to font size, line spacing, etc...) assures its exceptional status with respect to the interpreting text and more importantly, to Gadamer's own body of work, will not be missed. What often follows such citations are lines like 'This means that...' or 'What Gadamer is saying...' that immediately engage in explication, as if the cited passage cannot entirely be trusted on its own to demonstrate the thesis in question. In terms of the right deixis the worry here is unwarranted. For it is precisely through its withdrawal, at its very point of exclusion from the thesis it is intended to demonstrate, that the existence of this passage is best poised to declare it in its symbolic-virtual dimension and affirm the notion that 'Gadamer is Heideggerian.'

Yet in terms of the left deixis the worry that such a particular passage might disappoint is justifiable. Not only at the level of its content where elements can always be found contradicting the interpreter's official explication which might call for critical rebuttal; indeed at this level the hermeneutical task is endless and expansion to the secondary literature is assured. Rather, at a much more consequential level the left deixis of the maximal square fatally attacks the right at the very level of its existential exceptionality and thereby undermines the grounding of the universal thesis. For in the left deixis those existing elements which satisfy nevertheless do not form any thesis and so do not generate any exception. The contradiction here is even more troubling than the contradiction to be had in the right deixis: it is affirmed in the left that there is no exception yet those elements present cannot form a thesis; each one to the left is not an exceptional One as on the right. The Not-all affirms each existence through the use of a negated universal quantifier so as to display its restrictive aspect and here is why cited passages may incite concern that they are either in default with respect to the unity of the thesis or else appear overly eager in excessively displaying their thematic markings. This wavering between a too little and a too much prevents such passages from being identical to themselves. A minimally consistent self-identity is needed to integrate elements into a thematic unity, but the Not-all disturbs this unity from within and so prevents the collectivization of particular textual passages under a unified meaning.

This dissonance should not be seen as a weakness of the left deixis in contrast to the symbolic unity to be had in the right but rather as its undeniable strength which grants to it its logical priority. To the initial difficulties which the right introduces into the smooth operation of the hermeneutical circle, the left complements by further introducing the Not-all which thoroughly disturbs the unity and cohesiveness of

the hermeneutical field. Insofar as it is the Not-all which ultimately suspends this field, the left deixis could be said to complete the work started by the right. In this way no unified field of meaning traverses the maximal logical square and its two sides could in no way enter into a relationship. That this square inscribes a non-unified hermeneutical field is underscored by the fact that the same x is utilized in the writing of the propositions on both its sides. Had an x been used to the right and a y to the left so as to designate two different spaces or two aspects of the same space, one would be justified in entertaining the notion that the two sides enter into some relation. But the use of the same x, everywhere valid, calls on the reader to endeavor to think the one and same space as self-undermining. Consider that from one perspective the x is taken as excepted from the All-space that it presupposes and within which it is a member, and from another perspective this same x is taken as existing without being a member of some All. Again if this x denotes a particular textual passage of Gadamer of interest to the interpreter, both these functionings must be considered. First, this passage could be conceived as harboring an essential meaning for All of Gadamer's work while the second functioning of this very same passage refuses to authorize any such essence but would instead be based entirely on an existence which remains resistant to any meaningful unity whatsoever. Together they establish and then immediately undermine the set of signifiers of a text along with whatever meaning they carry. However, it should be cautioned that the terminology of 'perspective' is perhaps rather misleading. The danger is to read this as a binary, as if there were determinate x-right and y-left perspectives. What must be kept in mind is how it is the same textual passage that is being examined from both these 'perspectives' and that a proper interpretation must consider both at once: as a text which ultimately bears no relation to itself due to the nonsensical Not-all preventing a set of common terms from coming to subsume the putting into relation of the 'two' perspectives under a unified meaning. It can hardly be stressed enough that no relationship is possible since at the level of essences one is lacking and the existences from either perspective are incommensurable to the other.

The logical priority of the left deixis over the right in the maximal logical square cannot only be expressed by the different argument forms of the same element x but also in terms of the phallic function Φx, for it too makes an appearance in each of the propositions. Given that the phallic signifier Φ is exceptional to the field of signifiers, it is legitimate to approach this rather enigmatic function which bears its name as involving the status of the exception in the logical square. Yet as the link between signifiers and *jouissance* is also involved, the phallic function can fruitfully be taken as equivalent to the function of castration, which states that a certain *jouissance* must be given up by every user of signifiers. It not only serves to distinguish and disconnect the two irreducible functionings of the element x, but its use in each proposition allows for the two sides of the logical square to be read has having inscribed the two different

relationships that can be struck with this function. Accordingly, in the right deixis this function is affirmed by the One excepted from it while making itself the nucleus of the movement of signifiers which fails to deliver the promised *jouissance*; while in the Other deixis this impossibility is supplemented by an experience of dissatisfaction preventing closure through meaningful unity. Interpreting with the One holds out promise that the elusive meaning of a textual passage can eventually be corned and be made to corral the infinite slide of signifiers. But as far as the Other is concerned no such relation could be struck and here lies the sobering truth of the One which might exclude itself so as to uphold a meaningful unity. This truth equally holds for anyone wishing to be excluded from the Lacanian logical square itself so as to find there a meaning. But as its two sides stand in thorough non-relation, ultimately only its suspension will be found there.

CHAPTER 7

SETTING THE FORMULAE OF SEXUATION IN MOTION

> Well then, you are going to take up *L'étourdit* again and off you go, give us what will be, not
> your reading, but the way in which you are going to follow it.[651]

As the derivation, explication and relevance to textual theory of the Lacanian logical square are the primary aims of the previous chapter, the thesis of Part II that this logical square can be used to think the suspension of meaning has not yet been satisfactorily demonstrated. Nevertheless, by establishing the spatial asymmetry of the logical square important groundwork has been laid and the present chapter seeks to expand on this understanding by turning to *L'étourdit*.[652] For in this text Lacan takes up topology in a manner suggestive of the further spatial manipulations to be had with his sexuated formulae. Indeed topology permits thought to aim beyond the set theory at stake in the logical square as presented above. This is a crucial step towards demonstrating our thesis since thinking in terms of set formation is what largely restricted the previous discussion of the logical square to its hermeneutical horizon. As was seen there, in the circumstance where well-defined sets encounter elements of the same order existing in domains refusing to similarly collectivize into meaningful entities, one could at best speculate that these entities *might* be suspended. That is, approached from the perspective of set formation alone the precise mechanism of such a suspension remains elusive. However, by merging the four discourses with the four sexuated formulae, the Lacanian logical square effectively begins to revolve and the spatiality it inscribes becomes transformed. Following these spatial twists and turns makes it apparent that the hermeneutical circle rotates in a field which is itself suspended from a singular point. In Part I this suspension point was spoken of alternately as a sublime object or a nonsensical element. But in sexuation theory it is identified with the Not-all. The wager of the present chapter is that topology leads thought to this suspension point by effectively equating the Not-all with the subversive structure of the cross-cap. The recent major commentary on *L'étourdit* by Fierens proves invaluable and is closely considered.

Section 7.1 introduces a twofold path or circuit through the Lacanian logical square leading up to the suspension of meaning. This introduction is first made using the logic of negation and second by making

use of the Kantian table of nothings. Comprised of an initial trajectory with a subsequent reversal, the two legs of this circuit are expanded upon in the following sections. Section 7.2 establishes the hermeneutical circle in the right deixis by integrating the four discourses into the logical square in order to demonstrate the breakdown of the meaning-relation. Section 7.3 explicates Lacan's use of topology and then integrates it into the logical square to demonstrate the suspension of meaning.

7.1 Counting Nothings in the Land of Nyania

If the Lacanian logical square is to be used to demonstrate the suspension of meaning, it must ultimately be placed into motion. Hence a major effort of the present chapter is to establish how each of its four propositions should not be thought of as isolated to its respective quadrant but rather as inscribing elements and spatial relations that overflow one from the other. Certainly the previous chapter has already taken a significant step in this direction by establishing their interrelation. But as each proposition was explicated in turn through the others, what may have been lost is how these relations are not chaotic but do have a certain order or ranking beyond what has already been said regarding the status of the exception and the *a priori* nature of the left deixis. This chapter suggests one way to conceive this ordered movement and the present section provides an introduction to it, sketching out the suggested twofold path to follow so that the suspension point of meaning can be unveiled. Laying all our cards on the table, this path is none other than the movement through quadrants $\boxed{1} \rightarrow \boxed{2} \rightarrow \boxed{3} \rightarrow \boxed{4}$ of the logical square, with a return trajectory that underscores how the Not-all of $\boxed{4}$ plays a part in the constitution of each of the other three while itself being constructed by them. These two trajectories are taken up in more detail in Sections 7.2 and 7.3. While this section is largely introductory, by tracing out the entire circuit once via the logic of negation and once more via Kant's table of nothings, it nevertheless does prove valuable in underscoring the importance of both prohibition (*i.e.*, the prohibitive 'No!' of negation) and spatiality (*i.e.*, inscribed nothings) to the Lacanian logical square.

One way to understand the movement $\boxed{1} \rightarrow \boxed{2} \rightarrow \boxed{3} \rightarrow \boxed{4}$ is by recognizing how it proceeds as a series of successive negations. Simply stated, the universal affirmative $\forall x \, \Phi x$ is negated by the particular affirmative $\exists x \, \overline{\Phi x}$, which in turn is negated by the universal negative $\overline{\exists x} \, \overline{\Phi x}$, followed by a further negation by the particular negative $\overline{\forall x} \, \Phi x$. This succession of three negations (necessitating the use of the bar of negation four times) is indispensible for entering the space of the Not-all. In more detail, the movement begins with the 'No!' said by Epimenides to the phallic function Φx. This effectively divides the right deixis into two halves and what is at stake in this division can be reduced to the logic of sets. That is, where quadrant $\boxed{1}$ holds the set of the phallic, in quadrant $\boxed{2}$ there exists the set of that which is not phallic. Yet this neat division is upset as soon as a move is made into quadrant $\boxed{3}$. For the proposition found there, identical to the one proceeding it but with a negating bar over the existential quantifier,

affirms that 'There is no x that is not phallic.' This additional negation calls the bluff of the One and thus effectively empties the Epimenidean set. But this does not leave the set of the phallic intact, for the further movement into quadrant $\boxed{4}$ finds there a proposition which negates the universal as well. Thus the phallic set turns out to be Not-all there is.[653] So at the end of this trajectory what exactly is left? The present chapter endeavors to show that here lies the sought-after sublime object, a contingent piece of the real capable of suspending the structured rotation of the hermeneutical circle whose meaning subsists in the imaginary register articulated in the deixis to the right. This can already be understood by more consequentially following the third arrow of the above succession. In this case $\boxed{4}$ directly negates $\boxed{3}$ and this can fruitfully be conceived as the impossible ontologization of the void inscribed in the latter quadrant.[654] As seen below, this ontologization becomes a crucial factor when it comes to the question of the suspension of meaning.

For the present moment, the suspicion that the last two negations in the above succession have effected a departure from set theory is well confirmed by Lacan himself in *L'étourdit*. In introducing the two propositions from the left deixis, he notes how

> '[t]heir inscription is not usual in mathematics. To deny, as the bar over the quantifier marks it, to deny that *there exists one* is not done, and still less that *forall* is fornotalled (*pourpastoute*). It is here nevertheless that there is revealed the sense of the saying, from the fact that, combining there the *nyania* (thereisnotonewasdenied)...it supplies for the fact that between them, there was no relationship (*de rapport nyait pas*).'[655]

What Lacan draws attention to is the fact that the writing of $\overline{\exists x}$ and $\overline{\forall x}$ departs from ordinary mathematical usage to arrive elsewhere. In terms of the present discussion this is a shift from the theory of simple set formation (in play in the previous chapter) towards a dimension best served by topology.[656] This is also a shift from the fact of enunciating (*i.e.*, that of the Epimenidean order) to the fact of saying. Either way it is a shift from the right deixis of sets to the specific topology inscribed in the left, a shift caused by the *nyania* which inscribes the fact that there is no relationship between the two sides. This term *nyania* is a neologism by Lacan and provides a sense of the extraordinary difficulty of following *L'étourdit*. But as is generally the case, even such mysterious signifiers can be understood provided one is prepared to *work through* the Lacanian text.[657] As it turns out this *nyania* is rather simple to unwind. It is composed of two negations. The *nia* [was denied] refers to the exception in the right deixis, the One who enunciates a 'No!' and thereby exempts itself from the set of the phallic. Epimenides, the man who enunciates how 'All men are mortal' and the Freudian primordial father all fit this bill. The second negation, *n'y a* [is not], is the negation of the existence of this exception which creates an exit out of the logic of sets and an entrance into the specific topological domain of the left deixis. With *nia* equivalent to $\overline{\Phi x}$ and *nya* to $\overline{\exists x}$, the combined *nyania* is thus none other than $\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$. According to Figure 6.2, this

proposition is equivalent to $\forall x\ \Phi x$, while the Not-all is equivalent to the existence of the exception so that a set might exist part phallic and part not phallic. Distance from such an understanding was taken soon after the Lacanian logical square was formally presented in Chapter 6, but the path suggested by *L'étourdit* allows one to truly bury the notion of such equivalencies. For traversing the logical square as $\boxed{1} \to \boxed{2} \to \boxed{3} \to \boxed{4}$ thoroughly breaks with any and all symmetry between the two sides. The crucial moment arrives with the movement into the left deixis beginning with the *nyania* which clears the space to allow 'everything' to be said of the element x 'even if it proceeds without reason.' Yet this 'everything' does not return us to the All, for 'it is an all (*tout*) outside universe, which is read right away from the second quantifier as *notall*.'[658] As the text proceeds it becomes clear that 'reason' concerns the way the exception limits the universal affirmative, providing it with a boundary that effectively makes of the right deixis the place of the One. But what happens when reason fails, that is, when the exception is denied? In this case it is not so much that the All is suppressed; rather, it immediately begins to overflow the confines which rendered it a universal One, an overflow which can be conceived as occurring in the space cleared by the *nyania*. This all that is not All is the Not-all. The Not-all is what exceeds the All, being 'outside' or 'greater than' the universe and the universal All.

But there is a surprise awaiting the reader on the following page. Contrary to what one might expect from studying Figure 6.2, the fact that the Not-all negates the universal nevertheless does not make it a particular. Lacan instead characterizes the Not-all as 'the singular of a "confine" ("*confin*")' which he immediately links with *jouissance*. Now, in English as well as in French, the term confine suggests a bounded region and if this term stood alone it would certainly fail to distinguish the Not-all from the All, the latter of which must precisely be conceived as such a region kept within the limits set by the exception.[659] The Not-all must of course be conceived differently and Lacan achieves this conception quite precisely with the expression just cited. Understanding this requires a brief etymological digression. In both French and Old French the noun of this expression is always said in the plural, as *confins*, which additionally translates as a 'border' or 'boundary.' Its Latin roots are found with *confinium* [boundary, limit] derived from *confinis* [bordering on] which in turn is derived from *com-* [with] and *finis* [an end, limit]. By unconventionally dropping the final 's,' the endeavor here is to return to a sense better captured by its etymological roots and by further stating how we are to take the singular of this term, Lacan doubly marks this fact to ensure it will not be missed. His reading of 'confine' in the singular thus frustrates the conception that the Not-all *qua* confine is a region restricted to set limits. Instead we are effectively asked to recognize in the Not-all the very limit *as such*. Now, by embodying the very limit itself the Not-all completely subverts the logic of the universal and of the particular. For it directly negates the former but cannot be equated with the latter either, having attained itself by passing through the *nyania* which

negates the exception. Since the singular is usually conceived in the sense of 'the one and only' and since the exception can legitimately be read as affirming the existence of just that, this cannot be what is captured by the Not-all. If it did the Not-all would reduce to the exception. But the Not-all only comes to be through the denial of the exception. Thus the Not-all must be radically reconceived: the singular of a confine is that which paradoxically carries within it the universal, the exception which unifies and limits, and the negation of this exception. That is, all of the propositions in the Lacanian logical square are effectively comprehended in the space of the Not-all. As Fierens says, what is at stake with the Not-all 'is a new way of thinking, which no longer classifies in boxes or logical places, but whose logic, since it is a journey, is constituted from changes of logic.'[660] So initially the path proceeds quite linearly through the quadrants of the logical square, but upon reaching the Not-all the path suddenly takes a paradoxical twist. Here a return trajectory commences, underscoring how the sequence $\boxed{1} \to \boxed{2} \to \boxed{3} \to \boxed{4}$ had taken place within the space of the Not-all of $\boxed{4}$ all along.

Neither universal nor particular, the Not-all is singular. The importance of having arrived at this result cannot be overemphasized for the project of suspending the hermeneutical circle of meaning. This singular element, suspected to exist in certain aesthetic theories in Section 4.2 and directly theorized by Freudian-Lacanian thinkers throughout Chapter 5, is now established as occupying quadrant $\boxed{4}$ of the Lacanian logical square. What should be recognized is how the Not-all of $\boxed{4}$ is an element doubly-inscribed, operating both as part of and the space within which the sequence $\boxed{1} \to \boxed{2} \to \boxed{3} \to \boxed{4}$ proceeds. The Not-all thus schematizes an element which overlaps content with form, an element found in the sequence yet paradoxically embodying the very sequence which disclosed it. To identify with this element would thus be to identify with a suspension point to the sequence. This has direct implications for textual analysis. Although it has not been directly shown how the classical hermeneutical circle is confined to the right deixis, already the fact that the Not-all breaks with the particular makes it highly likely that this is the case. For where else could the dynamic between the universal and particular play out if not between the first two quadrants? The third quadrant is thoroughly empty and the fourth contains a singular element. If this is the case, it might be conceived how the universal (whole) and particular (part) turn in an empty space, generating a singular element that simultaneously embodies the very form of their reciprocal exchange. Extracting out and identifying with this element would then suspend the circular turn. In more concrete terms the circle begins with the provisional possibility of the universal notion (perhaps an interpretive thesis like 'Gadamer is Heideggerian') and the necessity of its particular constitutive exception ('At least one text of Gadamer is not Heideggerian'), continues through the recognition of the impossibility of any such exception ('There is not one text of Gadamer that is not Heideggerian'), only to conclude with the final contingency of the interpretive act, the act which

underscores each of these moments and forever ensures the inaccessibility of meaning and the indetermination of interpretation. The point here would be that the very approach of the interpreter to the text must be paradoxically embodied in an element of that text. Identification with this textual element would then necessarily suspend the interpretive process and the associated hermeneutical pursuit of textual meaning. Before turning to a more detailed discussion, the path and return trajectory through the quadrants of the logical square can be repeated in another (Kantian) way.

Lacan recalls at the bottom of the first page of *L'étourdit* how 'it is from logic that [analytic] discourse touches on the real by encountering it as impossible, which is why it is this discourse that raises it to its final power: science, I have said, of the real.'[661] This investigation of the real *qua* impossible is exactly what one should expect of the Lacan of the 1970s and Fierens intriguingly suggests linking it with Kant's own investigation into the impossible which comes on the final pages of the Transcendental Analytic of his first *Critique*.[662] The 'Table of Nothings' found there is something to which Lacan himself made references to a decade earlier. The link is established through the identification of each of the four Kantian nothings with one of the four propositions of the Lacanian logical square.[663] Accordingly, the nothing that Kant calls an *ens rationis* [Latin, a being of reason] is an 'empty notion without an object' and is to be associated with the pure essence of the universal of quadrant $\boxed{1}$. It can be grasped by considering the ontological status of the hypothetical proposition 'If p then q' from Section 6.3 above when no particular p is affirmed to exist. What results is a *Gedankending* [German, a thing of thought] which is the status Kant assigns to the noumenon – that which cannot be known but can be thought. It is a nothing which no positive feature can fill out. In Fregean terms it is a function without an argument and in Lacanian algebra it is S_2 when S_1 is barred to it, or $\frac{S2}{S1}$. The classic Kantian examples include the soul, God and the universe as a whole. The point here is that these are easily imagined but are never actually encountered since they transcend the limits of our experience. Slightly less graspable is a *nihil privativum* [Latin, a privative nothing], an 'empty object of a notion' and this is to be situated at the level of quadrant $\boxed{2}$ which harbors a particular element that says 'No!' Here the corresponding matheme would be the exceptional S_1 secretly supported by the void of $, or $\frac{S1}{\$}$. The term legitimately brings to mind the passage from *Summa Theologiae* (1256-72) where St Thomas Aquinas cites St Augustine of Hippo's characterization of evil as the privation of good[664] and this is itself a good starting point since the nothing in question does concern a positive notion with a positive object that just happens to be missing, like the holes in a sponge. Yet a better approximation of this nothing can be had by considering it as a real opposition, as the result of the conflict between two positive forces. This nothing is not the absence or lack of a positive force, but the 0 which results when two positive forces of equal strength cancel each other out, like the rope which remains stationary in a tug-of-war match when two groups of men of equal

strength pull it in opposite directions. However, the problem with these examples is that they are too determinate, readily providing images which 'fill in' the nothing and thus what is lost is how the *nihil privativum* which emerges as the outcome of the mutual privation of two opposing forces has an ontological status somewhat 'less than' that of the *ens rationis*.

The purest evacuation of existence, however, is the nothing Kant calls an *ens imaginarium* [Latin, an imaginary being]. This 'empty intuition without an object' is of the order of quadrant $\boxed{3}$ since both are clearly concerned with the absence of all substance. Hence in Lacanian terms it would be written as the void of $ without *objet a*, or $\frac{\$}{a}$. Less than either of the previous two nothings, this absence nevertheless functions as the form of intuition without itself being an intuitable object. The classic examples are pure space and pure time and Kant opens his first *Critique* with a discussion of each of these in turn since they are the very condition of possibility of all representation. But by reaching this point the journey through nothings has not yet ended. There is still one more to be considered, one which is somehow 'less than nothing,' if 'nothing' is most consequentially defined as the pure absence of the empty set Ø named by the *ens imaginarium*. The nothing in question is a *nihil negativum* [Latin, a negative nothing], an 'empty object without a notion' which correlates to quadrant $\boxed{4}$. The corresponding matheme is the empty *objet a* devoid of its notional S_2, or $\frac{a}{S2}$. This occurs when the very notion of an object contradicts itself and thereby cancels itself. The object which results is a nothing of this type, what Kant calls an *Unding* [German, a non-thing]. Such self-contradicting notions not only fail on the notional level but cannot be grasped through our imagination either; that is, in no way can we imagine what a 'square circle' looks like. So it cannot be approached either through the logic of the universal or of the particular but is rather to be experienced as the impossible ontologization of the empty space within which the universal and particular subsist. In previous terms it is singular, a punctuated point paradoxically found within the very field it itself discloses. The most elusive nothing of the four, one can say nothing of it except by keeping silent.

In terms of ontological ranking, the four nothings thus follow the same sequential path through the logical square as that forged by the logic of negation. Starting with that which harbors the highest being, it proceeds as: $\boxed{1}$ (*ens rationis*) → $\boxed{2}$ (*nihil privativum*) → $\boxed{3}$ (*ens imaginarium*) → $\boxed{4}$ (*nihil negativum*). The 'naturalness' of initially proceeding along this path can be confirmed by attempting to grasp these nothings through the imagination, the hermeneutical phenomenological faculty *par excellence*. For instance, the hypothetical 'If p then q' occupying the Platonic heavens is as easily imagined as the souls of the departed and God Himself in the Christian heaven, but less imaginable are the holes without the delimiting sponge material or the nothing of a motionless rope. Still less can pure space and pure time be represented by an image since by definition these are the *a priori* of representation itself. And although Lacan tells us that *objet a* is not without its imaginary dimension, whatever image does come to attach

itself to this real object is more fleeting than any other, as is witnessed whenever one attempts to imagine what the object of a self-contradictory notion like a square circle might look like. In following this sequence, what should not to be overlooked is how the very movement of encountering the impossible ends up in actually constructing this final paradoxical object or alternatively, how the other three moments are but different forms of this object. To sense this construction a theoretical application of the fruitful scientific technique of 'reverse engineering' might be made. Consider that by attempting to grasp the object of the negative nothing directly, one inevitably slips backward into an imaginary being. But whatever comes to represent the empty set (*e.g.*, Ø) fails on that count alone, for the *a priori* of representation cannot be represented. Thus the slide into a privative nothing is equally inevitable since it seems that the object can only be approached at a glance, as if a minimal representation were necessary to delimit its contours (*e.g.*, empty parentheticals { }). Yet again this image fails to satisfy for long and eventually gives way to the temptation to treat the object as a transcendent being of reason, as an object safely stored away in the noumenal beyond. At every stage the form of the object to be grasped is reduced to the preceding one. What this movement underscores is how the *objet a* of $\boxed{4}$ permeates all the others while simultaneously being constructed by them. Its double presence is why there is a persistent viscosity to the sequence, preventing a smooth run through the logical square.

Having traced out the path through the Lacanian logical square twice, once by tarrying with the negative and once more by pursuing a series of lesser and lesser nothings, a more detailed discussion can now be had to better account for the topological twisting of space that is the movement from one quadrant to the next which ends in the suspension of the hermeneutical field of meaning. The following section integrates the theory of the four discourses with the logical square to establish how this square concerns the production of meaning, the hermeneutical circle and the potential suspension of this circle, while simultaneously showing the passage between its quadrants in the revolving light of discourse theory. The final section then provides an account of the path through the logical square by making use of the topological figures discussed by Lacan in *L'étourdit*. It is held that topology functions heuristically, teaching the interpreter who engages in its study that the hermeneutical pursuit of textual meaning is not all there is to interpretation. Topology, much better than (post)structuralism, aesthetic theory or set theory alone, accesses a dimension which can answer the obvious question of 'What now?' that arises after the proper initiatory interpretive stance has been struck, a stance well-captured by Fierens' excitable introductory exclamation: 'Interpretation is in no way to be reduced to explaining the meaning of the text!'[665] Here it must be stressed how the insights of *L'étourdit* will be lost to anyone not willing to clear his workspace of the usual tools of interpretation and instead take up scissors, tape and paper and follow Lacan in making the requisite cuts and sutures to produce his sexuated topological figures – this said fully

in the spirit of Freud who often admonished his readers that his own discoveries would not be properly recognized if they neglected the analysis of their own dreams.

7.2 The Breakdown of the Meaning-relation

At the start of the final section in the chapter Žižek sets aside to discuss the Lacanian notion of sexual difference in his monumental book *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (2012), he writes the following:

> 'So, to conclude, one can propose a "unified theory" of the formulae of sexuation and the formulae of four discourses: the masculine axis consists of the master's discourse and the university discourse (university as universality and the master as its constitutive exception), and the feminine axis of the hysterical discourse and the analyst's discourse (no exception and non-All). We then have the following series of equations:

> S_1 = Master = exception S_2 = University = universality
> $\$$ = Hysteria = no-exception a = Analyst = non-All

> We can see here how, in order to correlate the two squares, we have to turn one 90 degrees in relation to the other: with regard to the four discourses, the line that separates masculine from feminine runs horizontally; that is, it is the upper couple which is masculine and the lower one which is feminine.'[666]

As his interests run in a decidedly different direction, Žižek does not further develop his unified theory. But the little that has been written here is highly suggestive and permits the Lacanian logical square to be entirely expressed in terms of the four discourses. This is captured in Figure 7.1.

$$\overline{\exists x}\,\overline{\Phi x} \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \forall x\,\Phi x$$

$$H_d : \uparrow \frac{\$}{a} \overset{\rightarrow}{\mathbin{/\mkern-5mu/}} \frac{S1}{S2} \downarrow \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad U_d : \uparrow \frac{S2}{S1} \overset{\rightarrow}{\mathbin{/\mkern-5mu/}} \frac{a}{\$} \downarrow$$

$$\$\ \boxed{3} \quad \boxed{1}\ S_2$$

$$a\ \boxed{4} \quad \boxed{2}\ S_1$$

$$A_d : \uparrow \frac{a}{S2} \overset{\rightarrow}{\mathbin{/\mkern-5mu/}} \frac{\$}{S1} \downarrow \qquad\qquad\qquad M_d : \uparrow \frac{S1}{\$} \overset{\rightarrow}{\mathbin{/\mkern-5mu/}} \frac{S2}{a} \downarrow$$

$$\overline{\forall x}\,\Phi x \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \exists x\,\overline{\Phi x}$$

Figure 7.1: The Lacanian Logical Square and the Four Discourses (Combined)

A momentary glance at the Lacanian logical square as originally presented in Figure 6.2 will confirm that its overall structure has been carried forward to Figure 7.1 to allow for direct comparison. This is because the placement of the four quadrants and their propositions has been strictly maintained across the two versions. The differences between them thus extend only to their respective contents. As can be seen, the arrows designating the relations between the quadrants have been dropped from the new logical square,

as well as all verbal descriptors. But that which is subtracted is nevertheless still operative behind the scenes, and indeed the analysis of the logical square undertaken in Chapter 6 and Section 7.1 is still valid. So the two additional ways in which each quadrant is marked simply enhances what can be understood of the logical square. First, each quadrant can now be referred to by one of the four mathemes from discourse theory. Second, each quadrant is now inscribed with one of the four discourses. These writings should all be familiar from the discussion in Section 5.3 above except for the three arrows and parallel lines which now attend each discourse. The significance of each of these additions is taken up in turn.

It should be readily recognizable from the foregoing chapters why S_2, S_1, $ and a should come to mark quadrants $\boxed{1}$, $\boxed{2}$, $\boxed{3}$ and $\boxed{4}$ respectively. Recall how S_2 denotes a series of signifiers which inscribes both meaning and knowledge within its chain, but a chain which only 'completes' itself when the phallic S_1 constitutes it as such. Together they constitute the contradiction inherent to the right deixis between All signifiers and the One signifier which nevertheless eludes this universal dimension through its exceptional particularity. In the Other deixis to the left there is no better matheme than the subject $, the empty lack between signifiers devoid of any substantive meaning, to designate the void of the upper quadrant. While the uncanny *objet a* as the impossible objectal correlate to the empty subject functions in a similar fashion as the Not-all of the lower quadrant which directly negates or impossibly ontologizes the void of the *ens imaginarium*.

With the four mathemes thus distributed to the four quadrants the entire logical square can effectively be treated as a single discourse; that is, so long as each quadrant is taken as one of the four places of discourse theory (*cf*. Figure 5.7). Subsequent rotations of the entire square, 90° at a time, would then produce each of the remaining three discourses in turn. This is provided, of course, that quadrants $\boxed{1}$ and $\boxed{2}$ are interchanged.[667] Thus, with no rotation the logical square is read as the $H_d: \frac{\$}{a} \to \frac{S1}{S2}$, but by making a 90° counterclockwise turn the $M_d: \frac{S1}{\$} \to \frac{S2}{a}$ emerges. Two additional turns will produce first the $U_d: \frac{S2}{S1} \to \frac{a}{\$}$ and then the $A_d: \frac{a}{S2} \to \frac{\$}{S1}$. These substitutions can also be inverted, inscribing instead the propositions themselves into the discourses. This has the advantage of bringing into discourse theory what is known of the relationships internal to the logical square. For instance, the M_d would be written as $\frac{\exists x\, \overline{\Phi x}}{\exists x\, \overline{\Phi x}} \to \frac{\forall x\, \Phi x}{\forall x\, \Phi x}$ and here it is clearly seen how the proposition occupying the position of truth exposes the utter pretense of the master's claim to be the One since it directly negates the exceptionality of his position of agency. Similar substitutions could be made for the other three discourses and already much could be fruitfully read from these writings. To take the fullest advantage of them, however, a better theoretical understanding of the relations in play within a discourse is needed.

Before turning to such a discussion, it should be noted how the above has effectively isolated the hermeneutical field of meaning to the two quadrants of the right deixis and, moreover, delimited the potential suspension of this field to the subversive quadrant of the Not-all in the left deixis. To recognize this, rotate the logical square 90° counterclockwise so that these two quadrants appear across the top. What results is the $M_d: \frac{S1}{\$} \rightarrow \frac{S2}{a}$ and suddenly the analysis of meaning with respect to this discourse (*cf.* Section 5.3) is readily applicable to the logical square: there is the retroactive trajectory of meaning production which swims against the tide of signifiers moving left to right ($S_1 \rightarrow S_2$), the subjectivization of the subject $ which emerges at the end of this trajectory fully imbued with meaningful content, and the uncovering of the *objet a* which falls out of the signifying chain and which can potentially put an end to meaning production. However, because of this falling away only the three mathemes of alienation (recall how Figure 5.3 only references S_2, S_1 and $) are effectively in play. To put *objet a* into play would require an additional 180° turn. Doing so results in the $A_d: \frac{a}{S2} \rightarrow \frac{\$}{S1}$ or $\frac{\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x}{\forall x\ \Phi x} \rightarrow \frac{\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}}{\exists x\ \Phi x}$ and the potential of *objet a* to suspend meaning would become actualized. But note that while all four mathemes of separation (*cf.* Figure 5.4) are now in play, the placement of *objet a* in the position of agency places the two quadrants associated with meaning along the bottom of the discourse. The significance of occupying these bottom positions is only had by making sense of the three arrows (and parallel lines) which denote the direction (and termination point) of the mathemes as they turn from one discourse to the other.

The significance of one of these arrows is already generally known. This is the arrow which links S_1 and S_2 running across the top of the M_d. Taken together the matheme $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ represents the chain of signifiers within which meaning subsists. The split between these two levels, between what psychoanalysis calls the symbolic and the imaginary registers, could readily be acknowledged by (post)structuralism itself. This split provides a valuable clue on how to read this matheme newly found in each quadrant of the logical square, a square now defined in terms of discourse theory. Since the logical square concerns the phallic function Φx, the question to ask is how one might understand $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ in relation to this function. The answer is approachable by recalling that to speak is to be symbolically castrated. Whatever we say we often experience how our saids fall short, failing to articulate our intended meaning with any kind of precision, while simultaneously also recognizing how these saids say too much, carrying meanings entirely unintentional. Actually experiencing or consciously recognizing the castrating effects of language is not strictly necessary; this phenomenon is registered in the Other regardless. Examples abound, from Epimenides who fully intends to include himself in the fact that 'All Cretans are liars' yet does just the opposite by uttering it, to the man who likewise unknowingly castrates himself when affirming how 'All men are mortal.' Being submitted to the Φx thus involves the disjoint between what one intends to say and what one actually says or in matheme terms, between the

'betweens' of signifiers (marked by the arrow) and the level of the signifiers themselves (S_1, S_2). The three mathemes of alienation thus stand quite appropriately arranged as $\frac{S1}{\$} \rightarrow \frac{S2}{}$, which is Lacan's definition of a signifier as that which represents a subject for another signifier (*cf*. Figure 5.7). This arrangement visually confirms how the subject presenting himself in his own words is out of synch with the meaning of those words. Having reached this point it can now be speculated that if the relation between S_1 and S_2 somehow breaks down, if the arrow suggesting their relation gives way instead to parallel lines which block that relation, the meaning inscribed between them breaks down as well. This would put into play a full separation of the subject from meaning.

Thus far only one of the three relational arrows which accompany discourse theory has been discussed, the one which links $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ across the upper horizontal plane of the M_d. Given that this upper level arrow is found in each of the discourses which have now come to define the quadrants of the logical square, what can be generally said of it? The answer is that the relation between the agent and the other in any of the four discourses should be characterized by the modality of impossibility. A defining modality of discourse theory, this has already be noted during the discussion of Verhaeghe in Section 5.3 above and Fierens equally observes how the social bond between the two partners in a discourse is fundamentally disparate such that no true dialogue can take place between them.[668] This is easily seen in the M_d of quadrant ⟨2⟩ where the fact that an exceptional S_1 must articulate an S_2 to actualize the latter's potential meaning is truthfully revealed by $\$$ to be impossible; that is, with no such exception any hopes for a full actualization of this potentiality are dashed. Faced with this impossibility each of the two sides of a discourse must sustain itself on its own. For its part the agent is sustained by a truth which necessarily determines it in its address to the other. The arrow to the left that marks the relation between truth and the agent in any discourse thus marks a relation characterized by the modality of necessity. Illustrating again with $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$, the basic matheme of the meaning-relation, we find this pair related in the mode of necessity in the U_d of quadrant ⟨1⟩. The necessity of this relation in this discourse is easily understood as well, for an S_1 is clearly needed to actualize the potential meaning of a battery of signifiers S_2 if that meaning is to be addressed to the other (in the same way that a p is needed to release the essence of 'If p then q'). Because of this, meaning and the being of meaning subsist in the quadrant of the universal affirmative more than in any other single quadrant, which also implies that the single most basic matheme of discourse theory concerning meaning is S_2. On the other side of the divide within a discourse is the other, which can only respond to the agent's address by producing a contingent product. Here is the arrow to the right marking the relation between the other and the product of each discourse, a relation characterized by the modality of contingency. The H_d of quadrant ⟨3⟩ inscribes the pair $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ in such a contingent relation, with S_1 in the place of the other and S_2 in the place of the product. This S_2 can be read

as a meaning produced by the S_1 in an attempt to appease the hysterical provocation by $, but a meaning immediately lost since the desire behind that provocation cannot be satisfied. More generally speaking this product is always simultaneously also a loss since it is merely a possible result dependent on the truth, which originally determined the agent. But in being characterized by the modality of possibility this relation between the product and the truth of any discourse is ultimately marked by powerlessness or impotency. For this product is utterly powerless to return to the truth of the discourse which produced it. The symbol of such a relation is thus no longer an arrow but the parallel lines $\parallel$ which visually confirms the blockage in effect between any two mathemes that find themselves occupying the lower horizontal plane of a discourse. Now, it is the A_d of quadrant $\boxed{4}$ where the meaning-relation thoroughly breaks down, so instead of $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ we find there $S_2 \parallel S_1$. With this discourse of the nonsensical Not-all where an S_1 is produced but cannot return to the S_2 which occupies the place of truth, the meaning-relation is thoroughly exhausted. This is certainly connected to the fact that S_2 and S_1 are ontologically distinct due to the former's lack of existential import. But what the A_d captures is a more primitive dimension which provides the *a priori* force behind the fact that saying cannot return to the level of the said prior to it having been said.

By way of summary of the immediately foregoing the turn of the discourses proceeds as per the direction of the arrows, moving through the quadrants sequentially $\boxed{1} \rightarrow \boxed{2} \rightarrow \boxed{3} \rightarrow \boxed{4}$, whereupon it reaches the A_d, which puts an end to the meaning-relations to be had in each of the previous three discourses. Yet it is already known from previous discussions of this sequence (discussions which took up this sequence in terms of the logic of negation and the Kantian nothings) that upon reaching the fourth component the analysis in a sense has only really just begun. For that which paradoxically comes at the end of the sequence is to be recognized as having haunted the previous three components which lead up to it. This is still the case when this sequence is defined in terms of discourse theory. Recall that Lacan in his late period considers the real *qua* impossible. Each discourse thus concerns the real inasmuch as a real relation runs between agent and other in the form of the impossible. This also makes the A_d the privileged discourse. With *objet a* as its agent and *objet a* being real, the A_d should be seen as haunting or manifesting itself in the other discourses through their impossible (and impotent) relations. Thus the A_d is the science of the real, the very science of the discourses as they revolve around the real. More specifically, the A_d pushes each discourse to constitute itself from its impossibility and to further demonstrate its ultimate impotence. Faced with its impotence each discourse is then lead to reverse itself and attempt a new social bond. The logic of this reversal is further discussed below. For now it is enough to get a sense of the A_d as the real engine of the (clockwise, and then counterclockwise) turns of the discourses which constitute it. And again it should be acknowledged how Lacan stands in stark contrast to

classical Aristotelian logic, which does its best to avoid logical impossibilities and impotencies. Instead, Lacanian discourse utilizes a logic which attempts to accommodate itself to these aporia and further tries to establish the impossibility of each discourse so as to demonstrate its impotence. In this way all roads lead to the A_d just as readily as they lead away from it.

An initial discussion is now complete of the discourses found in each quadrant as well as how the Lacanian logical square may be taken *in toto* as a discourse. This provides an adequate backdrop for a more detailed examination. For instance, the legitimacy of beginning the sequence with the U_d of quadrant $\boxed{1}$ should be better established. By making reference to the psychoanalytic rule of free association, Fierens quite rightly reasons that since a signifier is always differentiated from itself, this implies that 'a signifier (S_1) becomes necessarily other, it is always transformed into another signifier (S_2).'[669] This he names the 'preliminary rule' and as already seen, the necessity of $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ is found in the U_d. The further implication of self-differentiation is that any signifier whatsoever carries within itself this entire meaning-relation $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$. This provides an additional justification for treating the Lacanian logical square as one 'giant' rotating discourse with four 'smaller' discourses harboring its individual quadrants. That is, each signifier of $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$, which together constitute the meaning-relation circling within the right deixis, harbors within itself a discourse making use of the same meaning-relation form in necessary and impossible ways. This double inscription of the meaning-relation certainly makes Figure 7.1 more complex, but with greater complexity comes greater flexibility and an increased potential that it can be utilized for diverse purposes. But there is a general lesson to be had from this double inscription *as such*. In terms of textual analysis, this is the very inscription of the aporia existing between the whole and the part of the hermeneutical circle: should meaning be approached by considering the whole (by adhering to the level of the logical square) or the part (by adhering to the discourses within its quadrants)? More specifically, while the preliminary rule places the U_d of quadrant $\boxed{1}$ at the start of the sequence due to the modality of necessity, in terms of temporal order S_2 (which also marks the same quadrant) comes *after* S_1 of quadrant $\boxed{2}$, as is clearly seen in the matheme $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$. The ambiguity here does not stem from failing to distinguish a matheme coming to mark an entire quadrant and this same matheme occupying a place in a discourse within a quadrant. Additional symbols are entirely unwarranted and would mistakenly remove that which should instead be preserved. The ambiguity of Figure 7.1 in this respect is thus reflective of the self-differentiated nature of the signifier or in the specific terms of Chapter 6, of the status of the exception in its contradiction with the universal in the right deixis. Effectively what is witnessed here is the presence of a real disruption in the hermeneutical circle of meaning.

Nevertheless this circle turns, as do the discourses. The arrows of the latter point out their clockwise rotation along a specific modal path concurring with the path forged by the logic of negation and the

series of vanishing nothings. As was said, reversing this rotation is equally possible. Coming up against the impotence that is the powerlessness of its product to rejoin its truth, the other of any discourse may swim against the tide of arrows to become its own agent. This sets off a new discourse. The only requirement is that the other recognize his impotence and decide to act. In this way the other of the H_d (S_1) becomes the agent of the M_d, while the other in this new discourse (S_2) can effect an additional turn by becoming the agent in the U_d. In the face of the real disruptions which drive these turns and counterturns, what is it that allows a discourse to maintain minimal cohesion? The answer is that the meaning-relation $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ stabilizes each of the three non-analytic discourses.[670] This relation might fruitfully be thought of as covering over impossibility and impotence with the substance of meaning. For instance, the meaning of the knowledge (S_2) communicated in the U_d can be seen as that which binds the teacher and student; yet this bind is not permanent since the hysterical subject that is produced cannot return to the truth of this discourse (S_1). More concretely and in different terms, advocating a thesis such as 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' is always (and often secretly) supported by the textual work of master-interpreters like Palmer or Betti, just as a Lacanian thesis can establish its own authority through the masterly interpretations of Le Gaufey, Fierens, Žižek or Lacan himself. Putting such authorization directly into play, as the agent in the M_d, would be equivalent to offering up some Gadamerian passages in order to demonstrate their Heideggerian-like quality, despite the imperfections of these passages inclusive of their partial contradiction of this thesis. Again meaning attempts to bridge the impossibility which here takes the form of the contradiction between S_1 (who, in truth, is no master) and S_2 (who responds to this contradiction by producing a contingent product). A further turn to the H_d would establish another impossible relation to which meaning would again be called upon to resolve. As already stated the former master, now an other, produces meanings so as to mollify the hysteric's embrace of the truth of the master's pretence of occupying a meta-position able to offer neutral assessments of the Gadamerian opus. Of course the rotation $U_d \rightarrow M_d \rightarrow H_d$ just followed[671] could at any point be reversed. For the other of the H_d might choose to abandon contingent meaning-relations to instead settle for those that are impossible. Yet whatever stability is provided by this latter meaning-relation might itself be disturbed by the other of the M_d when he recognizes his impotence and decides to assume the position of agency. In this case the U_d emerges, a discourse which achieves stability through a meaning-relation in the mode of necessity.

As already noted the A_d prevents the two partners of any discourse from engaging in a full dialogue. Moreover, the disruption it introduces into a discourse is what rotates it into a new discourse. Because of this, ultimately any stability a discourse does have is precarious at best. The paradox is that its (counter)clockwise rotation is both caused by and constitutes the A_d. Indeed the A_d is included in the very

rotating path it itself propels. Yet in providing illustrations above of how meaning provides stability to a discourse by covering over its inherent impossibility and impotence, a corresponding illustration for the A_d was conspicuously missing. The reason for this should be obvious. For the meaning-relation utterly fails with the A_d, straddling as it does the impotent relation between truth and product. Instead of another transformation of S_1 by S_2, the two are here radically disconnected; that is, instead of $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$, the (non)relation is now written $S_2 \, /\!/ \, S_1$. Note that when $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ takes on the modality of impossibility in the M_d there is not a similar breakdown of meaning. For an impossible meaning can cover over impossibility and impotence just as well as a contingent or necessary meaning.[672] But this is not the case with a meaning-relation that operates in the modality of possibility. To be more precise, the meaning-relation in the A_d has no functional mode. For in the A_d of quadrant $\boxed{4}$ there is a thorough breakdown in the meaning-relation. Here meaning can no longer cover over impossibility and impotence in any sense since the meaning-relation is *itself* rendered impotent.

It should be clear how non-hermeneutical phenomenology is at once an interpretative approach that aligns itself with the A_d where the meaning-relation breaks down. Such an approach situates itself at the place of impotence in each of the three non-analytic discourses so as to upset their stability-through-meaning and further drives them to tip over to a new discourse where a new impossibility makes an appearance. In this way psychoanalytic interpretation can be characterized as the science of the rotation of the discourses, a rotation which leads back to itself, the A_d, where no meaning is offered up as a stabilizing force for the interpretive endeavor. Along with the breakdown of the meaning-relation there is here the *objet a*, a singular point from which meaning is suspended. Before turning to a discussion of topology to better illustrate this suspension, it is worthwhile to further distinguish the psychoanalytic approach from those which become entrenched in one or more of the non-analytic discourses making use of the stabilizing meaning-relation $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$, and especially from those which naïvely hold out hope that this meaning-relation can be avoided altogether and so accordingly strive to make definitive relationships directly out of incongruent meanings already in existence. Of course the theory of the four discourses is 'universal' in the sense of being able to characterize all interpretive groups and thinkers like those discussed in Part I. Thus the profound challenge to the medieval Church's centuries-old dominion over interpretative technique by the Protestant Reformers, and the subsequent response to this challenge known as the Counter-Reformation, could be characterized as so many turns and counter-turns playing out between the M_d and the H_d; or else Deleuze and Nancy might be said to struggle against the H_d that so often characterizes contemporary aesthetic thought by analyzing paintings within the A_d whose dimensions emerged with Freud in his original polemic with the hysteric. Yet the above distinction is useful in drawing a significant line of demarcation in the history of thought on meaning at the dawn of the

19th century. This line was marked by Section 1.2 and concerns the transcendental turn to hermeneutics initiated by Schleiermacher. Very broadly speaking it was only after this time that interpreters can be said to properly concern themselves with the meaning-relation $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$.

At stake in the period prior to this time, from the exegetical thought of the medieval period up to and including the rationalist hermeneutics of Chladenius, is the bringing together and the putting into relation anomalous meanings caught up in two or more signifying chains. Here the effort is not to orient the meaning-relation $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ into a modality best able to provide stability but rather the mediation of differing series of S_2 through the particular subjectivization of the interpreter. In other words a meaning-filled interpreter acts as a conduit, setting out to resolve disparate meanings by making appeals to a realm of ultimate meanings that have already subjectivized him and stabilized his universe. Thus pre-Enlightenment biblical exegetes resolve textual difficulties in the name of the one true God who assures the wholeness of Scripture while Chladenius' unwavering faith in reason similarly guarantees that the rational whole of a work is never in question. But this faith in reason soon becomes seriously shaken in the hands of Kant. Indeed there are good grounds for holding Kant to have closed out the Age of Reason. The very title of his revolutionary work of 1781 alerts his reader to the fact that what will be contained therein is nothing short of a critique of the pure objects of this faith, and in accomplishing just that Kant delivers a fatal blow to the legitimacy of any effort to reconstruct a limited number of primordial meanings from which all other meanings might flow. In simple terms Kant recognized that reason – a faculty of the mind whose work stands at the apex of the cognitive enterprise such that if the desired grand unity were attained, this would constitute the completion of knowledge – aims at the unconditional. In the first book of the Transcendental Dialectic he writes how the unconditional can 'be arranged in three classes, the *first* containing the absolute (unconditioned) *unity* of the *thinking subject*, the *second* the absolute *unity of the series of conditions of appearance*, the *third* the absolute *unity of the condition of all objects of thought in general*.'[673] Kant calls these the transcendental ideas, which accordingly break down into the objects of psychology, cosmology and theology, *viz.*, the soul, the universe as a whole, and God. Yet far from endorsing unconditionals as missing links connecting all other meanings, Kant proceeds to demonstrate their illusory nature. In terms discussed in the previous section, these *Gedankendinge* [German, things of thought] are nothings of the type previously discussed: *entia rationis ratiocinatae* [Latin, beings of reason]. This is not to say that Chladenius and those who preceded him were simply duped so that a Schleiermacher or anyone else having read Kant simply avoids these errors in their own use of the universal. For Kant further argues how the appeal to such illusory objects is entirely natural and unavoidable. In his terminology the transcendental ideas are considered 'regulative ideals,' a set of principles that operates as a supposed knowledge of the inherent rational order. Although

entirely unprovable, such unconditioned universals must be presupposed if we are to acquire a positive knowledge – and meaning – of our reality. In a word the transcendental ideas are necessary illusions and as specifically noted in Section 1.1, Chladenius completely fails to grasp universality as a regulative ideal. Overlooking the illusory and necessary work of reason as it aims for ultimate meanings is a methodological defect generally shared by all hermeneutical approaches prior to the Kantian turn. In a world where meaningful existence is assured, their projects largely remain outside the meaning-relation $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ that seeks in contingent, impossible and necessary modes to cover over the real fault running through the otherwise ontologically consistent universe, a fault which makes its first sustained appearance only after the Kantian critique. So despite appearances that the pedagogy of Chladenius puts in play that most basic of the hermeneutic (and non-analytic) discourses, the university discourse with its necessary meaning-relation cannot be said to characterize his project (or else, his pre-critical thought renders the U_d so stable that it cannot be made to turn, which amounts to the same thing). Generally speaking, the best critiques of hermeneutical thought prior to Schleiermacher aim not at how it misses the illusory quality of the universal, but how it misses its *necessary* illusory quality. Such critique is at once self-critique and Schleiermacher's recognition of this effectively announced that the new interpretive era of discursive turns had arrived.

To clarify, the path travelled by pre-Kantian interpretation is not contingent, never merely possible and certainly not impossible. Rather, it is conceived as necessary. But since Reason and/or the Divine assures a complete Meaning, the Necessity involved here is quite different than the necessity at stake in discourse theory. After the Kantian turn it is no longer a transcendent entity but the subject who is held to account for meaning. A thesis such as 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' is thus not divinely inspired but enunciated by a subject in a meaning-relation that can, of course, be taken as necessary. But not strictly so, for it can also be seen as impossible or contingent, or even as having entered a dimension in which the very relation itself breaks down. As discussed, these four modes concern the meaning-relation $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ as it circulates through revolving discourses. Yet it is important to recognize how this relation is internal to the signifier itself. Such an insight only becomes possible after Kant. For the demonstration of the necessary illusory quality of the transcendent Signified implies that any signifier which comes to mark its empty place is itself rendered internally divided, as captured by the definition of the signifier as that (S_1) which represents for another signifier (S_2) its absence (\$). It may seem that the pre-Kantian concern for finding the Signifier has simply been substituted by a new conception of the infinite dispersal of signifiers; indeed there is no signifier which does not represent the subject, as implied by Lacan's definition. However, recall from Section 5.3 how the phallic signifier coincides with its own impossibility since it is nothing but the void opened up by its failed representations. Putting this notion into play places S_1 and S_2

on radically different levels and so allows for their relation $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ to take on different modalities. For instance, the relation of the enunciation (S_1) to its enunciated 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' (S_2) is in the modality of contingency when S_1 'dominates' in the sense of announcing the import of S_2 or in other words, when S_2 is conceived as the subject of S_1 (visually confirmed in the arrangement of the terms in the H_d where S_2 is positioned below S_1). Now, is contingency not the predominate mode the meaning-relation takes up today? We may readily grasp the meaning of the thesis an interpreter develops from his reading of a particular textual passage, but are we not quick to add that, in the end, this meaning is entirely dependent on *that* particular reading by *that* particular interpreter? All too often ending in a smug Nietzschean-like perspectivism from which meaning is deemed (absolutely) relative, what this assessment neglects in the meaning-relation is its necessity: in the U_d a thesis like 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' thoroughly eclipses its enunciation, making instead S_1 the subject of S_2. However, the passage between contingency and necessity proceeds from the impossible, both in the sense of having to pass through the M_d where the meaning-relation is precisely in the modality of impossibility (concerning the contradiction between an enunciated thesis and its enunciation) and in the sense that impossibility deeply characterizes each discourse and links it internally to its own impotence, an impotence capable of provoking a turn into a new discourse.

This is at once to say that such a passage involves the A_d which, as already stated, is the very science of the rotation of the discourses. Now if it does act in this capacity, the impotency of its own discourse becomes its own resource. This impotency of course involves the thorough absence of the meaning-relation: S_1 fails to enter into relation with S_2, a failure written as $S_2 \nparallel S_1$. Not reducible to a putting into relation of S_1 and S_2, or to a putting into relation a series of established meanings, the type of interpretation concomitant to psychoanalytic discourse instead concerns itself with the circulation of the meaning-relation as the U_d, M_d and H_d rotate and counter-rotate into one another; while at the same time such interpretation is also consciously aware that what drives these rotations is the failure of the meaning-relation to be definitively established. The fact that the relation between S_1 and S_2 is ultimately rendered impotent so that the meaning-relation thoroughly breaks down is part and parcel of the radical otherness inherent to the signifier as such. Moreover, the *tautological* nature of the definition of the signifier is what prevents finding in the A_d the promise of a meta-language since the inscription of the signifying pair as $S_2 \nparallel S_1$ in this discourse is a writing every bit as internal to the signifier as the meaning-relation $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ itself. This makes the A_d as caught up in the rotation of the discourses as any of the other three. Nevertheless, by writing the absence of this relation the discourse of the analyst does offer respite from the pursuit of meaning. For in its place of agency is the nonsensical *objet a*, a paradoxical point from which meaning can be suspended. The final section begins from where this section leaves off, from the

breakdown of the meaning-relation $S_2 /\!\!/ S_1$, and proceeds by way of the meaningless twists, cuts and sutures of space that is topology to arrive at a conception of this nonsensical suspension point.

7.3 The Suspension of Meaning

About midway through *L'étourdit* Lacan announces that it is time 'for a little topology.'[674] In the ensuing pages the reader is guided through a series of operations to be performed on a few standard topological figures which transform them one into the next. This digression is nothing new. By this time Lacan has already devoted over a decade of study to this branch of pure mathematics, as any glance of his seminars from the 1960s will confirm. This conforms to the methodological approach in play since his 'structuralist' period and Lacan only increases his recourse to mathematical inscription and logical forms as he enters his final decade. But although this move to topology can be seen as a natural progression, here it is more important than ever to emphasize the *real* aspect of these methodological endeavors. The problem is that topological figures too readily lend themselves to the imagination, and falling into this imagery is a temptation difficult to resist. The danger here is to treat topology as a metaphor which would miss the *n'espace* [nospace] into which mathematical discourse can lead us, as Lacan writes a couple of pages later. Much safer is to approach this *n'espace* through pure literal algebra, a mathematical writing which today seems to increasingly take second seat to the figural presentation centering itself on the page. In the past the topological figure appeared with rarity and the reader's only recourse was to work through its algebra. Indeed a survey would likely show that the vast majority of topology textbooks from decades past employ only algebraic expressions within their pages, refraining from illustrative material. No doubt due to prohibitive publishing costs of the past, from the Lacanian perspective the technological advances made in recent years in graphical design allowing for more illustrations in publications today is not a welcomed development. The lesson here – that topology ultimately depends on metaphor as little as do the mathemes of sexuation and discourse theory – should be kept ever in mind in this final discussion which does make use of topological images to illustrate the suspension of meaning.

Before turning to topology as it is found in *L'étourdit*, an additional caution should be made, which additionally serves to underscore the critical relation Lacan strikes with mathematics and logic. Undeniably his belief that mathematics can serve as a model for psychoanalysis places him squarely in the Enlightenment tradition. In this respect he echoes Descartes' own project as per his unfinished treatise *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* (1619-28),[675] which seeks to adapt the methodology of mathematics to the pursuit of philosophical knowledge. Within the *Regulae* (the Rules, as this treatise is commonly called) the successful advancement of arithmetic and geometry is traced back to the fact that mathematics deals with pure and uncomplicated objects which unproblematically lead to indubitable knowledge since the senses offer no resistance in grasping them. However, the senses do prove prejudicial in our grasp of the

corresponding objects of philosophy. This problem is addressed in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641).[676] More specifically, his technique of hyperbolic doubt in the first meditation intends to purify the mind of sensory prejudice so that philosophical first principles can be purely grasped. In an analogous fashion Lacan champions mathematical discourse as that which is founded on something other than meaning. He thus sees in it a model for a psychoanalysis taken as a non-hermeneutical phenomenology. But unlike the Descartes of the *Regulae* this is not a blind embrace of mathematics. Again it must be emphasized that Lacan is well aware of the impasses reached by classical logic whenever it is taken to the 'meta' level, just as he is aware of the limits of reason whenever it is employed in a similar fashion. That is to say, the writing of his mathemes of sexuation and discourse theory bear witness to his having read both Russell and Kant, inscribing as they do the very aporia of logic and reason that others before him merely treated as exceptional cases.[677] And his development of non-metaphorical topology performs precisely the same task, albeit in a different venue. Here one can already appreciate how topology might serve as a model for a psychoanalysis which goes beyond the perspective of meaning. For if Lacan speaks of making cuts into the surface of topological figures, this can certainly be read as equivalent to the cut preventing a universally consistent logic or even the cut which traverses reason as it aims for the unconditional, but it can just as well be read as the cut severing the meaning-relation $S_2 /\!/ S_1$.

So what exactly is topology? It is a branch of pure mathematics based on set theory. For its objects of study, called topological spaces, are effectively sets with extra structure. More precisely, topological space is a set each of whose points x is enclosed in a collection of subsets called open sets. Even in the most introductory of textbooks this rough conception is formalized via mathematical script in a foundational definition that begets a myriad of other definitions, theorems, lemmas, corollaries and formal propositions. Within the space of a few chapters a highly specialized algebraic writing quickly establishes itself and to the non-mathematician any illustration provided is a welcomed relief. As said above such writing inscribes the real, but in order to keep within manageable limits the discussion which follows refrains from topological algebra to instead highlight pertinent attributes of a few select topological spaces.

A more informal discussion of topology might thus begin by noting its etymological roots in the Greek word *topos* [place] or else cite from a dictionary of the American language that might define topology as 'the study of geometric properties and spatial relations rendered unaffected by the continuous change of the shape or the size of the figures.' In common parlance topology has been dubbed 'rubber-sheet geometry' in a phrase which nicely captures the intuition that geometrically quite distinct shapes like the coffee mug and the donut are topologically equivalent (or homeomorphic) since each could be stretched, twisted or otherwise deformed into the other without being ripped apart. Standard examples of

topological spaces include the line, the circle, the plane, the sphere, the torus, the möbius strip and the cross-cap. The last four are of present concern and can be identified with one of the four quadrants of the Lacanian logical square. This is shown in Figure 7.2.
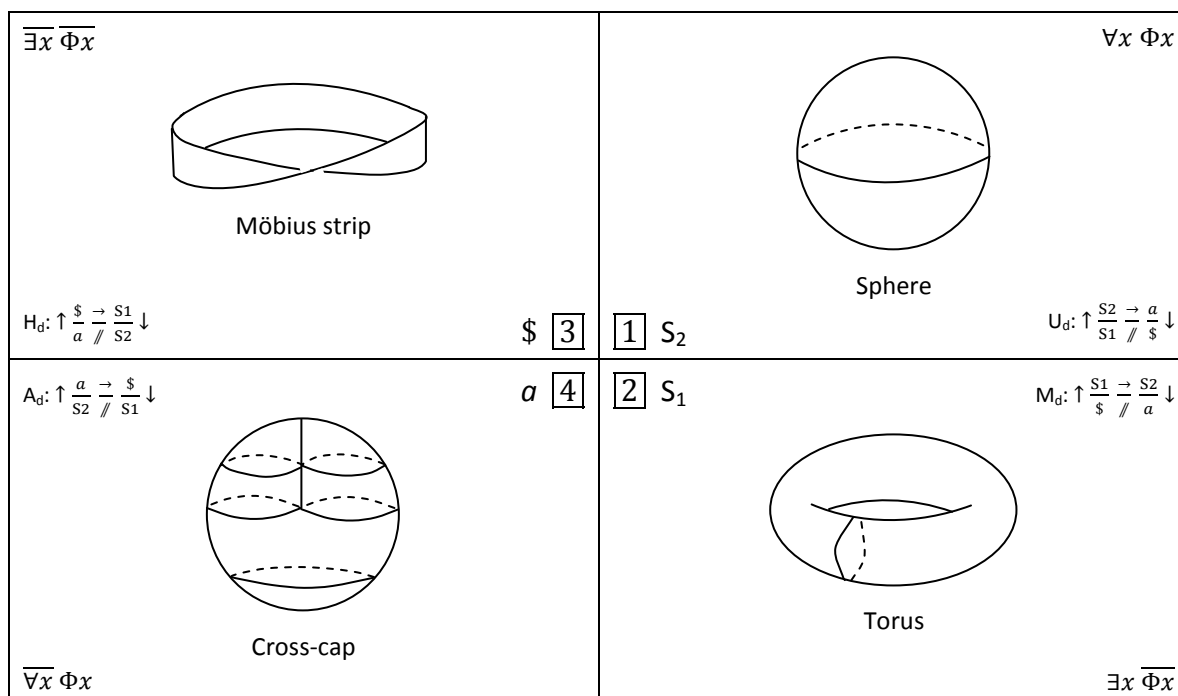

$\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$

Möbius strip

$H_d: \uparrow \frac{\$ \to S1}{a /\!/ S2} \downarrow$

$\forall x\ \Phi x$

Sphere

$U_d: \uparrow \frac{S2 \to a}{S1 /\!/ \$} \downarrow$

$\$\ \boxed{3}\quad \boxed{1}\ S_2$

$A_d: \uparrow \frac{a \to \$}{S2 /\!/ S1} \downarrow$

$a\ \boxed{4}\quad \boxed{2}\ S_1$

$M_d: \uparrow \frac{S1 \to S2}{\$ /\!/ a} \downarrow$

Cross-cap

$\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$

Torus

$\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$

Figure 7.2: The Topology of the Lacanian Logical Square

Figure 7.2 simply adds to Figure 7.1 a standard topological space. Each of these topological spaces or figures is discussed in turn below. By way of introduction the most natural way to proceed is to begin with what is in many ways the simplest topological figure of the four, *viz*., the sphere. Now, by performing specific operations on the sphere it can be transformed into the torus, which can in turn be cut and sutured into the möbius strip, whose supplementation with additional topological features can then produce the cross-cap. This path thus travels through the quadrants of the Lacanian logical square as per the familiar sequence $\boxed{1} \to \boxed{2} \to \boxed{3} \to \boxed{4}$. However, it must be stressed how for Lacan these transformative operations are not to be conceived as external interventions into the field of topology but rather as part and parcel of this very field itself. More exactly, the cuts and sutures are not operations to be performed *on* these figures so much as they are effectively *equivalent to* the figures themselves. Here again the privilege will go to the left deixis whose topological figures stand logically prior to those of the right. So although Lacan largely proceeds along this sequential trajectory in order to make himself initially understood, there is also discernible in his work an effort to have us recognize this trajectory as taking

place entirely within the space of the cross-cap of quadrant $\boxed{4}$. Again this quadrant is the cornerstone of the logical square in the sense that it harbors a paradoxical point such that if extracted, the entire sequence is suspended. Furthermore, there is both a theoretical and a practical advantage to now express the conclusions already drawn from the above analysis of the logical square in topological terms. The contention is that engaging with Lacan's topological discussion in *L'étourdit*, one arrives at a purity of thought on these matters, but a thought which paradoxically only emerges through the initial mistaken immersion into the topological image. The image is thus not so much to be forgotten and set aside; rather, it is to be recognized as that which spits out its own suspension point. On the practical front the obvious advantage in turning to topology is that its imagery provides for nice visual presentations of different aspects surrounding the phenomenological exploration of meaning, inclusive of its structural form as well as its breakdown and ultimate suspension. In general such visuals often help to stabilize that university discourse known as academic writing, from the simple essay to the PhD dissertation.

As suggested above, forging a path through the logical square might begin with the sphere. The naturalness of this approach receives Lacan's tacit blessing when he writes how '[n]othing is more of a nature to take itself to be spherical.'[678] Yet Lacan does not begin his topological lesson with the sphere but rather with the torus. One explanation for this might be had by considering Lacan's claim 'that the sphere is what does without topology.'[679] This is a curious statement since the sphere is by all accounts a spatial figure well defined in topology. A clue as to what motivates this claim is found in the sentence which immediately precedes it: 'Naturally there are saids that form the object of predicative logic and whose universalizing supposition belongs simply to the sphere, I say: the, I say: sphere, in other words: that precisely structure finds in it only a supplement which is that of the fiction of the true.' This seems to suggest that the sphere is to be associated with the imaginary covering over of the real or in terms of the foregoing analysis, of the fact that the logical square does not occupy uniform space. In more traditional sexuated terms the sphere would be equated with the attempt to compensate in the phantasmatic dimension for the traumatic fact that 'there is no such thing as a sexual relation.' Articulated in this way immediately brings to mind Lacan's analysis of Aristophanes' myth from Plato's *Symposium* (c. 384 BC)[680] which he takes up around the time of his Seminar XI.[681] Briefly, Aristophanes held the view that humans were originally spherical beings lacking nothing but unfortunately were split into two by a jealous Zeus; ever since then the human *qua* divided being has striven to find its compliment in the hope that it might provide complete satisfaction by returning it to the One. Historically it is notable that the notion of the harmonious perfection of the sphere was not confined to the level of individual fantasy. For instance, a similar notion informed the scientific understanding of the universe for centuries in the sense that the topological space of the sphere provided the standard by which the erratic movements of astronomical

objects were to be reconciled. This does not imply that after Johannes Kepler the hope for a final reckoning with the ultimate meaning of the universe was abandoned. The existence of today's New Age philosophies and the ecological movement itself bear witness to the contrary insofar as they seek wholesome communion with the universe and/or nature. But such mythology continues to motivate the hard sciences as well, as in the case of present day physics in its effort to formulate a grand and unified Theory of Everything. The point here is that operating behind these projects is a 'universalizing supposition' to be associated with the topology of the sphere, whose universal quality Lacan highlights in the above citation by isolating out the definite article 'the' (*la*); that is, one should always speak of the sphere as *the* sphere. But whether these projects take the guise of (pseudo-)science or embrace the original platonic fantasy of the sphericity of primordial Man matters little, for Lacan would have us dismiss them all as so many efforts to harmonize the sexual divide.

That the sphere is to be associated with the universal[682] and that any aspiration for universality is ultimately phantasmatic is likely the reason why Lacan begins with the torus and not the sphere. Nevertheless its necessary and illusory quality makes the sphere the implicit starting point of any discussion. So for the sake of completion we should begin one step prior to Lacan's own discussion, one which offers a topological description of the sphere and the operation which would transform it into a torus and thus place it in line with the operations Lacan himself performs on the other three topological figures which move them one to the next as per the sequence $\boxed{1} \rightarrow \boxed{2} \rightarrow \boxed{3} \rightarrow \boxed{4}$.

One way to take up the sphere is to consider it a surface or, as the topologist calls it, a manifold. This is true for all four of the topological spaces now occupying the logical square.[683] To begin thinking in terms of such surfaces, it is helpful to contrast them with surfaces that are strictly flat. These are the prototypical surfaces in topology and are called Euclidean planes. While the plane is customarily understood to be a flat surface extending infinitely far in all directions, Euclid himself conceived it to be of finite (though arbitrarily large) extent. Euclid's own conception is closer to our spontaneous understanding of the disk as a plane circle with its interior. Extending finitely, the disk obviously has an edge or boundary. Now, what makes the sphere an apt topological space for the notion of the universality of meaning is the fact that it is an example of a surface completely lacking boundaries. A small insect traveling on the surface of a sphere will not fall off the sphere since it lacks an edge. It is also possible for it to travel in any direction and return to its starting point. Such a surface is said to be closed. This makes it appropriate to deem meaning to be spherical: any traveler finding himself on its surface is fully immersed in its substance as there are no boundaries to cross which could provide a minimal distance to make of meaning an external object. In a word, the spherical surface rules out the subject-object dichotomy and can only offer the subject meaningful subjectivization. The Heideggerian-Gadamerian

brand of hermeneutical phenomenology dwells within the topological space of spherical meaning and so makes its home in the quadrant marked by the matheme S_2. In a happy coincidence, topologists use the similar notation of S^2 to refer to the sphere (also written as 2-sphere) to mark its difference from the circular disk (a 1-sphere). But while the sphere is not homeomorphic to the disk, a cut can be made to its surface to make it so. Simply defined, the operation of cutting (or ripping or puncturing) introduces a discontinuity in the original surface and thus converts its space into a topologically nonequivalent one (while stretching or shrinking surfaces preserves continuity and thus topological equivalency). In the present case, by cutting the sphere in half two hemispheres result each of which is homeomorphic to the disk,[684] or else the sphere can be flattened into a polygon by a cut which stops short of splitting the sphere in two. These cuttings resulting in spherical disks become important below. For now the task is to enquire into the operation which transforms the sphere of quadrant $\boxed{1}$ into the torus of quadrant $\boxed{2}$.

Two methods to accomplish this are suggested. The first begins by recognizing how the removal of at least one point from the sphere results in a space that is homeomorphic to the plane. Refraining from an algebraic proof, this might be grasped by imagining how all spheres, like an inflated beach ball, have the feature of dividing space into a bounded region and an unbounded region so that it is impossible to travel within space from one region to the other without passing through the sphere. But if the beach ball is punctured (*i.e.*, a single point is removed) it ceases to divide space into two regions, just like a Euclidean plane. This becomes clearer if a large section of the beach ball is cut away so that the remaining surface can be easily stretched flat. Now, if this puncturing or cutting procedure is performed on the beach ball in not one but two places on its surface, what results are the homeomorphic spaces of the annulus or a disc with one hole or a cylinder (since a sphere with two holes is simply an inflated version of a cylinder which additionally flattens into an annulus or a disc with one hole). The final step to transform the sphere with two holes into the torus requires suturing (or gluing or taping). Generally speaking the operation of suturing is the reverse of cutting. If the edges of a cut are sutured back to the way they were joined previous to the cut, then the original (or an equivalent) topological space is recovered;[685] but if different edges not originally together before the cut are instead sutured, then a new topological space may result. In the present case suturing the two ends of the cylinder together (or suturing together the outer and inner rims of an annulus or the outer and inner edges of a disc with one hole) results in the torus. This doughnut-shaped topological space is another example of a manifold with no boundary. As in the case of the sphere, the torus is a closed surface and thus a small insect will similarly encounter no edges as it travels its surface.[686] However, because what separates the two topological spaces is a suture which does not perfectly reverse the cut, the torus is clearly not homeomorphic to the sphere.

There is another method of transforming the sphere into the torus. This method reverses the order of the two basic procedures operative in the previous method so that here it is suturing which precedes cutting. But there is a preliminary operation to be performed. This involves what we might call 'pinching' the sphere between any two nonadjacent points, perhaps between x and the antipode of x (the point that is opposite x through the origin). The two most northern and southern points occupying the polar regions of the sphere fit this bill, yet any two nonadjacent points will do. Deforming the sphere through pinching results in a surface which is homeomorphic to the non-pinched sphere, but this equivalence vanishes with the next two operations. The first step involves suturing. First, the x and antipode of x are sutured together; as well, all the points which immediately encircle x are sutured to those which immediately encircle the antipode of x. Second, the sutured x and antipode of x (now one point) is cut away. What results is the topological space of the torus. As with the previous method, this procedure becomes clearer if a larger section of points is pinched together, sutured and cut away; so as long as those points around the two edges of the removed section are also sutured together a torus is produced, although in this case the result is more in line with the typical visualization of this topological space as a donut with a 'big' hole.

This second method is more pertinent for present purposes. At first glance it appears that it makes no difference which method is used, for both produce the torus. As was said, the torus is a manifold with no boundaries and so it is a closed surface just like the sphere. Because of this similarity it is tempting to consider the topology of meaning to be toric to the same extent that it is spherical. Yet this would be going too far. Indeed meaning has something to do with the torus and the great advantage of taking up these topological surfaces within the context of the logical square is that such 'somethings' become more manifest. In general much of the analysis undertaken of the logical square with respect to meaning since Chapter 6 can now be rearticulated in topological terms. In the case of the sphere and the torus it is a matter of considering their relation as the relation between the two quadrants of the right deixis, a relation which was articulated above using various elements and terminology. Considering the sphere and the torus with these in mind gives us a better picture of the topology of meaning. For instance, despite the greater clarity which ensues by removing a large section of sutured points from the pinched sphere so that a big-holed donut visually presents itself, it must be stressed how the successful transformation of the spheric into the toric surface simply necessitates *at least one x* (so sutured) to be cut away. This italicized phrase cannot but bring to mind the particular affirmative proposition of quadrant $\boxed{2}$ which of course is the quadrant of the torus. This cut away x is the One, the exceptional Epimenides who refuses to submit to that function which collectivizes All x into a universal and spherical set. As cut away it thus confirms the truth of the M_d which has it that there is no such exception (much like how the center of

gravity of the torus is 'missing,' positioned as it is at the heart of the empty space the torus encircles). Yet this nevertheless does not prevent it from forming a limit to the univeralizing pretentions of the sphere of meaning (even though missing the toric center of gravity still makes its 'presence' felt and thus carries a certain 'material weight' with respect to this particular topological space). That the existential particular affirmative operates as a limit to the universal was graphically presented above when a hyperbolic function was examined. Specifically, the asymptote $x = 0$ was found to form a limit to $f(x) = \frac{1}{x}$, although an ambiguity persisted as to whether this escaped x should be counted amongst the All of this function. In topology as well there is the concept of a limit point whose relation to the topological surface is often just as ambiguous. In the case of the torus this limit is its missing x towards which all the points on its surface converge. Again this might be visualized by imagining a small insect whose path of endlessly revolving in a spiral fashion around the core of the torus simultaneously also encircles (yet never encounters) its central axis point of rotation.[687]

In general an effort must be made to conceive the torus in contradictory relation to the sphere, as that topological space which constitutes universality in its very stance as exception and limitation. This contradictory relation may be envisaged rather crudely by way of personifying these topological spaces. Accordingly, the universal sphere might be said to aspire in its efforts to encompass the particular existential torus. Yet it finds that the best it can do is to fit itself into the latter's empty center. It is obvious that any stability derived from such an amalgamation would be short lived. On the one hand the universal cannot abide being demoted to an exception, which is precisely the status it would derive from its occupation as the toric center. On the other hand the torus cannot tolerate having been so 'completed;' indeed this is impossible since the very constitution of universal completeness is predicated on the existence of the exception. The two topological spaces of the right deixis of the logical square are thus forever at odds: the universal aspiration of meaning to encompass all aspects of existence is juxtaposed against the stance of the particular which attempts to extract itself from its universal grip to make instead a manageable object of meaning. What we have here are topological descriptions of that hermeneutical circle manifest in the right deixis but whose rotation is secretly driven by the spatial manifolds in the left which nevertheless do not refrain from offering up a suspension point to the rotation. To appreciate this, the torus of quadrant $\boxed{2}$ must first be transformed into the möbius strip of quadrant $\boxed{3}$. It is with this transformation that Lacan begins his lesson in topology.

Lacan asks us to take a torus and deflate or empty it. This manipulation is a preparatory step in a series of cutting and suturing operations to come which will tear the torus out of the realm of the spherical (characteristic of the topological spaces in the right deixis) and plunge it into the topology of the aspherical surface (characteristic of those in the left deixis). However, this will not be accomplished by

respecting the topological structure of the torus. A simple emptying which reduces the volume of the torus to nil and so results in the flat tire shape of the annulus will not do. For flattening the torus in this manner produces two separate folds along the two circumferences of the annulus and what is needed instead is a single fold which likewise completes two circuits around the central axis of rotation, but one which simultaneously completes a single circuit around its core.[688] As per Lacan's instructions, this can be brought about by running the length of the torus between our pinched fingers, but doing so in such a way that the finger on top at the beginning is at the bottom by the end of a single complete turn around its axis. This procedure places a one-half twist (180°) into the deflated torus and the resulting figure looks something like a möbius strip. However, this is in appearance only. The surface of a deflated torus still has both an inner and outer face even if its inner face has been caved-in on itself as a result of the pinching operation. This is a characteristic shared by the torus and the sphere: as spherical surfaces, whether inflated or deflated, they both retain an inner and outer face.

Now, an actual möbius strip is obtained by this operation if the caved-in inner face is considered fused together. But Lacan follows another route to demonstrate this transformation 'in a less crude fashion' which leads up to what he calls his 'conjuring trick.'[689] Beginning with a cut that follows the single fold of the deflated torus, we appear to end up with two pieces or laminas of the toric surface. Yet when this is stretched out the actual result is a single continuous strip. This strip, what Lacan calls the 'bipartite möbius strip' (or more simply the 'bipartite strip') has two sides and two edges and so should not to be confused with the 'true möbius strip.'[690] Obviously, if the edges of the cut just performed are sutured back together with points along either side of the cut matching as they did before the cut, the flattened and one-half twisted torus is restored. But if one of the two laminas is slid out from under the other in either direction so that one edge lines up not with the other edge but *with itself* and this is then sutured together, what is produced is the one-sided, one-edged true möbius strip of quadrant ③.

What follows this conjuring trick is a series of cryptic sentences all of which may be viewed as leading up to and thus validating the paradoxical Lacanian claim that the möbius strip is nothing but its own absence. If this is indeed the case we can certainly appreciate Lacan's warning 'that it is not from the ideal cross-section, around which a strip is twisted in a half-turn, that the Moebius strip is to be imagined.'[691] This was precisely the procedure used to construct the möbius strip as per the commentary surrounding Figure 5.5 above. But while certain nuances of Lacan's discussion are lost by proceeding down this forbidden path which ends up placing a very present möbius strip into our hands, nevertheless certain operations can be performed on this construction so that the möbius strip *qua* absence is experienced. More specifically, such an experience (which is not without a fleeting image of this absence) is had by comparing two different types of cuts of the möbius strip. To see this, take a möbius strip constructed out

of a strip of paper with a one-half twist and cut it lengthwise a third of the way from the edge (any distance will do so long as it is not equidistant from the 'two' edges). Such a cut will not meet up with its starting point until it completes two circuits of the möbius strip. At the end of these two circuits three apparent laminas are produced but when stretched out, there are in fact only two strips. One strip is twice the length and a third the width of the original strip. This is the bipartite strip with its two sides and two edges, but what is remarkable is that the other strip produced is linked to it. Moreover, this second strip is identical to the original möbius strip before the cut and is in fact its central third. Thus a trisection of the möbius strip produces a narrower möbius strip linked to the longer bipartite strip.[692] So far the only absence to speak of concerns the partial disappearance of the original möbius strip, transformed as it is into a bipartite strip due to the off-center cutting; but as its central portion is retained the möbius strip must be said to maintain a continual presence from start to finish. Now, to conceive the möbius strip as absent requires making a different type of cut while simultaneously thinking the results of the off-center cutting operation. First, take another constructed möbius strip and make a cut down its center lengthwise. It becomes clear that instead of two circuits this median cut is complete in only one and that this results in a double-length bipartite strip with no other strip linked to it. However, if we treat this median cutting operation as an off-center cutting operation so as to require an additional circuit to be completed (that is, we are to effectively double the cut where none is needed by pretending to cut through the empty space opened up by the initial median cut), we can imagine producing the möbius strip linked to the bipartite strip. Of course there is no such linked strip. But that is Lacan's point: the möbius strip in its essence is absence and this absence is as much produced by the single median cut which imaginarily produces the möbius strip as it is actually produced by the doubled and off-center cut. This is why Lacan can claim 'that the Moebius strip is nothing other than this very [single median] cut, the one by which it disappears from its surface.'[693] The ramifications of equating the möbius strip to the cut run deep. For despite (or more accurately, because of) its absence from the spheric and toric topological spaces of the two quadrants of the right deixis of the logical square, it nevertheless makes its 'presence' felt in them whenever they undergo transformations since these transformation necessitate the cutting operation. Recalling from Figure 7.2 how the matheme associated with the möbius strip is $, this should not be surprising, for cutting is nothing more than the topological expression of the active intervention of the subject. Even better: the cutting operation *is* the subject. This is yet another way to understand the logical precedence the left deixis enjoys over the right despite only coming at the tail end of the sequential path through the quadrants of the logical square. Expressed in terms of textual analysis, the very act of interpretation is a cut into the topology of the text, and by tarrying with these cuts the hermeneutical pursuit of meaning can be suspended.

But the nature of the möbius strip is not simply to be of the cut. It is of the suture as well. For a single median cut is equivalent to the suturing operation which transforms a bipartite strip into a möbius strip, an operation that works by making along the whole length of the bipartite strip only one of its front and back sides so that '[t[here is not one of these points where the one and the other are not united.'[694] If Lacan's use of the double negative, which effectively states how there is no exceptional point on the single surface of the möbius strip, is reminiscent of the universal negative proposition, this is quite appropriate given the quadrant the möbius strip occupies. Furthermore, the lack of exceptional points also implies that no exceptional line of points exists. This fact is lost when privileging a conception of the möbius strip as imaginarily produced by the median cut that follows a line of points thought to be somehow exceptional. For when it comes to the real möbius strip any single-turn cut following any one of its infinity of lines will produce this paradoxical unilateral surface. This makes Lacan's claim that such cuts are 'lines without points' understandable, for if the exception does not exist these lines cannot be conceived as composed of a set of points. Thus the möbius strip *qua* act of cutting and suturing thoroughly departs from those collectivized sets of points known as the torus and the sphere of the right deixis. Without exceptional points there is no way to orient oneself on the surface of the möbius strip, which is a problem not encountered on the latter two surfaces. Indeed orientability is a concept used by topologists to distinguish between topological surfaces. This concept can be grasped by imagining an arrowhead placed on a circle that indicates its rotation. If this oriented circle itself moves about a surface in an arbitrary manner and manages to preserve its orientation, the surface is said to be orientable. Orientability is a defining feature of the torus and the sphere of the right deixis. However, in the case of moving along any path on the möbius strip, by the time the rotating circle returns to its starting point its rotation will have reversed.[695] The möbius strip is in fact the prototypical nonorientable space and if a surface can be said to contain an embedded möbius strip, this is enough to qualify that surface as nonorientable. As the surface of the cross-cap satisfies this condition, the line between the two sides of the Lacanian logical square can be newly expressed as that which divides the orientable spherical surfaces of the right from the more paradoxical nonorientable aspherical surfaces of the left.

This topologically expresses the fact that 'there is no such thing as a sexual relation,' or what Lacan often speaks of in *L'étourdit* as 'the *ab-sens* of the sexual relationship.'[696] A French neologism translating as 'lack-of-sense' or 'ab-sense,' this term must not be confused with the absence that is the möbius strip. But how exactly is ab-sense to be distinguished from absence? For Lacan clearly holds these to be different, as when he writes 'that the ab-sense that results from the single cut, brings about the absence of the Moebius strip.'[697] By combining the basic thesis of Chapter 3 on (post)structuralism with the discussion of discourse theory from Section 7.2, a relatively straightforward answer to this question

presents itself. As long as one maintains the elemental distinction between meaning and sense whereby meaning is that which is 'caught between' signifiers and sense is what adheres to the formal structural framework of signifiers, then the familiar matheme of the meaning-relation can again be utilized. Accordingly, the structural level inscribed by writing $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$ concerns sense, which implies that when this relation breaks down what results is ab-sense. Ab-sense is then to be equated with the matheme written $S_2 /\!/ S_1$ in distinction to the absence that is $. Redefining ab-sense in terms of the (breakdown of the) meaning-relation makes it legitimate to speak of the line dividing the right from the left deixis as one which also concerns 'the *ab-sens* of the meaning relationship.'[698] But while the transformation of the torus into the möbius strip takes us across this line, this does not imply that the discourse first encountered there makes a practice of ab-sense. As already seen, the meaning-relation is still operative in the discourse associated with the möbius strip. It is only with a further turn that meaning is put into parenthesis in a discourse which straight away goes beyond the meaning-relation. Indeed the very posing of the question of this beyond is to refer back to this discourse which at once proceeds from this beyond. This discourse is of course the A_d: $\frac{a}{S2} \underset{/\!/}{\rightarrow} \frac{\$}{S1}$ which, as evident in its writing, is a discourse founded on, operating from and aiming at the ab-sense of the meaning-relation. That such ab-sense is utilized as a resource in addressing the other *qua* absence helps keep these two distinct, but recognizing how the occupant in the place of agency is *objet a* further distinguishes both of these from nonsense. Each of these mathemes – $ (absence), $S_2 /\!/ S_1$ (ab-sense) and *objet a* (nonsense) – only appear together in the A_d. As repeatedly emphasized, this discourse takes logical precedence over all others. The quote immediately above states one way this is true, claiming as it does that ab-sense is what brings about the absence of the möbius strip. For present purposes it remains to be seen how *objet a*, repeatedly identified with the paradoxical suspension point of meaning throughout this study, becomes isolated so that it can act in this capacity. To anticipate, this is accomplished by making a cut on the cross-cap of quadrant $\boxed{4}$ which at the same time releases those elements constitutive of the topological spaces of the other three quadrants. But before turning to this operation and its results, the transformation of the möbius strip into the topological space of the cross-cap must first be briefly related.

In order to prepare for this transformation and to better appreciate the magnitude of what results, recall how the sphere and the torus of the right deixis are both manifolds with no boundary. Further, they are both capable of bounding the nothingness of space within their closed surfaces. But by turning to the möbius strip of the left deixis this trait is reversed. Instead of a surface with no boundary bounding space, the one-sided and one-edged möbius strip is a bounded surface thoroughly incapable of bounding space. It is simply nothing or as previously stated, it is nothing but its own absence. Now, it stands to reason that if this single edge was sutured somehow so that it no longer had a boundary, a closed manifold would

result which would again bound space. However, this reasoning is only half correct: a closed manifold does indeed result, but one which nonetheless is incapable of bounding space. To use terminology from Section 7.1 above, what results is not so much nothing as it is *less than nothing*. Far from being a defect feature, this is instead its undeniable strength and the 'secret' to its dominant influence in the logical square – provided, of course, that it is closed with the proper operation. So exactly how is the one-edged möbius strip to be closed? Actually, there are a number of ways in which this can be done and Lacan mentions one[699] before moving on to the operation that produces the topological space which most interests him. To arrive at this space, recall how a sphere can be cut into spherical disks. Whether a full hemisphere or portion thereof, such a cutting is a disk with a single circular edge which can be sutured to the single edge of the möbius strip. Performing this suturing operation 'caps off' the boundary of the möbius strip. The result is what is called the cross-cap,[700] a surface which has no true inside or outside. It looks rather like a dented, brimless hat. Unlike its companion surface in the left deixis, the surface of the cross-cap has no boundary and thus is a closed manifold, a feature it shares with the sphere and the torus. Yet it differs from those surfaces of the right deixis in not being capable of bounding space. What is important to note, however, is that this 'failure' to bound space is successfully accomplished by the cross-cap in an even more radical way than the möbius strip which only does so through its absence. In Lacan's words, the suturing of a spherical disk onto the edge of the möbius strip is an operation 'reduced to the point: out-of-line point which, in supplementing the line without points, happens to compose what in topology is designated as cross-cap.'[701] It is thus not so much absence as rather a curious 'presence' that is at stake in the cross-cap and this singularity, what Lacan here calls the out-of-line point, is what allows the cross-cap to suspend that which obligates other closed manifolds to bound space. Now, if the bounded space of the right deixis is the space traversed by the hermeneutical circle, then the singular out-of-line point harboring within the cross-cap is unique in its ability to stand outside meaningful space. Here is the topological expression for the *objet a*, the sublime object capable of acting as the suspension point of meaning once it is cut away from the cross-cap.

What is suggested here is that there are two operations to consider when taking up the cross-cap, this fourth and last topological surface of the logical square. On the one hand, there is the suture which reveals the surface and on the other, there is the cut which breaks with all continuity. Yet these are not two separate operations, as if suturing first constitutes the cross-cap and then cutting subsequently tears it apart; if this were the case it would be legitimate to ask what topological surface follows the cross-cap. Nothing follows. But this nothing is a nothing curiously ontologized. For the foundational stone of the logical square has indeed been laid upon reaching the cross-cap – provided of course that this stone is understood as the very embodiment of those cutting and suturing operations which have led to it. In the

final analysis then the specific task will be to conceive the suture and the cut as simultaneous operations.[702] Yet despite being of the same gesture, these two operations can nevertheless be considered separately to appreciate how the cross-cap is privileged in the logical square in the sense of underscoring all the other topological spaces. Generally speaking, the suturing operation is what establishes the bounded topological space of meaning in the right deixis while the inverse operation cuts away a singularity capable of suspending meaningful trajectories through this bounded space.

More specifically, with respect to the suturing operation it is clear that what forms the single out-of-line point is the spherical disk which infinitely curves in upon itself due to its suture to the one-half twisted möbius strip. Recognizing how the out-of-line point of the spherical disk is *objet a* while the möbius strip is $, this suturing operation can be read as their elemental combing as per the fundamental fantasy that Lacan formally writes as $ ◊ *a*. Roughly equivalent to the Kantian transcendental schemata, this matheme is to be read as the split subject in relation to *objet a*. This relation is what grants to the subject a meaningful grasp of reality and through it the subject achieves a phantasmatic sense of wholeness, completeness and fulfillment. In a word, this is the basic formula for the meaningful subjectivization of the subject. In addition, the constitution of the cross-cap bears on the object side of the subject-object divide by establishing the universal field of meaning in which the subject can either immerse or oppose himself. One might say that out from the singularity of the out-of-line point 'grows' spherical surfaces of meaning[703] and in terms of discourse theory this concerns the putting into relation the two mathemes associated with the spherical surfaces of the torus and the sphere. The relation in question is of course the meaning-relation $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$. The suturing operation thus assures a smooth and continuous surface bounding a universal space of meaning for the subject of the hermeneutical circle.

The cutting operation can be expressed in various ways on the cross-cap and its significance likewise extends across the larger logical square. On the subject side it will be recalled from Section 5.3 that the top half of the A_d: $\frac{a}{S2} \underset{/\!/}{\rightarrow} \frac{\$}{S1}$ inscribes a halt to the incessant slide of meaning. But positioned as it is in this discourse the matheme $a \rightarrow \$$ also writes the impossible relation between the two elements which compose the fundamental fantasy. This would then mark the appearance, in discourse theory, of what Lacan calls 'the traversing of fantasy.'[704] Here the temporally paradoxical move made by the subject 'at the end of analysis' is to inhabit the very cause of his split subjectivity and to thus depart from an existence requiring compensation for the split by way of meaning. In other words, traversing the fantasy is an active assumption of the very place of the cause of meaning and this opportunity arrives at the bequest of the cut – thereby demonstrating that the 'impossible' nevertheless does happen. Also previously expressed as a separation from the forced choice of meaning which attends alienated subjectivity, more simply said the cut is that which allows a movement away from subjectivization to

subjectivity proper. On the object side the cut is most discernible as the shift away from meaning to the domain of non-meaning, something understood in Part I as the shift from hermeneutical phenomenology to (post)structuralism. This cut breaks the continuity of the spherical surface and thus disallows it from bounding a universal space of meaning. With both the sphere and the torus severed, their relation also becomes one of discontinuity. Such severing is at once a severing of the hermeneutical circle or what has alternately been called the breakdown of meaning or ab-sense. As seen in the A_d this is concisely written as $S_2 \mathbin{/\mkern-5mu/} S_1$.

What is crucial to recognize is how this cut simultaneously offers up a 'stable' suspension point outside the purview of the hermeneutical circle it severs. Occupying this point would transform any failure to acquire meaning into ontological success. To explain this, consider how the cross-cap is produced by suturing the spherical disk to the möbius strip.[705] Yet it will be noticed how this spherical disk only comes to be by having been first cut out of the spherical surface that is the bounded limit of meaning and as just discussed, this cut is the breakdown of meaning whose matheme $S_2 \mathbin{/\mkern-5mu/} S_1$ clearly pertains to the discourse associated with the cross-cap itself. This implies that the cut to the spherical space of meaning of the right deixis is at the same time the operative cut which constitutes the cross-cap of the left. Being at the tail end of the trajectory of transformations leading away from the meaningful realm of the right deixis, it should not be surprising that the cross-cap is constituted by an operation conceivable as either a cut or a suture. For performing an additional cut and suture to the cross-cap does not transform it into yet another topological space but instead fragments it into those spaces already discussed which, through a series of cutting and suturing operations, we have seen form a trajectory toward it. Here a moving away is a leading back, for the cross-cap is entirely singular in participating in its own constitution. The result is a topological space whose tautological aspect might be characterized as the ontologization of the fact that the möbius strip is nothing but its own absence. Yet despite being constituted by the tautological operation of a cut/suture, this ontologized nothing is nevertheless best understood by way of the cut. Recall how the aspherical surface of the cross-cap is nonorientable because it contains an embedded möbius strip. It then follows that by cutting away the interior of a disk from the cross-cap a möbius strip results. A cut thus splits the cross-cap into a spherical disk and a möbius strip. This result is well-established in the field of topology and can readily be seen in the A_d: $\frac{a}{S2} \underset{\mathbin{/\mkern-5mu/}}{\rightarrow} \frac{\$}{S1}$ where such a cut is doubly-inscribed, first on the lower level in the form of ab-sense which captures the severing of the hermeneutical circle and second on the upper level where the absence that is $ marks the cut *tout court*.[706] Together these 'two' cuts release the *a*-spherical surface of *objet a*, the very embodiment of the nothing of this double-inscription: in a first move ab-sense voids a space of spherical meaning and kicks the subject outside the hermeneutical circle, while in a second move this newly opened domain of non-

meaning is ontologized into a singular point such that if occupied by the subject, is capable of suspending the hermeneutical circle of meaning. Figure 7.3 provides a representation of this suspension.
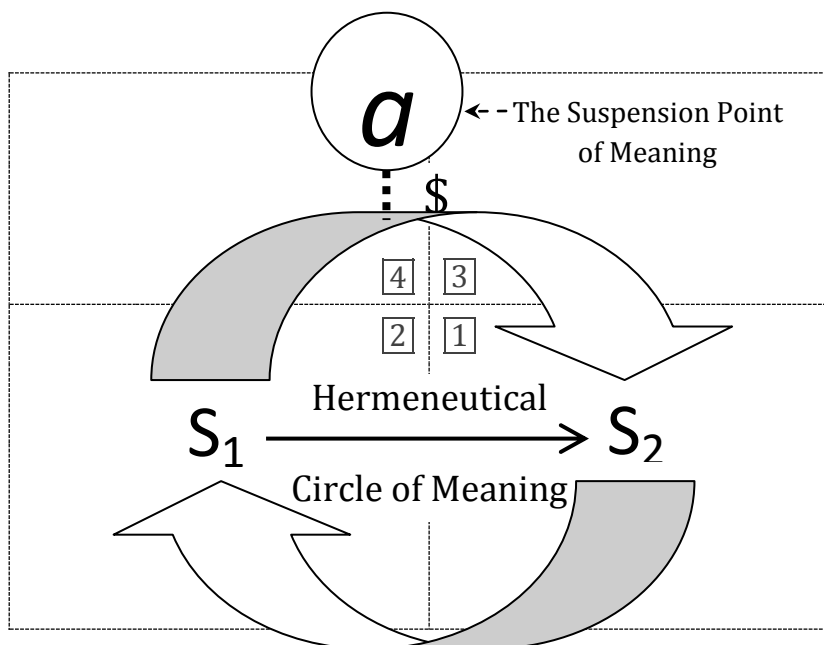

Figure 7.3: The Suspension of Meaning

In this figure the entire Lacanian logical square has been rotated clockwise a quarter turn from the way it was presented in its three previous incarnations. Since the matheme associated with each quadrant remains unchanged as well as the sequential order of the quadrants, this modification is entirely cosmetic. It has solely been made so that what it seeks to convey best strikes the eye. As can be seen, the hermeneutical circle in play between S_1 and S_2 of quadrants 2 and 1 is now at the bottom of the square with *objet a* of quadrant 4 now on top, which allows for the empty distance between them to be marked by $ of quadrant 3. This arrangement visually confirms the existence of a 'suspension' point to the hermeneutical circle of meaning, a term which is to be taken as per the original emphasis given by its Latin roots.[707] In the present context, however, the noun form of the Latin *suspensio* (derived from *suspensus*) is insufficient, as the temptation here is to read suspension as 'suspense' which thus confers upon it the sense of 'uncertainty' or 'indeterminacy.' We have seen how such states are not at all foreign to the subject who finds himself *in* the hermeneutical circle where the final retroactive production of meaning is often anxiously awaited. Far better than simply resigning oneself to objective meanings is to recognize in their mode of *futur antérieur* a subjective stamp. This can be gathered by looking instead to the original verb form where the Middle English *suspenden* and Old French *suspendre* are found to both

derive from the Latin *suspendere* – a verb often defined as 'to hang up.' Here, however, it becomes important to consider *suspendere* in its full compounded sense and resist further breaking it down into its two components, *sus-* [for *sub-*, under] and *pendere* [to hang]. For if its prefix is neglected and only its base word is considered, suspension is once again taken as the situation where the final production of an objective meaning pends for a subject who can, for that very reason, easily wash his hands of the entire affair. This is not to say that to suspend meaning it simply suffices to recognize in it a relativity since its point of origin can be traced back to the particular perspective of the subject. For treating meaning as a strict subjective phenomenon is as deficient as its strict objective treatment. Rather, a curious mix of both the subjective and the objective is needed to reach suspension proper which in no way concerns a middle ground between the two: if the subject of the hermeneutical circle finds himself at the mercy of meanings retroactively produced by an objective mechanism beyond his control, this phenomenal experience *in toto* must of course be recognized as itself bearing his subjective mark; but the crucial point is that this recognition must be accomplished in an *objective* way.[708] In terms of Part I this objective experience moves beyond the objectivity of the non-meaningful mechanisms of (post)structuralism to condense instead into a non-hermeneutical phenomenological singularity. Here is the ontological point from which the subject 'hangs up' the hermeneutical circle within whose turn meaning at any given moment hangs in abeyance.

This ontological point is of course *objet a*, which suspends the endless circular relation of S_1 and S_2. Figure 7.3 denotes this suspension by a short vertical line which 'links' *objet a* to the hermeneutical circle, but it will be noted that this line is dotted and that the void of $ is positioned 'between' them. This figure can be read in two ways. In a first approach, the non-hermeneutical phenomenological experience in question is one in which the hermeneutical field of meaning suddenly pulls away from the subject it just enveloped. Yet it does not disappear altogether but very much hangs nearby in the air, as if tethered just above the subject's head from some anchoring point still higher up. The nature of this anchoring point could be expressed in terms of the (barred) knowledge of the analyst[709] in a twofold manner: his insight into the ultimate impotency of the hermeneutical circle is certainly what keeps it suspended, yet his further insight that this nevertheless does not warrant a wholesale dismissal of meaning is what keeps it within his horizon. In other words, although the A_d leaves the hermeneutical circle thoroughly incapacitated so that it is unable to exercise its influence on the subject's experience of reality, this does not imply that it thereby dissolves into the void so that what remains of reality is the utterly absurd. Remaining close enough to ensure this does not happen, what is at stake instead with the Not-all of meaning is not the absurd but the nonsensical. So while the inability of the hermeneutical circle to intervene in the phenomenal field makes it tempting to deride the impotency of meaning – to point a

finger at it and smirk as it dangles and kicks its legs helplessly above our heads – derision is not the proper attitude to strike.[710] For while derision successfully points out the inconsistency and failure of the hermeneutical circle to deliver meaning, it nevertheless overlooks how such a subjective stance is only made possible *because* the hermeneutical circle is not up to its task.

In broader terms, it is not that the domain of the nonsensical harbors some essential Thing which pre-exists meaning and thus causes it to stumble and fail; rather, nonsensical encounters happen due to the very inconsistency of the field of meaning. Indeed those non-hermeneutical phenomena experienced in the analyst's chair wholly take place within the very space opened up by the failure of meaning. Saying it this way places the crucial accent on the surplus objectivity of any situation and thus allows for a more consequential reading of Figure 7.3. Accordingly, where the first approach sees two distinct elements (what is hung up is done so through support from above), the second approach sees only one: what is to be fully acknowledged is the fact that the subject only ever achieves an *empty* distance – denoted by $ – from the hermeneutical circle so that its suspension is viewed as accomplished *without* attachment.[711] Here the suspension of the hermeneutical circle is to be read as *coinciding* with the sudden appearance of *objet a*, what might be called the surplus object of meaning.[712] Of course one need not be an analyst to experience its effects; the wavering, say, between a too much and a too little meaning is equally had by the analyst and the non-analyst alike. Yet such experiences will not halt the desire to acquire meaning until the subject begins forging a 'link' between the breakdown of meaning and its object-cause. Thus it might be understood that what prompts such wavering is the parasitic-like quality of this surplus object, its ability to attach itself to any textual or aesthetic work which, for that very reason, incites both an infinite production of its meaning and prevents its final hermeneutical reckoning. But this link must be forged in such a way that only a non-relation persists, for at its most basic level *objet a* is a point where a cause is immediately its own effect. What is then needed is not so much a link between the breakdown of meaning and its object-cause but rather the ontologization of the subjective experience of this forged link. This would move a mere subjective experience of this breakdown, which at best only ever 'negatively' confirms the existence of a persisting non-meaningful Thing, to its 'positive' registration in the analyst's discourse as the nonsense of *objet a*. Far from reaching some beyond of meaning, the move accomplished here is much more modest.[713] Absent from the hermeneutical field as a meaningful element, *objet a* is nevertheless present there as a nonsensical surplus object of meaning. And whenever this object makes its presence 'fully' known the hermeneutical circle of meaning is at once suspended.

NOTES

[1] St Thomas Aquinas, quoted in Herbert Thurston, S.J. and Norah Leeson, *The Lives of the Saints, Vol. III (March)*, originally compiled by the Rev. Alban Butler, eds. Herbert Thurston, S.J. and Norah Leeson (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1942), 107.

[2] Peter Szondi, *Introduction to Literary Hermeneutics*, trans. Martha Woodmansee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995 [1975 posth.]), 13.

[3] Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, Second, Revised Edition, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 2003), 165.

[4] Richard E. Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969)

[5] Lawrence K. Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics* (Stocksfield: Acumen Publishing Limited, 2006), 6.

[6] Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*, 34.

[7] For a recent study endeavoring to be historically comprehensive, see M. A. R. Habib, *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005)

[8] In so doing we proceed largely in agreement with contemporary literature on the history of hermeneutics which equally finds value, though for differing reasons, in sketching out and locating the origins of modern thinking on textual interpretation just prior to the Reformation. An exception is Szondi with whom one can agree sympathetically when he questions his proficiency with the material but whose range of focus nevertheless seems too limited:

> 'Not only practical considerations, of time and competence, but also the logic of the matter at hand dictate that we restrict ourselves to the hermeneutics of those eras which still condition our own: the Enlightenment, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In what follows we shall therefore ignore the theories of interpretation of ancient and medieval times as well as the hermeneutics of Humanism and of the Reformation, the main work of which is the *Clavis scripturae sacrae* of Flacius (1567).' Szondi, *Introduction to Literary Hermeneutics*, 13.

[9] Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, "Introduction: Language, Mind, and Artifact: An Outline of Hermeneutic Theory Since the Enlightenment" in *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 2006), 3. His fourfold distinction of forms of legal exegesis was the corrective, the extensive, the restrictive and the declarative.

[10] Mueller-Vollmer, "Introduction," 3.

[11] John Bowker (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 425.

[12] Generally repudiated today, it still retains a modern counterpart in typology, a method of exegesis whereby Scripture is said to harbor symbolic or anticipatory references in addition to any apparent historical meanings. See Section 1.2 below for a discussion of Boeckh's difficulty with interpretation specifically aiming at the allegorical level of meaning in a text.

[13] Quoted in Palmer, *Hermeneutics*, 35.

[14] Bowker (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions*, 988.

[15] Mueller-Vollmer, "Introduction," 2.

[16] See, for example, Josef Bleicher, "The Rise of Classical Hermeneutics," in *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics as Method, Philosophy and Critique* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 12. Bleicher further notes how Dilthey regarded this 'formal deficiency' as overcome by later scholars who also succeed in excising all other remaining dogmatic tendencies, thereby preparing the way to the final incorporation of biblical hermeneutics into a general hermeneutics.

[17] Wilhelm Dilthey, *The Rise of Hermeneutics* in *Wilhelm Dilthey: Selected Works, Volume IV*, eds. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, trans. Fredric R. Jameson and Rudolf A. Makkreel, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 238.

[18] And indeed back to him, as is evident by many 20th century hermeneuts working in the shadow cast by Heidegger who can often be seen as taking their measure from his work. See Section 1.3 below.

[19] Szondi, *Introduction to Literary Hermeneutics*, 5.

[20] Szondi, *Introduction to Literary Hermeneutics*, 8.

[21] Johann Martin Chladenius, "On the Concept of Interpretation" and "On the Interpretation of Historical Books and Accounts" from *Introduction to the Correct Interpretation of Reasonable Discourses and Writings*, trans. Carrie Asman-Schneider in *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, pp. 55-71 (New York: Continuum, 2006)

[22] Maurizio Ferraris, *History of Hermeneutics*, trans. Luca Somigli (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1996), 64.

[23] Chladenius, "On the Concept of Interpretation," 60-4.

[24] Chladenius, "On the Concept of Interpretation," 58, 55.

[25] Chladenius, " On the Interpretation of Historical Books and Accounts," 65ff.

[26] Despite the fact that no serious scholar in the Humanities or historical sciences would openly endorse Chladenius today, much preferring to espouse some version of a relativist approach, is this not our spontaneous dispositional attitude toward our research objects, admitted perhaps only as a pre-conscious thought of the type: 'Now, something really *did* happen yet all that is available to piece it together are these fragmented perspectives scattered here and there,' a thought which also functions as the motivating force for that research?

[27] While a close examination of the influence of German Idealism on Romanticism is ruled out in the present work, it should at least be noted that with the Kantian transcendental subject, the possibility of taking responsibility for the manner in which a text is grasped – an implicit possibility from Flacius to Chladenius – opens up in a way which fully breaks from all previous thinking. The Romantic thinkers examined here have read Kant and thus recognize his Copernican revolution which cautions us against conceiving an independently existing object whereby our knowledge of it requires appropriately conforming our thinking to it; rather, it is the object itself that must now be seen as conforming to our thinking. Thus with this new notion of modern subjectivity comes a paradoxical shift toward recognizing how it is in fact the object itself which resists comprehension. The historical trajectory of Part I is very much an account of the increasing recognition of this resisting textual 'object.'

[28] Friedrich Ast, *Basic Elements of Grammar, Hermeneutics and Criticism* (§§69-93), trans. Dora Van Vranken, in *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur*, eds. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, pp. 39-56 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 42. All citations in this dissertation with *italic* script represent the author's original emphasis.

[29] Ast, *Basic Elements of Grammar, Hermeneutics and Criticism*, 43.

[30] Ast, *Basic Elements of Grammar, Hermeneutics and Criticism*, 51-2; 49-50.

[31] See Ast, *Basic Elements of Grammar, Hermeneutics and Criticism*, 44, for one of the many places Ast articulates the circle in this text.

[32] The difficulty of succinctly discussing Schleiermacher's thoughts on hermeneutics is only compounded by the fact that this work is published posthumously multiple times based on lecture notes from different periods of his teaching career which spanned across three decades. This complex publication history is interesting in itself, but more so for allowing one to link the reception he has had with particular thinkers to the version of Schleiermacher they have read. Briefly the publication history is as follows: four years after his death in 1834 Friedrich Lücke publishes a work from his own student notes on the papers Schleiermacher delivered during his late-lectures; this forms the basis of Dilthey's biography of Schleiermacher, as well as for Heidegger's and Gadamer's assessment. In 1959 Heinz Kimmerle, a student of Gadamer, publishes a work expunged from Schleiermacher's early-lecture notes. In polemic with Kimmerle, Frank publishes a new edition of the Lücke edition in 1977. The importance of choosing to focus on early- or late-Schleiermacher will be clarified below.

[33] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, ed. and trans. Andrew Bowie, pp. 1-224 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 5.

[34] Bleicher, "The Rise of Classical Hermeneutics ," 14.

[35] Ferraris, *History of Hermeneutics*, 87-8. This seems quite reasonable given Schleiermacher's study of Fichte and the latter's doctrine of *Anstoß*, an ambiguous object said to primordially disturb the self-identity of the I. For a discussion of Žižek's thesis on how the *Anstoß* is an element formally homologous to the Lacanian *objet a*, the latter of which will be discussed below, see William J. Urban, "Giving Fichte a Chance: A Žižekian Defense of the I," *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3. (2011). http://zizekstudies.org/index.php/ijzs/article/view/323

[36] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 3. As his translator rightly suggests, Schleiermacher is influenced by the new aesthetic notion associated with Kant's *Critique of Judgment* and thus employs the term art to refer to any activity which relies on rules for the subsumption of particulars under universals while simultaneously recognizing the absence of rules for the application of those rules – a conception which thus recognizes the groundless freedom of the subject in its spontaneous act of judging.

[37] Schmidt, *Understanding Hermeneutics*, 11. As well, he was considered an authority on Scriptural texts and the practical assessment of their authenticity, the demonstration of which forms the smaller 'Criticism' part of the title of his work. Although hermeneutics and criticism presuppose each other, the former ranks first since the latter has a natural endpoint. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 4.

[38] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 8.

[39] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 94.

[40] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 8.

[41] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 10.

[42] For a discussion of this split favorable to the early Schleiermacher, see Palmer, *Hermeneutics*, 91-4.

[43] Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 23.

[44] Gadamer traces this expression back to similar expressions in the texts of two giants in the German Idealist tradition who champion the subject: Fichte and Kant. See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 194.

[45] Interestingly, Schleiermacher also expresses these notions via sexual difference. Our empathetic 'receptivity for all other people' is characterized as the female strength and this 'divinatory method' is contrasted to the masculine capacity for judging particular objects under universals, called the 'comparative method.' Again the two cannot be separated, for divination without confirmatory comparison is fanciful, while the masculine method alone provides no unity without the feminine approach. See Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 92-3.

[46] It is interesting to note Schleiermacher's implicit recognition of how the poetic form embodies an object particularly resistant to the hermeneutical task as he defines it. For it does not have the easily recognizable coordination and subordination of individual parts to an overall guiding idea as does (especially scientific) prose which lends to those parts their meaning. With poetry the parts struggle to assert their specific value independent of their mere semantic relation to the whole context and leading idea. One can almost sense Schleiermacher's discomfort in having to rely almost exclusively on psychological interpretation to deal with the unbounded nature of such cases, as he does not have the option of excluding them from consideration due to their non-rational nature as Chladenius did. See Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 64-7.

[47] Wilhelm von Humboldt, "On the Task of the Historian," trans. Linda Gail DeMichiel in *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 2006), 106.

[48] Leaving aside his notion of language to be examined below, this recourse to the synthetic power of imagination alone helps explain Heidegger's positive nod towards Humboldt. Generally critiquing Kant, Heidegger celebrates this faculty introduced in the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781)

which encouragingly opened up a traumatic abyss of spontaneous freedom from which Kant unfortunately 'shrunk back' from that point onward. See Part Three in Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

[49] Humboldt, "On the Task of the Historian," 108-9.

[50] Humboldt, "On the Task of the Historian," 111-2.

[51] Humboldt, "On the Task of the Historian," 115.

[52] Humboldt, "On the Task of the Historian," 117.

[53] Johann Gustav Droysen, "History and the Historical Method" from *Outline*, trans. E. Benjamin Andrews, in *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 2006), 120. Kant's 'Transcendental Aesthetic' which opens his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) equally deals with sensible objects with respect to time and space.

[54] Droysen, "History and the Historical Method," 122.

[55] Droysen, "History and the Historical Method," 123.

[56] Johann Gustav Droysen, "The Investigation of Origins" and "The Modes of Interpretation" from *Historik*, trans. Carrie Asman-Schneider in *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 2006), 124.

[57] Droysen, "The Investigation of Origins" and "The Modes of Interpretation," 126.

[58] See Droysen, "The Investigation of Origins" and "The Modes of Interpretation," 128-31.

[59] Wilhelm von Humboldt, "The Nature and Conformation of Language" from *Introduction to the Kawi Language*, trans. George C. Buck and Frithjof A. Raven in *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 2006), 100-1.

[60] Humboldt, "The Nature and Conformation of Language," 104.

[61] Humboldt, "The Nature and Conformation of Language," 105.

[62] Philip August Boeckh, "Formal Theory of Philology," "Theory of Hermeneutics" and "Theory of Criticism" from *On Interpretation and Criticism*, trans. John Paul Pritchard, in *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum, 2006), 133-4.

[63] Boeckh, "Formal Theory of Philology," "Theory of Hermeneutics" and "Theory of Criticism," 147. When such a separation does exist, as it did in the medieval period which lacked criticism, 'all historical truth founders' (143). As the etymological meaning of *kreinein* is analysis and separation, a determination of the definite relation between two objects in a judgment (142), it is no wonder the judgments cast during the medieval period are questioned today. For without criticism, one half of the hermeneutical circle is missing: 'Obviously, criticism shares in the logical circle which arises in the interpretive task: the single part must be judged on the basis of the including whole, and this whole in turn on the basis of the single part' (144). The medieval period thus confirms what might be considered Boeckh's motto: 'The true critic will accordingly be always a good interpreter. The reverse is not always the case.' (145) Yet for all that, criticism should not be overvalued so as to stand alone, for 'criticism must everywhere presuppose the interpretative activity, the explanation of separate items, in order to proceed thence to solve its specific problem, which is to comprehend into an inclusive whole the relation of these details. One cannot judge without understanding the thing in itself; criticism accordingly presupposes the interpretative problem to have been solved.' (147) Again and again Boeckh stresses the interdependence of interpretation and criticism. His analysis of interpretation is more closely examined below.

[64] Boeckh, "Formal Theory of Philology," "Theory of Hermeneutics" and "Theory of Criticism," 136.

[65] Boeckh, "Formal Theory of Philology," "Theory of Hermeneutics" and "Theory of Criticism," 142.

[66] 'In the great circle of reasoning which the relation of interpretation to criticism presents, there lie then new and ever new circles, since every kind of interpretation and criticism presupposes the completion of all the other interpretative and critical problems.' Boeckh, "Formal Theory of Philology," "Theory of Hermeneutics" and "Theory of Criticism," 147.

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[67] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Interpretation" in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context: From Nietzsche to Nancy*, trans. Walter Kaufman and R. J. Hollingdale, eds. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 47-8.

[68] Nietzsche, "Interpretation," 53.

[69] Nietzsche, "Interpretation," 44.

[70] Nietzsche, "Interpretation," 56.

[71] Nietzsche, "Interpretation," 55.

[72] Wilhelm Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences* in *Wilhelm Dilthey: Selected Works, Volume III*, *Parts II- IV*, eds. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi, trans. Rudolf A. Makkreel and John Scanlon (Part II), Rudolf A. Makkreel and William H. Oman (Parts III, IV),(Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 101.

[73] Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, 108. The talk of objectified spirit bears the obvious mark of Hegel. Besides his keen interest in Schleiermacher, it is also Kant who must be counted amongst his greatest influences, as will be seen below.

[74] Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, 140.

[75] Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, 252-3.

[76] Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, 160-1.

[77] Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, 216.

[78] Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, 226-8. The other two classes include ideas and actions. Ideas (concepts, judgments, larger thought formations) form a class of expression and are constituents of science. They are the most 'detached from the lived experience in which they arose.' For Dilthey, the human sciences are an endeavor where 'life grasps life.' In reasoning which harkens back to Humboldt and Droysen, the human being is thoroughly historical and thus the investigator of history is the same one who makes history. This means abstract propositions which are logically independent from their subject (*e.g.*, 296-8) can be formulated, but fail to grasp history properly. As he writes, 'the subject who experiences is not the same as the one who observes' (302). Yet note that like Schleiermacher, the subject is not simply a dupe of history. One of the reasons Dilthey champions the textual matter of biography and especially autobiography as documents embodying 'the highest and most instructive form of the understanding of life' (*cf.*, *e.g.*, 221-3) is that they show the individual to be a point of intersection which experiences (or is subject to) the force of life while also exerting (or is the subject of) this force (*e.g.*, 268). This prospect of an autonomous subjectivity capable of spontaneous action (which he gets in large part from Kant and especially Fichte for whom he frequently discusses, *cf.*, *e.g.*, 353ff), partially explains his often stated rejection of the teleological view of the world and life (*e.g.*, 311) in accordance with Droysen. In general terms, teleology is suspect at the very presuppositional level of historical understanding which finds that each historical moment (or part) has meaning only with respect to the (whole) historical process, the latter of which in turn acquires its sense from those parts. Detached as well from lived experience, actions form a second class of expression yet fare somewhat better in expressing the human spirit and are thus readily more understandable.

In general, expressions are a key component to Dilthey's hermeneutical formula. Whether an idea or action, '[e]xpression adds stability to lived experience. Something created from its content comes to stand over against the lived experience as external, independent, and enduring. All attitudes allow of expression: thus expression seizes the stuff of reality in order to find in it a medium for understanding' (349). In a word, understanding aims for the meaning embedded in the objectifications of these formed expressions of the past. Hence the triad of lived experience, expression and understanding is deeply related structurally.

[79] Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, 281.

[80] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Albany: State University Press, 1996)

[81] Rudolf Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" in *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann*, ed. and trans. Schubert M. Ogden, pp. 289-96, 314-15 (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1965)

[82] Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" 290.

[83] Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" 289.

[84] Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" 291-2.

[85] Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" 293-4.

[86] Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" 295.

[87] Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" 296.

[88] Rudolf Bultmann, *History and Eschatology: The Presence of Eternity* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957)

[89] Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, 150.

[90] Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, 43.

[91] Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, 46.

[92] Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, 109. The reference to Idealism is of the Kantian variety to which Bultmann often favorably mentions. Along the lines of man's responsibility, consider his positive assessment of Kant's categorical imperative, 'a law which is valid without condition, a law which is the expression of practical reason, a law to which man assents because it is the self-determination of the rational will.' (101)

[93] Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, 141-2.

[94] Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, 122. See also p. 138 for Bultmann's recognition of the lack of exceptional points for historians to occupy, the non-existence of privileged stances 'outside history' which could offer them a bird's eye view of the entire historical process.

[95] Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, 151-2.

[96] Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, 155.

[97] Bultmann, *History and Eschatology*, 143-4.

[98] Gerhard Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," trans. James W. Leitch, in *New Frontiers in Theology: Discussions Among Continental and American Theologians. Volume II: The New Hermeneutic*, eds. James M. Robinson and John B. Cobb, Jr., pp. 78-110 (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1964)

[99] Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," 80. Ebeling's conception of his article as being the inheritance of the Reformation is laid down in no uncertain terms in its opening sentence: 'The subject "Word of God and Hermeneutic" combines two concepts which are perhaps more representative than any others of the approach that has determined theological thinking in the last four decades, and that still determines it today and also must determine it in order to be faithful to the Reformation.' (78)

[100] Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," 86.

[101] Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," 93.

[102] Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," 98.

[103] Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," 98. It seems we have here an expression of the Kantian aesthetic notion mentioned above when discussing Schleiermacher, that while there are rules for the subsumption of particulars under universals, there is the recognition that there are no rules for the application of those rules – in Bultmann's terms, our preunderstanding may indicate which questions to pose but its mysterious ground and its ultimate limits nevertheless requires a decision on our part on just how to proceed. Yet reading further the radical nature of this subjective decision is tamed for Ebeling does find a ground for the understanding in a theological beyond.

[104] Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," 101.

[105] Ebeling, "Word of God and Hermeneutic," 107.

[106] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, xxi-xxii. This implies that it is, strictly speaking, improper to refer to anyone that holds to hermeneutical phenomenology has having a methodology; hence from its first articulation by Heidegger, through Bultmann and Ebeling, to Gadamer and his adherents, it would be

more accurate to say these men hold to a particular approach informed by a unique hermeneutical disposition. Their 'method' is thus really a self-styled and conscious lack of one, easily contrasted with those dissenters who actively seek to reestablish a sound methodological basis in the wake of the hermeneutical phenomenological approach to textual meaning.

[107] The very fact of these debates which all involved Gadamer should have been enough to relieve him of his often repeated worry that *Truth and Method* had come 'too late' and was thus superfluous in its theoretical attempts. In retrospect it appears to have arrived just in time. See, *e.g.*, Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 551.

[108] While Gadamer generally celebrates Schleiermacher's project of a universal hermeneutics, he does have serious reservations. See Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 184-97 for his most focused and sustained discussion. For instance and perhaps predictably, Gadamer argues that 'however universal the hermeneutics that Schleiermacher evolved, it was a universality with very perceptible limits...since the interest that motivated Schleiermacher's methodological abstraction was not that of the historian but the theologian.' Simply said, Schleiermacher's hermeneutics concerned texts whose authority was undisputed (197). Gadamer correctly discerns the same limitation with Bultmann in concurrence with our findings above: despite the latter professing how the interpretation of Scripture is subject to the same conditions as any literature, a closer look reveals how '[t]he existential fore-understanding [preunderstanding] from which Bultmann starts can only be a Christian one' (332). Gadamer's more serious criticism of Schleiermacher involves a claim that the latter excessively relied on psychological interpretation. Yet this criticism is more important for revealing the consequences of Gadamer's choice to focus on Schleiermacher's late-work than with any careful reading of him. Now, Gadamer certainly understands how Schleiermacher's '[h]ermeneutics includes grammatical and psychological interpretation.' Yet he further writes that 'Schleiermacher's particular contribution is psychological interpretation. It is ultimately a divinatory process, a placing of oneself within the whole framework of the author, an apprehension of the "inner origin" of the composition of the work, a re-creation of the creative act. Thus understanding is a reproduction of the original production.' (187) Gadamer thus quite consciously chooses to 'pass over Schleiermacher's brilliant comments on grammatical interpretation' (186) and does so in the face of his own student's (Kimmerle's) publication of Schleiermacher's early-work which emphasized grammatical over psychological interpretation – a publication which Gadamer himself oversaw. We are told this move is legitimate because psychological interpretation came to dominate his thought later in life and became the main influence on Boeckh, Dilthey and others (who are also accordingly critiqued by Gadamer). Yet in doing so it seems Gadamer makes the same mistake as these later scholars in misreading Schleiermacher. As we saw above in the discussion of Schleiermacher, there is little reason to believe he felt one could fully escape the hermeneutical circle through psychological-divinatory transposition so that understanding would be 'complete,' as Gadamer seems to suggest (190-1). Rather, the evidence suggests that even in his late-work grammatical interpretation was equal to psychological interpretation, each making up an aspect of the hermeneutical circle which stands as the condition of the understanding. Against Gadamer, we should argue that Schleiermacher did not conceive psychological interpretation as an extraneous technique to realize understanding and thereby break the hermeneutical circle. This thesis of Gadamer's permits him to argue how he follows instead Heidegger's notion that if the hermeneutical circle is inescapable, one should not so much seek to escape it but rather seek to properly orientate oneself towards it; this thesis only works if Gadamer ignores how even in Schleiermacher's work such a notion was also present, although of course not explicitly articulated as such.

[109] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 231.

[110] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 237.

[111] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 241.

[112] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 258-9.

[113] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 264.

[114] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 277.

[115] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 279.

[116] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 281.

[117] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 290.

[118] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 291.

[119] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 293-4.

[120] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 301.

[121] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 307. It should also be noted that three pages early Gadamer reiterates how tradition is not a permanent precondition which exists by itself. True it can be conceived as a mega-horizon within which the interpreter's own horizon plays its part; yet again because the interpreter's movement participates in co-determining tradition, the whole of tradition itself is always in motion as well. What we have here is a hermeneutical circle at the level of history itself which far exceeds the complexity of similar circles conceived by the Romantic theorists of history.

[122] Emilio Betti, "Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften*," trans. Joself Bleicher, in *The Hermeneutic Tradition: From Ast to Ricoeur*, eds. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, pp. 159-97 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990)

[123] Betti, "Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften*," 177.

[124] Betti, "Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften*," 164.

[125] Betti, "Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften*," 168.

[126] Betti, "Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften*," 181-2.

[127] Betti also formulates the failure of Gadamer by referencing Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and its distinction between *quaestio facti* and *quaestio juris*: where Gadamer's concern is purely descriptive, wanting to ascertain 'what actually happens in the activity of thought apparent in interpretation,' Betti holds that hermeneutics should provide a solution to the *quaestio juris*, that is, 'what one should aim for in the task of interpretation, what methods to use and what guidelines to follow in the correct execution of this task.' Betti, "Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften*," 187.

[128] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 308.

[129] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 328.

[130] Betti, "Hermeneutics as the General Methodology of the *Geisteswissenschaften*," 187.

[131] E. D. Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) In many respects a modern-day philological hermeneut, Hirsch might also be roughly characterized as a more empirically scientific and less philosophically sophisticated version of Betti, that 'most eminent recent theorist in what may broadly be called the tradition of Schleiermacher' (112), who is often mentioned in this work in such favorable light.

[132] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 247.

[133] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 249.

[134] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 256-8.

[135] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 1.

[136] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 11. One of the causes Hirsch cites 'can be traced to the influence of a vigorous essay, "The Intentional Fallacy"' (11ff). See William K. Wimsatt Jr. and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy" in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* by W.K. Wimsatt, Jr., pp. 3-18 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954). This classic essay in American literary criticism is interesting since it presents the exact opposite argument of Hirsch and yet levels the same accusation of relativism if one chooses to ignore its admonishments. For Wimsatt and Beardsley, 'the design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable as a standard for judging the success of a work of literary art' (Wimsatt and Beardsley, 3; all subsequent citations in this endnote will be taken from *The Verbal Icon*). The reason behind this is rather simple: although an author may have a desire to communicate a particular meaning with his text, this does not necessarily mean he succeeds in doing so. Given this, we do better to focus on his actual public accomplishment in assessing the meaning of his text. Thus they argue that a poem should be considered neither the critic's own nor the author's but a

detached object which can be objectively critiqued (5). The meaning of a text is then a public affair (10). This stance is brought out more clearly by contrasting it with their follow up work, 'The Affective Fallacy.' See William K. Wimsatt Jr. and Monroe C. Beardsley, "The Affective Fallacy" in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* by W.K. Wimsatt, Jr., pp. 21-39 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1954). The first page of this work contains a concise summary of the two fallacies:

> 'The Intentional Fallacy is a confusion between the poem and its origins...It begins by trying to derive the standard of criticism from the psychological *causes* of the poem and ends in biography and relativism. The Affective Fallacy is a confusion between the poem and its *results* (what it *is* and what it *does*)...It begins by trying to derive the standard of criticism from the psychological effects of the poem and ends in impressionism and relativism. The outcome of either Fallacy, the Intentional or the Affective, is that the poem itself, as an object of specifically critical judgment, tends to disappear.' (21)

Hirsch would ultimately argue that what Wimsatt and Beardsley choose to focus on is not the text's meaning at all but rather the text's significance. See below for a discussion of this distinction.

[137] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 25.

[138] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 238.

[139] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 127.

[140] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 77.

[141] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 210-1. Hirsch tells us that this distinction was first made by Frege in an article discussed below in Chapter 2.

[142] Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 173-4. As Hirsch himself notes, he is thus following the economist John Maynard Keynes whose work on probability theory led the latter to conclude that probabilities can also be qualitative rather than just quantitative. So passage X from a particular text can be placed in a probability judgment involving vague concepts like 'more,' 'less,' 'very,' and 'slightly' to assign their probable meaning. Elsewhere, Hirsch suggests Schleiermacher implicitly recognized this logic since his divinatory-comparative function distinction in effect replicates what occurs when probability judgments are cast: where the feminine function provides 'the productive guess or hypothesis for which no rules can be formulated...[t]he critical, masculine function, on the other hand, cannot bring forth, but it can judge and test.' This latter function is comparative precisely because the divinatory guesses are tested by making comparisons, *i.e.*, by subsuming them under classes of similar instances. But while Schleiermacher recognized how the two functions go together, he overlooked how the feminine function which brings forth the ideas is prior to the masculine function which then makes comparisons, either accepting or rejecting them (204-5).

[143] Karl-Otto Apel, "Scientistics, Hermeneutics, Critique of Ideology: An Outline of a Theory of Science from an Epistemological-Anthropological Point of View," trans. Linda Gail DeMichiel, in *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, pp. 321-45 (New York: Continuum, 2006)

[144] Because of this shift in focus to empirical-materialist conditions which changes the very nature of the object of hermeneutics, a slight change in terminology is desirable. Although not originally intended to register the difference between Betti-Hirsch and Apel-Habermas, it is desirable to make use of suggested terminology found in a translator's footnote in a book by Habermas (examined below) to do just that. See Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 323n23. There Shapiro explains that his use of the word 'objectify' [*vergegenständlichen*] is meant to capture the process by which something is transformed into an object separate from and external to the subject so that the statements of natural science can apply to it. Here is the constitution of an object in the Kantian sense. In contrast, the word 'objectivate' [*objektivieren*] is employed when something is given form in a symbolic system (*i.e.*, language in the case of Apel and Habermas). This latter notion is said to frustrate the simple subject-object dichotomy in that 'it may become external to the subject in the sense that others can participate in it, but it is at the same time that in which the subject exists.' Inasmuch as Apel and Habermas utilize this notion, they clearly stand closer to the hermeneutical phenomenological

approach of Gadamer et al. than do Betti and Hirsch. Yet it is debatable whether this notion truly covers what Gadamer has in mind when he speaks of objectivity: could it not rather be its mere shadow approximation, one offered up from a perspective still too influenced by empirical science?

[145] Apel, "Scientistics, Hermeneutics, Critique of Ideology: An Outline of a Theory of Science from an Epistemological-Anthropological Point of View," 322.

[146] Apel, "Scientistics, Hermeneutics, Critique of Ideology: An Outline of a Theory of Science from an Epistemological-Anthropological Point of View," 323.

[147] Apel, "Scientistics, Hermeneutics, Critique of Ideology: An Outline of a Theory of Science from an Epistemological-Anthropological Point of View," 328.

[148] Apel, "Scientistics, Hermeneutics, Critique of Ideology: An Outline of a Theory of Science from an Epistemological-Anthropological Point of View," 333. We might say that for Gadamer, meaning can never become an object in any sense (neither objectified nor objectivated) for then it would become an externalized thing towards which analysis might proceed. In line with his phenomenology, meaning for him is more at the level of an experience.

[149] Apel, "Scientistics, Hermeneutics, Critique of Ideology: An Outline of a Theory of Science from an Epistemological-Anthropological Point of View," 336.

[150] Apel, "Scientistics, Hermeneutics, Critique of Ideology: An Outline of a Theory of Science from an Epistemological-Anthropological Point of View," 339.

[151] Apel, "Scientistics, Hermeneutics, Critique of Ideology: An Outline of a Theory of Science from an Epistemological-Anthropological Point of View," 341.

[152] Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 4.

[153] Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 69.

[154] Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 91. While he does critique Peirce's justification of the validity of the rules of logical syllogism in the process of inquiry, there is plenty to suggest why Habermas feels pragmatism accomplished the first step toward the type of reflective activity he feels is needed to reinvigorate and re-adapt scientific methodology for the human sciences. For instance, Peirce is evidently already aware by 1902 of the intimate connection between the constitution of meaning and the logic of inquiry as guided by a reflection of its application when he writes: 'In order to ascertain the meaning of an intellectual conception one should consider what practical consequences might conceivably result by necessity from the truth of that conception; and the sum of these consequences will constitute the entire meaning of the conception.' (335n.17)

[155] Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 226.

[156] Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 217.

[157] Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 286.

[158] In the Preface we learn that Palmer spent some time in Germany to study under Gadamer, met with Ebeling and even consulted with Heidegger about his project of using Heidegger's 'theory of understanding as the basis for a phenomenological approach to literary interpretation.' Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*, xv.

[159] Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*, 221.

[160] Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*, 248. The examples could easily be multiplied. Here are three others: Thesis 15 warns us that 'the belief that form is separable from content and/or from the total meaningful unity of the work is a misconception based on wrong philosophical premises...[and] is a product of reflexive thinking after the experience itself.' The activity of reflection so championed by Habermas is here seen as a falling way 'from the unity and fullness of the aesthetic moment' and is based on the methodological practice of treating sensuous form as separable from the meaning-content of the work. For Palmer, in the aesthetic encounter there is no such separation (247-8). The argument of Thesis 16 is reminiscent of Ebeling: 'The beginning point for literary interpretation must be the language event of experiencing the work itself – i.e., what the work "says." The saying power of a literary work, not its form, is the ground of our meaningful encounter with

it, and is not something separate from the form but rather speaks in and through the form.' (248) Finally, and what is certainly his most strongly worded condemnation of methodology occurs in Thesis 14 which refers to methodological pursuits seeking out knowledge of the object-text as 'rape theories of interpretation, if we may call them so, [which] take such an ego-centered, dogmatic, closed approach to the work that it becomes frigid' (247).

[161] Palmer, *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*, 242.

[162] Paul Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics" in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, trans. and ed. John B. Thompson, pp. 43-62 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

[163] Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," 44.

[164] Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," 54.

[165] Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," 59.

[166] Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," 61.

[167] Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," 62. With the words 'matter of the text' Ricoeur states that it leads him to the threshold of his own reflection and we might also pause here to reflect on Ricoeur's own career in its initial decades so as to position this essay. While his work in the 1960s was largely 'negative' in the sense of providing a defense of hermeneutics against the inroads made by structuralism and psychoanalysis (see Section 5.2 below), he only begins to make a 'positive' contribution starting in the mid-1970s of which this essay is one of the first.

[168] That Ricoeur grants some autonomy to the subject is apparent from his opening discussion in this essay regarding hermeneutics and its privileged relation to language. Because of the polysemy of words, the fact that they 'have more than one meaning when considered outside of their use in a determinate context,' there is a call to be sensitive to the selective role of contexts for determining their current value. What is needed here is nothing short of the subjective activity of discernment of these contexts to produce a univocal discourse and to identify this intention of univocity: 'such is the first and most elementary work of interpretation.' Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics," 44.

[169] Manfred Frank, "The Interpretation of a Text" in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context: From Nietzsche to Nancy*, trans. Robert E. Sackett, eds. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, pp. 145-175 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990)

[170] Frank, "The Interpretation of a Text," 149.

[171] Frank, "The Interpretation of a Text," 154.

[172] Frank, "The Interpretation of a Text," 155.

[173] Frank, "The Interpretation of a Text," 163-4.

[174] Frank, "The Interpretation of a Text," 167.

[175] Frank, "The Interpretation of a Text," 169.

[176] Frank, "The Interpretation of a Text," 170.

[177] Jean-Luc Nancy, "Sharing Voices" in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context: From Nietzsche to Nancy*, trans. Gayle L. Ormiston, eds. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, pp. 211-59 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990)

[178] Nancy, "Sharing Voices," 215.

[179] Nancy, "Sharing Voices," 220.

[180] Nancy, "Sharing Voices," 223.

[181] Nancy, "Sharing Voices," 232.

[182] Nancy, "Sharing Voices," 236-7.

[183] Nancy, "Sharing Voices," 244.

[184] Nancy, "Sharing Voices," 259.

[185] Alan How, *The Habermas-Gadamer Debate and the Nature of the Social: Back to Bedrock* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995)

[186] How, *The Habermas-Gadamer Debate and the Nature of the Social: Back to Bedrock*, viii.

[187] How, *The Habermas-Gadamer Debate and the Nature of the Social: Back to Bedrock*, 214.

[188] Demetrius Teigas, *Knowledge and Hermeneutic Understanding: A Study of the Habermas-Gadamer Debate* (London: Associated University Press, 1995)

[189] Teigas, *Knowledge and Hermeneutic Understanding: A Study of the Habermas-Gadamer Debate*, 179.

[190] Teigas, *Knowledge and Hermeneutic Understanding: A Study of the Habermas-Gadamer Debate*, 182-8.

[191] Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations, Vol. 1*, trans. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 252.

[192] Gottlob Frege, "On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*" in *The Frege Reader*, trans. Max Black, ed. Michael Beaney, pp. 151-71 (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1997). There are at least three commonly acceptable translations of *Bedeutung* as Frege uses it in this article. Besides 'meaning,' there is also 'significance' and 'reference.' In his lengthy discussion of the problems posed with translating *Bedeutung* in his introduction, Black tends to prefer reference while recognizing that meaning '*is* the most natural translation' (39) although he notably does leave untranslated the original German term in the title, a decision which both reflects the difficulty of translation and preserves the ambiguity of what Frege tried to capture with this term.

[193] Frege, "On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*," 152. For Frege each of these expressions is a proper name (a word, sign or combination of signs) that *expresses* its sense and *stands for* or *designates* its meaning (156).

[194] Frege, "On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*," 156.

[195] Frege, "On *Sinn* and *Bedeutung*," 157.

[196] Husserl, *Logical Investigations, Vol. 1*, 141-2.

[197] Husserl, *Logical Investigations, Vol. 1*, 139.

[198] See for example Husserl, *Logical Investigations, Vol. 1*, 353, 331, 325.

[199] Husserl, *Logical Investigations, Vol. 1*, 322.

[200] See §19, 14 of Investigation V in Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations, Vol. 2*, trans. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970).

[201] Husserl, *Logical Investigations, Vol. 2*, 554.

[202] Husserl, *Logical Investigations, Vol. 2*, 589.

[203] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 12.

[204] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 33.

[205] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 141.

[206] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 142. Note that in the current section only the meaningful dimension of *Dasein* with respect to the fore-structures of understanding is being discussed, as the dimension of *Dasein* that is future oriented and anticipatory of meaning is discussed in Section 1.3 above with respect to Bultmann, Ebeling and especially Gadamer with his notion of the structure of *Dasein* as 'a thrown projection.' However, for completion's sake we can highlight the following passage where Heidegger speaks of this latter dimension. It comes much later in his work when he reviews the results of his analysis in sections 31-4 and also serves as his most direct commentary on meaning:

> 'What does *meaning* signify? Our inquiry encountered this phenomenon in the context of the analysis of understanding and interpretation. According to that analysis, meaning is that in which the intelligibility of something keeps itself, without coming into view explicitly and thematically. Meaning signifies that upon which the primary project is projected, that in terms of which something can be conceived in its possibility as what it is. Projecting discloses possibilities, that is, it discloses what makes something possible' (297-8).

[207] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 143.

[208] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 146.

[209] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 291. A little further on and much more directly he writes that 'the self cannot be conceived either as substance or as subject, but is rather grounded in existence' (305). Without substance or subjectivity the Heideggerian self stands unopposed to an external object.

[210] Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 397.

[211] Martin Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer" in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz, pp. 1-54 (New York: Harper & Row, 1971)

[212] Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," 12.

[213] Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," 28.

[214] Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," 40.

[215] Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," 51.

[216] Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," 32, 33.

[217] The use of *Logical Investigations* and *Being and Time* as representative texts to extract out the Husserlian and Heideggerian types of phenomenology is justifiable at least from Heidegger's perspective: 'In those days I, as Husserl's assistant, regularly once a week read Husserl's first major work, the *Logical Investigations*, with the gentlemen from Japan. By that time the master himself no longer held his work in very high esteem; it had been published around the turn of the century. But I had my own reasons to prefer the *Logical Investigations* for the purposes of an introduction to phenomenology. And the master generously tolerated my choice.' See Heidegger, "A Dialogue on Language between a Japanese and an Inquirer," 5. For its part, while Heidegger's 'A Dialogue on Language' forms an important supplement to *Being and Time*, as our interest is primarily with his hermeneutical phenomenological notion of meaning there is no better place to turn than to its rigorous articulation in *Being and Time*.

[218] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 2002)

[219] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 42.

[220] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 202.

[221] We find the most obvious stamp of Heidegger in the third and final part of this work, already seen in its title of 'Being-for-Itself and Being-in-the-World,' where Merleau-Ponty amply cites from *Being and Time*. In one notable passage he seeks to provide us with a Heideggerian awareness of that world horizon which stands anterior to the subject-object in a distinctly French way:

> 'In all uses of the word *sens*, we find the same fundamental notion of a being oriented or polarized in the direction of what he is not, and thus we are always brought back to a conception of the subject as *ek-stase*, and to a relationship of active transcendence between the subject and the world. The world is inseparable from the subject, but from a subject which is nothing but a project of the world, and the subject is inseparable from the world, but from a world which the subject itself projects. The subject is a being-in-the-world and the world remains "subjective" since its texture and articulations are traced out by the subject's movement of transcendence. Hence we discovered, with the world as cradle of meanings, direction of all directions (*sens de tous les sens*), and ground of all thinking.' See Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 499-500.

Here we have 'subject' being taken in two senses, as '[t]he world is already constituted, but also never completely constituted; in the first case we are acted upon [subject to], in the second we are open to an infinite number of possibilities [subject of]. But this analysis is still abstract, for we exist in both ways *at once*. There is, therefore, never determinism and never absolute choice, I am never a thing and never bare consciousness' (527). The articulation of freedom here is classic Marxist: I am free to choose, but not under conditions of my own choosing. It is equally the case, however, that Merleau-Ponty often gives standard Heideggerian demonstrations of how the subject-object dichotomy has been overcome, as in 'the analysis of time...[which] discloses subject and object as two abstract "moments" of a unique structure which is *presence'* (500). In concurrence with hermeneutical phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty likewise sees the future, past and present all linked together in the movement of temporalization.

[222] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 83.

[223] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 170. That '[n]either the word nor the meaning of the word is, in fact *constituted* by consciousness' (468) is a theme often reiterated and is developed in at least one place through a critique of Descartes who is said to overlook language and the tacit, unspoken *cogito* standing prior to the spoken *cogito* of his *cogito ergo sum*:

'In the proposition: "I think, I am," the two assertions are to be equated with each other, otherwise there would be no *cogito*. Nevertheless we must be clear about the meaning of this equivalence: it is not the "I am" which is pre-eminently contained in the "I think," not my existence which is brought down to the consciousness which I have of it, but conversely the "I think," which is re-integrated into the transcending process of the "I am," and consciousness into existence' (446).

We thus arrive at what Merleau-Ponty is most famous for, *viz.*, his notion of consciousness as embodied.

[224] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 225.

[225] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994)

[226] In fact this text is quite sparse on theory, preferring instead to move from one descriptive image to the next. The titles of some of its chapters already give some indication of this: The House; Drawers, Chests and Wardrobes; Nests; Shells; Corners, etc. The overall rhythm of the text moves from the citation of poetry from which images are extracted and expanded upon by Bachelard's own imagination and back, quite often interspersed by his childhood recollections. Only rarely is the process stopped for a moment of theoretical self-reflection. Notably in the introduction we are told that only images and recollections of intimate, felicitous, loving, protective, eulogized, positive and attractive spaces will be considered in his book. Given that psychoanalysis attends more to the dark underbelly of such spaces, do we not here have a better account for Bachelard's dismissal of this field inasmuch as this reflects the repression or disavowal of a traumatic truth? His own rationale for rejecting psychoanalysis is provided below.

[227] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 225, 158.

[228] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xvi.

[229] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 74. At most, metaphor affords us 'a *fabricated image*, without deep, true, genuine roots. It is an ephemeral expression....Contrary to metaphor, we can devote our reading being to an image, since it confers being upon us. In fact the image, which is the pure product of absolute imagination, is a phenomenon of being; it is also one of the specific phenomena of the speaking creature' (74-5).

[230] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 147.

[231] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 134-5.

[232] Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 220. Moreover,

'[t]he phenomenology of the poetic imagination allows us to explore the being of man considered as the being of a *surface*, of the surface that separates the region of the same from the region of the other...It would be contrary to the nature of my inquires to summarize them by means of radical formulas, defining the being of man, for instance, as the being of an ambiguity. I only know how to work with a philosophy of detail. Then, on the surface of being, in that region where being *wants* to be both visible and hidden, the movements of opening and closing are so numerous, so frequently inverted, and so charged with hesitation, that we could conclude on the following formula: man is half-open being.' (222)

While it is clear Bachelard falls into Heidegger's phenomenological camp, he does differ slightly by downplaying the being-thrown-into-the-world aspect of *Dasein* to favor instead its open possibilities embodied in its future orientation. In other words, a greater emphasis is laid on becoming rather than on a static being-there. This is a distinct French reading of Heidegger to be accounted for by the use of the *futur antérieur,* as noted in the discussion of Nancy in Section 1.3 above.

[233] Jean-Paul Sartre, "What is Writing?," "Why Write?" and "For Whom Does One Write?" in *What is Literature? and Other Essays*, trans. Bernard Frechtman and J. MacCombie, ed. Steven Ungar, pp.21-140, 333-38 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988)

[234] There are extremely few places in Bachelard's book in which meaning is directly commented upon and without exception it is taken up in a negative light in each of these cases. In one instance he suggests that meaning has a limiting dimension: 'And language bears within itself the dialectics of open and closed. Through *meaning* it encloses, while through poetic expression, it opens up.' See Bachelard, *The Poetics of*

Space, 222. So although Bachelard might agree with Sartre's assessment that the poetic form is relatively more vacuous of meaning than prosody, the agreement stops there between the two men on this issue.

[235] Sartre, *What is Literature? and Other Essays*, 38.

[236] Sartre, *What is Literature? and Other Essays*, 56. Perspicuously, Sartre recognizes how Kant neglects to also apply the constitutive function to the imagination of a spectator looking at an aesthetic object; for Kant only the regulative function need be considered (55). For a detailed discussion of Kantian aesthetics, see Chapter 4 below.

[237] Sartre, *What is Literature? and Other Essays*, 67. The bond of understanding shared by Sartre's writer and readers is at an entirely different level than the one shared by Bachelard's poet and the single reader. From the perspective of Sartre's notions of responsibility and freedom sought out at the public level, Bachelard – that collector of literary images who seeks to exaggerate them to their limit – appears rather self-indulgent when he writes:

> 'There is also the courage of the writer who braves the kind of censorship that forbids "insignificant" confidences. But what a joy reading is, when we recognize the importance of these insignificant things, when we can add our own personal daydreams to the "insignificant" recollections of the author! Then insignificance becomes the sign of extreme sensitivity to the intimate meanings that establish spiritual understanding between writer and reader.' See Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 71.

[238] Sartre, *What is Literature? and Other Essays*, 136.

[239] Sartre, *What is Literature? and Other Essays*, 140.

[240] Sartre, *What is Literature? and Other Essays*, 139.

[241] Roman Ingarden, "On the Cognition of the Literary Work of Art" from *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, trans. Ruth Ann Crowley and Kenneth R. Olson, in *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, ed. Kurt Mueller-Vollmer, pp. 187-213 (New York: Continuum, 2006)

[242] Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, 199. Ingarden laments the fact that despite Frege and Husserl's *Logical Investigations* which fatally critiqued psychologism, it is still a prevalent theory. For his concise discussion of the failures of psychologism in its various guises and explanations regarding meaning formation and his championing instead Husserl's notion of meaning as an intentional object, see pp. 197-205.

[243] Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, 202.

[244] Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, 193.

[245] Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, 196.

[246] Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, 206.

[247] Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, 208.

[248] Ingarden, *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, 208.

[249] Wolfgang Iser, "Interaction between Text and Reader" in *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation*, eds. Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crosman, pp. 106-19 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980)

[250] Iser, "Interaction between Text and Reader," 106.

[251] Iser, "Interaction between Text and Reader," 107.

[252] Iser, "Interaction between Text and Reader," 112.

[253] Iser, "Interaction between Text and Reader," 119.

[254] Hans Robert Jauss, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti, pp. 3-45, 191-201 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982)

[255] Jauss, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," 18.

[256] These are discussed in their own numbered sections in the last half of the article. See Jauss, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," 20-45.

[257] Jauss, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," 25.

[258] Jauss, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," 28, 30.

[259] Jauss, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," 45. This political dimension does not suddenly arrive out of nowhere. It is portended by the first part of his article where he pits formalist literary theory (which raises literature to an independent object detached from its historical conditions) against Marxist aesthetic theory (which is deemed too biased in only considering material and economic conditions in its analysis of literature as reflective of inequality). Jauss' work can thus be seen as an attempt to resolve the reciprocal dilemma he sees existing between the formalist and Marxist camps, although of the two he does feel Marx's original work and those of a few of his later followers hold more promise than the formalists insofar as Marx et al. recognize how the reception of art is as important as its production.

[260] Georges Poulet, "Phenomenology of Reading," *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (October 1969) pp. 53-68

[261] Poulet, "Phenomenology of Reading," 67.

[262] Poulet, "Phenomenology of Reading," 53.

[263] Poulet, "Phenomenology of Reading," 56.

[264] Poulet, "Phenomenology of Reading," 59.

[265] Poulet, "Phenomenology of Reading," 68.

[266] Paul Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics" in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action and Interpretation*, trans. and ed. John B. Thompson, pp. 101-28 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

[267] Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," 105.

[268] Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," 111.

[269] Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," 118.

[270] Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," 127.

[271] Ferdinand de Saussure, Selections from *Course in General Linguistics* in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, First Edition, ed. Vincent B. Leitch (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 971-2.

[272] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx" in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context: From Nietzsche to Nancy*, trans. Alan D. Schrift, eds. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 67.

[273] Ferdinand de Saussure, Selections from *Course in General Linguistics* in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, First Edition, ed. Vincent B. Leitch, pp. 960-77 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001)

[274] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 965.

[275] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 968ff.

[276] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 970.

[277] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 973.

[278] Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, 974.

[279] Roman Jakobson, Selections from "Linguistics and Poetics" and "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," in *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, First Edition, ed. Vincent B. Leitch, pp. 1254-69 (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001)

[280] Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," 1265-6. Jakobson can in many ways be seen as building on the initial work of Saussure and his theory of metaphor and metonymy is no exception as it bears some resemblance to Saussure's own distinction between the syntagmatic and associative relations.

[281] Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," 1260.

[282] Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," 1263. More clearly, in a dialogue one utilizes the metalingual function when the other is stopped and effectively asked: "Now, what did you mean by that last statement?" In Jakobson's terminology, at that moment one is in search of a meaningful equivalence to the textual sequence in question.

[283] Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," 1264.

[284] Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," 1265. Perhaps more clearly, the poetic function takes equivalences between properties of words and sounds in an utterance to generate a linguistic sequence, *e.g.*, a new line of poetry.

[285] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "A Writing Lesson" in *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. John Russell, pp.286-97 (New York: Atheneum, 1963)

[286] One can characterize the two distinct styles employed in this text after Jakobson's distinction between metaphor and metonymy. When Lévi-Strauss is in full narrative mode telling us of his negotiation with the native chief, providing us vivid depictions of the treacherous route through the jungle and of the temporary difficulty in securing food for the entire group, Jakobson might note the predominant use of metonymy which underlies the realistic descriptions employed. See Jakobson, "Two Aspects of Language and Two Types of Aphasic Disturbances," 1267. However, when Lévi-Strauss assumes an academic tone in which he provides the reader with correlations (or lack thereof) between writing and the rise and fall of great civilizations of the past, Jakobson might note that this illustrates how the 'researcher possesses more homogeneous means to handle metaphor, whereas metonymy, based on a different principle, easily defies interpretation...Not only the tool of the observer but also the object of observation are responsible for the preponderance of metaphor over metonymy in scholarship' (1269). This is not to say that there is no use of metaphor in the narrative portion of the text. Certainly insofar as 'Sad' predicates the noun 'Tropics,' the translated title 'Sad Tropics' itself would be classified as involving what Jakobson would call 'semantic similarity' that might serve to indicate the author's ambivalent stance toward the text's subject matter. [*I.e.*, consider the case of double irony involved in the particular subjective stance Lévi-Strauss took as an anthropologist. On the one hand, he is the personification of the very Western forces that decimated 'primitive' societies; yet on the other, such decimated objects only appear within the Western horizon so that there is no need to affect nostalgia for lost cultures since nothing in a sense is truly lost. In Jakobson's theory, it is through a unique manipulation of the two kinds of connection (similarity and contiguity) in both their aspects (positional and semantic) that 'an individual exhibits his personal style, his verbal predilections and preferences' (1266)]. But the point here is that whenever Lévi-Strauss predicates the various objects he describes in the opening and closing pages, he tends to do so in a rather straightforward, factually descriptive manner and in terms which suggest a predisposition towards what Jakobson calls 'positional contiguity' (1269).

Another way to characterize the two writing styles is to consider, in a post-structuralist manner, the narrative portion of the text predominantly in its diachronic dimension (as might be expected since it is a description of a trek through the jungle which is most 'naturally' told from start to finish) and the content of the academic interlude as largely a synchronic analysis conducted by Lévi-Strauss (as it takes a break from the temporal flow of the story to engage in a static analysis of its elements). Against Saussure, this allows us to see how the diachronic and synchronic dimensions are both needed to achieve a fuller understanding of any text. For through this interlude Lévi-Strauss synchronically rearranges and develops new terms that not only have a retroactive effect on our understanding of the earlier narration but also anticipatorily impacts the remaining diachronic flow of the story: after the interlude whenever Lévi-Strauss observes symbolic exchanges, they are no longer curious incidents with an unknown, ambiguous status but are described much more confidently as having a clear meaning, *i.e.*, they are political struggles over the distribution of power and capital resources between native individuals and groups. The lesson here is that, standing prior to the comprehension of meaningful textual matter, the meaning one takes from a text can be seen as a result of the dynamics of that text's underlying structural dimensions.

[287] Lévi-Strauss, "A Writing Lesson," 291-3.

[288] Lévi-Strauss, "A Writing Lesson," 288-9.

[289] Another case in point occurs toward the end of the text. Lévi-Strauss was not aware of the custom of the natives to deliver payment *immediately* upon entering an exchange. So when he promised a machete in exchange for a message to be delivered to a neighboring group and failed to promptly hand over the

machete once that task was completed, Lévi-Strauss was initially taken aback in the native's having 'gone away in a rage, and I never saw him again. I had to entrust the present to another Indian.' His failure to grasp the meaning of the initial communicative exchange is clear. But the native's abrupt departure – a 'structural scansion' if you will – which ended that exchange nevertheless sent a successful message to Lévi-Strauss so that he subsequently acted on this understanding to redress the initial communicative breakdown. See Lévi-Strauss, "A Writing Lesson," 296. This abrupt departure, incidentally, demonstrates what Jakobson calls the phatic function of language whose 'messages primarily [serve] to establish, to prolong or to discontinue communication, to check whether the channel works' and this checking for 'contact' is not limited to verbal exchanges, but 'may be displayed by a profuse exchange of ritualized formulas.' See Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," 1263. So when Lévi-Strauss finds another native to accept the machete on the offended party's behalf to complete the exchange, this demonstrates that the communicative channel did work.

[290] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998)

[291] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 30.

[292] What is suggested at the end of *Of Grammatology* is how this subsuming of binary terms nevertheless posits one of the terms within the other. As he writes in the case of *Confessions*: 'But Rousseau could not think this writing, that takes place *before* and *within* speech.' See Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 315. A facet of Derrida's analysis of Rousseau is examined in the following paragraph. Derrida's privileging of writing over speech is critiqued by Žižek in one of his essays reviewed in Chapter 5 below.

[293] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 4. This science is privileged and unlike any other of the human sciences. As he later writes, 'grammatology must not be one of the *sciences of man* and...it must not be just one *regional science* among others' (83).

[294] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 163.

[295] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 158.

[296] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 130.

[297] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 108.

[298] Jacques Derrida, "Sending: On Representation" in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context: From Nietzsche to Nancy*, trans. Peter and Mary Ann Caws, eds. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, pp. 107-138 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990)

[299] Derrida, "Sending: On Representation," 117.

[300] Derrida, "Sending: On Representation," 121.

[301] Derrida, "Sending: On Representation," 134.

[302] Derrida, "Sending: On Representation," 136.

[303] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx" in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context: From Nietzsche to Nancy*, trans. Alan D. Schrift, eds. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, pp. 59-67 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990)

[304] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," 59.

[305] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," 62.

[306] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," 63.

[307] Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," 66.

[308] Dominick LaCapra, "Rethinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts" in *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language*, pp. 23-71 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983)

[309] LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language*, 29-30. As might be expected by a thinker who has accomplished the 'linguistic turn,' much later LaCapra provides us with a concise definition of a text in the following terms: 'And, whatever else they may be, texts are events in the history of language. To understand these multivalent events as complex uses of language, one must learn to pose anew the question of "what really happens" in them' (65).

[310] LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language*, 35-61.

[311] LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language*, 38.

[312] LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language*, 63. While it is clear LaCapra reads Gadamer's approach as succumbing to an excessive subjective relativism, the case of a documentary conception of texts has the opposite problem since 'a purely descriptive, objective rendering of the past can allow for uses of language that escape it only in terms of the exiguous category of unavoidable bias or particularistic subjectivity. This category may apply to certain aspects of historiography. But the simple opposition between self-effacing objectivity and subjective bias fails to accommodate the range of language uses in any significant history' (61). The interest here is how LaCapra thus conceives the hermeneutical phenomenological approach as excessively reliant on the subject while more scientifically-minded hermeneuts like Hirsch are deemed to have an approach that is comparatively subject*less* – exactly the opposite argument presented in Chapters 1 and 2 above.

[313] LaCapra, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language*, 68-9. We should of course recognize in this opposition the general difference of outcomes from following either the hermeneutical approach (whether that be pre- or post-Heideggerian) or the structuralist approach (both in its classical but especially post-structuralist versions), respectively.

[314] Hayden V. White, "The Context in the Text: Method and Ideology in Intellectual History" in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, pp. 185-213, 236 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987)

[315] White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, 189. In a formulation White often reiterates, 'for the analyst concerned with meaning production rather than with meaning produced, with processes of the text rather than with the text as product' (212), he does best to draw his attention to the internal semiotic shifts of the text found at the level of its form, not content.

[316] White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, 190.

[317] White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, 212.

[318] White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, 193. As White continues, it is clear he feels his method can objectively account for more of the elements of a text than any contending '"content"-oriented method' which too easily lends itself to 'charges of tautology and petitio principii' (193). That is, while the latter tends to turn only to those texts which match the investigator's own consciously held values, his own 'approach would demonstrate its "objectivity" above all in the methodological tolerance and patience it lavished on...especially those texts representing other, opposed positions, projects, and the like' (194). Like LaCapra, he charges Gadamerian-style hermeneutics as excessively subjective and is at pains to maintain his distance from it. Indeed he expressly positions his entire project of rethinking the basic issues of intellectual history in the opening paragraph of his text as a 'response to new methodologies that have arisen in philosophy, literary criticism, and linguistics and that offer new ways of conceiving the tasks of historical hermeneutics' (185). He explains how older authorities like Hegel, Nietzsche, Dilthey and Freud have been replaced by new models represented by thinkers in phenomenology, deconstruction and discourse analysis such as Gadamer, Ricoeur, Habermas, Foucault and Derrida. The remainder of the text thus makes both implicit and explicit references to these men and others, noting both their break from the previous generation but more importantly their failure to turn to the particular semiological analysis that White believes offers a greater objectivity to be had as it attends to the form and not the content of a text.

[319] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), 5: 302, 304. Citations to the *Critique of Judgment* are made following the standard KGS volume and page number. References to the *Critique of Pure Reason* are to the standard A and B pagination of the first and second editions, respectively.

[320] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, trans. Jeff Fort (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 10-11.

[321] Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator: An Introduction to the Translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*" in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt, pp. 69-82 (New York: Schocken Books, 1968)

[322] Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," 73.

[323] Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," 78-9.

[324] Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," 80.

[325] Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," 82.

[326] Jean Baudrillard, *Conspiracy of Art: Manifestos, Interviews, Essays*, trans. Ames Hodges, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2005)

[327] Baudrillard, *Conspiracy of Art*, 27.

[328] Baudrillard, *Conspiracy of Art*, 123.

[329] Baudrillard, *Conspiracy of Art*, 175.

[330] Baudrillard, *Conspiracy of Art*, 173-4. In even more disparaging terms, critics 'never see that, while discourse always tends to produce meaning, language and writing always make illusions – they are the vibrant illusion of meaning, the resolution of the misery of meaning by the happiness of language. That is really the only political, or transpolitical act that someone who writes can accomplish' (174). Sartre could not possibly disagree more. Theoretically, Baudrillard splits language into two levels. Language produces meaning at the level of its content but also nonsense at the level of its form: 'While it is a vector of meaning, language is at the same time a superconductor of illusion and nonsense. Language is only the unwitting accomplice of signification – in its very form, it calls for the spiritual and material imagination of sounds and rhythms, the dispersion of meaning in the event of language.' Given this, radical thought is to attend to the nonsensical form of language so as to account 'for the fundamental illusion of meaning while at the same time accounting for meaning' (175). The difference from (post)structuralism should be clear: whereas a similar accounting of meaning-content is made at the level of the structural form of language, there is a characteristic refrain by (post)structuralism from questioning the existential status of meaning; Baudrillard's aesthetic theory, however, has no trouble doing both. For meaning is also expressly judged to be illusory or imaginary in the latter's work.

[331] Baudrillard, *Conspiracy of Art*, 221-2.

[332] Alain Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, trans. Alberto Toscano (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005)

[333] Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 9.

[334] Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 1. As his translator notes, these words allude to Badiou's critique of Heideggerian poetics from one of his seminars. The *Handbook* is peppered with such allusions which offer the reader the opportunity to better delimit Badiou's own position which in many ways is diametrically opposed to Heidegger. For instance, he writes how

> 'we know that Heidegger – together with the entire hermeneutic current that invokes his name – sees the Platonic operation, which imposes the initial cut of the Idea upon the thinking of being, as the beginning of the forgetting of Being, as the inception of what is ultimately nihilistic with metaphysics. According to this position, the disclosure of the meaning of Being is already covered over in the Idea by the technical supremacy of beings, as it is arranged and enframed by a mathematical form of understanding' (37).

This accurate assessment of Heidegger stands in stark contrast to Badiou's unique return to Plato and the Idea through a new philosophical form of understanding that is precisely grounded on the fundamental axioms of set theory – the very foundation of mathematics.

[335] Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 7.

[336] Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 27.

[337] Badiou, *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, 12. The artistic truth is thus a subjective composition, while 'an artwork is a subject point of an artistic truth' (12).

The particular moments of this trajectory (from the Event to its Naming with a Subject pledging Fidelity to it in Truth) are fleshed out in Badiou's chapters on the various art forms. For instance, dance is the figure of the eventual site as such, mimicking an undecided thought which points to the event before it is named (61, 64); theater 'is nothing but the consequence of playing out an act of naming' (63); Beckett's prose exemplifies elements leading up to the event; while Mallarmé's poem exemplifies moments after the event (*i.e.*, its naming, the subjective fidelity and the emergence of truth which together cause the void, the empty set of mathematics, to arise in the situation). Moreover, in a passing remark in the final chapter Badiou seems to suggest that at least one of these moments could have its meaning, but only at the cost of the dissolution of the entire procedure: 'Memory is a de-eventalization, since it attempts to connect the act of naming to a meaning' (124). So Bachelard's phenomenology of the imagination, reliant as it is on childhood remembrances, is entirely devoid of truth as his procedure ensures there is no event to which the subject could pledge fidelity.

[338] Gratitude is expressed to the editors of the *Avello Publishing Journal* for their kind permission to reuse material initially published in their inaugural issue from 2011 for the present section. See William J. Urban "The Topology of the Kantian Sublime: Lyotard, Heidegger, Rancière, Deleuze and Nancy," *Avello Publishing Journal*, v.1, n.1 (2011). http://avellopublishing.wordpress.com/journal/volume-1-issue-1/contents/ It should be noted that the argument in this section can be taken as a self-contained whole but does go well beyond material that has hitherto been developed in a few respects, utilizing, for instance, some Lacanian concepts that will only be formally introduced in Part II below. But as it was originally written well before the development of Part II, a fruitful understanding of it need not await a reading of the latter. In general the argument of the present section should be seen as an earlier attempt, through aesthetic theory, to conceive the suspension of fields presumed to be self-enclosed. It is thus not so much superseded by the aim and effort of Part II as rather standing as the latter's compliment.

[339] Here is the reason why Badiou cannot be discussed in the present section. As was seen in Section 4.1 his notion of inaesthetics expressly prohibits the singular and immanent truth of art from circulating among the other registers of work-producing thought, *viz.*, politics, love and science.

[340] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Standford University Press, 1991), 101.

[341] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5: 252.

[342] For a discussion of these three references in the third *Critique*, see Henry E. Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 336-41.

[343] Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, trans. Steven Corcoran (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 89.

[344] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5: 252-3.

[345] Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste*, 337.

[346] See the chapter 'The Schematism of the Pure Concepts of Understanding' in Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A137-47/B176-87.

[347] This is Heidegger's *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*. Throughout his text, Nancy refers to Heidegger's work by this title (translated as 'Kantbook') which Heidegger himself gave to his own work on Kant. See Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 219.

[348] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 152n14.

[349] Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (London: Verso, 1999), 39, 61.

[350] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 23-4.

[351] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5: 246.

[352] Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 43, 61.

[353] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 25.

[354] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 44.

[355] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 77.

[356] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5: 247.

[357] See Joan Copjec, "Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason" in *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists*, pp. 201-36, 259-60 (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994). Page 213 is one place where she concisely makes this claim.

[358] Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 38-9.

[359] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 98.

[360] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 98.

[361] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 17.

[362] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 21.

[363] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 23.

[364] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 19.

[365] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 20.

[366] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 97, 101.

[367] 'The sublime is not a pleasure, it is a pleasure of pain: we fail to present the absolute, and that is a displeasure, but we know that we have to present it, that the faculty of feeling or imagining is called on to bring about the sensible (the image).' Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 126.

[368] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 128.

[369] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 117.

[370] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 143.

[371] Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 135.

[372] Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 112-3.

[373] Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche: Volumes I and II: The Will to Power as Art; The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*, trans. by David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), 70.

[374] Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 90.

[375] Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 80.

[376] Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 2.

[377] Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 139.

[378] Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 123.

[379] Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. and ed. by Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 41.

[380] Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 48-9.

[381] Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," 50.

[382] Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. and ed. by Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum Books, 2010), 67, 75.

[383] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 96.

[384] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 176-7.

[385] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 22.

[386] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 24.

[387] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 173-4.

[388] In contrast and as seen above, the schema's transcendental determination of time in the first *Critique* seems to provide enough time for a full comprehension of a common household object or a painting; with such objects, there are no gaps discernible and the imagination 'successfully' presents its own synthesis for a complete conceptualization in the understanding and in reason. Again, this was Heidegger's exclusive focus and thus for him the imagination's operation was not problematic. But as was also seen, if the mathematical sublime is conceived as the impossible schema of the 'universe as a whole,' we can reread this logic back into the first *Critique* and hypothesize that the frustrating experience of not being able to grasp this infinitely large object all at once may very well occur when viewing much smaller objects. Thus even a painting could sublimely affect the subject due to the violence of the imagination as

it endeavors to overcome the inherent gap between its own apprehending and comprehending functioning.

[389] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 139.

[390] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 144.

[391] Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, 30-1.

[392] In the literature, there is some debate as to whether the imagination is its own faculty alongside sensibility. Certainly they are afforded separate status in the first edition of the first *Critique,* although thereafter Kant seems to use them equivalently (which is the main reason why Heidegger argues Kant 'shrunk back' from the singular transcendental power of the imagination). However, followed here is the example set by the French thinkers in this section who all use these two terms interchangeably or at least treat the imagination as the essential force of sensibility, pitting both against the two other major Kantian faculties, *viz.*, the understanding (with its intelligibility) and reason (with its rationality).

[393] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 69.

[394] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 141.

[395] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5: 247, 253.

[396] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5: 209'.

[397] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5: 316.

[398] Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 40-1.

[399] Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, 94.

[400] Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, 131. This is certainly true for the post-Marxist, but must he not account for the necessity to our thinking that behind every contingency lurks a hidden necessity?

[401] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 208.

[402] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 148.

[403] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 82-3.

[404] Kant is consistent in saying that what occupies the noumenal realm in the dynamical antinomy are God and soul.

[405] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 86.

[406] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 207, 149.

[407] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 212.

[408] We could express this in terms of Lyotard's first chapter in *The Inhuman* where he makes use of Kant's reflective judgment. See Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, 15. He would need to accomplish one more crucial reflexive turn by reflecting his entire meditation in this chapter *into itself*. Textually, it is not enough to 'prepare post-solar thought' for its inevitable separation from the body (23); rather, we need to experience that singular point where this separation necessarily supports itself. By doing so, epistemological 'failure' becomes ontological 'success' and we see that the masculine and feminine subjective positions simply become two (ultimately failed) strategies to deal with the traumatic fact that there is no such thing as a sexual relation. So in a way Lyotard is quite right to divide his first chapter into just two (and only two) sections – HE and SHE – since there can be no other section to write.

[409] See Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontents*, 90ff. If Lyotard is sure of the substantiality of the forever inaccessible Thing, it seems reasonable that he would abstractly theorize on the 'immaterial materiality' of pure difference and pure passion and this is precisely where Rancière levels his criticism.

[410] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 209.

[411] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 125.

[412] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 213.

[413] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 210.

[414] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 215-6, 218.

[415] Although he does not provide an analysis of the particular text of Deleuze's examined here, the thesis on Deleuze articulated in this section is particularly emboldened by the fact that in his book on Deleuze, Žižek mentions that Lacan was appreciative of the fact that Deleuze managed to theorize *objet a* in his

much earlier *The Logic of Sense*. See Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 27.

[416] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 143, 139.

[417] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 181.

[418] Rancière, *Dissensus*, 182.

[419] The crucial point is that such an object frustrates the mere re-arrangement of the sensible into a new distribution. Rather, it is paradoxically at once disclosed by that distribution and the point which embodies the anticipated 're-distribution' of that distribution.

[420] Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: the logic of sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003)

[421] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 2-3.

[422] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 136.

[423] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 96, 95.

[424] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 83, 98.

[425] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 97.

[426] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 100-1.

[427] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 102.

[428] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 102-3.

[429] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 104.

[430] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 106.

[431] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 121.

[432] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 138.

[433] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 156.

[434] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 195n5.

[435] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 157-8.

[436] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 153.

[437] Indeed, Lacan's *objet a* has two faces, one real and the other imaginary. It is never symbolic.

[438] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 159.

[439] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 158.

[440] Deleuze, *Francis Bacon*, 158.

[441] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 107.

[442] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 21-2.

[443] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 7.

[444] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 10-1.

[445] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 25.

[446] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 26.

[447] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 20.

[448] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 9.

[449] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 118, 123.

[450] Nancy, *The Ground of the Image*, 112.

[451] See Chapter 7 of Alenka Zupančič, *Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan* (London: Verso, 2000).

[452] This re-conception of the sublime takes advantage of the double, even triple, split that operates in the third *Critique*. Kant's text itself is divided into two parts, a critique of aesthetic judgment and a critique of teleological judgment. The former is further divided into two types, judgments of taste and of the beautiful in nature and art (which is the main focus for Kant), and judgments about the sublime. Following Žižek, the contention here is that in order to understand the sublime properly, teleology must also be taken into account. See chapter 2 of Slavoj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993). That is, the sublime should be seen as the negative intersection between beauty and teleology, as the failed synthesis between these two. Moreover, 'the Sublime is the site of the inscription of pure subjectivity whose abyss both Beauty and Teleology endeavor

to conceal by way of the appearance of Harmony' (*ibid* 46). We might hasten to add that this is what the concern for meaning is all about, to conceal this real abyss with imaginary meaning in order to harmonize the text by filling in its gaps and indeterminacies. As discussed, Kant further splits the sublime into its mathematical and dynamical versions which can be seen as two failed attempts to conceal the abyss. These failures manifest themselves as the *magnitude* of nature in the case of the mathematical and the *might* of nature in the case of the dynamical. These failures, which have to do with the fact that sensibility or imagination is inadequate to the Ideas of reason, is an unpleasure. Yet finding this out is pleasurable as it invokes in us the feeling of the supersensible moral Law that is stronger than the mightiest natural force. A 'pleasurable unpleasure' is thus experienced by the subject, or in French, a *jouissance*. It is important to note that for Kant this feeling of the sublime is always precisely just that, a feeling, so when he speaks of the sublime it always has to do with a phenomenon as experienced on the subject-side. What Deleuze and Nancy accomplish in their work in aesthetics (and what Lacanian psychoanalysis accomplishes generally) is to conceive the sublime on the object-side as well. Nevertheless, Kant is aware that where the link between beauty and the supersensible is merely explanatory and interpretive, the link of the sublime to the supersensible does one better by justifying and elevating this link to universal validity. But because Kant failed to specify a sublime object, he could not further recognize the sublime as the point of exception implied with every universal, as that singular point at which its validity or hold is canceled. As was seen above, since Deleuze and Nancy effectively do specify this sublime object in art, they could proceed to conceive it as that suspension point which troubles every narrative-interpretive gesture to aesthetic works.

It should also be recognized that aesthetic theory's accomplishment in specifying a suspension point to meaning makes it superior, on this score, to either hermeneutical phenomenology or (post)structuralism – the two dominant approaches to textual analysis explored in Chapters 1-3 above. If one permits a crude analogy, it can be seen how aesthetic theory overcomes having to choose between these two approaches. On the one hand, does not Kant's notion of beauty have more to do with the hermeneutical phenomenological approach? To have 'purposiveness without a purpose' (Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, 5: 226) means that an object of beauty is a product of man's conscious activity so as to bear the mark of purposiveness, yet it is only beautiful insofar as the subject experiences it as serving no definite purpose and so is something that is devoid of reason and end. Beauty marks that point where man's activity (usually instrumental and directed to realize conscious ends) functions as a spontaneous natural force so that a true artwork springs forth not from a conscious plan but spontaneously. Here one might think of the Heideggerian gaze on a Greek temple which lies in ruins from millennia of neglect but whose being nevertheless spontaneously shines through so as to unveil the ancient Greek world. On the other hand, does not teleology have more to do with (post)structuralism? Just like the latter's focus on the blind mechanical laws of signifiers, so too with teleology's aim to discern hidden purposes and laws at work in nature among which there is no place for purposiveness. So if beauty is to hermeneutical phenomenology as teleology is to (post)structuralism, then the re-conception of the sublime as the negative embodiment of beauty and teleology allows aesthetic theory to radically undermine having to choose between either of these two dominant methodological approaches.

[453] G. W. F. Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, trans. Bernard Bosanquet, ed. Michael Inwood (London: Penguin Books, 2004)

[454] Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, 63.

[455] Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, 36.

[456] Hegel, *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*, 77. In Chapter 1 above it was noted in passing more than once how, from Schleiermacher onward, there is a Kantian recognition that while there are rules for the subsumption of particulars under universals there is nevertheless the absence of rules for the application of those rules which indexes the ground of freedom in aesthetic judgment. However, with Hegel we begin to see how this freedom is still too abstract and must be supplemented by a more concrete notion of freedom.

[457] Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vols. IV and V (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958), 96, 1, 111.

[458] Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 96.

[459] Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 264.

[460] Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 359-60.

[461] Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 278. To dispel the mystery of dream analysis even further and again stress how they are treated as texts, one should reflect on Freud's actual procedure in interpreting dreams. Upon waking from a dream Freud would write it down on paper, usually immediately but never longer than a day later. Then its analysis would proceed *from the written text itself*. The associated thoughts these words trigger are of course key to the entire process, but one should not lose sight of the fact that throughout his book (which is composed mostly of his own dreams), the analysis often includes wordplay with the original German signifiers. It is often mused that the significance of such wordplay is lost on the non-German speaker but a more persuasive explanation as to why the lessons of Freud's wordplay might prove unconvincing is that to be fully convinced, one must actually do the hard work of such analysis oneself and this, as he often implies, is something for which most people have little patience or self-discipline. So the dreamer who sees a clock in his dream that reads 'twenty to five' (and writes it out like this with words and not '4:40') may eventually arrive in his analysis at '225' – a particularly troubling amount for the dreamer as he anxiously filled out his tax form the previous evening – and be convinced that Freud's method holds some truth. While readers without their own hands-on experience in this type of analysis might find such a scenario intellectually stimulating but remain effectively unmoved.

[462] Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 485.

[463] This is seen throughout the book. Perhaps most directly: 'I must affirm that dreams really have a meaning and that a scientific procedure for interpreting them is possible.' Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 100.

[464] Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 506-7.

[465] Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Chapter VI (A) and (B). These are of course later translated linguistically as metaphor and metonymy, respectively, by Jakobson.

[466] Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 525.

[467] Freud is well aware that the impossible conjunction of form and content nevertheless does happen. After summarizing the particular findings of a patient's dream, he emphasizes the lesson to be drawn from it: 'Thus here again the lack of clarity shown by the dream was a part of the material which instigated the dream: part of this material, that is, was represented in the *form* of the dream. *The form of a dream or the form in which it is dreamt is used with surprising frequency for representing its concealed subject-matter*.' Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 332. Ultimately the only way to account for this is to posit a paradoxical object which conjoins form and content at a singular point by its very embodiment of the minimal gap which holds them apart.

      At a more general level, such a real object must also be presupposed if we are to account for the minimal gap between the signifier and the image. That these two exist in different dimensions is easily confirmed by the common phenomenon of forgetting a celebrity's name while at the same time being flooded with imagery from his film and television work; once the name is recalled the images instantly recede and vice versa. In terms of dreams, Freud spends considerable time demonstrating how '[a] dream-thought is unusable so long as it is expressed in abstract form' and only becomes usable 'once it has been transformed into pictorial language' (340). As he notes, what is especially difficult for the dream-work is to find suitable images for logical conjunctions like 'if,' 'because,' and 'either-or' (312ff). The point here is that despite existing in distinct dimensions a transformation from one to the other is nevertheless possible because of this paradoxical element.

[468] Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XVII, pp. 219-52 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958), 219.

[469] Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" 238.

[470] Freud, "The 'Uncanny,'" 241, 245.

[471] C. G. Jung, "Dream Analysis in Its Practical Application" in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 159-82 (New York: Random House, 1955)

[472] Jung, "Dream Analysis in Its Practical Application," 169.

[473] Jung, "Dream Analysis in Its Practical Application," 173-4.

[474] Jung, "Dream Analysis in Its Practical Application," 182.

[475] Ernst Kris, "Ego Psychology and Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Therapy" in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 77-93 (New York: Random House, 1955)

[476] Kris, "Ego Psychology and Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Therapy," 83.

[477] Kris, "Ego Psychology and Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Therapy," 88ff.

[478] Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970)

[479] Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 8. Throughout this first part the symbol is referred to as a relation of meaning to meaning in an intentional structure (*cf.*, *e.g.*, 9, 12, 18, 20).

[480] Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 47.

[481] Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 65. Energetics is a term Ricoeur uses to refer to Freud's very early model of the psyche which treats psychical energy in a quantitative manner. Borrowing from physics, there is the attendant notion that this apparatus economically strives for equilibrium with respect to the conflicting flows of energy. Such an apparatus is clearly carried over into the final chapter of *The Interpretation of Dreams.* The psychical model articulated there explains dreaming as a regressive movement of the usual progressive movement in waking life (which proceeds from the unconscious system towards the increasing censorships of the preconscious and conscious systems). But Ricoeur also sees the notion of energetics in many subsequent texts by Freud, evidently finding enough traces of this line of thinking to elevate the tension between energetics and hermeneutics into a defining conflict within psychoanalysis.

An important point that should be noted is how Freud makes it clear that the apparatus that accounts for dreams also accounts for the neuroses. Pathology is not a collapse of the apparatus but a mere different emphasis of its components. So we learn of the neuroses by examining dreams. Thus, as he famously writes: '*The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind*.' Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 608. This also means that the neuroses – just like dreams – are texts that can be read.

[482] Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 255-6. This is really a foregone conclusion. Already at the beginning of his discussion he writes that 'there is no doubt that psychoanalysis is a hermeneutics: it is not by accident but by intention that it aims at giving an interpretation of culture in its entirety' (66).

[483] Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 359.

[484] Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 342-3.

[485] Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 543.

[486] Manfred Frank, "The 'true subject' and its double: Jacques Lacan's hermeneutics," in *The Subject and the Text: Essays on Literary Theory and Philosophy*, ed. Andrew Bowie, trans. Helen Atkins, pp. 97-122 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

[487] Frank, "The 'true subject' and its double: Jacques Lacan's hermeneutics," 100.

[488] Frank, "The 'true subject' and its double: Jacques Lacan's hermeneutics," 107.

[489] Frank, "The 'true subject' and its double: Jacques Lacan's hermeneutics," 115.

[490] Frank, "The 'true subject' and its double: Jacques Lacan's hermeneutics," 118.

[491] Frank, "The 'true subject' and its double: Jacques Lacan's hermeneutics," 122. To this end, in a footnote Frank approvingly cites Derrida as implicitly suggesting 'that Lacan's psychoanalysis differs only in inessential points from the analytical hermeneutics of Ricoeur' (119n100). Frank's appeal to the hermeneutical insights of the 19th century is thus thoroughly compatible with, as was seen in Section 1.3

above, Ricoeur's call to return to epistemological concerns forgotten in the wake of the Heideggerian turn.

[492] Julia Kristeva, "Psychoanalysis and the Polis" in *Transforming the Hermeneutic Context: From Nietzsche to Nancy*, trans. Margaret Waller, eds. Gayle L. Ormiston and Alan D. Schrift, pp. 89-105 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990)

[493] Kristeva, "Psychoanalysis and the Polis," 90.

[494] Kristeva, "Psychoanalysis and the Polis," 92.

[495] Kristeva, "Psychoanalysis and the Polis," 95.

[496] See, *e.g.*, Kristeva, "Psychoanalysis and the Polis," 103.

[497] Jacques Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 197-268 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006)

[498] Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," 221.

[499] Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis,' 215. The very capitalization of the term Word alone brings to mind Ebeling's word-event theology examined in Section 1.3 above.

[500] Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," 227. Later he writes in a straightforward fashion that 'psychoanalysis in its early development...[was] intimately linked to the discovery and study of symbols' and this new development 'expresses nothing less than the re-creation of human meaning in an arid era of scientism' (238-9) which is significant because, as he said earlier,

> '[s]ymbols in fact envelop the life of man with a network so total that they join together those who are going to engender him "by bone and flesh" before he comes into the world; so total that they bring to his birth, along with the gift of the stars, if not with the gifts of the fairies, the shape of his destiny; so total that they provide the words that will make him faithful or renegade, the law of the acts that will follow him right to the very place where he is not yet and beyond his very death; and so total that through them his end finds its meaning in the last judgment, where the Word absolves his being or condemns it – unless he reaches the subjective realization of being-towards-death' (231).

Speaking even earlier about the Word, Lacan writes that 'the world of things will situate itself' in 'a language's world of meaning' (228). Lines like these could have easily been written by Ricoeur or Gadamer or anyone well-versed in Heideggerian hermeneutical phenomenology. At this point in Lacan's career it is clear that the meaning-dense symbol forms the structure and limit of the psychoanalytic field.

[501] Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," 217. The full quote nicely captures this argument and the conception of psychoanalysis with respect to it: 'What we teach the subject to recognize as his unconscious is his history – in other words, we help him complete the current historicization of the facts that have already determined a certain number of the historical "turning points" in his existence. But if they have played this role, it is already as historical facts, that is, as recognized in a certain sense or censored in a certain order.' He provides an example by way of the anal stage to illustrate that what is at stake here is not the fact of toilet training as such but whether the subject registers it as a victory or as a defeat. It should also be noted that Lacan claims such 'restructurings of the event after the fact,' which in French would be rendered by the term *après coup*, are in line with Freud's notion of *Nachträglichkeit* or deferred action (213).

The logic here is equally applicable to the reading of texts so that in no way can the writings of a Schleiermacher, a Gadamer, a Derrida, a Nancy or a Freud be taken as a simple collection of facts. Rather, the particular way they have been 'taken up' – say, from the perspective of the work of early 1970s Lacan – is what is important.

[502] Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," 213. More directly he writes that '[p]unctuation, once inserted, establishes the meaning; changing the punctuation renews or upsets it; and incorrect punctuation distorts it' (258). The exact nature of the punctuation, whether it takes the form of repeating a word the subject has just uttered or through a simple clearing of the throat, is less important when compared to its proper timing. Here lies the rationale for his infamous 'short

sessions' which is more accurately termed 'variable length sessions' since there is no telling when a favorable opportunity will arise to suddenly terminate the session. He writes:

> 'It is, therefore, a propitious punctuation that gives meaning to the subject's discourse. This is why the ending of the session – which current technique makes into an interruption that is determined purely by the clock and, as such, takes no account of the thread of the subject's discourse – plays the part of a scansion which has the full value of an intervention by the analyst that is designed to precipitate concluding moments. Thus we must free the ending from its routine framework and employ it for all the useful aims of analytic technique' (209).

In other terms which are maintained throughout this paper, punctuation has the effect of halting the subject's 'empty speech' to produce instead a genuine 'full speech.'

[503] Jacques Lacan, "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 6-48 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006). Throughout this article the insights available to the analyst focused on the symbolic is juxtaposed to its imaginary-meaningful effects which are liable to lead him astray. From the very first page he announces how

> '[t]he teaching of this seminar is designed to maintain that imaginary effects, far from representing the core of analytic experience, give us nothing of any consistency unless they are related to the symbolic chain that binds and orients them. I am, of course, aware of the importance of imaginary impregnations (*Prägung*) in the partializations of the symbolic alternative that give the signifying chain its appearance. Nevertheless, I posit that it is the law specific to this chain which governs the psychoanalytic effects that are determinant for the subject – effects such as foreclosure (*Verwerfung*), repression (*Verdrängung*), and negation (*Verneinung*) itself – and I add with the appropriate emphasis that these effects follow the displacement (*Entstellung*) of the signifiers so faithfully that imaginary factors, despite their inertia, figure only as shadows and reflections therein' (6).

The analysis he will carry out will, among other things, demonstrate that this focus on the symbolic and away from its secondary meaning-effects is in no way a focus on some general form abstracted out from the content of phenomena.

[504] *Lacan*, "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" 21.

[505] To give some sense of this, below are the opening moves from less than two full pages of his text. See Lacan, "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" 35-7. Consider the following table compiled from these pages:

$$+ \quad + \quad + \quad - \quad + \quad + \quad - \quad - \quad + \quad - \quad \text{etc.}$$
$$1 \quad 2 \quad 3 \quad 2 \quad 2 \quad 2 \quad 2 \quad 3$$
$$\alpha \quad \gamma \quad \beta \quad \gamma \quad \gamma \quad \delta$$

Figure 5.1: Lacan's Alpha-Numeric Ciphering Matrix

The first row provides us with an arbitrary diachronic series of presences and absences, as in a randomly generated succession of coin tosses. The numerical row beneath it can be thought of as the imposition of a symbolic layer or matrix on top of this random series. The bottom alphabetical row is an additional matrix imposed on the numerical series.

More specifically, the numerical row in the above table is generated synchronically, by grouping possible outcomes of the initial series according to the following definitions:

Outcomes of (+ + +) and (− − −) are assigned a 1.
Outcomes of (+ − +) and (− + −) are assigned a 3.
Outcomes of (+ − −), (− + +), (+ + −) and (− − +)* are assigned a 2.
   *The content of this parenthetical is corrected from the error in the translated edition. See Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 47.

Thus the numerical row begins with a 1 as its series is (+ + +). What follows is a 2 because of (+ + −), etc. Already a limitation imposes itself: moving from 1 to 3 (or 3 to 1) necessitates an intervening 2.

The alphabetical row is generated by additionally grouping the possible outcomes of the numeric series according to the following definitions:

Outcomes of (1—1), (3—3), (1—3) and (3—1) are noted by α.
Outcomes of (2—2) are noted by γ.
Outcomes of (1—2) and (3—2) are noted by β.
Outcomes of (2—1) and (2—3) are noted by δ.

The horizontal bar (—) can represent either 1, 2 or 3. But again there are limitations.
E.g., (1—1) must be (1 1 1). Why? As already seen (1 3 1) is ruled out because 1 to 3 (or 3 to 1) necessitates an intervening 2. Moreover, (1 2 1) is ruled out because a 2 must immediately follow itself if an initial 1 is to reappear in the third slot. Given these and other limitations, the missing numbers can be filled in appropriately.

Thus the alphabetical row begins with α as its series is (1 2 3). What follows is γ because of (2 3 2), etc.

Lacan summarizes the limitations with respect to the overlaid alpha-matrix in a table reproduced below:

$$\frac{\alpha, \delta}{\gamma, \beta} \quad \rightarrow \quad \alpha, \beta, \gamma, \delta \quad \rightarrow \quad \frac{\alpha, \beta}{\gamma, \delta}$$

Time 1   Time 2   Time 3

Figure 5.2: A Δ Distribution

If at Time 1 there is an α or δ, regardless of what letter is put at Time 2, α or β always appears at Time 3.
If at Time 1 there is a γ or β, regardless of what letter is put at Time 2, γ or δ always appears at Time 3.

Hence what appears at Time 3 is already determined to some extent by Time 1. There are additional limitations and determinacies to be had by extending this analysis diachronically and Lacan does just that; through even more obscure tables and figures he considers what may or may not appear in Time 4 as well as other determinacies. It is in this precise sense that the unconscious is indestructible, 'remembering' when no actual conscious trace of a memory exists. So if there is any truth to Jung's contention that the unconscious and conscious thought form a sort of partnership, it is only in the limited sense that, while the latter is prone to forget, the former compensates for such deficiencies by remembering in its stead, counting and recording the past in the signifying chain itself.

One can imagine the mindboggling complexity that would ensue by extending this analysis even further synchronically, laying ever more definitional matrices on top of the existing ones. This in effect is what natural language does and Lacan's wager is that by going through exercises like those above, one becomes more proficient with the type of analysis needed to unlock the unconscious causal forces of the subject.

Moreover, if one mentally subtracts what appears in the time slots so that only these slots themselves are left for consideration, one begins to grasp how Lacan understands the symbolic order as self-limiting, chasing down as it were its inherent blank it endeavors to fill with a 'proper' signifier but ever failing to do so and thus failing to complete itself. The off-center 'thing' resisting symbolization which the

symbolic order revolves around is of course the real and Lacan will soon turn his efforts to its further delimitation. It is here that one can see his full break with structuralism. But for the moment one might consider that if meaning is caught up in the differential structure of signifiers, then its pursuit is interminable yet simultaneously not without its limits at the structural level. The same of course goes for desire, Lacan's primary focus, since desire is co-extensive with lack or those slots or blanks within which signifiers fall.

Finally, to help dispel the notion that the foregoing does not reflect the universe we live in, one might consider what a tennis match looks like to someone without an inkling to the rules of its game. It might very well seem like a mindless back-and-forth series of random pluses and minus and any initial interest this new spectator takes in it is likely to quickly dissipate. However, if one teaches him how these back-and-forths are overlaid with overlapping sets of symbol matrices (*i.e.*, one teaches him the rules for the games, sets and matches of tennis), this random activity suddenly becomes a sport which just might hold some interest – even enjoyment – for him.

[506] Lacan, "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter,'" 39. This might be seen as the Lacanian version of Freud's implicit admonishment to *actually practice* dream analysis so as to take it seriously and thereby recognize his discovery as legitimate.

[507] Jacques Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 412-41 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006)

[508] Lacan begins to use algebraic symbols in the mid 1950s in an attempt to formalize psychoanalysis, a basic requirement for any field with designs on achieving scientific status, although his rationale for its use should be seen as more in line with his repeated insistence that such formalization is necessary for the successful transmission of psychoanalytic knowledge in the training of psychoanalysts. This generally accords with structuralist thought, as adherence to such formalization frustrates the imaginary lures of intuitive thinking. His use of such symbols only increases from this point in his career and in the early 1970s he coins the term matheme [*mathème*] to designate his own particular psychoanalytic algebra. Part II below makes extensive use of mathemes.

[509] Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," 416.

[510] This is implied throughout but sometimes stated quite directly, as when he writes how 'it is easy to see that only signifier-to-signifier correlations provide the standard for any and every search for signification [meaning].' Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," 418.

[511] Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," 419. It is as if meaning suddenly emerges from nothing since the whole of that meaning cannot to be gotten by summing up the meaning of each individual part (well-known to anyone who has ever dabbled in translation and realized how word for word translations are often useless in rendering meaning from one language to another). This 'nothing' out of which meaning springs is of course the place occupied by the signifying structure.

[512] If these examples bring to mind discussions of Ingarden and Iser from Section 2.3 above, this connection should further raise the legitimate prospect of a general compatibility between Lacanian structuralist thinking and the phenomenology of reading.

[513] Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," 430-1. Along the same lines which also considers the connection of metaphor with metonymy, Lacan writes how the '[m]etaphor's creative spark does not spring forth from the juxtaposition of two images, that is, of two equally actualized signifiers. It flashes between two signifiers, one of which has replaced the other by taking the other's place in the signifying chain, the occulted signifier remaining present by virtue of its (metonymic) connection to the rest of the chain' (422).

[514] Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," 418.

[515] Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," 423.

[516] The idea here is that the subject can be separated from his imaginary ego, as well as be reached at the level of his symptoms, not by working in the realm of meaning but by working through the meaningless

mechanisms of signifiers. Lacan portrays himself as a trainer of analysts and it is to them as well as to existing analysts that his warnings are most often addressed. Here he in effect tells them to be especially wary of being mesmerized by the surplus of meaning which issues from patients' mouths. So in no way should Lacan's turn to the meaningless signifier be seen as registering a frustration with this surplus of meaning; rather, at this point in this career it registers his faith that only the realm of the signifier can truly separate the subject from his alienating immersion in meaning and break him away from his ego which is nothing but a metonymic displacement of the patient's desire for a full and meaningful being. However, the idea of a separation between being and meaning is only clearly articulated in Lacan's third period.

[517] Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," 433.

[518] Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud," 412.

[519] Jacques Lacan, "The Signification of the Phallus" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 575-84 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006)

[520] This relation, indeed this very distinction, is often overlooked in the literature. Perhaps rather predictably as the very title of this paper leads one to suspect that what Lacan will discuss is the meaning of the phallus. Yet a cursory glance through its pages confirms that Lacan much more often speaks of the phallus in its capacity as a signifier rather than as a signified. Moreover, in terms of causality it is clear he places its capacity as a signifier as logically prior to the experience of the phallus *qua* signified. Thus he declares how 'the phallus is a signifier...that is destined to designate meaning effects as a whole, insofar as the signifier conditions them by its presence as signifier.' Lacan, "The Signification of the Phallus," 579.

An additional point to be stressed in Lacan's return to Freud is how the former endeavors everywhere to ground his own work in the latter's textual edifice. A clear case in point is found in this paper in terms of Freud's anticipation of structuralism:

'[T]he commentary on Freud's work I have been pursuing for seven years...[has] led to certain results: first and foremost, to promote the notion of the signifier as necessary to any articulation of the analytic phenomenon, insofar as it is opposed to that of the signified in modern linguistic analysis. Freud could not have taken into account modern linguistics, which postdates him, but I would maintain that Freud's discovery stands out precisely because, in setting out from a domain in which one could not have expected to encounter linguistics' reign, it had to anticipate its formulations. Conversely, it is Freud's discovery that gives the signifier/signified opposition its full scope: for the signifier plays an active role in determining the effects by which the signifiable appears to succumb to its mark, becoming, through that passion, the signified' (577-8).

Lacan continues by writing how this has led to a 'passion of the signifier' which has opened up 'a new dimension of the human condition in that it is not only man who speaks, but in man and through man that it [*ça*] speaks.' This 'it' speaks in what is termed 'the Other,' what Lacan in his structuralist period equates with the symbolic order (*i.e.*, the battery of signifiers that make up the unconscious) and this is so 'because it is there that the subject finds his signifying place in a way that is logically prior to any awakening of the signified' (579).

[521] The experience is similar to the one which causes a subject to excitedly declare how he knows the true meaning of some situation (a success) – much like Michael Jackson's enthusiastic 'This is it!' – yet is simultaneously an experience that makes him helpless to explain what precisely that meaning is (a failure).

[522] Lacan, "The Signification of the Phallus," 582.

[523] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 21, 22.

[524] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 211-2.

[525] It will be noticed how the 'forced choice' of life in this example goes well beyond the pragmatic outcome of rational decision-making since the subject must be considered to have *already* 'chosen' life if he is to hear the options presented to him in the first place.

[526] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 211-2.

[527] Lacan implies throughout his talk that when the subject emerges, he does so in the field of the Other at the level of meaning. See, *e.g.*, Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 218, 221.

[528] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 258.

[529] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 270.

[530] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 250. While continuously stressing how interpretation is not open to any and all meanings, Lacan invokes the Wolf Man, 'one of Freud's great psycho-analytic cases, the greatest of all,' as the supreme example of such an interpretation since 'one sees in it, more clearly than anywhere else, where the problem of the conversion of phantasy and reality converge, namely, in something irreducible, *non-sensical*' (251).

[531] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 207.

[532] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 270.

[533] The möbius strip will be extensively discussed in Part II below. Briefly, a representation of it appears
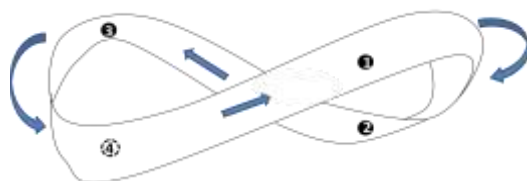

Figure 5.5: The Möbius Strip

in Figure 5.5 and can be constructed as follows: Take a strip of paper, say a foot long by one inch wide. Join the two ends to form a loop but just prior to doing so give one end a one-half twist (180°). The resulting möbius strip subverts the normal way of representing space, for while it seems to have two sides this is deceptive as it really has only one side (and one edge). To each 'inside' point there seems to be an 'outside' point 'beyond' it. However, traversing the length of the strip (say, by tracing it with one's finger) reveals that the two points are not discrete but are, in fact, contiguous.

In an homologous fashion, that substantive 'beyond' the subject so often wagers on as the Cause for disturbances in its world *itself* turns out to be a mere effect of its own disturbing effects; its traumatic aspect only gains this feature in retrospect, from the perspective of a later symbolic horizon. The classic example is a small child who witnesses the copulation of his parents. There is nothing traumatic about the scene to the child at that time; that possibility is reserved for a later date when his first sexual theories are formulated which do not permit the remembered scene to be symbolized and thus fully integrated into his newly narrativized life-world. This notion of the retroactive character of trauma, how trauma is constituted in an overdetermined fashion, is a clear indication of how Lacan fully breaks away from certain structuralist modes of thought which proceed in a linear fashion from causes to their effects.

[534] A single glance can only confirm what we already know and imbue it with meaningful understanding – a temptation to be resisted at all costs. This is the reason for Lacan's explicit admonition made on the penultimate day of this seminar during a discussion of interpretation:

'I have already tried to embody certain consequences of the very particular *vel* that constitutes alienation – the placing in suspense of the subject, its vacillation, the collapse of meaning – in such familiar forms as *your money or your life*, or *freedom or death* which are reproduced from a *being or meaning* – terms that I do not propose without some reluctance. I would ask you not to be too hasty in overloading them with meanings, for if you do you will only succeed in sinking them. So I feel that it

is incumbent upon me to warn you of this at the onset.' Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 246.

[535] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007)

[536] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, 15.

[537] One might pause here to note the distance taken from hermeneutical phenomenology, not only from those thoroughly in line with Heidegger and Gadamer but those who otherwise wish to revise it, like Ricoeur who was seen in the closing paragraphs of Chapter 2 above championing a subjective self-discipline in the name of the meaningful matter of the text. Here is a clear conception of the subject *qua* subjectivization, one that is only considered in its meaningful aspect. In contrast Poulet's phenomenological reading strategy is much more Lacanian as it seeks out 'a subjectivity without objectivity' in the text, one entirely devoid of objective content so that all one is left with is pure consciousness. Poulet of course cannot bring this subject to its full notion, lacking as he does a concept of the uncanny *objet a* which is this subject's objectal correlate. The lesson here is how phenomenologists more in line with Husserl (and not with Heidegger) forge the straighter path toward late-Lacan.

[538] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, 45. Moreover, 'the impossible is the real' (165) and '[i]f the real is defined as the impossible the real is placed at the stage at which the register of a symbolic articulation was found to be defined as the impossible to demonstrate to be true' (172-3) – a truth he tells us everywhere can only be (phenomenologically) experienced.

[539] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, 116, 19. The former point regarding how there is no sexual relation will soon have Lacan's undivided attention as he begins developing his formulae of sexuation. The latter point demonstrates the insight that while hermeneutical phenomenology is correct to seek out 'proper' historical contexts within which to appropriate the meaning of a particular phenomenon, the very logic here of subsuming particulars under universals belies the claim that meaning precedes structure. In a word, structure trumps hermeneutical phenomenology. This further implies that when it comes to the question of the origin of the signifying system *itself*, no recourse can be made to any historical conception of its advent. Rather, as was seen with originating cases of trauma, there is a similar retroactive logic at play here, but at a 'meta-level.' That is, the signifying system as a whole coordinates its own birth, retroactively positing its own origins. So structure trumps hermeneutical phenomenology, but in a radical way. For in its non-hermeneutical phenomenological conception structure must be seen paradoxically as ontologically prior to history. In this sense the standard (hermeneutical phenomenological) critique of Freud and Lacan as having failed to place the psychoanalytical framework into historical context becomes thoroughly innocuous.

[540] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, 109.

[541] Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, 15.

[542] It should be stressed that Lacan places the accent with nonsense in the triad sense-meaning-nonsense. As seen in Chapter 4 above, (post)structuralism already moves away from meaning towards sense (and flirts at times with nonsense), but a *sustained* movement away from sense towards nonsense is seen with Lacan's non-hermeneutical phenomenology in the form of the A_d. For instance, during a question period in this seminar an interlocutor makes the following statement: '*What you say is always decentered in relation to sense, you shun sense*' and Lacan responds: 'This is perhaps precisely why my discourse is an analytic discourse. It's the structure of analytic discourse to be like that.' Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, 146.

[543] Jacques-Alain Miller, "Suture (elements of the logic of the signifier)," trans. Jacqueline Rose, *Screen* 18, pp. 24-34 (Winter 1978). This paper was first presented in Lacan's seminar on February 24, 1965. As Lacan will later allow Miller, his son-in-law, in 1973 to publish the lectures which make up Seminar XI and will further grant to him official publication rights with respect to other seminar and written material after his death, Miller can be said to have been not only one of the earliest Lacanians but to have thoroughly

inherited Lacan's intellectual legacy, at least in an official capacity. Moreover, *Suture* is but an early example of his efforts to expand on Lacan's original work, efforts which continue to this day.

[544] Slavoj Žižek, *The Fright of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieślowski Between Theory and Post-Theory* (London: British Film Institute, 2001), 31. Žižek here and elsewhere traces the deviating path the concept of suture has traveled since 1966, highlighting its misappropriation at the hands of both film theorists and deconstructionists.

[545] Miller, "Suture (elements of the logic of the signifier)," 25-6. Perhaps the most concise way to summarize what Miller accomplishes in this paper is to say how he specifies 'the 1' as holding the place of the impossible '0.' After its opening section, this paper is highly technical, using and developing a logic that takes its distance from (yet is also said to provide the foundation for) what Miller calls the 'logician's logic' (31) of Russell, Giuseppe Peano and others, but especially Frege who he references frequently. Thus the subject he describes in its metaphorical and metonymical relations to the signifier is expressed in terms of the double movement of the 'zero lack' and the 'zero number,' the latter of which is the suture (*cf*. 30-1).

[546] Miller, "Suture (elements of the logic of the signifier)," 26. The operations of the zero lack appear to be responsible for 'cancelling out...meaning' at the level of signifiers in their successional chains (31). One might also mention in passing how Miller's abrupt writing style with respect to the paper's technical material seems calculated to frustrate the overly hasty assumption of the meaning of his presentation with the end result that it makes his reader more aware how meaning is constructed.

[547] Roberto Harari, "Chapter 4: Destinies of the *a*: Deception, Transference, Failure and Mourning" in *Lacan's Seminar on "Anxiety:" An Introduction*, ed. Rico Franses, trans. Jane C. Lamb-Ruiz, pp. 87-115 (New York: Other Press, 2001)

[548] In the earlier part of his career Lacan returned again and again (notably in Seminars I and III and two texts in his *Écrits*) to the brief commentary Kris provides in his article on one of his cases. By focusing on the patient's response to Kris' intervention, Lacan eventually contends that Kris errs by addressing the *demands* of his patient at the expense of his *desire* and its vicissitudes. Kris and by extension ego psychology as a whole are thus resoundingly criticized for their brutal attempts to mold the patient to the analyst's view of reality.

[549] Harari, *Lacan's Seminar on "Anxiety:" An Introduction*, 92.

[550] Harari, *Lacan's Seminar on "Anxiety:" An Introduction*, 105. It must be stressed that the claim 'anxiety cannot deceive' does not imply it *directly* speaks the truth, for the real can only be approached through a double gesture. As Harari explains, '*the subject pretends pretense when he is speaking the truth, and this is the way that the subject reacts to the fact of being marked by the signifier*. This is obviously a circumstance that psychoanalysts must pay attention to even though linguists may not' (104). This should make it clearer how psychoanalysis in its most radical dimension moves a step beyond (post)structuralist understanding:

> 'We were saying that the recourse to deception is the best verification about the way in which the subject reacts to the determinism imposed on him by the signifying order. It is therefore valid to postulate that the speaking being is more than the candid claim that he or she is only a "marionette of the signifier." *Freudian determinism does not imply a sort of resigned fatalism, the vision of a world of homunculi directed by the strings of parental or societal discourse, past or present*' (105).

In short, the subject is a *free* subject even under the most determining of circumstances and can be held accountable for his actions. The general compatibility of psychoanalytic theory with German Idealist philosophy is perhaps rather obvious after Žižek.

[551] Harari, *Lacan's Seminar on "Anxiety:" An Introduction*, 112.

[552] Monique David-Ménard, "The Act of Interpretation: Its Conditions and its Consequences" in *Lacan in the German-Speaking World*, eds. Elizabeth Stewart, Maire Jaanus and Richard Feldstein, trans. Elizabeth Stewart, pp. 147-58 (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004)

[553] David-Ménard, "The Act of Interpretation: Its Conditions and its Consequences," 147.

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554 David-Ménard, "The Act of Interpretation: Its Conditions and its Consequences," 152.

555 David-Ménard, "The Act of Interpretation: Its Conditions and its Consequences," 153. This loss of control is expressed in epistemological terms as a 'loss of knowledge on the part of the analyst who deals in interpretations' and is specifically linked with the A_d in the final sentence of the paper: 'I believe...that one should attempt to think of this loss of knowledge or power as being similar to the loss that occurs at the end of an analysis' (157). It should be explained that by coming to the end of analysis the analysand necessarily becomes an analyst in Lacanian psychoanalytic theory.

556 As might have already been suspected, many of Lacan's mathemes take on (a limited number of) different equivalences depending on the context within which they are discussed. This is partly due to Lacan's occasional use of the same algebraic notation over the course of decades which saw his thought develop significantly. But it is equally true that at any given time during that development many of those differing equivalences are, in fact, effectively equivalent. Two cases in point: first, taking S_2 here as denoting knowledge reflects Lacan's contention that the epistemological dimension constitutes itself as a signifying chain, which is how S_2 was first introduced above; and second, the nuances between the phallus and S_1 discussed above are sometimes relaxed so that they are effectively equated, as in the present analysis which makes recourse to discourse theory. While certainly confusing or even discouraging to the neophyte, this variability combined with the fixedness of a quasi-mathematics is one of the reasons Lacanian theory continues to be fruitfully developed in unexpected directions.

557 Thus the interpreter is not permitted to say: 'I don't quite like my interpretation, but the text imposed it upon me. So if you don't like it either, don't bother *me* about it. Talk to the *text*. It's to blame!' Clinically speaking, such a stance amounts to perversion whereby the subject hides her enjoyment derived from her interpretation behind some higher Cause, or in Kantian terms, behind a supposed respect for the 'imposed' moral Law, the categorical imperative which 'compels' a particular direction to the interpretation and thereby justifies its consequences.

558 Paul Verhaeghe, *Does the Woman Exist? From Freud's Hysteric to Lacan's Feminine*, trans. Marc du Ry (New York: Other Press, 1999), 245.

559 Verhaeghe, *Does the Woman Exist? From Freud's Hysteric to Lacan's Feminine*, 118.

560 Verhaeghe, *Does the Woman Exist? From Freud's Hysteric to Lacan's Feminine*, 102-3.

561 To give a phenomenological sense to this, one might make an analogy with Lacan's thesis that the mysterious 'dark continent' of femininity is nothing but an hysterical setup, something Verhaeghe stresses throughout his book. Could one not similarly dismiss the mystery supposedly dwelling in certain (poetic) texts which are said to unveil the meaning of a primordial ontology? More generally speaking, what follows from discourse theory is how one's desire for textual interpretation is sustained by the paradoxical object-cause, a surplus-*jouissance*, that little bit of the real which belongs neither to the interpreter nor to the object-text yet nevertheless allows access to the space of truth of the very endeavor of interpretation.

562 Bruce Fink, *Lacan to the Letter: Reading Écrits Closely* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), vii. Continuing, Fink writes: '...though much of his argument must be reconstructed or pieced together from the various claims he makes on the basis of a line-by-line reading.' That is, it is not as simple as it sounds when Lacan 'comes right out and says what he means,' for even this will involve a bit of work. Moreover, the effort required to read Lacan appears to be intentional, for '[h]is texts and lectures seem designed to introduce us to the very kind of work analysis itself requires, sifting through layers of meaning, deciphering the text as if it were a long series of slips of the tongue. He says at one point that his writing style is deliberately designed to contribute to the training of analysts...but it no doubt goes further still. His writing affects us and, in certain cases, even upsets us' (155).

563 In doing so Fink's book becomes the first in English to break away from the preferred strategy in the secondary literature of commenting on the Lacanian theoretical apparatus as a whole rather than engaging in a sustained step-by-step analysis of particular texts by Lacan, as is the case here with Fink.

564 It should be noted that working through psychoanalytic commentary is more than a sterile academic exercise as it harbors the potential to produce real effects in the subject. As Lacan said in his first seminar,

'[c]ommenting on a text is like doing an analysis.' Quoted in Fink, *Lacan to the Letter: Reading Écrits Closely*, 63.

[565] This tendency to smooth over difficulties with Lacanian theory extends to Fink's spoken word on at least one noted occasion. During the open discussion portion of Fink's presentation entitled "An Introduction to Lacanian Clinical Practice" given at The Ontario Psychiatric Association (Psychotherapy Section) 2008 Fall Conference held at the University of Toronto on November 1st, an audience member abruptly asked 'Where is the Lacan?' When asked to elaborate the questioner explained that he had expected to encounter much more difficulty with the presentation material but as far as he was concerned it was all perfectly in line with what he already knew. Fink's eventual response of 'If I spoke to you like Lacan you wouldn't understand a word' could only further the understanding already in play. (The author of this dissertation was in attendance at this conference).

[566] Fink, *Lacan to the Letter: Reading Écrits Closely*, 84, 159.

[567] Fink, *Lacan to the Letter: Reading Écrits Closely*, 185-6n37.

[568] Žižek's consistent reading of Lacan as thoroughly opposed to both these schools of thought, which demonstrates his preference for Lacan's third period, takes many forms. In the present book under review, for instance, Žižek examines Benjamin as a sort of proto-late-Lacanian. He thus begins his examination by arguing how Benjamin's textual approach 'is quite the opposite of the fundamental guidance of hermeneutical understanding ("to locate the interpreted text into the totality of its epoch.") What Benjamin has in mind is, on the contrary, the *isolation* of a piece of the past from the continuity of history: ...an interpretative procedure whose opposition to hermeneutics recalls immediately the Freudian opposition between interpretation *en détail* and interpretation *en masse*.' Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 137. What follows is a demonstration of the similarities between Benjamin's thought and Lacan's notion of the agency of the signifier which, as we have seen, moves beyond mere (post)structuralist considerations by its additional concern for the real.

[569] This occurs in the foreword to the second edition of the sequel to *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, a book entitled *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 2002). There Žižek identifies some weaknesses in his former analysis inclusive of a concern that he endorsed 'a quasi-transcendental reading of Lacan, focused on the notion of the Real as the impossible Thing-in-itself' (xii). He has ever since backed away from this notion and rightly so, since this leaves Lacan vulnerable to the kind of 'deep' hermeneutical phenomenological approaches which the work of Lacan's late period belied. Some contributions of this latter book are discussed below.

[570] The reference is to Lacan's famous 'Graph of Desire' presented in one of the many significant papers whose review here was not permitted. See Jacques Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 671-702 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1960]). Briefly, Lacan there slowly builds up to the complete graph (*cf.* 692) by effectively beginning with a graph not dissimilar to Figure 5.6 above; starting with this figure, one can imagine another chain above and parallel to the signifying chain represented there as $S_1 \rightarrow S_2$, along with a similar retroactive arc emanating up through but extending beyond the existing trajectory which buttons-down meaning. As Žižek writes, '[t]he complete graph is thus divided into two levels, which can be designated as the level of meaning and the level of enjoyment [*i.e.*, *jouissance*].' Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 121. This graph thus provides a nice visual of the beyond of meaning which Lacan increasingly turns his attention to from the 1960s onwards.

[571] See Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 213-4.

[572] Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 2002), 3, xi, xviii.

[573] Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do*, 174n38.

[574] Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do*, xx. Žižek further argues how this empty signifier marks the external difference (between the symbolic system and its outside) *internally*, in the guise of an excessive

signifier which stands-in for what eludes the system's grasp. In late summer 2012 a story circulated on Toronto FM morning radio of an incident that occurred with a group of amateur spelunkers in Australia which perfectly illustrates this notion. At one point someone noticed that a member of the group was missing, which caused no small amount of worry since a rising tide flooded certain caves daily. The group immediately re-organized into a search party to find its missing member. But sometime after setting out someone retook a group count and, evidently a better mathematician than the first, discovered that no one was missing. In fact, everyone had been present all along! Now, from the moment the woman presumed lost had taken up her place in her own search party she began to function as this empty signifier, for in her very presence there she marked what eluded it. To anticipate a possible objection to this logic, it should be noted that while they did eventually 'find' the 'missing' member, at that precise moment the search party reverted back to a group of (very) amateur spelunkers. In this sense the *search party* did not find the missing woman; it could not, for by definition, at its very level of functioning as a search party, the woman eludes it – until, of course, a re-count is conducted.

The more general point to be made is to reflect on how this woman stood 'closer' to the subject as Lacan conceives it than any of the other members of the search party. To explain this, let each member be a signifier so that the search party is taken as a signifying system. It then becomes clear how all these signifiers are in search of the subject for *the* signifier which has already found it for them. This privileged signifier is the woman and precisely in this way, as the representation of the failure of this signifying system to fully represent itself (*i.e.*, complete itself by finding the missing signifier), she is quite close to Lacan's notion of the subject which, coinciding with its own impossibility, is entirely devoid of meaning or any other substance.

[575] Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do*, 153-4. Žižek's cursory discussion (*cf.* 10ff) of Lacan's notion of the Ego-ideal in the first chapter (via Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and other short stories) allows for the opportunity to examine an early paper by Lacan, one entitled "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 75-81 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1936, 1949]). Lacan continuously re-worked its logic as he proceeded through his career and below is a schematic summary of how the lessons of that paper, which was initially written at the start of his hermeneutical period, were later re-conceived as he moved into his 'structuralist' period.

Lacan's paper is about a radically new theory on how the ego is formed. Whereas previously the thinking was that man adapts himself to reality, Lacan's thesis essentially reverses things and in a gesture strictly homologous to Kant's transcendental idealist revolution in metaphysics, he proclaims that it is man who adapts reality to himself. More specifically, the ego creates a new adaptation to 'reality' and the subject then tries to maintain cohesion with this double. It is Lacan's initial emphasis on the nature of this double as an image or 'imago' that characterizes his work in its first 'imaginary' period, for he is quite literally concerned with the imaginary identification aspect of ego-formation. Lacan further refers to the appearance of these doubles and object-projections as hallucinatory and dream-like in order to underscore the role that the mirror plays in presenting a whole yet fictional image for the fragmented child. (Of course, an actual mirror need not be present. Another child or even adult can act as that other who lends its whole image to foster a sense of wholeness for the fragmented child). We can readily understand this process by considering the image Lacan asks us to consider. The human child is born pre-mature and must be cared for and up to the age of eighteen months the child has immense difficulty with motor coordination and is outdone by the chimpanzee in intelligence. But while both are able to recognize their images in a mirror, it is only the child that remains fascinated with its specular image as the chimpanzee quickly loses interest. A representation of the picture Lacan paints for us is found in Figure 5.10.
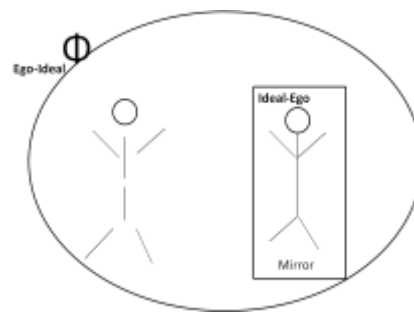
Figure 5.10: The Mirror Stage

Here we have the elementary imaginary dyad: the fragmented child anticipates himself when looking into the mirror, but is ever uncertain, so he turns to his mother, who offers a confirmation. "Yes, that's you!" she says and he is swept up in a wave of jubilation which attends to this phantasmatic experience of self-mastery. In this way, the child is compensated with a whole image of himself and this is an image that he will carry with him for the rest of his life. This image is what Lacan calls the Ideal-ego. (75-7)

It should be clear how Lacan here submits the domain of psychoanalysis to the domain of meaning. For early Lacan the goal of psychoanalytic treatment is to integrate traumatic symptoms into the patient's life in a meaningful way, just as the goal of the hermeneutical phenomenological approach is to integrate disturbing elements of the text into an overall cohesive narrative. In hermeneutical theory the text is like the fragmented child and the goal is to provide an interpretation to reassemble the fragmented text into an imaginary wholeness much like what the child encounters in the mirror. Any gaps or distortions encountered in the text index interpretive failure and must be resolved as it impedes the text's full integration into the domain of meaning. It is as if the text casts a disturbing gaze out from these gaps, resulting in an unsettling experience for the interpreter who endeavors to neutralize it through a hermeneutical approach.

However, as Lacan's career progresses into its second period, the logic of this paper is re-worked to include the symbolic. For instance, Lacan makes frequent mention to how '[t]he mirror stage establishes the watershed between the imaginary and the symbolic in the moment of capture by an historic inertia,' telling us that within the mirror stage there is a non-mythical beyond to the limits imposed by the imaginary which has to do with another (symbolic) register. See pp. 54-6 of Jacques Lacan, "On My Antecedents" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 51-7 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1966]). Moreover, even if the imaginary overlaps somewhat with the symbolic in the mirror stage, it nevertheless harbors the rule of the dividing line between the imaginary and the symbolic *within* the mirror stage. See p. 461 of Jacques Lacan, "On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 445-88 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1958]); and see p. 853 of Jacques-Alain Miller, "Classified Index of the Major Concepts" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 851-7 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1966]). More importantly, Lacan elsewhere establishes the supremacy of the symbolic over the imaginary, thereby warning the subject not to remain transfixed by the mere image. See pp. 456-7 of Lacan, "On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis," 456-7; see p. 613 of Jacques Lacan, "Guiding Remarks for a Convention on Female Sexuality" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 610-20 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1958]); and for additional references to the supremacy of the signifier over the signified, see Miller, "Classified Index of the Major Concepts," 853. Such transfixion with one's Ideal-ego encourages a false sense of mastery and leads to narcissism and aggressive posturing. See pp. 355-7 of Jacques Lacan, "The Freudian Thing, or the Meaning of the Return to Freud in Psychoanalysis" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 334-63 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006

[1956]). Lacan explicitly tells us that he has intentionally introduced his theory of the mirror stage to combat the contemporary stress on the alleged autonomy of the ego and its supposed need to be strengthened so as to better adapt the subject to 'reality.' See Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious," 684-5. In contrast, Lacan finds that true resistance is found in the imaginary and it is precisely through the mirror stage that the subject can carve out some breathing space by identifying with a purely symbolic point. See pp. 607-9 of Jacques Lacan, "On an Ex Post Facto Syllabary" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 602-9 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1966]).

       In another paper, Lacan adapts an extremely complex optical model, inclusive of a series of (curved) mirrors, to more fully illustrate how the subject is constituted. A cursory glance at his diagrams reveals how Lacan has in effect developed a much more sophisticated mirror stage theory. Utilizing this new model, he tells us how the real image of the subject is substituted by a virtual image that is superimposed onto the real space 'behind the mirror.' See pp. 565 and 568 of Jacques Lacan, 'Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: "Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure"' in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 543-74 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1960]); and see p. 860 of Jacques-Alain Miller, "Commentary on the Graphs" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink, pp. 858-63 (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 [1966]). What he is getting at with this statement is how the imaginary and the symbolic are not simply opposed to each other as if they were on two external levels. Rather, the specific dimension of the symbolic emerges from the very imaginary mirroring itself, from its doubling: there is always a point of double reflection at which the imaginary is linked to the symbolic. This virtual point Lacan calls the 'Ego-ideal' and is marked in Figure 5.10 by the phallic signifier Φ. In terms previously noted, this is provided by the mother's reassurance that the image in the mirror is really the child's image. This symbolic point is not a glimpse into the way 'reality' really is, nor is it an insight into how others see me, but rather this point indexes the way I see the others seeing me. What needs to be understood is that the image in the mirror which produces the Ideal-ego (or the imaginary form in which we appear to ourselves likeable) is always subordinated to the symbolic identification of the Ego-ideal (which is that point from which we are observed). Returning to Lacan's model of the elementary imaginary dyad of the child lacking full motor coordination observing himself in the mirror, what is crucial to grasp is how in order for this mirror stage to occur, there must logically first be a space within which to do so. What Lacan is telling us is that this *a priori* space (which is 'internal' to the psychic economy of the child in some sense), is marked off by the virtual point of the Ego-ideal, a point which forms his symbolic identification. This is the child's identification with the very place from where he is being observed, from where he looks at himself so that he appears to be likeable (to himself). Since the imaginary identification of the Ideal-ego is always already subordinated to the symbolic identification of the Ego-ideal, the latter thereby dominates and determines one's overall self-image. It is as if the Ego-ideal 'clears the space' that is subsequently filled in by the phantasmatic and meaningful image of the Ideal-ego. Hence the imaginary register of images is necessarily and inherently split, which is why Lacan refers to 'the lethal gap of the mirror stage,' for 'without the gap that alienates him from his own image, this symbiosis with the symbolic, in which he constitutes himself as subject to death, could not have occurred.' Lacan, "On a Question Prior to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis," 476, 461. This gap is constitutive of the subject's overall image of self and is what makes psychoanalysis possible, for such analysis 'operates in the symbolic…[and] is able to reshape an ego that is thus constituted in its imaginary status.' Lacan, 'Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation,' 567.

       Žižek nicely summarizes the foregoing analysis of Lacan's texts:

'The crucial theoretical point not to be missed here is that such mirror-inversion cannot be reduced to the domain of the Imaginary. That is to say, when one deals with the opposition of the Imaginary (captivation by the mirror-image, recognition in a fellow-creature) and the Symbolic (the purely formal order of differential features), one usually fails to notice how the specific dimension of the Symbolic emerges from the very imaginary mirroring: namely, from its *doubling*, by means of which – as Lacan

puts it succinctly – the real image is substituted by a virtual one. The Imaginary and the Symbolic are therefore not simply opposed as two external entities or levels: within the Imaginary itself, there is always a point of double reflection at which the Imaginary is, so to speak, hooked on the symbolic.' Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do*, 10.

However, it should be repeated how this entire discussion largely serves only to demonstrate, by way of the mirror stage schema, the general entanglement of the imaginary-hermeneutical field with the symbolic-signifying field and more specifically, how meaningful self-identity is intimately tied up with the *a priori* meaningless system of signifiers within which the subject is caught. But in commenting on Lacan's re-worked optical model of the mirror stage, Miller raises the question of 'the real object *a* [which] serves the function of the partial object...We find here a phase that precedes (according to an order of logical dependence) the mirror stage – which presupposes the presence of the real Other.' Miller, "Commentary on the Graphs," 859. That is, as Lacan increasingly turns to explore the real in his final period, it becomes possible to conceive of the radical subversion of the mirror stage schema *in its entirety* by way of the nonsensical *objet a*.

[576] Slavoj Žižek, "Is There a Cause of the Subject?" in *Supposing the Subject*, ed. Joan Copjec, pp. 84-105 (London: Verso, 1994)

[577] Žižek, "Is There a Cause of the Subject?" 85.

[578] One problem is Adorno's 'lack of an explicit concept of the superego.' Žižek, "Is There a Cause of the Subject?" 93. This is highly significant given Lacan's view from his very first seminar onward that this psychic agency is rather sadistic, issuing forth the hypnotic and obscene injunction of 'Enjoy!' to the subject, a command with which the subject finds it utterly impossible to comply. Lacking this notion Adorno effectively overlooks the subversive side of psychoanalysis, its real dimension indexed by *objet a* (surplus-*enjoyment*) and thus demotes psychoanalysis to a psychological theory.

[579] Žižek, "Is There a Cause of the Subject?" 95.

[580] Žižek, "Is There a Cause of the Subject?" 99. Another way to understand the problem with Habermas according to Žižek is that he conceives these distortions only as *empirical* impediments on the path of the gradual realization of a non-violent mutual understanding. His entire approach is thus modeled on the logic of the Kantian regulative Idea which is achievable only through an asymptotic approach (*ibid*). Borrowing some wording from Zupančič, such regulative Ideas 'function...to institute the co-ordinates of time and space *outside* of time and space, and thus to enable an infinite, endless progress.' Zupančič, *Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan*, 82. (See the graph in Figure 6.3 below for a visual presentation of a curve which endlessly approaches its asymptotes). But as seen above these distortions are precisely the way the real manifests itself in the symbolic and so a certain distortion is necessary and inherent to the field of signifiers which make up our language. Faced with the real, hermeneutics – as deep as it may be – is grossly inadequate. As well, the discussion of Lacan's theory of the four discourses above should also make clear how that theory holds to the precise opposite view of Habermas who presupposes that communicative discourse is non-authoritarian and free of constraint in its very notion; in contrast for Lacan, every discourse is marked by an inherent impossibility and haunted by a traumatic object.

[581] Slavoj Žižek, "The Eclipse of Meaning: on Lacan and Deconstruction" in *Interrogating the Real*, eds. Rex Butler and Scott Stephens, pp. 206-30 (London: Continuum, 2005)

[582] Žižek, "The Eclipse of Meaning," 210.

[583] The reader can easily make this mistake by not working through the second section of this paper which contains the crux of Žižek's theoretical argument to instead immediately turn to its later sections where he provides, among other things, a counter-history to Derrida's own account of the history of Western metaphysics. Via the history of music Žižek shows that it is in fact the voice which has historically dominated over writing. The uncanny voice threatens the established order and history is an account of the endeavor to bring it under control by fixing it into writing so as to regulate its excess and prevent it from accelerating into a consuming self-enjoyment cut loose from its anchoring in meaning. Žižek, "The Eclipse of Meaning," 214ff.

[584] Žižek, "The Eclipse of Meaning," 212. The title of this essay is obviously taken from Lacan's own explanation of the *vel* of alienation (quoted above).

[585] It is largely for this reason that the review undertaken in Part I does not separately consider linguistic theory. Husserl, Saussure and Jakobson, whose thought has proven foundational for contemporary linguistics, are indeed present here, but they otherwise satisfy the overriding requirement of the present work that meaning be primarily considered in relation to the (psychoanalytic) subject.

[586] Žižek, "The Eclipse of Meaning," 213. This might very well be one of the reasons why academic writing standards require the student to amply cite from primary sources, for it is precisely through the addition of the 'voice' of an established author that the student imbues his otherwise dull prose with a sense of subjective expression. That this 'voice' takes on an object-like quality is clear enough through the customary use of quotation marks which separate out the cited text from the unbound text which surrounds it. But it should also be noted that without this context the cited text would stand alone to convey little, if any, sense.

This equation can also be (at least) minimally manipulated in mathematical fashion to isolate any of the terms. Thus by subtracting 'meaning' from both sides, we arrive at: nonsense = sense − meaning. Here it is easily seen how the nonsensical object is attained by expunging meaning from sensible structure and analogously, how non-hermeneutical phenomenology can be initially approximated as a (post)structuralist project without any overriding hermeneutical concerns.

[587] Alenka Zupančič, *The Odd One In: On Comedy* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008)

[588] Zupančič, *The Odd One In: On Comedy*, 166-7. Said in other words which link this third stage to the trauma inherent to the inaugural stage of primary repression:

> 'The point is simply that what is traumatic is not the meaning or the content of this [first] signifier. The latter was not repressed because of its content, but in the contingency of the subject emerging in its place. The destiny of the subject is to unfold, through time, as all possible meanings of this signifier, all its masks, to be the life of all these meanings and also, perhaps, to work through them in analysis. But the crucial point is that the subject is not the sum of all these meanings, or simply their inner differentiation *qua* pure difference, and that her being is dislocated in relation to her meaning' (180).

In terms introduced above, Zupančič here also makes a distinction between subjectivization (the destiny of the subject unfolding its possible meanings) and the Lacanian subject *qua* pure difference. The point of analysis is to move from the former to the latter, to expunge meaning until all that remains of the subject is a pure point of punctuation.

Moreover, what should not be overlooked is how the forced choice of meaning offers a respite from the alienating grip of the signifying dyad. So while it is correct to say that the subject is alienated in the field of meaning, in a first move meaning acquisition offers the subject breathing space from its own traumatic emergence. This is why Zupančič implies above that in analysis the subject must work through its meanings if it is to gain a minimal distance towards them and thus grasp itself in its 'true' form.

[589] Zupančič, *The Odd One In: On Comedy*, 172. The schism between the child's meaning and being is visually presented with the framework of the $M_d: \frac{S1}{\$} \to \frac{S2}{a}$ where a gap exists between \$, the subject of meaning and a, its being.

[590] Zupančič, *The Odd One In: On Comedy*, 172-3. The child of course is no analyst. If she was she would directly embody the *objet a* produced in the $M_d: \frac{S1}{\$} \to \frac{S2}{a}$, the discourse which organizes the universe of meaning, so as to place it into the $A_d: \frac{a}{S2} \to \frac{\$}{S1}$ and thereby produce S_1 *as a loss*, thus stopping any further sliding of meaning.

[591] Zupančič, *The Odd One In: On Comedy*, 181. She continues: 'It is a moment at which it is no longer clear on which side we are standing – are we the audience of a joke, or something in it? Are we spectators of a picture or some spot on it?...Yet again: this disorientation is the effect of some sense emerging in an unexpected place and not, for instance, the effect of an utter loss of sense' (*ibid*).

[592] Zupančič, *The Odd One In: On Comedy*, 182. Zupančič later in an appendix carefully distinguishes the comic sequence from the functioning of jokes. As she writes: 'At the end of the joke, a Master-Signifier sutures its narrative and semantic field in a surprising manner: it "miraculously" produces a new meaning, bound up with a certain amount of pleasure. The new meaning remains fixed at the end of the joke (or it fixes this joke), and the pleasure is consummated in laughter' (198). It thus seems that while jokes never make it out of the meaningful side of the M_d, the comic sequence does take advantage of the more subversive potential found in the product of this same discourse.

[593] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge, Book XX, Encore 1972-1973*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998), 78-9.

[594] Jacques Lacan, December 15th, 1971 session of Seminar XIX: *...Ou pire/...Or Worse*. Quoted on page 13 of Cormac Gallagher, "Where was Jacques Lacan in 1971-72? *...ou pire* and *The Knowledge of the Psychoanalyst*." Paper presented to the 10th annual congress of APPI, 15th November 2003. Downloaded Feb 5, 2013. http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Spring_2004-WHERE-WAS-JACQUES-LACAN-IN-1971-72.pdf

[595] The logical treatises of the *Organon* include *Categories*, *De Interpretatione*, *Prior Analytics*, *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics* and *Sophistical Refutations*. See Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, Volume One, ed. Jonathan Barnes, pp. 3-314 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984). *De Interpretatione* [On Interpretation] is the Latin translation of the original Greek title Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας or *Peri Hermēneias*.

[596] Aristotle, *De Interpretatione*, 27.

[597] Having thus defined all four logical relationships in the classical logical square, it should be noted that there is nothing which necessitates discussing contradictoriness, contrariety, subcontrariety and subalternation in this particular order. The foregoing presentation was indeed designed to build from what proceeded it so that, say, subcontrariety would be defined without reference to subalternation, but the former could just as easily been demonstrated after the latter was first discussed. Thus to demonstrate that subcontrary propositions cannot both be false, consider that there are only three possibilities. Either 'All S are P,' in which case (by subalternation) 'Some S are P' is also true; 'All S are not P' which likewise implies that 'Some S are not P' is true; or 'Some S are P' and 'Some S are not P' are both true. It follows that at least one of the subcontrary propositions must be true or that both may be true, but not both false.

[598] These two strategies of initially proceeding from the knowledge of other academics are clear cases of an 'active pursuit' of such knowledge. Yet apparently 'passively receiving' such knowledge works just as well, at least in the case of Althusser who boasted in his autobiography of having learned philosophy through 'hearsay.' He reports there how he would seriously engage with a philosophical text only after 'gleaning certain phrases in passing from my friends, and...from the seminar papers and essays of my own students.' For Althusser such hearsay was the 'equivalent of taking *soundings* from a body of philosophical thinking' and only after being sufficiently armed with such 'philosophical core samples' was he able to begin reading the text in question. Louis Althusser, *The Future Lasts Forever: A Memoir*, trans. Richard Veasey, eds. Olivier Corpet and Yann Moulier Boutang (New York: The New Press, 1993), 166-7.

    In contrast to these strategies of first gaining an informed universal grasp of a text with which one is initially unfamiliar, one might engage the opposite strategy of boldly taking up the primary texts to 'organically' arrive at a universal proposition regarding the work. Moreover, there is nothing to prevent the initial position from being formulated negatively in either its universal or particular form. So it should be noted that while the present paragraph examines the circular movement which ensues by initially entering its flow with a universal affirmative position, similar examinations could be had by alternatively taking up any of the other three positions as a first move into the reading process.

[599] See Guy Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences* (Introduction and Ch 1: "Logic of the Sexual Fault-line"), trans. Cormac Gallagher (c. 2010 [2006]). Downloaded February 5, 2013.

http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Le-Gaufey-Prologue-and-Faille-of-Notall.pdf; and

 Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences (Ch 2), translated by Cormac Gallagher (2008 [2006]) as "Towards a Critical Reading of the Formulae of Sexuation" from the original French version in *L'Unebévue*, Paris: L'Unebévue ed. (2005), no. 22. Downloaded February 5, 2013. http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/TOWARDS-A-CRITICAL-READING-2506.pdf; and

Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences (Ch 3: "Some Clinical Consequences of the Logical Difference between the Sexes"), trans. Cormac Gallagher (c. 2010 [2006]). Downloaded February 5, 2013. http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Pastout-Clinic-09-2506.pdf

      Unfortunately, only Chapter 3 of *Lacan's Notall* is paginated, numbering from 1-50. While an effort is made to identify the section within which cited material can be found for Chapters 1 and 2, the 'PDF' page number is also provided. Chapter 1 has PDF numeration from 1-37, Chapter 2 has PDF numeration from 1-52 (with pages 51 and 52 being blank). In all cases a page citation is preceded by chapter number. *E.g.*, Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 43.

[600] Presupposing that the maximal reading of the particular involves an indivisible remainder which refuses to be taken up into the universal would no doubt form part of a productive approach to reading chapter 1 of *Lacan's Notall* where Le Gaufey situates the medieval quarrel about universals against the eternal question of sexual difference.

[601] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 28.

[602] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 20. Copjec writes much clearer on this point: 'Lacan abandons two of the terms of classical logical...; instead of *subject* and *predicate*, he uses the terms *argument* and *function*.' Copjec, "Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason," 215. This is explained in the ensuing discussion.

      Moreover, a confirmation that Lacan makes this substitution could also readily be had by examining any of the earlier sets of formulae as they too reflect this most obvious change to the classical logical square: the abandonment of the readily understandable format of 'S is P' for a writing which employs an initially quite obscure series of symbols which Lacan uniquely constructs from established algebraic and logical symbols (*i.e.*, his mathemes). These same mathemes are used from their initial introduction in 1971 to the finalized formulae of 1972. However, what does change over the course of this year is their actual arrangement or more specifically, the differing ways Lacan has chosen to express the quantity and quality of each proposition with the given array of mathemes at his disposal. The reader interested in Lacan's development of these formulae is directed to Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, pp. 19-26.

[603] Michael Beaney, "Introduction" in *The Frege Reader*, ed. Michael Beaney (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1997), 10.

[604] Symbolic castration is discussed in a different but closely related context in Section 5.3 above. Here the more general connection is drawn between (the signifier of) castration and the failure of signifying systems to move to completion due to their inability to represent themselves in their signifying capacity. The difficulty in conceiving Lacan's notion of castration is eased somewhat by noting how a common phenomenon experienced by most speaking beings precisely illustrates the castrating effects of language. This phenomenon involves the extraordinary difficulty in saying exactly what one intends to say. No matter how well we speak, there always seems to be something left unsaid, a remainder of sorts that resists being articulated into language. But as well the obverse experience is equally true, for we just as often find ourselves 'saying too much,' over and above what we intend to say. Such 'Freudian slips of the tongue' (as they are commonly known) often leave us quite embarrassed and at times expose us to an unconscious truth that was perhaps better left unsaid. This experience of saying (and writing) too little and too much is due to the phallic function and Lacan's propositions can be read as precisely inscribing four different relations the speaking subject may strike towards it. The entire trajectory of Part I above

could then be productively retraced with this in mind, broadly identifying the predominate stance each writer takes to the phallic function, or else a particular writer could be scrutinized, closely following his text as it strikes different relations to the phallic function which might allow, moreover, for the possibility of moving that text towards relations that are omitted.

[605] '[W]hat about the square proposed by Lacan, even if he does not take the trouble to construct it as such? It can be depicted as follows...'. Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 32. The cosmetic difference between the Lacanian logical square Le Gaufey presents on this page and Figure 6.2 is explained below.

[606] See Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge, Book XX, Encore 1972-1973*, 78.

[607] As Le Gaufey notes, the term '[d]eixis is the name in the logical square for the elements that are ranked on the same side.' Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 39n50.

[608] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 20.

[609] Slavoj Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (London: Verso, 2012), 761-2. Due to a typographical error, the Roman numeral referencing Lacan's seminar in footnote 31 on page 762 should read 'IX' rather than 'XI.'

[610] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 22.

[611] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 21n28.

[612] Peter Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 333.

[613] There is no shortage of helpful examples to illustrate Russell's paradox. One of the traditional examples is related on pages 30-1 of Bruce Fink, *The Lacanian Subject: Between Language and Jouissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). There Fink considers the status of a catalogue of all catalogues which do not include themselves within their own pages. According to this criterion a catalogue would be selected only if it did not include its own title in the list of titles it provides of other catalogues. Now, should the editor include the title of this catalogue of all catalogues within its own pages? Not to include it would make it a catalogue which does not include itself as an entry, so it should be included. But to include it makes it a catalogue which does include itself as an entry, so it should not be included. The upshot is that it is impossible to ascertain what such a catalogue contains or does not within its pages. Its status is thoroughly paradoxical. An alternative example comes from Hallward: 'Consider, for instance, the analogy of a village barber who shaves only those people in the village who do not shave themselves. Does the barber, then, shave himself? We must conclude that there can be no straightforward answer. But the fundamental assumptions of intensional set theory seem to bar us from saying that there can be no such paradoxical set.' Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 333.

[614] Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 488-9. The further argument is made that the political 'Left and Right are not simply two options within a field, but two different visions of the entire field.' That is, Žižek has often drawn a direct homology between the split of political space into Left and Right and the split of the sexual into the difference between the feminine and the masculine, respectively. Žižek concisely illustrates this homology via Lévi-Strauss' analysis of the two possible perceptions by the Great Lakes tribe of the Winnebago regarding the spatial disposition of the buildings in their village in Slavoj Žižek, "Class Struggle or Postmodernism? Yes, Please!" in Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left* (London: Verso, 2000), 112-3. This homology lends incidental credence to having reversed the two sides of the Lacanian logical square in Figure 6.2, for now the feminine pair of formulae more properly occupy the Left deixis while the masculine pair stands to the Right.

[615] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 35. This is a rather curious statement given the title of Le Gaufey's work which seems to recognize that Lacan's greatest contribution lay with the particular negative. Placing his highpoint with the latter would be more consistent with what Lacan himself claimed as his single greatest discovery in psychoanalysis, *viz.*, the

object a which, as is more clearly seen in Chapter 7 below, is the matheme from discourse theory most closely associated with $\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$. However, regardless with which of the four propositions Le Gaufey places the crucial accent, his analysis is fruitful for having suggested how the very operation of the universal negative is what opens up the 'space' of the logical square. This is further discussed immediately below.

[616] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 34.

[617] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 35. While more clearly articulated in Chapter 7 below, it can already be seen how the matheme from discourse theory most closely associated with the 'nothing' that is inscribed by $\overline{\exists x}\ \overline{\Phi x}$ is $, the Lacanian subject.

[618] This is analogous to how an 'object' must first exist so as to permit the conception of the space it delimits, yet logically speaking the empty space comes first and is only 'later' occupied by the object.

[619] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 36. Here are Le Gaufey's words on this issue, reproduced in full so as to reemphasize this important point:

> 'Lacan shows that he is aware of the fact that if one wants to undermine the dualities Man/Woman, Yin/Yang, XX/XY, penised/unpenised etc., one must not hesitate to damage their logical underpinnings, since he is sure that logic, in its own foundation, is much more "gendered" (because of its fundamental binarity) than "sexed." It is important to be convinced of this point, otherwise one will miss the intuition that pushes him to bring together "logical fault" and "sexual fault." For him sex touches on logic, but logic touches just as much on sex. So that reconnecting them with one another illuminates the one and the other, the one by the other, while the couples of opposites sustain logics of the kind (man/woman, active/passive, etc.) which, for their part seek to articulate themselves without fault, and without remainder.'

[620] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 38n49. Le Gaufey opposes Lacan *qua* existentialist to the tendency in the literature to place his thought within structuralist theory, although he is careful to note that Lacanian existentialism is not of the Sartrean type but is rather more in line with Blaise Pascal and Søren Kierkegaard.

[621] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 39.

[622] To Le Gaufey's point that '*The* woman does not exist' (or alternatively denoted with a capital 'W' as in 'Woman does not exist') which expresses the missing *universal* in the speaking being, it would be legitimate to add how the missing *essence* has long since been captured by the 'male chauvinist' insight into how 'woman has no *soul*.' See Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 41.

[623] Le Gaufey remarks 'that the universal (that there is no question of doing without, it is what allows us to write with complete security) maintains with the exception a relationship that Lacan to my mind, does not manage to clarify in the course of these two seminars, *Of a Discourse that might not be a Semblance* [Seminar XVIII] and *...or worse* [Seminar XIX].' Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 41. While Le Gaufey does travel outside these two seminars in search of clues on how to conceive of this relationship (as is seen in what immediately follows), according to Fierens it is nevertheless the case that 'Le Gaufey remains at a certain level of the notall, in other words principally at the seminar *...ou pire* [Seminar XIX], of 1971-1972.' Christian Fierens, "The Fact of Saying Notall with Reference to Le Gaufey's Work: *Lacan's Notall, Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*" trans. Cormac Gallagher, *The Letter* 38 (2008), no pagination. See PDF page 6. Downloaded Feb 5, 2013. http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Autumn-2008-103-121-1.pdf Fierens, whose work is extensively taken up in Chapter 7 below, thus seems to suspect that Le Gaufey has placed the crucial accent on propositions other than the Not-all, despite the title of the latter's work. As per Fierens this can be corrected by more closely examining the 1972 text *L'étourdit* which reflects certain advances in Lacan's thought regarding how the formulae of sexuation might be read.

[624] See Jacques Lacan, *L'étourdit* (First Turn), trans. Cormac Gallagher, pp. 1-21 (July 2009 [1972]). Downloaded February 5, 2013. http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/etourdit-First-turn-Final-Version2.pdf; and

Jacques Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), trans. Cormac Gallagher pp. 1-24 (May 2010 [1972]). Downloaded February 5, 2013. http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/etourdit-Second-turn-Final-Version4.pdf

[625] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (First Turn), 11. As both Le Gaufey and Fierens note, there is an obvious error in the text in that the function $f(x) = \frac{1}{x}$ is not exponential but hyperbolic.

[626] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 44. This logic is of course not limited to the world of religion but permeates the very core of philosophy, as seen in Section 4.2 above. There the homology between the Kantian dynamical logic of the sublime and the masculine sexuated logic of Lacan was put into play. More specifically the inaccessible noumenal realm which acts as the constitutive exception to phenomenal reality, providing both its support and ultimate guarantee, was illustrated by contrasting the aesthetic theory of Lyotard against that of Rancière.

While on the topic of Kant it should be noted in passing how the graph in Figure 6.3 nicely illustrates the Kantian regulative Idea which, as discussed in Žižek's critique of Habermas in Section 5.3 above, is only achievable through an asymptotic approach. In this way an illusory space is held open for the subject who conceives his project as one involving infinite and endless progress.

In contrast to this reading which excludes the exceptional x from the set of x so that it provides a clear limit, Le Gaufey argues in what follows how the exception might alternatively be conceived as included in the set of x while simultaneously also operating as the limit to that set, much like how a topological figure includes its edge (44). This is the case with the möbius strip of Figure 5.5 above.

[627] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 45. Le Gaufey has already acknowledged that such universals hold a certain necessity in the realm of writing (41) and this indispensability, we must now add, is functionally true despite their illusory quality.

[628] For this reason S_1 is the matheme from discourse theory most closely associated with $\exists x \; \overline{\Phi x}$ and S_2, all the other signifiers from which it sticks out, is the matheme likewise associated with $\forall x \; \Phi x$. These associations are more fully explored in Chapter 7 below.

[629] It is easily seen mathematically how denying the presence of a given mark arrives at its absence by considering how the subtraction of 1 from 1 results in 0, but denying the resulting absence in no way guarantees a return to the same mark of 1. This can also be seen at a more fundamental level with reference to the Axiom of the Empty Set which is one of nine axioms of set theory that compose the very foundation of mathematics. It states that the empty or null set Ø exists and it can be arrived at by denying the signifying mark which allows a group of elements to be collectivized into a set; the resulting elements would no longer be a set but instead loosely grouped in a domain. Here is the movement from the right to the left deixis. But there is no assurance of returning to that signifying mark by denying this domain; rather, a *set* would have to be made of this domain to do so. Abstractly said, a One emerges from the domain of the Other in just this way.

Incidentally, counting with numbers proceeds precisely in this manner, which can be characterized as a *creatio ex nihilo*. For the number 1 is arrived at not by negating the empty set Ø but by taking the *set* of the empty set Ø, and since the empty set Ø is universal in the sense of always being included in all other sets, subsequent sets of these sets can continue *ad infinitum* and the infinity of cardinal numbers is assured. Thus, {Ø} would designate 1, {Ø, {Ø}} would designate 2, {Ø, {Ø}, {Ø, {Ø}}} designates 3, {Ø, {Ø}, {Ø, {Ø}}, {Ø, {Ø}, {Ø, {Ø}}}} designates 4...etc... Note how the brackets in set theory function as punctuation. Just as in logic and language in general, once things get complicated the establishment of a method of systematized punctuation becomes essential if we are to find our way and derive a sense from what is being written.

[630] It is almost as if the square has anticipated the approach of the subject, much like in mathematics which remains immune to its critics who point out that its entire field would collapse if only another set of *a priori* principles had been chosen. To which the mathematician need only reply that 'That's entirely the point!' and point out that among its nine axioms of set theory is precisely the Axiom of Choice which

states quite simply that the function of choice exists. This is the precise concept of the being (not act) of subjective intervention and lying as it does at the foundation of mathematics this axiom amounts to making a choice regarding *choice itself*. With this axiom it begins to become clear how mathematics is self-grounding and dependent on a subject – which with Lacan is $ and so effectively equated with $\emptyset$. A general difference between axiomatic set theory and the Lacanian logical square is that the latter goes one better, endeavoring to also inscribe the 'mistaken' view of the non-mathematician/logician so as to articulate its relationship to the 'correct' view.

[631] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 3, p. 8. The aliquot designates a part of a number that divides the number evenly and leaves no remainder. The number 8 is such a part of 24. The aliquant designates a part of a number that does not divide the number evenly but leaves a remainder. The number 8 is such a part of 25.

[632] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 3, p. 11-2. In contrast to his chapter 2 where it seems Le Gaufey often places the crucial accent with the universal negative (which conflicts with the title of his work), on these two pages he quite expressly places that accent on the particular negative in order to make sense of the internal writing of the four propositions.

[633] Indeed this is the case if $\forall x\ \Phi x$ is associated with S_2, the matheme shown in Section 5.3 above to denote knowledge. So undermining the universal simultaneously undermines the possibility that knowledge is so easily transferable.

[634] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 3, p. 17.

[635] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 3, p. 19.

[636] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 3, p. 20.

[637] See Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 3, p. 25-6. Once again Le Gaufey seems to discuss this graph as if Lacan intended it to capture both sides of his logical square. But as previously noted its introduction in *L'étourdit* comes when Lacan first discusses the two propositions of the right deixis. For this reason it is safe to assume that it is only meant to illustrate their relation.

[638] Moreover, the impression from the graph is that the exception $x = 0$ is singular when clearly the existential quantifier of $\exists x\ \overline{\Phi x}$ reads as 'at least one' or 'some' and can thus be understood not just as a singular exception but as a plural exception as well.

[639] Note that not affirming the existence of the antecedent term is not the same as actively denying it, for the latter would lead to the fallacy known as 'denying the antecedent.' To illustrate, consider the hypothetical proposition 'If there is fire, then there is oxygen.' By affirming there is fire, it is sufficient to conclude there is oxygen, but by denying there is fire, one cannot conclude that there is or is not oxygen. For completeness sake, there are two other possibilities. What is known as 'affirming the consequent' similarly leads to a fallacy, for by affirming there is oxygen, one cannot conclude that there is or is not fire. But the hypothetical syllogism which denies the consequent leads to an entirely valid conclusion. Called *modus tollens* [Latin, 'mode of taking away'], by denying there is oxygen, one can conclude there is no fire, for the consequent is a necessary condition of the antecedent.

[640] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 3, p. 27.

[641] As already indicated, this is in keeping with the practice in academia that when an author's name is invoked, it is tacitly understood that the speaker/writer is referring to the body of work penned by that author. The following discussion provides the logical underpinnings as to why such an understanding can remain unspoken; that is, what Frege and then Lacan inscribe in logical terms is the very possibility for such a conventional shorthand. The usual explanation that this shorthand is culturally-contextually determined stands as a secondary consideration which only concretizes this *a priori* possibility.

[642] See Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 3, p. 33-7.

[643] To exemplify this, the author of the present work is acquainted with a former analysand who recounted to his analyst a memory he had as a child defacing the surface of a wall in his childhood home. He had drawn a multi-celled structure and in each cell had written a name of one of his family members

including his own. The explanation to his analyst was the same one given to his father at the time: 'It's a place where we can leave and pick up messages from the others.' For the analysis to be successful, it had to follow this latent thought through its transformation into the manifest content of the drawing and for argument's sake, let the operating thesis within which this proceeded be stated as 'All sons want to be like their fathers.' Indeed his father was a postman and the possibility that this episode was nothing more than a charming example of a young boy unknowingly emulating his father was the conclusion both the analysand and analyst initially arrived at in the analysis. Yet the troubling detail of distinct and isolated cells within which the names were written returned again and again to the analysand's speech. The latent thought eventually gave way to a much more troubling thought, that the drawing emphasized how no one in his family was truly talking, as if everyone had somehow been silenced into their own separate worlds. The work of analysis linked this silence to the silence that would ensue upon his father's arrival home from work each evening, a time when each family member became afraid of making too much noise for fear of upsetting him. The drawing of the analysand thus also reflected his father's desire for silence as much as it formed a protest against it. Accordingly, a new thesis would have to be written, one that would perhaps also encompass the less cheerful fact that sons often emulate fathers even to the point of conflicting desires.

[644] See Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 3, p. 38ff.

[645] A paradoxical statement because if I speak truly when I say I am speaking falsely, I am speaking falsely. But if I am speaking falsely when I say I am speaking falsely, I am speaking truly. So what I say is true if (and only if) it is false, which seems absurd. Sometimes written in the form 'This statement is false' which is equally paradoxical as it seems to be false if true, and true if false, the advantage of the form 'I am lying' is that it highlights the subjective elements which allow for the Lacanian 'solution' to this paradox to more readily be appreciated, *viz*., the Lacanian notion that the subject is split between his enunciation and his statement. That is, it is only to the extent that these two levels are confused that we find ourselves in a paradox (as in the case of traditional logic which fails to make this distinction, in contrast to the Lacanian square which endeavors to inscribe this very confusion itself in logical form). In everyday discourse the comprehension of such statements is usually had without any difficulty. They are entirely admissible precisely because we implicitly make such a distinction between these two levels whenever we hear or read these statements.

[646] Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 3, p. 39.

[647] The two positions alternately occupied by Epimenides quite effectively illustrates the difference between obsessional neurosis and hysteria which Žižek has characterized in the following fashion: 'the obsessional neurotic *lies in the guise of truth* (while at the level of factual accuracy his statements are always true, he uses this factual accuracy to dissimulate the truth about his desire...), while the hysteric *tells the truth in the guise of a lie* (the truth of my desire articulates itself in the very distortions of the "factual accuracy" of my speech: when, say, instead of "I thereby open this session," I say "I thereby close this session," my desire clearly comes out...).' Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 1997), 36-7. An example of the obsessional neurotic would be the office prankster who is accused of pulling a well-orchestrated prank which he did not, in fact, commit. When he rationally explains to his accusers how he was not even in town when the prank occurred and so cannot possibly be held to account, at a factual level he tells the truth, yet this 'truth' is propagated to conceal the fact that the prank realized his desire. The not-quite-repressible smile that might emerge during his self-defense bears witness to this lie and would be visible to all, but it could easily be misread as proof that the lie subsists at the factual level.

[648] For instance: the set of all cats is not a cat, the set of all guns is not a gun...

[649] This is the same with the predicate 'Heideggerian' which is less like 'tall' and more like 'membership' or 'truth' in being doubly-inscribed. Recall from Part I how 'being Heideggerian' was to express a concern with the *a priori* dimension to any subject-object dichotomy, a mark which was clearly borne in some fashion by the likes of Bultmann, Ebeling, Gadamer and Palmer. In linguistic terms, the subject-object dichotomy translates as subject-predicate. But the sense in which the object or predicate 'overtakes' the

statement within which it finds itself (and thus doubles itself by being in two positions at once) is not unique to the predicate 'Heideggerian.' For after Heidegger's conception of such an *a priori* dimension, all other predicates can potentially be read as doubly-inscribed and so threaten their propositions by a similar paradox. The difficulty here is to conceive these predicates as Fregean functions which release this potential the moment the interpreter no longer overlooks his own subjectivity in the matter at hand. Thus it must be recognized that to judge whether a particular passage of Gadamer can or cannot be subsumed under the universal 'All of Gadamer is Heideggerian' is to set into play the interpreter's own Heideggerian-ism, such as it is. These considerations were implicitly in place during the examination above of the predicate 'mortal' which put into play a similar paradox the moment the speaker recognized the incongruence between his own pretentions to immortality and his uttered statement 'All men are mortal.'

[650] This possibility that both propositions in the right deixis are true despite the contradiction between them is a reiteration of Copjec's original finding which Žižek has thoroughly followed in many of his books: since there is a structural homology between Kant's dynamical antinomies and Lacan's masculine set of sexuated formulae, the latter can be handled in exactly the same way Kant resolved the former in the *Critique of Pure Reason*; roughly speaking, Copjec invites us to view the two formulae as inscribing two radically different levels so that the truth of one does not necessarily interfere with the truth of the other, just as in the case of the phenomenal and noumenal realms in Kantian philosophy. See Copjec, "Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason," 228ff.

[651] Charles Melman, "What Thrilled Me in Fierens' Book," trans. Cormac Gallagher, *The Letter* 41 (2009), 128. Downloaded February 5, 2013. http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/CM-CG-Trans-Lettter-41.pdf

[652] As written, the title *L'étourdit* is a neologism. Derived from the substantive form of the adjective *étourdi*, the noun *l'étourdi* (without the 't') refers to someone who is thoughtless, dazed, dizzy, inattentive, or distracted. In common parlance such a person might be referred to as a scatterbrain or a blunderer. Now, the addition of the final 't' at the written level amounts to little more than a spelling error. So to begin understanding what is captured by the term *l'étourdit*, one might instead turn to the phonetic level. But as spoken the neologism effectively disappears, for *l'étourdit* and *l'étourdi* are pronounced exactly the same because the final 't' is silent in French. In the end the reader is forced to hear the title as *les-tours-dits* (similarly pronounced, this literally translates as 'the-turns-said') in order to grasp a modicum of its meaning without, of course, losing sight of the fact that those who complete such a circuit of 'saids' are blunderers nonetheless.

[653] In this way a 'figure eight' resembling Figure 5.5 above has been traced through the logical square.

Incidentally, this sequence of negations can be used to articulate the overall logic in play with respect to the present study. Roughly speaking, the first two chapters of Part I present hermeneutical phenomenology *qua* universal methodology of textual analysis, which is then negated by the third chapter on (post)structuralism which delimits an exceptional dimension to the reign of this universal. But with the fourth and especially fifth chapters, the contradiction between the first two poles is *itself* negated. The sequence thus proceeds Herm Phen → not Herm Phen → non-Herm Phen. (Note that the negation which denies the exception cannot be filled with a positive term and is thus impossible to represent; that is, it must itself vanish in order to function as that which 'clears the space' for the presence of the other terms). The difference between the two negations should be clear: where the first negation results in something definitely 'not hermeneutical phenomenological' such as (post)structuralism, the further negation has indefinite results. Žižek has often alerted us to the fact that such a difference is captured by Kant's discussion of the infinite judgment as opposed to the negative judgment in his first *Critique* (*cf.* Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A71/B97). As Žižek explains, any positive judgment like 'the soul is mortal' or 'he is dead' or 'he is human' can be negated by directly denying the predicate to the subject. Accordingly, 'the soul is not mortal' and 'he is not dead' and 'he is not human.' This is the negative judgment and it does result in something definite. For instance, 'he is not human' externalizes the subject with respect to humanity, positing him as either animal or divine. But the infinite

judgment negates by affirming a non-predicate. Accordingly, 'the soul is non-mortal' and 'he is un-dead' and 'he is inhuman.' With the infinite judgment an indefinite third domain is opened up which undermines the distinction between the previous two judgments. Hence to be 'undead' is to be neither alive nor dead but the monstrous 'living dead' well-captured by the figure of the zombie of popular culture (just as to be 'inhuman' marks the subject neither as 'human' nor 'not human' but with a terrifying excess inherent to being-human – something explored by Lyotard in his similarly titled book examined in Section 4.2 above). See, for example, p. 162 of Slavoj Žižek, "Fichte's Laughter" in *Mythology, Madness, and Laughter: Subjectivity in German Idealism*, eds. Markus Gabriel and Slavoj Žižek, pp. 122-67 (London: Continuum, 2009).

       Thus, the fact that the present study seeks to theorize a non-hermeneutical phenomenological approach to textual analysis (as per its title) should not simply be read as taking an external distance from hermeneutical phenomenology by championing a method either already established like (post)structuralism or one it seeks to newly develop. But neither is the distance taken a simple doubling of that initial external distance, as if the addition of another 'degree of freedom' (*i.e.*, the positioning of another methodological parameter between itself and hermeneutical phenomenology) would affect the proper methodological stance. Rather, the two negations resulting in non-hermeneutical phenomenology is the alignment with that which is already inherent to hermeneutical phenomenology. Any subversion of the latter's methodology would then come from within so that if one must speak of 'distance,' this must be understood as a self-distance. The additional consequence of this strategy is that nothing definitive can be said of the non-hermeneutical phenomenological approach. Here the Heideggerian stance of 'active passivity' which eschews holding out hope for a positive determination recommends itself – certain to frustrate any subject whose expectations are otherwise. For the approach championed here is rather parasitic, putting into play the terms of the field it seeks to undermine and subvert (and thus tears a page out of the book of Lacan who follows the methodology of Plato and Kant in taking the sophistry of his time and using it against itself and who, as we know, has inspired men like Badiou and Žižek to do much the same). And to the extent that this approach is already in play in the present study (and not only being theorized), the impact on its subject moves beyond frustration towards unleashing that excessive *jouissance* which attends any infinite judgment.

[654] This raises an interesting possibility, expressible in terms discussed in the first two chapters of Part I. For if the epistemological dimension could be said to oppose from the right deixis the ontological dimension inscribed in the left, this would legitimize using the logical square to frame the debates in hermeneutical phenomenology over the question of methodology.

[655] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (First Turn), 18.

[656] A clarification is in order. As already noted, topology is a branch of set theory so strictly speaking the shift in question is not from set theory to topology but from that aspect of set theory which concerns the formation of sets. This specific aspect was chiefly the extent to which set theory was put into play in the discussions of the logical square in Chapter 6 above.

[657] Indeed that Lacan's writings should be deciphered as rebuses is a generally held belief amongst Lacanians. But it has often been said how *L'étourdit* stands out as his most difficult. Le Gaufey speaks of it as Lacan's 'ultra-cryptic *écrit*' (Le Gaufey, *Lacan's Notall: Logical Consistency, Clinical Consequences*, Ch 2, p. 47) while Fierens notes the exceptional status of *L'étourdit* on the opening page of his commentary on it, telling us that for him, this 'particularly obscure and enigmatic' text for years 'resisted decipherment.' See page 3 of Christian Fierens, *Reading L'étourdit: Lacan 1972* (First Turn), trans. Cormac Gallagher (c. 2010 [2002]). Downloaded Feb 5, 2013. http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/FIRST-TURN-ALL-CHAPTERS-FINAL-VERSION.pdf

       The second half of this book-length commentary will be cited from Christian Fierens, *Reading L'étourdit: Lacan 1972* (Second Turn), trans. Cormac Gallagher (June 2010 [2002]). Downloaded Feb 5, 2013. http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/SECOND-TURN-ALL-CHAPTERS-FINAL-VERSION.pdf

The exceptional difficulty of *L'étourdit* is also witnessed by the colorful account of Melman who had originally received from Lacan this 'repugnant' text with the desire that it be published in his own review *Scilicet* (which it eventually was). Melman reports how he 'had given it back to him [Lacan] telling him that it was an absolutely unreadable, impossible text; that no one would ever understand anything in it; and that the sense of such a publication seemed to me to be absolutely not obvious.' Melman, "What Thrilled Me in Fierens' Book," 121.

[658] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (First Turn), 18.

[659] This is graphically seen in Figure 6.3 above where the curve of the hyperbolic function occupies a region bounded by its asymptotes.

[660] Fierens, "The Fact of Saying Notall with Reference to Le Gaufey's Work," 11.

[661] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (First Turn), 1.

[662] See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A290-2/B346-9.

[663] See Fierens, "The Fact of Saying Notall with Reference to Le Gaufey's Work," 13-4.

[664] St Thomas Aquinas, *Introduction to Saint Thomas Aquinas*, ed. Anton C. Pegis (New York: Random House, 1948), 533.

[665] Fierens, *Reading L'étourdit: Lacan 1972* (First Turn), 5. Fierens is well aware of this dimension and the privileged place this text of Lacan's occupies in this respect: '*L'étourdit* is the primary form that diverts us from our conscious semantics, it is the apparition of the unconscious in the dimension of non-sense, and it opens up a beyond of common meaning' (5). Moreover, '*L'étourdit* will deal with psychoanalytic interpretation. How will it deal with it? In what manner? In the manner of an interpretation: *L'étourdit* interprets interpretation' (11). This nonsense, this dimension which involves interpreting interpretation whose objectivity is conditional on not hearing it from meaning alone, is readily approachable through topology and Fierens' work here is superb. Indeed, this dissertation is in as great a debt to Fierens for having worked through Lacan's topological moves as it is with Le Gaufey for his account of the Aristotelian heritage of the Lacanian logical square and for his explication of the intricate relations between the propositions of that square.

[666] Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 794-5.

[667] It will be recalled from Section 6.2 above how the ordering of the propositions of the two quadrants in the right deixis were reversed from Lacan's popular presentation of them in Seminar XX in order to construct a logical square directly comparable to the classical Aristotelian version. So by interchanging them once again they revert back to the way they are usually presented as per the table of sexuation. (This interchange will be assumed from now on whenever the Lacanian logical square is spoken of *in toto* as a discourse).

Of course Žižek need not worry about *these* particular details, working as he does directly from the table of sexuation and not the logical square. Yet in doing so another problem arises. For by reading directly off the table of sexuation the arrangement is "$\frac{S1}{S2} \to \frac{\$}{a}$" which is not one of the four discourses. No matter how many 90° turns are made, no legitimate discourse will emerge. But by simply reversing the two sides of the table of sexuation this problem is instantly resolved – yet another advantage for having done just that from Section 6.2 onward.

[668] Fierens, *Reading L'étourdit: Lacan 1972* (First Turn), 21.

[669] Fierens, *Reading L'étourdit: Lacan 1972* (First Turn), 22.

[670] 'Each of the three non-analytic discourses is established thanks to its own meaning-relationship: the academic discourse finds its stability in the necessary, the master discourse in the impossible, the hysterical discourse in contingency.' Fierens, *Reading L'étourdit: Lacan 1972* (First Turn), 24.

[671] More directly stated in terms held from Chapter 6 onward, the thesis 'Gadamer is Heideggerian' (S_2) becomes the agent in the U_d on condition that it takes up again its truth that 'There is (at least one) text of Gadamer that is not Heideggerian' (S_1). With a quarter turn to the M_d this problematic passage of Gadamer that is not Heideggerian puts to work the thesis in the sense of offering it a challenge. While

another quarter turn produces the H_d where this passage is itself put to work to produce the very thesis in question. This illustrates the *a priori* nature of this discourse which subsists in the left deixis of the logical square, as well as its productive capacity to extend the epistemological field – something which Freud was one of the first to recognize.

[672] Such an argument is not new. Recall from Section 4.2 above how Rancière correctly charges the Lyotardian aesthetic project's preoccupation with meaninglessness as itself too meaningful a project.

[673] Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A334/B391.

[674] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 1.

[675] René Descartes, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes, Volume 1*, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross, pp. 1-49 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967)

[676] René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, trans. and ed. John Cottingham (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

[677] Statements by Lacan himself that testify to his accomplishment in this respect abound throughout his later work. For instance, in discussing the dual quality of *objet a* as both real and imaginary, Lacan says in Seminar XX:

> 'The affinity of *a* to its [imaginary] envelope is one of the major conjunctions put forward by psychoanalysis. To me it essentially introduces a point about which we must be suspicious. This is where the real distinguishes itself. The real can only be inscribed on the basis of an impasse of formalization. That is why I thought I could provide a model of it using mathematical formalization, inasmuch as it is the most advanced elaboration we have by which to produce signifierness. The mathematical formalization of signifierness runs counter to meaning – I almost said "*à contre-sens*" [counter meaning/direction]. In our times, philosophers of mathematics say "it means nothing" concerning mathematics, even when they are mathematicians themselves, like Russell.'
> Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: On Feminine Sexuality, The Limits of Love and Knowledge, Book XX, Encore 1972-1973*, 93.

[678] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 5.

[679] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 14.

[680] See pp. 30-4 of Plato, *Symposium*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1999).

[681] See Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 196-7, 205. Also see Jacques Lacan, "Position of the Unconscious" in *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 716-7.

[682] Besides the above quote there are other passing references to the sphere in *L'étourdit* that imply Lacan understands it as the topological figure of the universal. For instance, he writes that 'a spherical topology [is] the one that sustains the universal, the as-for-all: the topology of the universe.' Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 4. This citation is modified with the translation by Jack W. Stone, et al. See p. 17 of Jacques Lacan, *L'étourdit*, trans. Jack W. Stone, et al. Downloaded February 5, 2013. http://web.missouri.edu/~stonej/L'Etourdit.pdf.

[683] More specifically, each of these is an example of a '2-manifold' defined as a topological space that locally resembles 2-dimensional Euclidean space. This is easily understood in the case of the sphere by noting how the earth is sufficiently large so as to appear flat to the inhabitants on its surface. But in the other three cases this is not so easy. Yet moving away from the strict occupation of a meta-position which takes in the entire topological figure 'at a glance' to instead experience its local 2-dimensional surface is precisely what is needed to appreciate Lacan's work with these figures. This is why he often asks his listeners to imagine the perspective afforded to a small insect as it travels the surface of a torus or a möbius strip and to contemplate what lessons this holds for us beings who nevertheless simultaneously occupy the meta-position perspective on these figures. Here the powers of the imagination become indispensible and supplement any experience gained through actively manipulating these figures as per Lacan's instructions.

It is interesting to note that many introductory topology textbooks contain a discussion of manifolds in the context of cosmology. The central question entertained concerns speculation on the very shape of the universe which is taken as a spatial slice of 4-dimensional space-time. Since space appears locally to be 3-dimensional the assumption is that our spatial universe is a 3-manifold, although which 3-manifold is cause for speculation. The examination of the leading 3-manifold contenders is thought to help in determining the actual structure of the universe, much like ancient observations (like how the mast was the last part of a ship to disappear on the horizon as it sailed away from shore) indicated that the earth was not flat but curved. But knowing that locally the surface of the earth is 2-dimensional (implying it is a 2-manifold) did not preclude the shape of the earth from being, say, a torus rather than a sphere. Thus historically for a time speculation could theoretically ensue on the exact shape of the earth, just as it does now with the universe as a whole. Such is the current state of cosmological thinking on the shape of the universe. In the face of such speculation on which of the variety of 3-manifolds is the likely candidate for the actual shape of the universe, Lacan's work with manifolds of one dimension less appears quite modest. Or does it? Speculating on the ultimate shape of the universe seems to open itself to the Kantian critique which would indict it for overlooking the *regulative* aspect of the transcendental idea of contemplating the universe as a whole. In this sense Lacan need not move onto higher dimensions: aligning one's thought with the 2-manifold suffices to think the very shape of the universe itself. This is one way to understand a claim Žižek often makes of both Hegel and Lacan, *viz*., that they are not to be understood as going 'deeper' than the philosophies which preceded them, but rather are thinkers who stick much more closely to the 'surface' of things.

[684] This explains the ambiguity regarding the precise shape that Aristophanes has in mind during his speech which seems to suggest both spherical and circular beings: primordial Man is spherical and when split, each of the two hemispheres are topologically equivalent to the disk which of course need not be perfectly circular. Hence the popular conception of this myth which has it that man occupies a semicircle whose jagged diametrical edge matches up with the complimentary edge of the semicircle of woman such that when the two meet up a perfect circle results.

[685] Above topological equivalence or homeomorphism was introduced by way of defining topology as rubber-sheet geometry. The implication was that as long as a topological space was not cut, any stretching or twisting of the space results in a topologically equivalent space. Yet while our intuition and imagination confirms this to be true, nevertheless such a confirmation process is insufficient. For the notion of homeomorphism moves beyond what can be grasped by these human faculties. To appreciate this one must get their hands dirty and perform an actual topological operation. A simple exercise should suffice to demonstrate this (although it should be understood that this can easily be complicated so as to require using an accounting system to keep track of the changes being made): if a simple band of paper is cut, a narrow strip of paper results; but if the cut is sutured back together with points along either side of the cut matching as they did before the cut, the simple band of paper is restored. Of course this is quite obvious. But matching the points up as they did before the cut is equally satisfied if a full 360° twist (or whole multiples thereof) is made to the strip before the ends are sutured. The resulting band with a full twist is topologically equivalent to the original band with no twist; the former is simply a different embedding of the latter into Euclidean space. Yet it will be noticed how they *cannot* be deformed from one to the other as rubber sheets. For the cutting operation which momentarily destroys equivalence is necessary to move from one figuration of this topological space to the other. This fact takes on greater significance below when the cut *as such* is equated with the subject, reminding us interpreters never to overlook our own interpretive activity. But for the moment it suffices to note how intuition and imagination, which thrive in the meaningful realm of images, both fail to grasp an equivalence constituted in a realm holding no meaning. This reconfirms in topological terms the basic argument from Chapter 3 above regarding the existence of a meaningless structural dimension.

[686] To clarify, a boundary is an edge which could be created with a cut. So as long as the surface of a torus or a sphere remains intact (closed), they are both examples of manifolds with no boundaries. Thus, for

example, severing the ring of a torus in one place through its core would destroy this characteristic, as it would create two boundaries or edges at each end (this operation effectively transforms a torus into a cylinder); likewise puncturing or cutting the sphere in any way transforms it into a manifold with boundaries.

[687] Fierens' introduction to the topological discussion found in *L'étourdit* reminds us that Lacan in the 1960s had repeatedly utilized such a path traveled around the torus to visually illustrate the difference between demand (the repeated spirals around the core of the torus) and desire (the repetition of demands simultaneously carries out a turn around the central axis of the torus). See Fierens, *Reading L'étourdit: Lacan 1972* (Second Turn), 8-9. This also brings to mind how Lacan made use of the torus as early as 1953: the fact that its 'peripheral exteriority and central exteriority constitute but one single region' generally problematizes the distinction between inside and outside. More specifically, that the center of gravity of the torus falls outside the space inscribed by its surface makes it an apt illustration of the decentered nature of the subject. See Lacan, "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis," 264.

[688] There appears to be an error in Fierens' text which reads that what must be produced is 'a single fold which goes through two turns of the core of the torus before coming back to its starting point.' It should instead read as '...two turns of the *axis* of the torus...' See Fierens, *Reading L'étourdit: Lacan 1972* (Second Turn), 10.

[689] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 1.

[690] Although these distinctive operations we are asked to perform on the torus – from the pinching procedure that deflates it with a one-half twist, to the subsequent cut which follows the resultant single fold so that a bipartite strip is produced – are entirely possible, from a practical-logistical standpoint the procurement of suitable materials to actually carry them out nevertheless proves difficult. Yet it is crucial to physically perform as many of these operations as possible and having a working model of the bipartite strip is quite helpful, especially if we hope to continue following Lacan in his moves which from this point on only increase in complexity.

Now, like all figures encountered in the sequence $\boxed{1} \rightarrow \boxed{2} \rightarrow \boxed{3} \rightarrow \boxed{4}$, the bipartite strip can be conceived as an intermediate figure between the figure leading up to it and the figure following it. In the present case the bipartite strip is midway between the torus and the möbius strip. More specifically, by suturing its edges in two different ways, it can either regress to the flattened torus that feigns to be the möbius strip or it can progress on to the topological space of the true möbius strip. This implies it can be produced by a little 'reverse engineering' which proceeds not from the torus but from the möbius strip.

It turns out that this is quite simple to do. First, construct a möbius strip. The commentary on Figure 5.5 above has already provided the usual method for quickly doing so: Take a strip of paper, say a foot long by one inch wide and join the two ends to form a loop but just prior to doing so give one end a one-half twist (180°).

(We should note that in so doing we are momentarily ignoring Lacan's expressed warning *not* to construct the möbius strip in this fashion; yet yielding to this temptation does have the advantage in providing an initial approximation to these difficult to imagine topological spaces and more importantly, in establishing a standpoint from which to better appreciate Lacan's efforts at a more 'real' construction).

To arrive at the bipartite strip, simply cut the constructed möbius strip lengthwise down its center. This is known as the median cut. What results is the bipartite strip, a strip which initially appears to have two laminas but when stretched out reveals itself to be one strip twice the length of the strip before the cut.

This strip possesses two faces and two edges, so it is not homeomorphic to the möbius strip. Its lack of topological equivalence can also be assessed by simply noting that there are two full twists (720°) along its length. In general, a surface has two sides (is bipartite) if the number of half twists m is even, and has one side (equivalent to the möbius strip) if m is odd, where a half twist is defined as π radians or 180°.

It will be noticed how the 'two' laminas immediately produced after the median cut of the möbius strip can be slid one over the other in either direction so that a 'single' loop is made of the same length as the original strip (although half its width). In this position a möbius strip would be produced if the two laminas are fused together; but a torus is produced if the two aligned edges of the two laminas are instead sutured and the interior space they now delimit is inflated.

This method of proceeding from a constructed möbius strip to the torus effectively reverses Lacan's own transformation of the torus into the möbius strip. To reiterate, this method involving a median cut of the möbius strip goes against Lacan's expressed wishes, yet again in the present context the overwhelming benefit is that a bipartite strip is now in the reader's hands ready to be manipulated in the fashion recommended in *L'étourdit*. The contention is that while Fierens, to his great credit, provides ample illustrations of the many figures Lacan discusses in this text, their value can only be enhanced whenever they are supplemented by workable 3-dimensional models.

[691] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 2.

[692] Interestingly, since the two laminas of the bipartite strip can be manipulated to overlap with each other so as to feign the möbius strip, it can additionally be inlayed with the true möbius strip that is linked to it, resulting in a triple-thick möbius strip (only one third of which, of course, is a true möbius strip).

[693] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 2. Even more categorically, he writes that 'this cut = the Moebius strip' (*ibid*).

[694] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 2.

[695] Note that the metaphor of a small traveling insect used above to demonstrate various attributes of surfaces will no longer suffice when it is a matter of understanding orientability. To grasp this concept the traveler must be thought of not so much as *on* the surface as rather *in* the surface. In other words when it comes to demonstrating orientability, 2-manifolds require 2-dimensional travelers. To retain the metaphor of the small traveling insect, one might imagine it as infinitely flat. In another approach, a clock face might be observed as it travels around a möbius strip that is constructed out of translucent material. In both cases the path traversed reverses the orientation of the traveling object. Moreover, in theory it is not possible to distinguish such a traveler from its reflected image. This fact alone helps us appreciate Lacan's turn to the möbius strip as the quintessential topological space of the subject, a turn foretold already by his early mirror stage theory which concerns the role played by the initially quite confusing reflected image in the formation of the subject.

[696] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (First Turn), 15. See also pp. 11, 12 (*ibid*) and p. 19 of Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn).

[697] Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 2.

[698] The phrase Lacan actually uses is the 'ab-sense of meaning' and this within the context of critiquing Plato's notion of true opinion. Here Lacan mentions the regret of those clinging to meaning in the face of the non-meaningful domain the pure matheme opens up, a domain which progresses precisely at the expense of meaning. See Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 12.

It is worthwhile to reiterate that Lacan does not primarily concern himself with expressing the fact that 'there is no such thing as a sexual relation' in terms of meaning, non-meaning and nonsense – which would otherwise be a fair and concise characterization of the project undertaken in this Part II of the present study. At best it might be said that as Lacan finds various vehicles to express this fact, from topology and discourse theory to mathematics and the very formulae of sexuation themselves, he does offer us the occasional statement on the implications his analysis holds for meaning. Such 'one-offs' are supplemented with equally irregular occurrences of declarative statements of a more global nature, as on the day of June 11, 1974 in his twenty-first seminar when he remarks: 'Everything implied by the analytic engagement with human behaviour indicates not that meaning reflects the sexual, but that it makes up for it.' Quoted in Copjec, "Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason," 204.

[699] The operation in question involves suturing the one-edge of a möbius strip to the one-edge of another möbius strip to produce the well-known closed topological manifold called the Klein bottle. Like the cross-

cap, it does not exist in 3-dimensional space without self-intersection, although it does present a better visual approximation of itself in our universe than does the cross-cap.

[700] The cross-cap is thus quite aptly named and the image evoked by characterizing this suturing operation metaphorically as 'capping off' is indeed helpful when attempting to grasp this difficult topological space.

To further explain this operation a möbius strip constructed out of paper again proves useful. It will be noticed that the one-half twist to the strip which makes it one-sided and one-edged also effectively twists space itself. That is to say, the central hole of the möbius strip is not simply an encircled empty space, but an emptiness that 'curves in' on itself. It might be imagined that this hole is what is 'capped off' by suturing the single circular edge of a hemisphere to the one-edged möbius strip, or else the curved space of this hole might be seen as having been 'given body' by the twists placed into the hemispheric cap as a result of the suturing process. Figure 7.2 attempts to provide an approximate representation of the cross-cap, but it should be noted that while the metaphor of a capping action gives the impression of a top-down operation, the representation found there appears to cap the möbius strip from the bottom-up. By way of explanation, the cross-cap in Figure 7.2 mirrors the standard illustration of it given in many recent introductory topology textbooks. But of course there is no 'up' or 'down' when it comes to the two topological spaces of the left deixis since they are both nonorientable surfaces – which again reminds us of the failings of the image when dealing with such real objects.

[701] Lacan continues, designating the cross-cap which harbors this single point with other names: 'This is the asphere...In other words, Desargues' projective plane, a plane whose discovery as reducing its horizon to a point, is specified by the fact that this point is such that every line drawn to converge at it only passes through it by going from the front face of the plane to its back face.' Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 2.

[702] Žižek's work is peppered with many helpful ways to approach tautological gestures. A particularly apt example is a passage he has often cited from Richard Wagner's *Parsifal*: '[T]he wound is healed only by the spear which smote it.' See, for instance, Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 158.

[703] See p. 13 and 16 of Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), where Lacan writes that despite how the supplementation of the out-of-line point (*a*) to the line without points ($) 'makes of the sphere an asphere or a cross-cap...[w]hat it nevertheless makes happen in the cross-cap through being borrowed from the sphere, is that a cut that it makes Moebian in the surface that it determines in making it possible, restores this surface, to the spherical mode: for it is insofar as the cut is equivalent to it, that what it supplements itself with as cross-cap "projects itself," as I have said.' He continues by characterizing 'the supplementary point' (*a*) as that which is 'able to sphericize itself' and as that which is capable of having 'the effect of resolving it into a spherically spreadable point.' The point here is that although it harbors within the unbounded aspherical cross-cap, this does not prevent the *objet a* from functioning in a capacity capable of bounding a universal field of spherical meaning. There is no real secret to how this is done. The constitution of the universal is established through taking the position of the exception, as per the logic of the right deixis extensively covered in Chapter 6 above. In Lacan's words: 'The object (*a*) in falling from the hole of the [möbius] strip projects itself after the fact into what we will call, from an abuse of the imaginary, the central hole of the torus.' That is, seen from the perspective of the right deixis, the *objet a* is (mis)read as the constitutive exceptional point which establishes a universal field of meaning, or in the topological terms of the present chapter, *objet a* acts as the 'missing' center of gravity of the torus which forms a limit so as to constitute the universal sphere of meaning. (These citations have been modified or wholly replaced with the translation by Jack W. Stone, et al. See Lacan, *L'étourdit*, 23, 26).

[704] One of the earlier references to the notion of 'traversing the fantasy' comes on p. 273 of Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*.

[705] It is worthwhile to pause with Lacan and take note of this rather surprising transformation which, for present purposes, underscores the intimate connection that the left deixis has with the right in the logical square: 'What is remarkable in this sequence is that the asphere...only arrives at the evidence of its asphericity by being supplemented by a spherical cut.' Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 3.

[706] Seeing as how the möbius strip is the only surface with an edge in the logical square, it is quite appropriate to conceive it as the sole cutting instrument in the Lacanian topological toolbox.

[707] While nevertheless maintaining some connection, the brief etymological discussion which follows should make it clear how the sense intended by the use of this term departs from many of the main senses listed in dictionaries for the verb 'to suspend,' inclusive of those which convey the sense of exclusion (to bar or forbid from an office or the performance of a usual duty or activity, especially as a penalty), the sense of making inoperative for a time (to cancel, halt, withhold, render inactive or invalid temporarily) and the sense of holding back, refraining from, putting off, deferring or delaying the making of a judgment, sentence, etc, until a later time.

[708] This might be likened to a somewhat common experience: upon crossing the threshold of one's home for the first time after an extended period of absence (say, after a two or three week vacation), the immediate surroundings are of course quite familiar and bear the subject's personal stamp. But there is nevertheless the feeling of an eerie, cold 'objectivity' which seems to permeate each room and because of which, momentarily makes the subject a stranger in his own home. But perhaps this experience is less possible today than in previous decades. As Baudrillard laments (celebrates?) somewhere, the exit made by today's moviegoer from a darkened matinee theater into the sunny afternoon of reality is no longer momentarily met with a similar disconcerting feeling as it once did in years past.

[709] It should be noted that Figure 7.3 directly reads as the A_d: $\frac{a}{S2} \overset{\rightarrow}{/\!/} \frac{\$}{S1}$ (and thus in a writing which visually displays knowledge to be barred to the analyst) provided that quadrants $\boxed{1}$ and $\boxed{2}$ are interchanged. Again this interchange simply aligns the quadrants of the Lacanian logical square with the four places of discourse.

[710] Such an attitude would have more to do with a subject still somewhat immersed in the field of meaning, or else should be thought of as a remnant of subjectivization – the analyst's ego – which casts an all-too-knowing and cynical glance from somewhere below the suspended field. In contrast, subjectivity proper is a 'full' occupation of the very point of suspension.

[711] To hang by a support from above and to do so without attachment are two additional senses commonly found in dictionaries under their entries for 'to suspend.' Of those five or six in common use today, these two are closest to capturing the original sense of *suspendere*.

[712] Simply said, *objet a* 'is' the suspended hermeneutical circle.

[713] That Lacan is not interested in tapping into a beyond becomes clear in passages like the following which champions mathematics for its lack of meaning and for opening, through topological transformations, a field entirely devoid of that historical dimension so dear to hermeneutical phenomenology and which, moreover, harbors an ontologized point of nonsense:

> 'The matheme is uttered from the only real recognized from the onset in language: namely number. Nevertheless the history of mathematics demonstrates (saying it makes the case) that it can be extended to intuition, on condition that this term is as castrated as can be of its metaphorical use. Here therefore is a field in which what is most striking is that its development, over against the terms from which it is absorbed, does not [proceed] from generalization but from topological re-shaping, from a retroaction onto the beginning such that its history is effaced. No surer experience to resolve its embarrassment. Hence its attraction for thought: which finds in it the *nonsense* proper to being, or to the desire for a speech with no beyond.' Lacan, *L'étourdit* (Second Turn), 12.

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