

Metalepsis Seminar / Virtual Session 2

[metalepsis seminar](#) / WAAC-PSU / 8 January 2014

CLARIFY! CLARIFY! CLARIFY!

METALEPSIS SEMINARIANS, 9-ERS, AND AUXILIARY MEMBERS:



Alfred Hitchcock, master of metalepsis and advocate of clarity *via* Menippean satire methods

* working agenda for the spring

The latest working paper for the metalepsis "virtual" seminar is "[Deductive Binaries](#)," an experiment to connect as many things as possible *via* demonstrations and exhibits (in the legal sense) that show how something comes out of nothing (and nowhere, and nobody, and no-sense). The text rambles from one topic to the next, making it more of an anthology than an essay, but the upside of this disorganization is that it can be used as a kind of scratch agenda laying out possible topics for development. The seminar next incarnation is a kind of laboratory, akin to the laboratory set up to carry out the "[pitch drop experiment](#)" at the University of Queensland in Australia. In case you missed Nick Paumgarten's excellent piece on this in *The New Yorker*, January 2, 2012, 20–21, you can read all about it at the U. of Queensland web site. In short, this is an experiment purporting to be "about" nature (of pitch) which is really about the nature of observation. That's the new "laboratory" idea in a nutshell, taking us from metalepsis to unlimited semiosis in about a million years (less if you work at it; even less if you *don't* work yourself but invent a "zairja" to be your automaton).

"Deductive Binaries" has opened up a few new fronts for future investigation. Among these are

- a new connection to Merleau-Ponty's *Visible and Invisible*
- a view of stereognosis as the basis of the automaton (think "zairja")
- more development of the idea that privation converts to prohibition "retroactively" (that the subject has been "expelled")
- a condensation of the map-journal "conflict" in the expression A1B2A3, where A3 represents the "uncanny" inability to return home
- a linkage of cathexis (investment) and parallax view, "minimum distance" of the gapped circle, and the death drive.

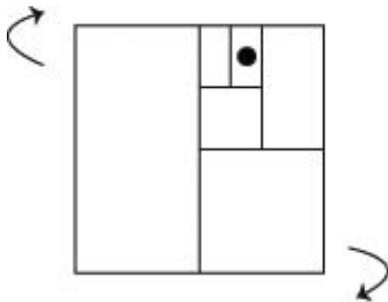
If you can make it through "Deductive Binaries," you will be able to answer a lot of questions about seemingly unrelated matters, but the best part is that you will be able to ask new questions of your own, pitched in ways where the possible answers come with hopefully surprising payoffs.



painting by Nicholas Owens, 2000; untitled but possibly inspired by Tiresius

* the tiresius connection

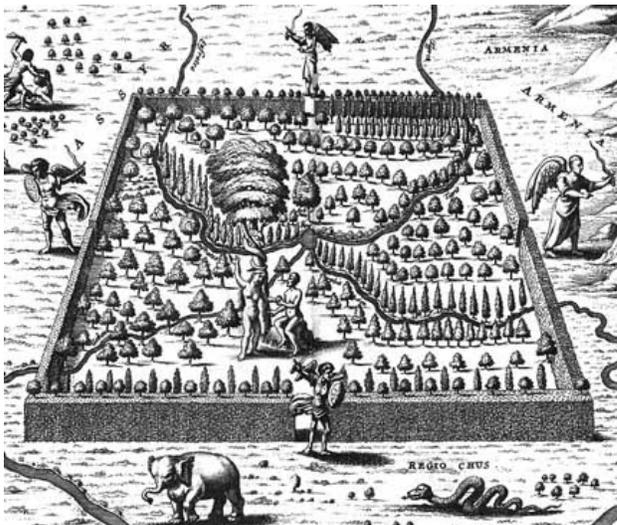
In case you missed that session of Mythology 101, Tiresius was the bisexual prophet who was blinded because he (inadvertently) saw Athena naked in the bath — ancient lingo shorthand for revealing the secrets of the gods (= the Edward Snowden of esoteric initiatory religion), just as Mozart was held to have been poisoned by the Masons for revealing their secrets in his comic opera [Die Zauberflöte](#). Tiresius said much and knew more — a precursor and mascot for the laboratory's aim of unlimited semiosis. The relation of blindness, ocularity, envy (*invidia*), privation/privacy, prohibition (*impotence/castration*), evil eye protection (also *invidia*), attraction/spell (*fascinum*), the controversy over Hestia and Hermes ... the list goes on ... makes Tiresius just the kind of girl/guy you want to meet before finishing your exams or dissertations. One key starting point is the "naked goddess" thing that runs parallel to the story of Diana and Actæon, both hunters, one bathing the other wandering back into the forest to finish up his killing spree. Actæon's transformation into a stag led to a rather exact formula for mortality: 33 "dogs" (in parenths because dogs as you must know are the boundary agents of *Hades*, "the invisible"). To know that invisibility has 33 dogs is a very important clue! What can you make of that!?!?



* map and journal

Also in "Deductive Binaries" is an attempt to link to one of computer science's central features, the reduction of information to binaries (0110101000111 ...), a series of true-false pathways that, for those spatially minded members of the laboratory/seminar, ends with the idea of "proximate location" — a minimum distance between a container and contained that means that every locational phenomenon, every "here," is indistinguishable from a "field" that approximates it

without a larger frame of reference. By "interrogating" a field with a constant question (Is the dot on the left?" — you also have to rotate the field/POV relation each time you ask to insure consistency) you can describe the location of the dot in the square above as 00010. That's three "no's," a "yes," and a "no." You still don't have exact coordinates but you have decided to terminate the process because you have reached a workable degree of precision. In an important sense, this procedure resembles that of a market adjustment. Two parties haggling over the price of something eventually stop when the buyer, who must think that he/she is paying less than actual value, and the seller, who must think he/she is getting just a bit more than actual value, find a balance point. This is a "stereognostic procedure" with a particularly interesting terminus: there is no actual "value." The price represents two different things to each of the parties involved. Now, think about this process in terms of the map's rule of ABA (going out and coming back return the system to the "same value") and the journal's rule of 123... (events in sequential order). A1B2A3 show that "A3" is the uniquely "dialectical" value of return. AND, when we associate return — as all good Freudian-Lacanian *must do* — to the death drive's return to the *objet petit a*, the GAP, we have some new things to think about. Stereognosis is truly a "gnosis," not of a "something" but of a "nothing" — a role of negation, applied retroactively and prophetically. Hence, "Tiresius."



Athenasius Kircher, *Earthly Paradise*; note the quadrature

* god is where?

The issue gets spooky where key texts (is the Bible key enough for you?) make direct references to locational aspects of being using A3 terminology. In the Book of Genesis, God is said to "be in the Garden," but not visible; only His footsteps can be heard. Wild! The contraction of God to an uncertain location within a defined domain (Eden is walled, as in the Kircher print above). Let's do a little reverse predication as a stand-in for an "Idiot's Guide to Religion." What we get is "God is (mis)Location." Add that to the 100 names of Allah and you have the "hundred names and one name" that is akin to the *Thousand Nights and One Night* thinking of Omar Kayyám. A surplus that is also a lack. AND, a "look" that is returned by its double, the gaze. Out of this we get a kind of rule, that is the principle of the double: that nothing can be in two places at the same time, and no two things can occupy the same place. This is simplistic drivel until you realize that there could be, in this principle, the horror of twins that has most foundation rites, in cultures everywhere, involve some aspect of twinship. Either it's Romulus killing Remus, Pollux appealing to *Hades* after the loss of his mortal twin, Castor, or Atreus and Thyestes founding Thebes and later coming to loggerheads at a famous banquet.

Is this any different from the widespread popular belief in astrology, where a distant configuration is tied to minute-by-minute unfolding of life events on earth? The "tell" of anything in the space and time of the present seems tied to an antipodal location, whose remoteness is not so much a matter of physical distance as of "steps" (39 steps?) or "ratios" that count off a circular turn (think of the 33 dogs of Actæon). Or, think of turning the gear of ABA against the gear of 123, or for that matter the gear of 123456789 with that of 987654321. I think you get the idea. Turning the circle is always *both* =360° and <360° (and possibly >360°?) — that is, a gap remains where none should possibly exist. It is both same and different, and in our reverse-predicated minds, that is the same as saying that identity itself and difference itself are married. Happily, we hope, but possibly they argue like Oberon and Titania in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. From Titania, clearly the Queen of Difference, we have this ...

Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound.
And through this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set. The spring, the summer,
The chiding autumn, angry winter change
Their wonted liveries, and the mazèd world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which.
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension.
We are their parents and original.

Next time you are in one of Washington's sudden weather reversals, when ice covers flowers that have been tricked out into a false summer, you can think of these lines.

Archive: [Spring 2014 Newsletter 1](#)

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Don Kunze
PhD / Prof of Architecture and Integrative Arts, Emeritus
web: art3idea.psu.edu