everything and nothing

Had the Argentine master of the short story, Jorge Luis Borges, been a theologian, his church would have been filled by artists, poets, and architects. In the front row, however, would have been a group Borges had not courted in his lifetime: Freudians and Lacanians. Why? This has to do with the nature of the symptom of psychoanalysis (Lacan called it the “sinthome”), the “organization of jouissance” that allows the subject to live in the face of the permanent presence of the traumatic-Real. The aim of psychoanalysis as a treatment is to find a short circuit that permits the analysand a more self-understanding and self-revealing connection to the basis of his/her death-drives (the pleasure derived from compulsive repetition centered on the void created by a lack or surplus). This is a reduction of the “delayed predications” within the mimetic, and thus psychoanalysis finds common ground with art of all kinds. Psychoanalysis’s short-circuit is not a mechanical reduction; it relies on metalepsis to identify key cases of “anamorphic” (=phallic) phenomena where appearance and disappearance, presence and absence, success and failure are critical. In Borges’ short essay on William Shakespeare, “Everything and Nothing,” the entire metaleptic process is on view in terms of the most extreme diegetic boundary conditions. Rather than dwell on the enigmatic φ/¬φ of God’s reply to Shakespeare, however, it is more interesting to reflect on how Borges himself played out the boundary terms, and how he used real boundaries of architecture, art, and geography in metaleptic demonstrations.

“History adds that before or after he died, he discovered himself standing before God, and said to him: I, who have been so many men in vain, wish to be one, to be myself. God’s voice answered him out of a whirlwind: I, too, am not I; I dreamed the world as you, Shakespeare, dreamed your own work, and among the forms of my dream are you, who like me are many, yet no one.”

**sinthome groups:**
Borromeo knot
James Joyce
inside frame
enigma
forced choice
death drive
jouissance
recto/verso relations
[chirality]
partial object
the lamella

Flash back to related metalepsis of mortuary practices and architecture (whose relations have been close throughout history and are evident in the etiology of monuments, Festarchitetur, and cemetery design):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bone&lt;...&gt;flesh</th>
<th>firmitas&lt;...&gt;utilitas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F&lt;……&gt;U</td>
<td>numbers of completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 (quarantine)</td>
<td>33 (signa=6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3x11</td>
<td>6 (1x2x3 = 1+2+3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 (9+1)</td>
<td>11 (1+0 in itself)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10+0(1)</td>
<td>10000+1 (“nights”)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*the unconscious*

everything<...>nothing

consumerism based on death drive

The process of psychoanalysis is reductive, but in a topological sense, allowing the analysand an “alternative route” back to the origins of the death-drive [Zurückgehen]. The writer’s situation is, as James Joyce demonstrated with Lacanian clarity, the reverse: the elaboration of narratives where the sinthome is embedded for the “future use” of the reader — not, it should be noted carefully, the purposes of interpretation and literal understanding (following the model of translation) but the kenosis that comes through resonance. This bears directly on the use of signifiers, to the near total exclusion of interest in signifieds. That is, meaning resides at the level of the mimetic field; there is no “master plan” beneath showing hidden passageways or clever designs, as in the idea of a labyrinth viewed from above. In fact, the Thesean labyrinth bears out the principle that the key to entry and escape lies exclusively in the ability to “tarry with the negative” of motion that is built in to any motion but amplified in the meander’s fractal (and metaleptic) quality. The Thesean labyrinth is “learned” as a gesture so that escape is made through a dance-motion. Thus the writer and reader share tesserae whose broken edges match (cipher) because of their negation (chirality). The return of the parts to create a perfect match is the trauma of breaking cast in obverse, just as Dante’s departure from the Inferno affords a “corrected” view of Lucifer’s orientation, which had been concealed by our very own point of view as “consumers” of the predications of Hell. Realizing our own diegetic investments (including the terza rima form of poetic disclosure of Hell’s payments for debts incurred) we trace back the stages of Hell’s “forced choice” (denial, renunciation, foreclosure) to convert the infinitely long spiral to a quick passage to Paradiso, a passage that Dante compares the flight of a bolt from a crossbow. In other words, the reading that leads to kenosis is “ordinance,” a flight through air, and as such must be compared to dreams of flying.