amos judd loves cold mutton … get over it!

Lewis Carroll was more than the author of the fanciful "Alice" novels, *Through the Looking Glass* and *Alice in Wonderland*. He invented an original approach to symbolic logic. You can find the complete text on the Internet, but for now you can contemplate the alluring up-front news that Carroll's four basic logical conditions — to replace Aristotle's "logical square" — happens to resemble Jacques Lacan's four "rules of sexuation," which Slavoj Žižek has astutely compared to the four forms of discourse that Lacan described in his seminars (University, Master, Hysteria, Analysis).

What this comparison to the sorites of Lewis Carroll adds to this treasury of riches is the connection to the "Bloom Set," the six critical terms that allow us to plug into ethnographic and popular culture examples, i.e. to fill out the abstract logical relationships with concrete situations drawn from art, architecture, film, folklore, urban form, etc. This is the payoff moment: it is necessary to find material conditions in cultures to corroborate the idea that discourses, rules of sexuation, and all of the matters contained within these are not simply abstract parsings but, rather, "unconscious rules" that emerge from universal conditions of the subject. These universal conditions do not mean that people resemble each other. They do not. Rather, the rules by which cultures organize their own contingent conditions (history, geography, levels of development, religions, ethnic practices, etc.) are standard but they appear only as background noise. They are the "making of" rather than the final products of cultures. The final products are distinctive and sometimes radically different, because the contingent conditions in which people find themselves are radically different.

What Amos Judd likes or does not like to eat is not important, but the puzzle Lewis Carroll devised using Amos Judd and his culinary preferences as a part of the "answer" allows us to demonstrate how reverse predication can be used simultaneously by palintropic procedures (reversals/negations) and at the same time by palintonic global conditions that lead to the "emergence" of concealed relationships. The construction process is easy to grasp and even easy to learn. You will be able to construct your own "riddle" with only ten or fifteen minutes of study. All this cleverness cannot come close, however, to the insights gained into the importance of the "sorites" (the technical name for the phenomenon of gradual addition or subtraction that leads to a realization of a collectivity — a pile is the usual example — that is simultaneously too early and too late). Soriteses can be any sequence of events that grows or declines. Therefore it provides insight into perceptions of gradual changes, such as environmental deterioration or resource depletion. On the bright side, sorites is also the key to the process of falling in love, where the couple whose eyes meet across a crowded room both feel that their meeting was fated (hence, "late" in relation to antecedent channeling coincidences) and entirely accidental ("early," before anyone had a chance to notice).

Carroll's quadration furthermore relates to the four conditions of knowledge, popular culture version provided by Donald Rumsfield, Secretary of Defense during the Bush II administration, the more sophisticated interpretation produced 250 years before Rumsfield by Giambattista Vico, the 18c. Neapolitan philosopher of culture. In this system, pluses are bad, minuses are good. The +/+ combination ("knowing what you know") is positive knowledge, i.e. willing consumption of propaganda. The positivist is immune to criticism or correction, limiting all knowledge to sense certainty. The first doubt comes with an understanding of the crucial role of the frame or context: +/−, knowing what you don't know, i.e. the limits of knowledge. The next step is to have access to implicit knowledge, without being self-conscious: −/+. This is also the basis of animism, where "dead things" (such as ventriloquists' dummies) acquire consciousness and will. The ultimate form of knowing, associated with the Greek word kenosis, is −/−, the kind of knowledge that is accumulated in a negative form in the unconscious and accessed only through the "negative" means of dreams and symptoms but also visions, prophecies, and epiphanies.

Because Carroll's "bilateral diagram" uses pluses and minuses in the same way Lacan does to define his sexuation rules, there is reason to compare the two. Lacan's system is based on framing conditions: All those who wish to call themselves men, obey the phallic law, Φ, which among other things is a subordination of identity to a network of symbolic relationships. This rule is maintained as long as there is an imagined or real exception, someone who constructs and manages the system but is exempt from Φ. Not all of any woman is subject to Φ, and there are no exceptions. The "tell" of this formula is the way men and women make different kinds of promises. For all men but the imagined exception, the pledge is "all or nothing." For women, who pass freely from one side of the promise boundary to the other, the pledge is never complete. It always waits for a remainder to fulfill a destiny that is not yet named or remembers a legacy that had been forgotten. Possibly this is why "poet" in many gendered languages is a feminine word.

(1) "All the policemen on this beat sup with our cook;
(2) No man with long hair can fail to be a poet;
(3) AMOS JUDD has never been in prison;
(4) Our cook's 'cousins' all LOVE COLD MUTTON;
(5) None but policemen on this beat are poets;
(6) None but her 'cousins' ever sup with our cook;
(7) Men with short hair have all been in prison."

a — Amos Judd
b — Our cook's cousins
c — been in prison
d — long-haired
e — Love cold mutton
h — Poets
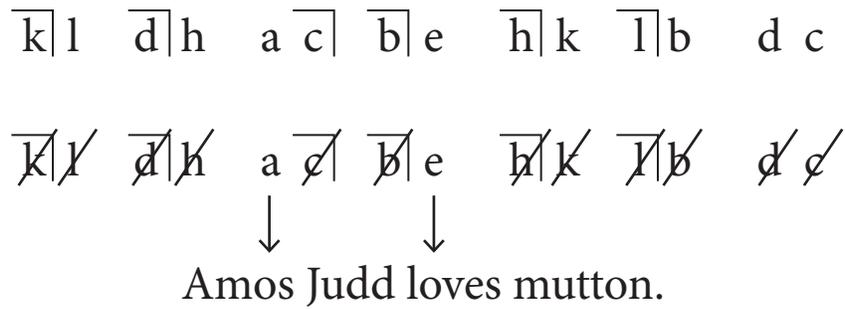k — policemen on this beat
l — sup with our cook

a = Amos Judd; b = cousins of our cook; c = having been in prison; d = long-haired; e = loving cold mutton; h = poets; k = policemen on this beat; l = supping with our cook

(1) $k_1 l_0$ — "All the policemen on this beat sup with our cook."
(2) dh'_0 — "No man with long hair can fail to be a poet."
(3) $a_1 c_0$ — "Amos Judd has never been in prison."
(4) $b_1 e'_0$ — "Our cook's 'cousins' all love cold mutton."
(5) $k'h_0$ — "None but policemen on this beat are poets."
(6) $b'l_0$ — "None but her 'cousins' ever sup with our cook."
(7) $d'_1 c'_0$ — "Men with short hair have all been in prison."

1 / The puzzle indeed sounds mysterious. Neighborhood policemen who drop by to dine with the family chef, long-haired guys who can't help but be poets, men getting jailed just for having short hair … the statements are bizarre but there is one obvious pattern going on. Every term but two is repeated twice. In one form, each is a *predicate*; in the complementary form, each is *predicated by* something.
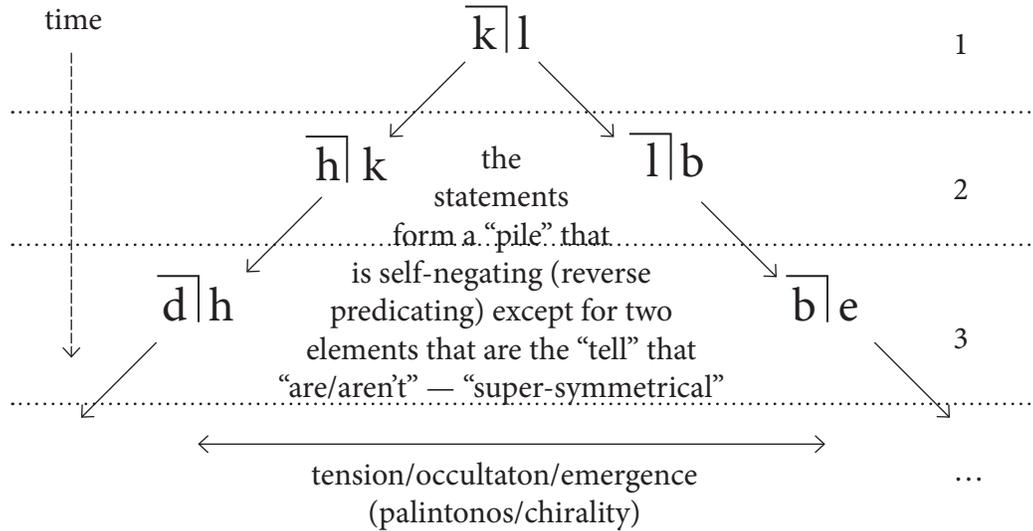
This pattern is revealed once we abandon Carroll's rather hard-to-read notation ($k_1 l_0$, $d'_1 c'_0$, etc.) for George Spencer-Brown's simplified bracket symbol. The general rule for this system is to regard the predicate as the limited term — all of something are contained within the other term, which is not limited. Thus, $k_1 l_0$ becomes the easier-to-read $\overline{k}|l$. All the policemen in the neighborhood ('k') sup with the cook ('l'); the cook of course is free to sup with others besides policemen, but when the police dine, it is with the cook and only the cook. Policemen do other things: none but policemen are poets. And, whoever the cook entertains in the kitchen are called "cousins." Weird, but logical.

The "calculus" of Spencer-Brown (itself a non-Boolean logic, same as Carroll's) produces a series that shows clearly how the pairs cancel each other out, leaving two elements that, when joined, provide the "answer" the riddle. Although "our cook's 'cousins' all love cold mutton," we don't hear any more about mutton. And, although we find that Amos Judd has never been imprisoned, this is the only statement about him. The two singularties combine to make a "super-singularity," something that was implicit in the sorites of statements but not at first evident. Only by determining which pairs cancel out and what remains can we see what was implicit, all along. Note: negation can change a "predicated" bar sign into a blank or a "predicator" blank into a bar.

$$\overline{k}|l \quad \overline{d}|h \quad a\,\overline{c}| \quad \overline{b}|e \quad \overline{h}|k \quad \overline{l}|b \quad d\ c$$

$$\cancel{\overline{k}|l} \quad \cancel{\overline{d}|h} \quad a\,\cancel{\overline{c}|} \quad \cancel{\overline{b}|e} \quad \cancel{\overline{h}|k} \quad \cancel{\overline{l}|b} \quad \cancel{d}\ \cancel{c}$$

$$\downarrow \qquad\qquad \downarrow$$

Amos Judd loves mutton.

2 / It is important to take note of the temporal process by which the two conditions of the first statement lead to conditions within six following statements. All policeman are constrained (contained/framed) by the requirement (Φ) to "sup with our cook." The requirement generates a constrained condition found in a later predication ("None but our 'cousins' ever sup with our cook"); and the element constrained by Φ is converted into a new Φ itself ("None but policemen on this beat are poets").

The temporalized narrative generates a process of negation vertically, where each of the original statements converts from predicated to predicator or vice versa. One statement with two elements generates two more statements with two more elements involved. This is sorites as a literal "pile" of signifiers, i.e. a "signifying chain" (Lacan's S2), about which Lacan would say that the Symbolic ever requires a supplement.

time

$\overline{k}|l$ 1

$\overline{h}|k$ the statements $\overline{l}|b$ 2

form a "pile" that

$\overline{d}|h$ is self-negating (reverse predicating) except for two $\overline{b}|e$ 3

elements that are the "tell" that "are/aren't" — "super-symmetrical"

tension/occultaton/emergence
(palintonos/chirality)

   …

3 / The palintropic-palintonic "pile" of predications reverses each component of an initial predication, then a new element is added to the reversed one. In the next step (3) the new element is reversed and the old element is "retired," having completed an odd/even pair. This reversal/pairing process works like the gambler's shuffle. It appears to randomize but in fact it is a highly ordered assemblage that creates a virtual space between the two arms of the predications that spread like wings from the initial pivot point, "All policemen on this beat sup with our cook."

In practice, it is this virtual central space that can play the poetic part of concealment, where the "answer predication" — Amos Judd loves mutton in this case — is occulted. The central space often reflects the chiralistic nature of the winged predication process. It can be symbolized as a palindrome (expression that reads the same forwards or backwards), an anamorph (a seeming blur that is corrected if viewed from the right spot), a gap, a hinge, or a Möbius band twist. Because the left-to-right order of time usually establishes scale, reversing this is a matter of scale dysfunction: detached virtuality. We "travel through time" or confront our doubles (identity dysfunction). We have a story inside a story, or one story or dream contaminates reality, which itself may be a dream.