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Toward a Political Theology of the Neighbor

In *The Concept of the Political* (1932), Carl Schmitt writes: "the specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy."[1] However, in his book *Political Theology* (1922), Schmitt presented a quite different, even contradictory, logic of the political. There, the structural function of the exception—the sovereign's Godlike ability to declare a state of emergency and act outside the law—implies that the border between the law and lawlessness is permeable and, by extension, that the relationship of interiority (friends) and exteriority (enemies) is unstable. The fact that Schmitt's political theology generates antitheses that it cannot maintain should not invalidate what we can take as its fundamental insight, that the political order is sustained by theological concepts that it cannot completely assimilate. The friend-enemy distinction remains significant when we understand it as a *symptom* of political theology, an attempt to formalize the political against the threat of the theological—that is, as the political's defense against destabilizing aspects of its own theologism.

Rather than abandoning political theology because of these contradictions, we need to push it further. The structural analogy of sovereignty to deity that grants the sovereign God's authority to decree an exception also suggests

1. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political,* trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 26.

that the sovereign's legitimacy derives in part from the divine claim to the fidelity of love: "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut. 6:5).[2] For the political theological tradition represented by Machiavelli, the key question may be whether it is better for the sovereign to be loved or feared. The theology of the Hebrew Bible, however, does not oppose those passionate relationships; God is to be loved *and* feared. In a famous midrash on the giving of the law at Sinai, God holds the mountain over the people and makes them an offer they can't refuse: "If you accept the Torah, it is well; if not, your grave will be right here."[3] The legitimacy of the law established at Sinai is based on a consent in excess of freedom of choice and a love indistinguishable from fear. Hence, we find an affective correlate of the paradoxical topology of sovereignty in the ambivalence that underlies the commandment to love God—a commandment that, like all commandments to love, has at its heart the collision of autonomy and heteronomy. Insofar as this antinomy includes both sides of the double genitive of "love of God," we can propose it as the *mysterium sanctum* underlying political theology, the implicit credo of sovereignty that informs the hierarchy of relations within family, polis, and ecclesia.

But in both Jewish and Christian doxology, love of God is conventionally paired with love of the neighbor, as two essentially linked imperatives or theological-ethical principles. In this essay, I bring the psychoanalytic commentary on the neighbor in the work of Freud and Lacan into relation with the logic of political theology theorized by Schmitt, in order to begin to specify the conditions of a political theology of the neighbor. Freud's writing is centrally relevant to a political theology of the neighbor, as the other side of the political theology of the friend and enemy, most notably in his late works *Civilization and Its Discontents* and *Moses and Monotheism*. However, the neighbor and neighbor-love appear over the entire range of his writings, from his earliest unpublished drafts to Wilhelm Fliess through his last works. Although Lacan's most famous remarks on the neighbor appear in his sem-

2. St. Francis de Sales in the *Treatise on the Love of God* writes, "nothing so much presses man's heart as love; if a man know that he is beloved, be it by whom it may, he is pressed to love in his turn. But if a common man be beloved by a great lord, he is much more pressed; and if by a great monarch, how much more yet?" (book 7, chap. 8; www.ccel.org/d/desales/love/htm/TOC.htm).

3. When the Israelites accept the law, thereby granting it the legitimacy of consent, they say, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do and obey" (וְנִשְׁמַע וְנַעֲשֶׂה; Ex. 24:7); the word translated as "obey," *shama,* literally means "to hear." Hence, the Rabbinic tradition reads the textual order of "do" and "hear" as implying that the Israelites were committing to the commandments *prior* to having heard or understood them, and for this they are greatly praised. See Hayim Nahman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky, eds., *The Book of Legends: Sefer Ha-Aggadah, Legends from the Talmud and Midrash* (New York: Schocken, 1992), 79.

inar 7, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* the neighbor and neighbor-love are frequent topics of his writing and seminars. In *Totem and Taboo,* Freud presents a mythical genealogy of the paternal law remarkably similar to Schmitt's theory of sovereignty. Like the sovereign, the father of the primal horde has the singular ability to transgress the law in the very process of embodying and enforcing it. Freud appropriates the narrative of the primal father in order to explain the genesis of the law and to stage a mythical "primal scene" of the origins of the superego's conflicting imperatives for and against enjoyment. In seminar 17, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis,* Lacan introduces the "discourse of the master" in part as a formalization of the structure of Freud's narrative of the primal horde.[4] And in the years between seminar 17 and seminar 21, Lacan rethought the discourse of the master in the language of symbolic logic and set theory as part of his "formulas of sexuation," where the structural parallels with Schmitt's political theology become most striking.

Indeed, just as Schmitt insists that what is at stake in sovereignty is the ability to *decide* when to declare a state of emergency, without needing any grounds or basis for the decision, so, according to Lacan, to participate in one of the two logics that define sexuation is, paradoxically, to have *chosen* to be a man or a woman.[5] If Schmitt's account of the sovereign exception can be mapped onto the man's side of Lacan's formulas of sexuation, what, we might wonder, are the political implications corresponding to the other choice of sexuation, that of the woman? According to Lacan, the position of the woman entails a different logic, and implies an entirely distinct account of individual and group relations, under the aegis of what he calls the "not-all" (*pas-tout*). Whereas the position of man is held vis-à-vis a totality of Men, Lacan argues that women do not participate in a general category of Woman, but enter into their sexuality "one by one," as part of an infinite series of exceptions that form a radically open set, a "not-all." Can we locate in the not-all a political theology of the neighbor? That is, a mode of political relation that would not be based on the friend-enemy couple, but on the neighbor as a third term, one that is obscured by Schmitt's binary opposition, but that is no less central to religious discourse, sociality, and political theology? I do not mean to argue that we should replace the model of sov-

4. Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire, livre 17: L'envers de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1991), 117–52.

5. "One ultimately situates oneself [in the man's position] by choice—women are free to situate themselves there if it gives them pleasure to do so"; "If it inscribes itself [in the woman's position] . . . it will be a not-whole, insofar as it has the choice of positing itself in Φx or of not being there" (Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan,* book 20: *Encore, 1972–1973: On Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1998]), 71, 80).

ereignty based on love of God implicit in Schmitt's political theology with one based on love of neighbor. Rather, my argument is that a political theology of the neighbor must come as a *supplement* to the political theology of the friend and enemy. It is only by considering the principles of love of God and love of neighbor together, as two halves of the same thought, as is the case in both Jewish and Christian doctrine, that we can begin to imagine other possibilities for social and subjective organization.

Political Theology

The argument for the theological foundations of political theory is, of course, very old. In the last century, though, it has been given what we might call a radically conservative inflection through the ideas of Carl Schmitt, who famously writes that "all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts."[6] For Schmitt, political theology is the truth of political theory in two ways. First, Schmitt defines sovereignty not according to its normative juridical and executive functions, but in terms of its extraordinary or exceptional powers. The sovereign is the one who can suspend the law in time of emergency, in part or *in toto,* for the sake of its ultimate restitution and the preservation of the polis. Just as God suspends the laws of nature in miracles, so the sovereign is empowered to interrupt the laws of the state, to decide if and when to act, without the support of precedent or previously determined principles. Second, Schmitt claims that the essential logic of the political lies in the opposition between the categories of "friend" and "enemy," an antithesis not of pathos but of *ethos*. The polis requires the ever-present "real possibility" of war for the concepts

6. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty,* trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), 36. For a useful overview of the idea of political theology, beginning with the Hebrew Bible, although largely from Christian perspectives, see Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004). In revisions of earlier works, Schmitt (in *Political Theology II*) and Hans Blumenberg (in *The Legitimacy of the Modern World*) debate the status of "secularization." For Schmitt, Blumenberg's thesis merely concerns legality, not legitimacy, and hence has no historical force; for Blumenberg, Schmitt's account of secularization is merely metaphorical, or based on a structural analogy between theology and politics, and derives its legitimacy not from an existential decision, but from a history of decisions that have already been made. See Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985); and Carl Schmitt, *Politische Theologie II. Die Legende von der Erledigung jeder politischen Theologie* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1970). Clearly, the question of secularization will be crucial to establishing the conditions of a political theology of the neighbor, but this topic is beyond the scope of this essay.

friend and enemy to retain their validity, and the exceptional decision to go to war constitutes the purest manifestation of the political as such.[7] I would argue, moreover, that there is an implicit link between these two elements of Schmitt's thinking: the ultimate justification of the sovereign's ability to decide on the exception is that it is meant to restore or ratify the essential political distinction between friend and enemy, however tendentious that opposition may be. There are fundamental differences, however, in the topologies implied here: if the principle of the friend-enemy opposition is based on the purity of the demarcation between interior and exterior, the assumption of a strict and recognizable difference between "us" and "them," the principle of sovereign exceptionality involves a more complex spatial logic. Is the sovereign inside or outside the law that he or she may decide to suspend at any moment? Sovereignty, Schmitt argues, is a "borderline" concept—a concept both of the border and at the border of conceptuality. To borrow a term from Lacan, we might describe this topology as one of "extimacy," insofar as the sovereign is paradoxically both inside and outside the law.[8] Moreover, Schmitt's concept of the political is *theological* in its manner of bridging these two topologies: just as in the Bible God's inaugural declaration "let there be light" was an extraordinary and fully arbitrary intervention of creation *ex nihilo* into the "darkness" of primal chaos, a cut that divided the world into stable oppositions of "light" and "darkness," so at the moment of emergency the sovereign transgresses the limits of the law for the sake of the reemergence of the fundamental opposition between friend and enemy that establishes the foundation of the political world.[9]

7. Schmitt refers several times to the friend-enemy determination as a "decision" made both by the state as a whole and existentially, at the level of every soldier on the battlefield: "Only the actual participants can correctly recognize, understand, and judge the concrete situation and settle the extreme case of conflict"; "In its entirety the state as an organized political entity *decides for itself* the friend-enemy distinction" (my emphasis); "The friend, enemy, and combat concepts receive their real meaning precisely because they refer to the real possibility of physical killing. War follows from enmity. War is the existential negation of the enemy"; "What always matters is the possibility of the extreme case taking place, the real war, and the decision whether this situation has or has not arrived. That the extreme case appears to be an exception does not negate its decisive character but confirms it all the more. . . . One can say that the exceptional case has an especially decisive meaning which exposes the core of the matter" (Schmitt, *Concept of the Political,* 27, 29–30, 33, 35.

8. "Perhaps what we have described as the central place, as the intimate exteriority or 'extimacy,' that is the Thing, will help shed light on the question or mystery that remains" (Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan,* book 7: *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960,* trans. Dennis Porter [New York: W. W. Norton, 1992], 139). Also see Giorgio Agamben's discussion of this topology in Schmitt (*Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life,* trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998], 15–29).

9. Schmitt refers to sovereignty as a "borderline concept" precisely because the sovereign holds an ambiguous position on the border of the law: "Although he stands outside the normally valid legal system, he nevertheless belongs to it" (*Political Theology,* 7).

The figure of the enemy in Schmitt's 1932 *The Concept of the Political* is drained of all animus. The enemy, according to Schmitt, is not evil:

> The distinction of friend and enemy denotes the utmost degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or dissociation. . . . The political enemy need not be morally evil or aesthetically ugly; he need not appear as an economic competitor, and it may even be advantageous to engage with him in business transactions. But he is, nevertheless, the other, the stranger; and it is sufficient for his nature that he is, in a specifically intense way, existentially something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible. . . . Only the actual participants can correctly recognize, understand, and judge the concrete situation and settle the extreme case of conflict. Each participant is in a position to judge whether the adversary intends to negate his opponent's way of life and therefore must be repulsed or fought in order to preserve one's own form of existence.[10]

The political emerges in a process that seems to have, on the one hand, the characteristics of formal logic, the "union or separation" of two groups, friends and enemies; and, on the other, an intensely personal, existential moment of "recognition," "understanding," and "judgment" for the particular subjects involved. The Friend and the Enemy form twin *imagos* for the national and subjective ethos, figures of positive and negative political ontology by which the interior "we" (the "I" and its friends) is identified as such, as distinguished from the exterior "they." If the "extreme case" of battle to the death with the enemy is the formal scene always on the horizon, as in the Hegelian dialectic of intersubjectivity, the *decision* to engage in war is radically contingent, not determined by any necessity. The act of war, in this sense, is the exception that proves the political rule, the self-identity of the state. And it is precisely insofar as this decisive act is always that of an individual subject, the "actual participants" in conflict, that subjectivity too becomes an instance of self-sovereignty.[11]

One problem with this account of the political, where we divide the world into friends we identify with and enemies we define ourselves against, is that it is fragile, liable to break down or even to invert and oscillate in the face of complex situations. But it is precisely in its inadequacy to the world we live in that Schmitt's account of the friend-enemy distinction is most useful: today, we find ourselves in a world from

10. Schmitt, *Concept of the Political,* 26–27.

11. In his illuminating discussion of Schmitt in *Politics of Friendship,* Jacques Derrida writes, "without an enemy, and therefore without friends, where does one then find oneself, *qua* a self?" (*Politics of Friendship,* trans. George Collins [New York: Verso, 1997], 77).

which the political may have already disappeared, or at least has mutated into some strange new shape. A world not anchored by the "us" and "them" oppositions that flourished as recently as the Cold War is one subject to radical instability, both subjectively and politically. The disappearance of the enemy results in something like global psychosis: since the mirroring relationship between Friend and Enemy provides a form of stability, albeit one based on projective identifications and repudiations, the loss of the enemy threatens to destroy what Lacan calls the "imaginary tripod" (*trépied imaginaire*) that props up the psychotic with a sort of pseudo-subjectivity, until something causes it to collapse, resulting in full-blown delusions, hallucinations, and paranoia.[12] Hence, for Schmitt, a world without enemies is much more dangerous than one where one is surrounded by enemies. As Derrida writes, the disappearance of the enemy opens the door for "an unheard-of violence, the evil of a malice knowing neither measure nor ground, an unleashing incommensurable in its unprecedented—therefore monstrous—forms; a violence in the face of which what is called hostility, war, conflict, enmity, cruelty, even hatred, would regain reassuring and ultimately appeasing contours, because they would be *identifiable*."[13] America today is desperately unsure about both its enemies and its friends, and hence deeply uncertain about itself. The rhetoric of the so-called war on terror is a sign of the disappearance of the traditional, localizable enemy: the terrorist does not have the stabilizing function that Schmitt associates with the enemy, but to declare war on him is to attempt to resuscitate the enemy's failing animus.

Derrida's argument in *The Politics of Friendship* is not so much that we have entered into a historical period where the friend-enemy polarity has broken down, but that it is an inherently unstable opposition. Derrida's account of how the enemy and friend come to displace and infect each other in his reading of Schmitt leads him to propose "a step (not) beyond the political":

> Let us not forget that the political would precisely be that which thus endlessly *binds* or *opposes* the friend-enemy/enemy-friend couple in the drive or decision of death. . . . A hypothesis, then: and what if another lovence (in friendship or in love) were bound

12. Jacques Lacan, "On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis," *Écrits: A Selection,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), 207; partial translation of Lacan, *Écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), 566. Lacan argues that it is the appearance of an actual instance of a father, or a "One-father" ("*Un-père*"), in the place of the missing symbolic father that triggers psychotic collapse (*Écrits* [1977], 217; *Écrits* [1966], 577; translation modified).

13. Derrida, *Politics of Friendship,* 83.

> to an affirmation of life, to the endless repetition of this affirmation, only in seeking its way . . . in the step beyond the political, or beyond *that* political as the horizon of finitude . . . the *phileîn* beyond the political or another politics for loving.[14]

This other "politics for loving" that Derrida hypothesizes, this love both beyond and not-beyond the political, must still remain in the vicinity of the theological if it is to be significant, in Schmitt's terms, and not merely a fantasy of some purely secular politics. I would like to suggest that such a politics can be located in the figure of the neighbor—the figure that materializes the uncertain division between the friend/family/self and the enemy/stranger/other.

There is an element of this political theology of the neighbor that we can already point to in Derrida's comments on Schmitt's reference to Jesus's call to "love your enemies" in Matthew. For Schmitt, this biblical reference points to a linguistic distinction in Greek and Latin (but not German or English) between the private *inimicos,* who may indeed be loved or hated, and the public *hostis,* the political enemy, who, according to Schmitt, is not an object of affect. But as Derrida points out in a reading of this passage in *The Gift of Death,* the full line from Matthew that Schmitt refers to involves a crucial reference to the neighbor: "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you . . ." (5:43–44). Jesus cites Leviticus 19:18, the commandment to "love thy neighbor as thyself," but adds to it something not present in the Hebrew Bible, a directive to "hate thine enemy," in order to make it seem that he is undoing a piece of legal vengeance and, in proclaiming Love your enemies, is asserting its opposite. In fact, the biblical passage in Leviticus Jesus refers to has just specifically forbidden vengeance.[15] Jesus acts here as a *sovereign,* in declaring an exception ("love your enemies") to a law ("hate thine enemy") that he himself has confected; Jesus's commandment to love the enemy must be perceived as not merely new, but antinomian, in violation of the preexisting legal code. Jesus's act of suspending a law that did not previously exist is not merely his exercise of the sovereign prerogative of exception, but an act of political-theological creation *ex nihilo,* truly a polemical "miracle."

14. Ibid., 123. Derrida uses the word *lovence* (*aimance*) several times in this text, a coinage, he notes, that also appears in the work of the poet Abdelkebir Khatibi. Derrida defines *lovence* as love in the middle voice, between passive and active, between loving and being loved.

15. Leviticus 19:18: "You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord" (*Oxford Annotated Bible, Revised Standard Version* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1962], 146).

Although Jesus's rhetorical technique here would seem to be that of paradoxical reversal, the first part of the verse, the injunction to love the neighbor, is not challenged, but persists, extended in the series of acts of love that follows ("bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you"). Indeed, rather than being inverted, it will be purified of particularism and appropriated as a central tenet of the new Christian political theology.

For Schmitt, the line from Matthew is meant to clarify the difference between the public enemy and the various enmities that occur privately and are not part of the political as such. Jesus, he points out, uses the word *inimicus* or *ekhthros* for the enemy we are enjoined to love, and this must be distinguished from the true enemy, the *hostis* or *polemios*. As Derrida indicates, Schmitt's disturbing example is that the Christian state can have Islam as its enemy, but still love the Muslim as its neighbor.[16] But Derrida argues that it is precisely in this enemy, the one who constitutes the political for Schmitt, that the trace of the neighbor materializes: "An identifiable enemy—that is, one who is *reliable* to the point of treachery, and thereby familiar. One's fellow man, in sum, who could almost be loved as oneself. . . . This adversary would remain a neighbor, even if he were an evil neighbor against whom war would have to be waged."[17] The implication of Derrida's comment is that the neighbor who is to be loved as ourself cannot be relegated to a private, pre- or extrapolitical realm, insofar as a similar, if not identical, structure of reflexivity also determines the relationship to the public enemy, who, as reliably "identifiable," is loved (or hated) as ourself. Thus, Derrida points out a possibility of "semantic slippage and inversion" in Schmitt's political theology: the enemy can also be a friend, and the friend is sometimes an enemy. The border between them, and between the public and private realms they are associated with, is "fragile, porous, contestable," and to this extent "the Schmittian discourse collapses" and against the threat of that ruin, it takes form.[18]

Schmitt's theory of the exception recapitulates the first two structural moments in providential history by describing the sovereign's political miracles as acts of "creation" and "revelation": if "creation" corresponds to the reestablishment of the polis in the superlegal sovereign act that terminates the civic crisis and the threat of chaos, "revelation" is the articulation of the constitution or civic law that holds open and maps the

16. Derrida, *Politics of Friendship,* 89.
17. Ibid., 83.
18. Ibid., 88.

contours of the political space established by creation. Cast in the light of revelation, the essence of the law is located in its *exceptional* rather than normative function.[19] However, Schmitt does not include among the metaphors that fill out his structural analogy what would traditionally be the final act of the drama of political theology: the eschatological conclusion when the earthly kingdom fashioned and chartered by God falls into ruin through human depredation, to be replaced by a heavenly kingdom that will last forever. For Walter Benjamin, who maintained a dialogue with Schmitt on these issues, redemption is finally the only theological category that has real significance for politics.[20] In his "Theologico-Political Fragment," Benjamin extends the account of allegorical signification he developed in his book on the German *Trauerspiel* to theorize the redemptive logic of political theology: "The order of the profane assists, through being profane, the coming of the Messianic Kingdom. The profane, therefore, although not itself a category of this Kingdom, is a decisive category of its quietest approach. . . . For nature is Messianic by reason of its eternal and total passing away."[21] The world we live in contains figures of redemption not in the examples of charity and acts of neighbor-love we might find here and there, but in the signs of transitoriness that we see everywhere: natural decay, cultural ruin, political disintegration—the eternity of entropy only. Benjamin's account of the political theology of redemption is insistently material and consistently focused on the transformations of temporality. In his late essay "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin places central importance on redemption, not as a religious correlative for the Marxist dream of a classless society, but as a kind of temporal bomb which the historical materialist can throw into teleological historicism

19. Schmitt argues that "a continuous thread runs through the metaphysical, political, and sociological conceptions that postulate the sovereign as a personal unity and primeval creator." In Leibniz he locates the "clearest philosophical expression" of the "systemic relationship between jurisprudence and theology": "Both have a double principle, reason . . . and scripture, which means a book with positive revelations and directives" (*Political Theology,* 37–38, 47).

20. Eric Santner has argued that the account of *miracle* we find in Rosenzweig and Benjamin can be seen as a critique of Schmitt's political theology: if for Schmitt the sovereign's power of exception is a kind of political "miracle," for Rosenzweig and Benjamin, the miracle is precisely the *interruption* of the exceptionality of sovereignty. See "Miracles Happen," p. 102, in this volume.

21. Walter Benjamin, *Reflections* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 312–13. Near the conclusion of his *Trauerspiel* book, Benjamin suggests that the *Trauerspiel*'s allegories of natural decay and cultural ruin finally signify redemption: "Ultimately in the death-signs of the baroque the direction of allegorical reflection is reversed; on the second part of its wide arc it returns, to redeem. . . . ultimately, the intention does not faithfully rest in the contemplation of bones, but faithlessly leaps forward to the idea of resurrection" (Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama* [London: New Left, 1977], 232–33). Also see Giorgio Agamben's account of the debate between Schmitt and Benjamin in "Gigantomachy Concerning a Void," in *State of Exception,* trans. Kevin Atell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 52–64.

"in order to blast a specific era out of the homogeneous course of history."[22] Redemption is not the final cause of history, but the interruption of the false totality of historical causality and contextualization by acts of critical creation and constellation.

Given Schmitt's right-wing sympathies, it is not surprising that his account of political theology does not invoke the language of redemption, which so frequently serves as a metaphor for political liberation. But it is precisely in redemption that we can find the possibility of a political theology other than that of the friend-enemy dyad—a political theology of the neighbor. In the *Star of Redemption,* his articulation of the three primal elements of human, world, and God into the three basic relationships of creation, revelation, and redemption, Franz Rosenzweig argues that redemption enters into the world through the act of neighbor-love, as the condition for messianic transformation, social revolution, and the radical revaluation of all values.[23] For Rosenzweig, messianic temporality is not indefinitely postponed to the future, but happens now, as an incursion into the presentness of the present by the nearness of the neighbor: "If then a not-yet is inscribed over all redemptive unison, there can only ensue that the end is for the time being represented by the just present moment, the universal and highest by the approximately proximate. The bond of the consummate and redemptive bonding of man and the world is to begin with the neighbor and ever more only the neighbor, the well nigh-nighest [*zunächst der Nächste und immer wieder nur der Nächste, das zu-nächst Nächste*]."[24] For Rosenzweig, love of the neighbor is not merely the first step on the path to redemption, the good deed that might help make the world a better place in some hypothetical future, but its realization *now,* the immanent production of its transcendental conditions. The nearness of the neighbor materializes the imminence of redemption, releasing the here and the now from the fetters of teleology in the infinitesimal calculus of proximity.[25]

22. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations,* trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1968), 263.

23. "The effect of the love of 'neighbor' is that 'Anyone' and 'all the world' thus belong together and, for the world of redemption, thereby generate a factuality which wholly corresponds to the reality effected, in creation, through the collaboration of that which is general in a limited sense with that which is distinctive in a limited sense. For the world of redemption, absolute factuality derives from the fact that whoever be momentarily my neighbor represents all the world for me in full validity" (Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption,* trans. William Hallo [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985], 236).

24. Ibid., 234–35; translation of *Der Stern der Erlösung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1988), 262.

25. Recall the last line of Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History," where he describes the nonhomogeneity of messianic time: "For every second of time was the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter." This immanent messianism disrupts teleological narratives of social redemption, insisting that messianic temporality is precisely the time of the now (*Jetztzeit*), the moment that is no longer identical to itself or part of a teleological history (Benjamin, *Illuminations,* 264).

Giorgio Agamben has linked Schmitt's account of the exceptionality of the sovereign with the seemingly antithetical figure he retrieves from Roman law: the *homo sacer,* the man who can be killed with impunity but cannot be sacrificed. According to Agamben, the axis of the political stretches between sovereign and *homo sacer:* "At the two extreme limits of the [political] order, the sovereign and *homo sacer* present two symmetrical figures that have the same structure and are correlative: the sovereign is the one with respect to whom all men are potentially *homines sacri,* and *homo sacer* is the one with respect to whom all men act as sovereigns."[26] Agamben argues that the *homo sacer* is a figure of the biopolitical ground of the political, humanity reduced to bare (and mere) life that may be taken away with impunity. Sovereignty is exemplified and *universalized* as the conditions of subjectivity, not in the determination of the identity of the Friend and the Enemy and the consequent decision to go to war (as in Schmitt), but in exercising the prerogative to kill the *homo sacer.* Agamben writes that finally *homo sacer* and the sovereign are united by the fact that "in each case we find ourselves confronted with a bare life that has been separated from its context and that, so to speak surviving its death, is for this very reason incompatible with the human world."[27] Eric Santner and Slavoj Žižek have both connected the *homo sacer* and the biblical figure of the neighbor, thus suggesting the further linkage between sovereign and neighbor.[28] This connection helps us clarify the point that the conditions of the political theology of the neighbor cannot be separated from those of the sovereign, but must be understood as their supplement—just as the biblical injunctions to love God and to love the neighbor are combined in both Judaism and Christianity as inseparable, the one finding its fulfillment in the other. Both sovereign and neighbor fall out of the world of the everyday, the situation of regulative law: the sovereign, for the sake of that world, the neighbor, for the sake of its redemption.

26. Agamben, *Homo Sacer,* 84.

27. Ibid., 100.

28. Santner writes that the *Muselmann,* Primo Levi's emblem for the radical evil of the camps and Agamben's exemplar of *homo sacer,* is "the ultimate—and therewith impossible—embodiment of the *neighbor*" ("Miracles Happen," p. 100 in this volume). Žižek argues that the ethical act of the *refuseniks,* the Israeli soldiers who refused to participate in immoral acts against Palestinians, reduced to the state of *homo sacer* in the occupied territories, was to treat the Palestinians "as *neighbors* in the strict Judeo-Christian sense" ("From *Homo Sacer* to the Neighbor," in *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* [London: Verso, 2002], 116).

Schmitt's claim that all political concepts are secularized religious concepts suggests that we should be able to locate a secularized concept of the neighbor in political theory. And indeed, we find two strong gestures toward such a project in texts by Theodor Adorno and Hannah Arendt, examples that will extend our consideration of the political theology of the neighbor. In a remarkable essay on Kierkegaard's *Works of Love,* Adorno is strikingly ambivalent about Kierkegaard's account of love and the neighbor, until he comes to regard it as an example of Kierkegaard's own ambivalence. At first, Adorno criticizes Kierkegaard for his reduction of the neighbor to an abstraction, without specificity or particularity. Adorno is disturbed by Kierkegaard's elimination of the actual neighbor, who becomes merely contingent—anyone can stand for "the general principle of the otherness or the universal human." Indeed, the ideal object of love, according to Kierkegaard, is the *dead* neighbor, precisely because no reciprocity (which reduces love to the economics of gift exchange) can be expected of the dead, nor do they have any of the annoyingly particular traits that interfere with the purity of love for the living.[29] Given these assumptions, Adorno writes, "the overstraining of the transcendence of love threatens, at any given moment, to become transformed into the darkest hatred of man."[30] Yet it is precisely Kierkegaard's "misanthropy," the result of his abandonment of the external world for the internal one, that gives him singular insight into the situation of modern society and its defining absence, the neighbor. According to Adorno,

> Kierkegaard is unaware of the demonic consequence that his insistence actually leaves the world to the devil. For what can loving one's neighbor mean, if one can neither help him nor interfere with a setting of the world which makes such help impossible? Kierkegaard's doctrine of impotent mercifulness bring to the fore the deadlock which the concept of the neighbor necessarily meets today. The neighbor no longer exists. In modern society, the relations of men have been "reified" to such an extent that the neighbor cannot behave spontaneously to the neighbor for longer than an instant.[31]

29. Slavoj Žižek, however, is skeptical of Kierkegaard's argument and suggests Kierkegaard's preference for the dead neighbor is for the sake of avoiding the other's jouissance: "the dead neighbor means the neighbor deprived of the annoying excess of *jouissance* which makes him or her unbearable. So it is clear where Kierkegaard cheats: in trying to sell us, as the authentic difficult act of love, what is in fact an escape from the effort of authentic love. Love for the dead neighbor is an easy feast: it basks in its own perfection, indifferent to its object" (*Revolution at the Gates: Žižek on Lenin* [New York: Verso, 2002], 214).

30. Theodor Adorno, "On Kierkegaard's Doctrine of Love," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 8 (1939–1940): 417, 419.

31. Ibid., 420.

For Adorno, Kierkegaard's lack of interest in the particularity of the neighbor signals that his project must be read as social critique: the only neighbor we can love is the dead one, because the neighbor as such is dead, has disappeared from modernity. Adorno suggests that the strength of Kierkegaard's account of neighbor-love derives from its anti-Hegelian historiography; just as Benjamin was able to glean signs of redemption from the natural history of decline, so Adorno argues that Kierkegaard "conceives progress itself as the history of advancing decay."[32] Thus, it is precisely in his elimination of the real neighbor that Kierkegaard points to the social conditions that have made neighbor relations impossible. Kierkegaard's condemnation of "worldly happiness" as impoverished compared with the happiness of eternity is not merely the Christian ideology of deferred pleasure, according to Adorno, but points to the real poverty, "civic inequality," and "universal injustice" that concepts of so-called welfare conceal.[33]

In her study of Hannah Arendt, Seyla Benhabib proposes that Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism* owes key methodological concepts, such as "configuration" and "crystallization of elements," and perhaps even its sense of the word "origin" to Walter Benjamin's *Origins of the German Tragic Drama,* where Benjamin first considers Schmitt's notion of political theology.[34] According to Arendt, what unites fascism and communism, despite drastic differences in their origins and ideologies, is the fact that the collectivization of the people as a mass in modernity, whether called a proletariat, the *Volk,* or a concentration camp, has the paradoxical effect of increasing social isolation and destroying the political as such.[35] In the final chapter of *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* Arendt describes the form of life that follows the disappearance of authentically political sociality as "organized loneliness."[36] The "loneliness" of totalitarian regimes must be distinguished from that of the modern "man of the crowd" of Baudelaire or Poe, the "man without qualities," both alienated and sustained by the endless currents of people circulating along

32. Ibid., 424.

33. Ibid., 425.

34. Selya Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996), 64.

35. Here Arendt comes close to Schmitt's argument about the "total state," which, however, as Julien Freund argues, is not a theory of totalitarianism, but "hyperstatism in the sense that the state increasingly intervenes in all domains—the economy, culture, etc.—in the form of the welfare state. It no longer deals only with politics but tends to invade all sectors of social life" (Julien Freund, "Schmitt's Political Thought," *Telos* 102 [Winter 1995]: 13). Just as much as for Arendt, the state that goes beyond its rightful business, the determination of friend-enemy distinctions, is no longer authentically political.

36. Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1973), 478.

the urban streets. Totalitarian isolation is more like the loneliness of some strange Leviathan, the multitude fused into a single monstrous body; as Arendt writes of the populace under totalitarianism, "it is as though their plurality had disappeared into One Man of gigantic dimensions."[37] Just as much as it erases the possibility of a social relationship by fostering paranoid structures of suspicion and mutual surveillance, totalitarianism destroys interiority and the discursive conditions necessary for thinking:

> All thinking, strictly speaking, is done in solitude and is a dialogue between me and myself; but this dialogue of the two-in-one does not lose contact with the world of my fellow-men because they are represented in the self with whom I lead the dialogue of thought. The problem of solitude is that this two-in-one needs the others in order to become one again: one unchangeable individual whose identity can never be mistaken for that of any other. For the confirmation of my identity I depend entirely upon other people; and it is the great saving grace of companionship for solitary men that it makes them "whole" again, saves them from the dialogue of thought in which one remains always equivocal, restores the identity which makes them speak with the single voice of one unexchangeable person.[38]

Arendt argues that thinking is a *social* discursive process that can only arise in *solitude,* and as such must be distinguished from the loneliness of totalitarian society, which, even in a crowd, only talks to itself. The dialectic of real thought requires that the difference which defines the social be taken on as self-difference, self-alienation: we become singular, "unexchangeable," only insofar as we have allowed ourselves to enter into discourse with internalized "fellow-men." For Arendt, totalitarian loneliness is not simply a function of the disappearance of traditional social relationships of neighboring, but results from the overwhelming *presence* of this neighbor, who is neither fully interiorized nor exteriorized, but whose unbearable closeness makes the self "equivocal," interchangeable rather than singular, and thus threatens its ability to speak to others within a symbolic order.

For Arendt, the primary characteristic of the failure of social relations under totalitarianism is the disappearance of the space between people and the correlative unleashing of "a principle destructive for all human living-together." Unlike tyranny, which is still a form of politics, totalitarianism is the annihilation of the political: "By destroying the space

37. Ibid., 465–66.
38. Ibid., 476.

between men and pressing men against each other, even the productive potentialities of isolation are annihilated. . . . if this practice is compared with that of tyranny, it seems as if a way had been found to set the desert itself into motion, to let loose a sand storm that could cover all parts of the inhabited earth."[39] Arendt's analysis suggests that what is lost in totalitarianism is the spacing proper to the function of the neighbor. To destroy the relation of the neighbor is to eliminate the breathing space that keeps the subject in proper relationship to the Other, neither too close nor too far, but in proximity, the "nearness" that neighboring entails. The emptiness of the social sphere, the "desert" left by tyranny, itself materializes as a horrific "sand storm" in totalitarianism, a solidification of the void that fills up all space, allowing no room for either subject or society.[40]

Whether or not Arendt's account of totalitarianism is an adequate theory of fascism or communism, the distinction she draws between "tyranny" and "totalitarianism" is useful for reflecting on the nature of political theology. If tyranny is still political—and indeed, in some ways embodies the essence of the political—why is totalitarianism no longer political, according to Arendt? The malaise of "loneliness" that she describes under totalitarian conditions might be explainable as a social or cultural symptom, not indicative of a new form (or failure) of politics; but it is precisely the disappearance of the space of the neighbor that for Arendt marks the loss of the political as such. By suggesting that the disappearance of the neighbor, lost in the fused body politic without organs, is the key event in the final dissolution of the political in modernity, Arendt's comments imply that the neighbor is a category of essential concern for political theory and not merely a function of ethics, a category of social relation crucial to the maintenance of the sphere of the political as such.

39. Ibid., 478.

40. Arendt suggests that for Saint Augustine the commandment to neighbor-love denaturalizes the mere "living together" that characterizes unredeemed life, desedimenting the social in order to allow for individuation. That is, neighbor-love paradoxically both requires and effects the "isolation" of the individual—a mode of isolation that is the condition of the higher communion of the heavenly city: "I never love the neighbor for his own sake, only for the sake of divine grace. This indirectness, which is unique to love of neighbor, puts an even more radical stop to the self-evident living together in the earthly city. . . . We are commanded to love our neighbor, to practice mutual love, only because in doing so we love Christ. This indirectness breaks up social relations by turning them into provisional ones. . . . In the city of God these relations are made radically relative by eternity. . . . The indirectness of the mutual relations of believers is just what allows each to grasp the other's whole being which lies in God's presence. In contrast, any worldly community envisions the being of the human race, but not that of the individual. The individual as such can only be grasped in the *isolation* in which the believer stands before God" (Hannah Arendt, *Love and Saint Augustine* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996], 111; my emphasis).

Psychoanalysis and the Neighbor

Arendt's account of the social and linguistic conditions of totalitarianism can be understood in terms of the phenomenon that Lacan calls "holophrasis," an expression he borrows from linguistics, where it refers to a single word used as a phrase—for example, the exclamation "fire!" Lacan associates holophrasis with psychosis, as well as with psychosomatic afflictions; in both cases, suffering is not organized in the manner of neurotic symptoms, via condensation and displacement, but through the direct petrifaction of the signifier onto the body. In Lacan's early accounts of holophrasis in the 1950s, he argues that it materializes the "limit" between language and the body, "the ambiguous intermediary zone between the symbolic and the imaginary." Later, in the 1960s, he defines holophrasis as the fusion of a primary signifier with the other signifiers in a symbolic system. The gap between these signifiers, S_1 and S_2, is the space where a subject should precipitate, and in a discursive field where there is no such gap, there is no room for subjectivity, only for what Lacan calls a kind of "monolithic" autism.[41]

When the proximity of the neighbor collapses, paranoid delusions and hallucinations emerge, often precisely in the place and the guise of the (missing) neighbor. Consider Lacan's emblematic case in seminar 3, *The Psychoses,* the psychotic woman who hears the utterance "Sow!" when she remarks to her neighbor, "I've just been to the pork butcher's." Lacan emphasizes that the woman's hallucination is triggered by "the intrusion of the neighbor" into the *délire à deux* she shares with her equally psychotic sister: "she receives her own speech from him [the neighbor's lover], but not inverted, her own speech is in the other who is herself, her reflection in the mirror, her counterpart."[42] Rather than receiving her signifiers back from the other in inverted form, according to the neurotic logic of desire and the symptom, her statement returns to her unsymbolized, raw, as aural hallucination. The exclamation "sow!" is

41. In seminar 11 Lacan uses the notion of holophrase, where a single term takes on a wide range of grammatical functions, to explain the psychosomatic effect: "I will go so far as to formulate that, when there is no interval between S_1 and S_2, when the first dyad of signifiers become solidified, holophrased, we have the model for a whole series of cases. . . . This solidity, this mass seizure of the primitive signifying chain, is what forbids the dialectical opening that is manifested in the phenomenon of belief" (Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan,* book 11: *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis,* trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: W. W. Norton, 1981], 237–38). See Alexandre Stevens, "L'holophrase, entre psychose et psychosomatique," *Ornicar?* 42 (1987): 45–79; and Eric Laurent, "Institution of the Phantasm, Phantasms of the Institution," www.ch-freudien-be.org/Papers/Txt/Laurent-fc4.pdf.

42. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan,* book 3: *The Psychoses, 1955–1956* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1993), 49, 51.

holophrastic, a fused isotope of speech that embodies the social void. The appearance of the real neighbor shatters the insular specularity of her relation with her sister and triggers the emergence of the neighbor in the real, as the grotesque literalization of the distorted limit between imaginary and symbolic.

It is not an accident that Lacan chooses to exemplify psychosis with the delusion of the neighbor. Throughout the seminar, Lacan returns to a comment Freud makes to Fliess in his early Draft H on paranoia, sent with a letter to Fliess in January of 1885, a biblically allusive aphorism that seems to hold the key to the truth about psychosis (at one point in his seminar, Lacan writes it on the board as a kind of scriptural revelation): "In every instance the *delusional idea* is maintained with the same energy with which another, intolerably distressing, idea is warded off from the ego. They [paranoiacs] love their *delusions as they love themselves*. That is the secret." (*Sie lieben also den* Wahn wie sich selbst. *Das ist das Geheimnis*.)[43] Freud's comments adumbrate his later theory of psychosis as the repudiation of an unbearable self-judgment through its projection onto the world; in Lacan's reformulation of this mechanism as psychotic "foreclosure," delusion and hallucination are the return in the real of what has been refused from the symbolic. Psychosis can manifest as a personality disorder, a series of wildly shifting moods or even discrete personae, because the psychotic identifies with the reality he has created through projective repudiation. Hence, it is not that the paranoiac "has" a delusion; he *is* his delusion, the threatening yet coherent account of reality that serves as a carapace against an even more disturbing attack from inside. Thus, Freud writes that the psychotic "loves his delusion as himself" because his self is built out of those very delusions.

Although Freud does not call special attention to it, Lacan emphasizes that the reference here is to Leviticus 19:18, the famous injunction to "love your neighbor as yourself":

> There is an echo here, which should be given full weight, of what is said in the commandment, *Love thy neighbor as thyself.* . . . Freud had the profound impression that something in the psychotic's relationship to his delusion goes beyond the workings of the signified and meanings. . . . there is an affection here, an attachment, an essential bringing to presence, the mystery of which remains almost total for us, which is that the delusional, the psychotic, clings to his delusion as to something which is himself.[44]

43. Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth, 1958), 1:212; *Briefe an Wilhelm Fliess* (Frankfort: S. Fischer, 1986), 110.

44. Lacan, *Psychoses,* 216.

It is as if Freud's allusion to the commandment to love the neighbor instantiates the proper symbolic relationship to the other, as a talisman against the appearance of the neighbor in the real: be sure to love your neighbor as yourself, because if you don't, you risk the emergence of the *delusion* of the neighbor in its place, as a horrific holophrasis of the failed social relation that will take the place of your self.

But why does Freud derive the formula for paranoia from the biblical injunction to love the neighbor? Why does he announce it in this epigrammatic, even oracular, voice as "the secret"?[45] Lacan's repeated insistence in his seminar on the psychoses on the centrality of Freud's expression leads to two linked explanations: on the one hand, Freud borrows the syntactical *structure* of the phrase in order to articulate the pathologies of paranoid delusion and their normative implications for the psychology of the subject; on the other, the *significations* that emerge from that structure are linked to what we might call Freud's determination of the psychoanalytic subject as primarily an ethical rather than psychological category, constituted by the weight of reality first encountered as the neighbor. Freud's work on paranoia is a key step in formulating an ethics of psychoanalysis around the encounter with the neighbor at the impossible intersection of family and society, since paranoia crystallizes the traumatic experience of the social in a form imperfectly mediated by the stabilizing triangles of the family. Thus, while paranoia, according to Lacan, is caused by the foreclosure of the primal signifier he calls the "Name-of-the-Father," resulting in the failure to dialecticize the maternal and paternal agencies of the family romance, its symptoms typically cluster around the fundamental term of the social relationship, both element and irritant—the neighbor.[46]

The allusion to the biblical neighbor in Freud's Draft H draws our attention to the similarities between the paranoiac's relationship to his or her delusion and that of the subject of cognition to the figure Freud calls the *Nebenmensch* (an unusual German word meaning something like "the next-man" or "adjoining-person") a few months later in the long draft to Fliess entitled the *Project for a Scientific Psychology:*

45. In his announcement of the "secret" of delusion, Freud takes the theatrical tone he will assume when he proclaims, six months later to the day, that the "secret" of psychoanalysis had been revealed to him in his dream of Irma's injection, which he hoped would be commemorated with a plaque.

46. For another example, see Freud's 1896 study of defense, "Analysis of a Case of Chronic Paranoia," where he exemplifies paranoid symptomology through the hallucinations and "interpretive delusions" that convinced a young woman that "she was despised by her neighbors" and the subject of their gossip (Freud, *Standard Edition,* 3:174–85).

> Let us suppose that the object which furnishes the perception resembles the subject—a *fellow human-being* [*Nebenmensch*]. If so, the theoretical interest [taken in it] is also explained by the fact that *such* an object [*ein solches Objekt*] was simultaneously the [subject's] first satisfying object and further his first hostile object, as well as his sole helping power. For this reason it is in relation to a fellow human-being that a human-being learns to cognize [*Am Nebenmenschen lernt darum der Mensch erkennen*]. Then the perceptual complexes proceeding from this fellow human-being will in part be new and non-comparable—his *features* [*seine Züge*], for instance, in the visual sphere; but other visual perceptions—e.g. those of the movements of his hands—will coincide in the subject with memories of quite similar visual impressions of his own, of his own body, [memories] which are associated with memories of movements experienced by himself. Other perceptions of the object too—if, for instance, he screams—will awaken the memory of his [the subject's] own screaming and at the same time of his own experiences of pain. Thus the complex of the fellow human-being [*Komplex des Nebenmenschen*] falls apart into two components, of which one makes an impression by its constant structure and stays together as a *thing* [*als Ding*], while the other can be *understood* by the activity of memory—that is, it can be traced back to information from [the subject's] own body.[47]

The subject learns to think in relation to its perceptions of the Nebenmensch, a neighboring human being, a fellow creature (not, it seems, the parents, nor a complete stranger, but perhaps, from the sound of its screams, another child), in a scene where the family romance and the social contract find their common root and their mutual contradiction. The Nebenmensch is the neighbor as "the adjoining person" standing between the subject and its primary maternal object, the uncanny complex of perceptions through which subjective reality divides into the representable world of cognition and the "unassimilable" element that Freud calls *das Ding,* "the thing." Freud's comments on *das Ding* here and in his later essay "Negation" are two central textual points of reference for Lacan's reconception of "the real" in the 1960s. In seminar 7, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* Lacan defines *das Ding* as the encounter with something in the other that is completely alien—an intrusive foreignness that goes beyond the compositions of self and other, and their politicizations as "friend" and "enemy." The Thing materializes the constitutive ambiguity of the primal object, the trauma of its uncertain

47. Freud, *Standard Edition,* 1:331 (translation modified); Sigmund Freud, *Aus den Anfängen der Psychoanalyse* (London: Imago, 1950), 415–16. Words and phrases in square brackets, except those taken from the original German text, are interpollated by the editors of the *Standard Edition.*

disposition between excessive presence and radical absence. Lacan describes the encounter with the Nebenmensch as a mode of *mediation;* the Thing is that part of the other that is "mute," but the neighbor speaks and thus forms a template for the subject's emergence: "It is through the intermediary of the *Nebenmensch* as speaking subject that everything that has to do with the thought processes is able to take shape in the subjectivity of the subject."[48] The subject accumulates as the retraversed paths of associative representations that both draw toward and away from the Thing encysted in the Nebenmensch, standing between the subject and the void left by the inevitable withdrawal of maternal succor.[49]

According to Freud, cognition emerges literally "vis-à-vis" the Nebenmensch: some strange *Zug* (feature or trait, but equally line or stroke) in the neighbor's face both initiates and limits the comparison of its attributes with traces from earlier memories through the linked processes Freud distinguishes as "judging" and "remembering." According to Freud, judgment is the act of "dissection" which cuts away unfamiliar, hence uncategorizable, components of the Nebenmensch from familiar ones, establishing a correlation between the Nebenmensch and the subject's first ambivalent experience of an object. Memory, on the other hand, sifts and collates the attributes which have emerged from judgment and, by comparing them with mnemonic traces of the subject's experience of his or her own body, introduces a second similarity, now between the Nebenmensch and the subject. This secondary identification is reflected in the echo between *Mensch* and *Nebenmensch* in Freud's aphoristic phrase "*Am Nebenmenschen lernt darum der Mensch erkennen*" [In relation to a fellow human-being, a human-being learns to cognize]. Indeed, it is precisely a self whose being lies in the indirection of its knowledge that emerges in the aftermath of the encounter with the Nebenmensch. Moreover, whereas the affinity established in judgment between the Nebenmensch and the primordial object is based on an act of winnowing the singular "thing," the real kernel of perception, from its predicates or movements, the comparison between the Nebenmensch and the subject in memory involves only elements which had already

48. Lacan comments on Freud's articulation of the mediating function of the *Nebenmensch* later in the seminar: "the formula is striking to the extent that it expresses powerfully the idea of a beside yet alike, separation and identity" (Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 39, 51).

49. Ibid., 52. The Thing is both the *occasion* for representation and that which *resists* representation, an excess or leftover that informs Lacan's developing notion of the *objet a* in the following seminars.

been established as comparable, as within the field of representation. In this sense, while judgment originally constellates the neighbor as both "helpful" and "hostile," affiliated with the primordial occasion of both love and hate, memory integrates that ambivalence into an imaginary and symbolic network by casting the neighbor as the reflection of the subject's body, as "like" the self.

To the extent that the Nebenmensch is the "next person," merely contiguous with the subject and its maternal source of both pleasure and unpleasure, it represents any and every other person to whom the subject is bound in a relationship of competitive similarity, an imaginary "equality" enforced—more or less—as distributive justice in the social world by civil and moral codes. But insofar as the Nebenmensch is always *this* next person, always embodied in a particular person who fills the arbitrary place of the neighbor, it materializes an uncanniness within the social relationship, an enjoyment that resists sympathetic identification and "understanding," linking the self and other instead in a bond of mutual aggression. In this sense, the Nebenmensch embodies both sides of the reality principle: on the one hand, it functions in the service of the pleasure principle, striving to achieve constancy by enforcing the minimum level of restriction necessary to maintain both body and body politic; and on the other, as the agent of the death drive, it threatens to subvert the social order by manifesting the excluded scandal of the real that subtends it. Thus, rather than standing for a secondary realm of social mediation and abstract intellection that reflects (or reflects on) a more fundamental world of maternal and paternal objects and desires, the Nebenmensch marks the incommensurability between representation and what exceeds it, the antagonism that lodges an impossibility at the heart of both social and familial relationships.

We can perhaps better account for the ethical weight of Freud's description of the encounter with the Nebenmensch by understanding this dynamic as a kind of translation and even transvaluation of the Levitical injunction to "love thy neighbor as thyself," a phrase, we recall, Freud had alluded to in his discussion of paranoia a few months before writing the *Project for a Scientific Psychology*. In Freud's account of cognition, the dual processes of judgment and memory echo and rearticulate the double gesture of the commandment to "love thy neighbor" / "as thyself." In the act of *judgment,* the subject experiences the Nebenmensch with the sundering intensity of its ambivalent love for the primal object. In *memory,* the subject turns that affect onto itself, incorporating the alterity of the Nebenmensch through specular identification.

Thus, in the birth of cognitive thinking and memory out of ethical judgment, the subject loves (and hates) his neighbor "as himself"—as a self, however, already inhabited by the alterity of the neighbor.

Freud writes that "people become paranoiac over things [*Dinge*] that they cannot put up with" and instead project onto the external world.[50] In seminar 7, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* Lacan specifies those "things" as *das Ding* by suggesting that the "moving force of paranoia is essentially the rejection of a certain support in the symbolic order, of that specific support around which the division between the two sides of the relationship to *das Ding* operates."[51] By failing to segregate the unsymbolized real from symbolic reality, a division which, according to the paternal imperative, ought to be established by "judgment," the thing-aspect of the Nebenmensch is not fully separated from its attributes and bleeds over into the realm of cognition in the form of delusions and hallucinations. Thus, whereas the neurotic subject responds to the call to *judge* the Nebenmensch, symbolizing the difference between the Thing and its attributes and identifying with that difference, the paranoiac *fails to judge* the Nebenmensch and, refusing to articulate the space of symbolic difference, is lost in the specter of real-ized signifiers, the materiality and grammatical patterns of language deprived of signification.[52]

Lacan argues that the chain of signifiers that constitutes the subject in their movement around the Thing functions according to the reality principle, through which the incursions of unbearable stimulation are both endured (reality testing as *sampling* reality) and avoided (reality testing as *repudiation* of reality):

> What one finds in *das Ding* is the true secret. For the reality principle has a secret that . . . is paradoxical. If Freud speaks of the reality principle, it is in order to reveal to us that from a certain point of view it is always defeated; it only manages to affirm itself at the margin. And this is so by reason of a kind of pressure that one might say, if things didn't, in fact, go much further, Freud calls not "the vital needs" . . . but *die Not des Lebens* in the German text. An infinitely stronger phrase. Something that *wishes.* "Need" and not "needs" [*Le* besoin *et non pas les* besoins]. Pressure, urgency. The

50. Freud, *Standard Edition,* 1:207; *Briefe,* 106–7.

51. Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 54.

52. In his late essay "Negation," Freud describes two distinct moments of judgment: the first, "judgement of attribution," in which the world is divided into the "good" and the "bad" by a primal act of affirmation, *Bejahung;* and the second, "judgement of existence," in which the rediscovery of the lost object is confirmed by negation, *Verneinung* (*Standard Edition,* 19:235). Lacan argues that psychotic foreclosure involves the failure of the primal act of judgment as judgment of attribution in his essay "On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis" (*Écrits,* [1977], 200–201).

> state of *Not* is the state of emergency in life [*l'état d'urgence de la vie*]. . . . As soon as we try to articulate the reality principle so as to make it depend on the physical world to which Freud's purpose seems to require us to relate it, it is clear that it functions, in fact, to isolate the subject from reality.[53]

Echoing Freud's announcement of the "secret" of paranoia in the grammar of neighbor-love, Lacan declares that *das Ding* is the "true secret" of the Nebenmensch and the reality principle. Far from being merely a mechanism through which the pleasure principle's tendency for immediate satisfaction is modified in order to bring it into accord with the requirements of reality, Lacan argues that the reality principle functions "to isolate the subject from reality." But this process is only partly successful; that aspect of reality that cannot be represented leaks through, as the *real* of life. In Lacan's striking biopolitical formulation here, the encounter with *das Ding* in the Nebenmensch, the materialization of radical urgency beyond biological necessity, constitutes a "state of emergency," *l'état d'urgence.* Moreover, this emergency figures not only in life, but *as* life: for the speaking subject, life itself is an ongoing crisis in matter, in which disequilibrium and non-self-identity are no longer the exception but have become the norm.[54] Lacan's use of a political vocabulary here suggests that, even before the constitution of a body politic, the subject's body is *already* political, insofar as it is the site of a crisis that requires a determining *choice:* "It is then in relation to the original *Ding* that the first orientation, the first choice, the first seat of subjective orientation takes place."[55] The Thing in the Nebenmensch is the emergency through which the subject arises as self-sovereign; that is, a decision that will determine and legitimate the specific forms in which it will live must have been made, a decision made from the heterological space of the unconscious.

Lacan associates this primordial choice with what Freud calls the "choice of neurosis," *Neurosenwahl,* and describes three modalities in which this choice may unfold: as hysteria, where the primary object pro-

53. Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 46; *Le séminaire, livre 7: L'éthique de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1986), 58.

54. My thinking here is informed by Eric Santner's comments on the "constitutive 'too muchness' that characterizes the psyche." Santner writes, "in the view I am distilling from the work of Freud and Rosenzweig, God is above all the name for the pressure to be alive to the world, to open to the too much of pressure generated in large measure by the uncanny presence of my neighbor" (*On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life: Reflections on Freud and Rosenzweig* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001], 8–9).

55. Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 54

vided insufficient satisfaction; as obsessional neurosis, where the object gave too much satisfaction; or as paranoia, which involves what Freud calls *Versagen des Glaubens,* a loss of faith in the neighbor's Thing: "the paranoid doesn't believe in that first stranger in relation to whom the subject is obliged to take his bearings."[56] Lacan argues that Freud's notion of *Glauben* here goes beyond the psychological or even epistemological sense of "confidence" or "certainty": "The use of the term belief [*la croyance*] seems to me to be emphasized in a less psychological sense than first seems to be the case. The radical attitude of the paranoid, as designated by Freud, concerns the deepest level of the relationship of man to reality, namely what is articulated as faith [*la foi*]. Here you can see easily how the connection with a different perspective is created that comes to meet it."[57] Although the hallucinatory symptomology of paranoia is often imagined as believing in things that aren't real, in fact, Lacan argues, it is quite the opposite: the paranoiac *fails to believe,* not in one reality or another, but in the transcendental element (the Name of the Father) that should demarcate the difference between *das Ding* and the world of representation and hold the space between them open. By suggesting that *Glauben* here implies a discourse closer to religion than psychology, Lacan discloses the other side of Freud's "secret" of paranoia: when Freud writes that the paranoiac's secret is that he "loves his delusion as himself," "delusion" has literally taken the place of the "neighbor" from the injunction in the Book of Leviticus. Lacan here points to Freud's allusion to the biblical neighbor and further connects it with Freud's notion of the Nebenmensch: when the paranoiac breaks faith with the neighbor and refuses to encounter the Thing, the resulting delusions and hallucinations which swarm in the place of the missing mediator represent a failure of judgment.

In Draft H Freud narrates another case that exemplifies this tendency for paranoid symptoms to attach to the figure of the neighbor. Freud describes the paranoid symptoms developed by one of his patients in her relationships with two sorts of neighbors, inside and outside the house. The woman's paranoia originated with the "enigmatic man" who for awhile boarded with her brother, sister, and herself, a "fellow worker" or comrade [*einen Genossen*] "on the most companionable and sociable terms" with this family of siblings. After the boarder left, however, the woman confided to her sister that he had one day made sexual advances

56. Ibid., 53–54; *L'éthique de la psychanalyse,* 67.

57. Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 54; *L'éthique de la psychanalyse,* 67.

to her, and her paranoia developed as a delusion that her female neighbors were gossiping about her relationship with the man:

> She had been tidying up the rooms while he was still in bed. He called her to his side, and when she unsuspectingly went, put his penis in her hand. There was no sequel to the scene; soon afterward the stranger [*der Fremde*] left.
>
> In the course of the next few years [she] fell ill, began to complain, and eventually developed unmistakable delusions of observation and persecution with the following content. The women neighbors [*Nachbarinnen*] were pitying her for having been jilted and for still waiting for this man to come back; they were always making hints of that kind to her, kept saying all kinds of things to her about the man, and so on.[58]

Freud links the woman's delusions of her neighbors' gossip with her self-reproaches for having enjoyed the sexual advance of the boarder, accusations which, in being projected onto an external agent, Freud reasons, are kept from her ego: "the judgment about her had been transposed outward." But, we might object, if the woman's paranoia serves as a defense against criticism, clearly she suffers no less in externally objectifying it by means of projection. We should understand Freud's explanation as implying not so much that her delusion protects her from being the target of criticism, whether her own or that of others, but that her paranoia relieves her of the burden of being critical, from the responsibility of judging rather than the opprobrium of being judged. That is, insofar as the woman's paranoia lies in her refusal to accede to the imperative to judge the Nebenmensch, something in the Nebenmensch returns—not, however, in the figurative symptoms in which the repressed returns in neurosis, but real-ized in the judgment of the social neighbor.

Hence the woman's self-reproach, her "Vorwurf," for enjoying rather than judging the boarder's advances, is itself, in Freud's later expression, "verworfen," foreclosed or repudiated in the form of the gossip of the *Nachbarinnen.* But the neighbor is not confined to the exterior of the household; rather, if the neighbor constitutes the "secret," *das Geheimnis,* of paranoia, it is an uncanny secret that threatens to disturb the home, *das Heim,* from within. For insofar as the male boarder who serves as the occasion of her delusion is here referred to as her *Genossen,* her fellow worker or comrade, the function of the neighbor is already located inside the house. Etymologically, the *Genossen* is the one with whom we enjoy—in this case, the companion with whom the woman shares her bread and home. Like the English word "boarder," which derives both

58. Freud, *Standard Edition,* 1:207–8; *Briefe,* 107–8.

from the table on which we eat and the edge or margin that separates inside from outside, this *Genossen* is the element of exteriority that has infiltrated the domestic space.[59] As the neighbor within the house, uncomfortably proximate to the family hearth, the boarder becomes *der Fremde* after the sexual assault, the internal stranger who signals transgressive enjoyment that disturbs the home's tranquility and disrupts the very distinction between inside and outside on which the household is built. The external neighbors, the *Nachbarinnen* around whose glances and gossip the woman's symptoms collect, are the projection of the foreclosed internal neighbor, the boarder whose enjoyment had already troubled the borders of the home.

Insofar as the paranoiac forecloses the signifier of the paternal law that regulates the partition between the symbolic and the real, we could say that paranoia involves the failure to accede to the imperative to judge the Nebenmensch *qua* commandment. Hence, Freud's formulation of the structure of paranoia as "they love their delusion as themselves" reflects the paranoiac's refusal of the "thou shalt" implicit in the Levitical injunction, reducing the imperative to a statement, a mere description of reality bereft of the commandment that configures it in a symbolic order.[60] Whereas for the neurotic, the agency of the Name-of-the-Father mediates the subject's relationship with its primary maternal object, the psychotic's lack of this paternal metaphor reveals the overwhelming presence of *das Ding,* no longer shielded by the spacing required for refiguration or substitution. Hence, the paranoiac's too immediate experience of *das Ding* as it materializes in such objects as the neighbor's probing gaze and mocking gossip disrupts the familial structures of subjectivity. On the other hand, the neurotic subject, the subject as such, finds its place within the family circle demarcated by the Oedipus complex only at the cost of attenuating the social relation, which, in the face of the unbearable proximity of the neighbor, gives way to a social order itself modeled on the family. Whereas hysteria, according to Lacan, is the pathological variant of the normative familial neurosis that

59. The *Oxford English Dictionary* argues that *boarder,* although originally deriving from two distinct substantives, one meaning a plank or a table and the other meaning a rim or side, was already blended into one root in Old English (*Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1971], 238).

60. See Kierkegaard's commentary on the fact that love in the injunction to love the neighbor is in the form of an imperative, a duty. According to Kierkegaard, the only love that can be eternal, free of anxiety, jealousy, and hatred, is love that is commanded. Hence, paradoxically, neighbor-love is more free, more independent, than the spontaneous love based on preferential desire, which is merely the illusion of choice (Søren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995], 17–43).

manifests the impossibility of a sexual relationship, paranoia—ranging from what Freud calls "normal delusions of observation" to full-blown psychotic schizophrenia—indicates the impossibility constitutive of the social relationship: the unbearable proximity of community's fundamental particle, the neighbor.[61]

Lacan's repeated insistence on the "mystery" of Freud's utterance, "They love *their delusions as they love themselves,*" suggests that he is intrigued by Freud's claim to have found "the secret" of paranoia not only in terms of the hidden content it might reveal, but also *as* mystery, occlusion of knowledge. Freud is himself clearly interested in the original injunction's grammatical structure, its formal cadence, in which the parallelism between *neighbor* and *self* prepares for his substitution of *delusion* for *neighbor.* But whereas both the original scriptural text and Freud's modifications of it in Draft H (and implicitly in the *Project for a Scientific Psychology*) seem to suggest the dialectical reciprocity and substitutability of their terms (whether between *self* and *neighbor* for the subject of the Levitical injunction, *self* and *Nebenmensch* for the normal neurotic, or *self* and *delusion* in the formula of paranoia), this apparent symmetry is misleading. The paranoid projection is not the result of a representational or figurative act; on the contrary, it is precisely the tropological function of the *as* that the paranoiac rejects in loving his delusion *as himself*—as Lacan writes, "He *literally* loves it like himself."[62] In refusing to tolerate the proximity of the Nebenmensch, the paranoiac literalizes what *should have been* a figure according to the paternal imperative and fixates on a real neighbor, not as a trope of the Nebenmensch, but as the refusal to trope as such.[63]

We can map the structure of psychosis described by Freud and Lacan across the dual axes of political theology: on the one hand, we have seen how the symptoms of psychosis, especially in its paranoid manifestations, tend to cluster along what we can think of as the horizontal axis defined by the imperative to *love the neighbor.* The vicious gossip and penetrating gaze of the neighbor become the site of overwhelming af-

61. Freud, *Standard Edition,* 1:208.

62. Lacan, *Psychoses,* 218; my emphasis.

63. Lacan returns to Freud's statement later in the psychoses seminar: "The characteristic of alienating degradation, of madness, that connotes the remnants of this practice which have been lost at the sociological plane provides us with an analogy with what takes place in the psychotic and gives meaning to the sentence from Freud I quoted to you the other day, namely, that the psychotic loves his delusion like himself. The psychotic can only apprehend the Other in the relation with the signifier, he lingers over a mere shell, an envelope, a shadow, the form of speech. The psychotic's Eros is located where speech is absent. It is there that he finds his supreme love" (*Psychoses,* 254).

fect—love, hate, and fear commingled in fragments of the social relationship. On the other hand, the presence or absence of the primary signifier of the symbolic order that Lacan calls "the Name-of-the-Father," the determining condition of psychosis, correlates with the vertical relationship implied by the commandment to *love God,* the theological imperative underlying the exceptional powers of sovereignty. In his reading of Racine's *Athaliah,* Lacan describes this signifier as the "quilting point" [*le point de capiton*] that organizes the symbolic structure of the play: "everything radiates out from and is organized around this signifier," which, in the paradigmatic case of *Athaliah,* is "fear," in the phrase "fear of God." Lacan writes that this signifier is "particularly ambivalent," easily shifting into its correlative divine affect, love; unlike the classical fear of the gods, "The fear of *God* . . . is the principle of wisdom and the foundation of the love of God. Moreover, this tradition is precisely our own."[64] Lacan argues that we live in a world radically transformed by the advent of monotheism and the condensation in it of a primal signifier that anchors us in a relationship with an exceptional God. And, according to Lacan, this has nothing to do with whether or not a particular individual believes: monotheism enacts a material and historical break that is absolute and irrecusable and that structures subjectivity thereafter. In Freud's discussion of the case of Daniel Paul Schreber, we see that for Dr. Schreber "love of God" in its most obscene literal form (the fantasy of being fucked by God) takes the place of his failed relationship to the symbolic order and his inability to assume his position in it as judge. According to Lacan, it is significant that this failure, in Schreber's case and many others, occurs in the *political* sphere:

> Further still, the father's relation to this law [promulgated by the Name-of-the-Father] must be considered in itself, for one will find in it the reason for that paradox, by which the ravaging effects of the paternal figure are to be observed with particular frequency in cases where the father really has the function of a legislator or, at least has the upper hand, whether in fact he is one of those fathers who makes the laws or whether he poses as the pillar of the faith, as a paragon of integrity and devotion, as virtuous or as a virtuoso, by serving a work of salvation, of whatever object or lack of object, of nation or of birth, of safeguard or salubrity, of legacy or legality, of the pure, the impure or of empire [*du pur, du pire ou de l'empire*], all ideals that provide him with all too many opportunities of being in a posture of undeserving, inadequacy, even

64. Lacan, *Psychoses,* 266. In the Hebrew Bible, the word translated as *fear* of God, *yirah,* is closely associated with *love* of God. See Psalms 118:4, "Let those who fear the Lord declare, 'His steadfast love is eternal.'"

> of fraud, and, in short, of excluding the Name-of-the-Father from its position in the signifier.[65]

The signifier of the Father is "sovereign" in its rule over the subject precisely insofar as it is the *exception* to the rules that govern the movement of signification. There is a point, at least hypothetically, when the subject hovers between neurosis and psychosis, even perhaps a zero degree where "primal repression," the installation of the paternal signifier, and "foreclosure," the *failure* to install such a signifier, have not yet been distinguished.[66] And this is the point when the subject is called upon to decide whether primal repression or foreclosure will define the political economy of his or her psyche.

Lacan poses the distinction between neurosis and psychosis as a question of love: "Where does the difference between someone who is psychotic and someone who isn't come from? It comes from the fact that for the psychotic a love relation that abolishes him as subject is possible insofar as it allows a radical heterogeneity of the Other. But this love is also a dead love."[67] Although the psychotic fails to separate himself from the other's signifiers, because of the unbearable intensity of the affect they arouse, it is this inability that at the same time enables him to experience the Other in its purity, or "radical heterogeneity." Unlike the model of love for the dead neighbor that Kierkegaard presents as exemplary of love, the psychotic's love is itself dead, petrified in the fullness of its encounter with the real Other. Whereas such an encounter with the absolute alterity of the neighbor is paradigmatic of ethics for Levinas, for Lacan it is neither ethical nor real love. Neurosis and psychosis represent two asymmetrical modes of the failure to love the neighbor: whereas the neurotic becomes an autonomous subject of desire in turn-

65. Lacan, "On a Question Preliminary to Any Possible Treatment of Psychosis," *Écrits* (1977), 218–19; *Écrits* (1966), 579.

66. The signifier of the "Name-of-the-Father" is equivalent to what Lacan later calls "S_1," the signifier of what Freud calls "primal repression." In an exchange with Jean Hyppolite during his seminar of 1953–54, Lacan describes the structure of *Verwerfung,* the mechanism of the psychotic's "foreclosure" of a primal signifier, in terms that are virtually indistinguishable from those of primal repression—presumably the exact opposite of foreclosure: "originally, for repression to be possible, there must be a beyond of repression, something final, already primitively constituted, an initial nucleus of the repressed . . . it is the centre of attraction, calling up all the subsequent repressions. I'd say that that is the very essence of the Freudian discovery." It is as if in its radical exceptionality, the signifier that will become the key mark of interpellation in paternal authority for the subject, variously characterized as "The-Name-of-the-Father," the "phallus as signifier," and "S_1," approaches a zero degree where it is indistinguishable from its diametrical opposite, the psychotic's *lack* of such a signifier (*The Seminar of Jacques Lacan,* book 1: *Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953–1954* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1988], 43).

67. Lacan, *Psychoses,* 253.

ing away from the impossibility of the command to love the neighbor, the psychotic fails to achieve subjectivity while succeeding in experiencing the other as radically other, loving the neighbor not wisely, but too well.

Toward a Political Theology of the Neighbor

The political theology described by Schmitt has precise thematic and topological analogues in Freud and Lacan that will allow us to approach more closely the question of a political theology of the neighbor. First, recall Freud's revision of Darwin's account of the mythical primal horde in *Totem and Taboo*. Faced with "a violent and jealous father who keeps all the females for himself" and forbids his sons any sexual access to them, the brothers one day band together to kill and devour their father. They discover the power that arises from collectivity: "united, they had the courage to do and succeeded in doing what would have been impossible for them individually."[68] But their ambivalence toward their father prevents them from gaining access to the forbidden *jouissance* (represented by the women), even though the father is dead: "They hated their father, who presented such a formidable obstacle to their craving for power and their sexual desires; but they loved and admired him too. . . . A sense of guilt made its appearance, which in this instance coincided with the remorse felt by the whole group."[69] The sons enter into a mode of melancholic mourning, whereby they identify with the lost object, simultaneously loving and hating the father, but now as part of themselves. This way, as Freud famously remarks, "The dead father became stronger than the living one had been." The sons hate themselves for the murder of the father they loved and hate the father who has become part of themselves. Hence, the cannibal feast by which they consummated their victory literalized the introjection of the father as the superego—an obscene and self-punishing agency whose enforcement of the law has become absolute. Now, carrying the father's ever-vigilant prohibition within them, the brothers prohibit themselves the free enjoyment for which they had killed the father. Freud's myth establishes the prototype for the structure of modern sociality, based on the intrinsic substitutability of its members—not, however, in the structure of the primal horde, but in its demise, in the generations of new filial

68. Freud, *Standard Edition,* 13:141.
69. Ibid., 143.

bands "composed of members with equal rights" and with equal (self-) restrictions.[70]

This narrative of the origin of the superego in the intergenerational transmission of guilt is familiar to us. But Freud's myth also contains the structural contours of a primitive Schmittian political theology.[71] The primal father holds the place of the sovereign at the border of the law: both inside it, as its embodiment and the principle of its enforcement, and outside, the great exception, the one person who is not himself subject to prohibition, but freely enjoys. Murdering and consuming the father apotheosizes him, in the sense that his function becomes transcendentalized, rather than located in a particular set of individuals and contingent circumstances. Freud describes the totemism that underwrites this originary constitution of the political in theological terms, as the establishment of a "covenant" between the father and the sons: "He promised them everything that a childish imagination may expect from a father—protection, care, indulgence—while on their side they undertook to respect his life, that is to say, not to repeat the deed which had brought destruction on their real father."[72] Freud will renarrativize this structure in his last great book, *Moses and Monotheism,* and both versions of the myth resonate, of course, with the Passion story of Christianity, the murder and resurrection of Jesus, meant to both expiate and repeat the murder of the primal father. In *Moses and Monotheism,* the rational Egyptian Moses is murdered and replaced by the Semitic Moses, the representative of the jealous desert God of the burning bush. Slavoj Žižek points out that this ferocious, prohibitory God that emerges in *Moses and Monotheism* is *not* the return of the presymbolic father of the primal horde, the originary father of jouissance. Rather, this Moses reincarnated as the father-God is pure will, as Lacan points out, will without jouissance—both ferocious and ignorant of the jouissance represented by the primal father.[73] Žižek argues that Freud's account of the father in these texts provides a theological background for Schmitt's understanding of political antagonism. Moreover, Žižek suggests that this father as sheer will opens up the possibility of both modern science *and* modern accounts of sexual difference:

70. Ibid., 141.
71. Slavoj Žižek describes the theological background to Schmitt's theory of the exception through a fine reading of the shifts in Freud's account of the father and the genesis of the law between *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism* ("Carl Schmitt in the Age of Post-Politics," in *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt,* ed. Chantal Mouffe (New York: Verso, 1999), 22–27.
72. Freud, *Standard Edition,* 13:144.
73. See Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 167–78; and seminar 17, *L'envers de la psychanalyse,* 155–66.

The paradox that one has to bear in mind here is that this God of groundless Willing and ferocious "irrational" rage is the God who, by means of His Prohibition, accomplishes the destruction of the old sexualized Wisdom, and thus opens up the space for the desexualized "abstract" knowledge of modern science. The paradox lies in the fact that there is "objective" scientific knowledge (in the modern, post-Cartesian sense of the term) only if the universe of scientific knowledge is itself supplemented and sustained by this excessive "irrational" figure of the "real father." . . . Pre-modern Aristotelian and medieval knowledge was not yet "objective" rational scientific knowledge precisely because it lacked this excessive element of God *qua* the subjectivity of pure "irrational" willing. . . . The further paradox is that this "irrational" God *qua* the prohibitory paternal figure also opens up the space for the entire development of modernity, up to the deconstructionist notion that our sexual identity is a contingent socio-symbolic formation: the moment this prohibitory figure recedes, we are back with Jungian neo-obscurantist notions of masculine and feminine eternal archetypes which thrive today. . . . paradoxically, the domain of symbolic rules, if it is to count as such, has to be grounded in some tautological authority *beyond rules,* which says: "It is so because I say it is so!" [74]

If this third aspect of the father as ferocious yet ignorant of jouissance is the "real" father, his function is to maintain the distinction, the breathing space, between the other two paternal manifestations: the ravenously sexual presymbolic or "imaginary" father of the primal horde and the "symbolic" father, internalized as the memory of his name, who replaces him and legislates access to jouissance, doling it out according to a strict economy of guilt. The figure of the reasonable, logical father, the Egyptian Moses, who reoccupies the place of this symbolic father, depends upon these other two fathers, imaginary and real, to embody and mark the place of the jouissance on whose suspension (rather than elimination) the rational order of knowledge, difference, and structure itself is predicated and differentiated from the premodern account of knowledge as correspondence (or what Lacan calls the assumption of a "sexual relationship" between heaven and earth, spirit and matter). This third father of willed ignorance of jouissance defines the order that allows the separation between what Žižek calls the imaginary or "Jungian" notion of sexual essence and its symbolic "deconstruction" in performative models of gender positionality. Hence the Freudo-Lacanian account of the three fathers, in demonstrating the conditions of the emergence of neutral scientific knowledge and its distinction from the magical thinking of essential reciprocity, also shows how the two dominant non-

74. "Carl Schmitt in the Age of Post-Politics," 26.

psychoanalytic notions of gender emerge: gender as biological or even cosmic necessity, on the one hand, and gender as fluid continuum of cultural possibilities, on the other.

But we can also find at least the beginnings of an expression of a third, properly psychoanalytic model of sexual difference in the scenario of the primal horde, one that is conditioned by a logic that assumes neither (biological-cosmic) necessity nor (cultural-ludic) possibility, but only the *impossibility* of fully inhabiting sexual identity that makes every concrete instance of sexuation a function of radical contingency. Although Freud does not present the myth of the primal horde as a narrative of sexual difference, it is clear that it is heavily inflected by the masculine conditions of sexuation: to be a man in the wake of the murder of the primal father is to take on the functions of both the singular father and the plural sons and to be divided between their contradictory imperatives. On the one hand, a man assumes his sexuality as an individual, but interchangeable, member of a group of sons, whose possibilities of jouissance are strictly limited, not only to women outside the immediate family "horde," but by the guilt and reparative renunciation that vitiates all later attempts at sexual encounters. The sons form a collective with equal rights, insofar as they are all equally *prohibited* from the untrammeled access to jouissance that they imagine the father once enjoyed. On the other hand, this filial position of self-denial is mitigated by the other aspect of the introjected paternal agency: each son participates in the legend of the Great Father who once *did* enjoy fully, and each represents for himself the possibility of the father's greatness being restored.

For Lacan, Freud's myth of the primal horde expresses the ethical paradox that constitutes modernity: even though we no longer believe in the living authority of a moral code that derives from the now debunked religious law, we still obey it. As he comments in his seminar *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* "Although the obstacle is removed as a result of the murder [of the father], *jouissance* is still prohibited; not only that, but the prohibition is reinforced . . . whoever attempts to submit to the moral law sees the demands of his superego grow increasingly meticulous and increasingly cruel." [75] The internalization of the paternal agency of criticism and renunciation constitutes the masculine subject, on the one hand, as a self-limiting system: the drives are attenuated and regulated not only insofar as we cede their satisfaction to the agency of the primordial father who still claims them for his exclusive usufruct, but also on account of the guilt we suffer for our ill will toward the father we still

75. Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 176.

love. On the other hand, there is an excess of prohibition over transgression that prevents the subjective system from attaining homeostasis—the more we give up jouissance, the more we punish ourselves.[76] According to Lacan, the cultural mechanism that responds to and embodies this traumatic ambivalence is the imperative to *love God:*

> But if for us God is dead, it is because he always has been dead, and that's what Freud says. He has never been the father except in the mythology of the son, or, in other words, in that of the commandment that commands that he, the father, be loved, and in the drama of the passion which reveals that there is a resurrection after death. That is to say, the man who made incarnate the death of God still exists. He still exists with the commandment which orders him to love God. That's the place where Freud stops, and he stops at the same time . . . at the place that concerns the love of one's neighbor, which is something that appears to be insurmountable for us, indeed incomprehensible.[77]

The commandment to love God is itself the instantiation, the only true materialization, of the still-living father—his resurrection or installation as undead in the position of absolute sovereign, both inside and beyond the world of moral law he regulates.[78] Whereas the classical assumption about ethics is that pleasure, well-being, and happiness all lead to the greater good, Lacan argues that for Freud, on the contrary, the idea of the Good is a screen against jouissance, a vestige of the paternal prohibition of enjoyment.

76. In *Civilization and Its Discontents,* Freud explains this increase in self-directed aggressivity: "The effect of instinctual renunciation on the conscience then is that every piece of aggression whose satisfaction the subject gives up is taken over by the super-ego and increases the latter's aggressiveness (against the ego) . . . the original severity of the super-ego does not—or does not so much—represent the severity which one has experienced from it [the object], or which one attributes to it; it represents rather one's own aggressiveness towards it" (*Standard Edition,* 21:129–30).

77. Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 177–78.

78. Lacan argues that Freud "stops" before the commandment to love God insofar as he is able to revalue and purify it, in the manner of Spinoza, of its pathological ambivalence, as *amor intellectualis Dei* (*Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 180). In the concluding words of seminar 11, four years later, Lacan suggests that this model of the "intellectual love of God" is an attempt to avoid sacrificing to the Other, "*the dark God*": "It is the eternal meaning of the sacrifice, to which no one can resist, unless animated by that faith, so difficult to sustain, which perhaps, one man alone has been able to formulate in a plausible way—namely, Spinoza, with his *Amor intellectualis Dei*." Although this is a "heroic" project, its renunciation of desire, or quietism, ultimately does not represent the way of psychoanalysis; nor does its antithesis, the project to sustain pure desire, which Lacan finds equally in Kant and Sade. Rather, the "impure desire" of psychoanalysis is "a desire to obtain absolute difference, a desire which intervenes when, confronted with the primary signifier, the subject is, for the first time, in a position to subject himself to it. There only may the signification of a limitless love emerge, because it is outside the limits of the law, where alone it may live" (*Four Fundamental Concepts,* 275–76).

And whereas Lacan's comment suggests that Freud's work reiterates the structural centrality of the commandment to love God, as a reminder of the father's exception to the law of prohibition he ordains, Freud pulls back from the commandment to love the neighbor, where, according to Lacan, he perceives and reacts against the traces within the law of the obscene transgression the commandment would seem designed to limit. This, Lacan suggests, is a sign of Freud's moral fiber: "the whole Aristotelian conception of the good is alive in this man who is a true man; he tells us the most sensitive and reasonable things about what it is worth sharing the good that is our love with. But what escapes him is perhaps the fact that precisely because we take that path we miss the opening on to *jouissance*. It is in the nature of the good to be altruistic. But that's not the love of thy neighbor."[79] Freud rejects the injunction to love the neighbor for the best moral reasons: my love is precious, and I owe it to family and friends first; moreover, my neighbor is malicious, unloving, and unlovable. But the cost of this response is that he misses something real in it, what Lacan calls "the difficult way, love for one's neighbor." And if Freud "stops" at the thought of the consequences of his discovery of the obscenity of the law, it is with even greater horror that he encounters the truth of the commandment to love the neighbor that he finds, Lacan suggests, *in the same place*. The position of the subject is precisely at the intersection of these two commandments to love, where they come together, forming an ethical pivot. If the subject is called to face one or the other, he or she nevertheless remains in the place determined by both. The neighbor (as what Freud had called in the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* the Nebenmensch) bears within it the "thing," the kernel of jouissance that is both foreign, strange, and unrecognizable in the other and intimate to me—the secret of my own traumatic drives. As Lacan writes, "we cannot avoid the formula that *jouissance* is evil. Freud leads us by the hand to this point: it is evil because it involves the evil of the neighbor [*le mal du prochain*]."[80] What troubles Freud in the injunction to love the neighbor is precisely the fact that it condenses his own most disturbing insights about the nature of the superego, both urging and prohibiting the violence of jouissance in a single utterance. For Freud, the neighbor materializes the fundamental antagonism both within and between the familial and the social, the

79. Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 186–87. For more on Lacan's comments in this seminar on the relationship between the commandments to love God and to love the neighbor, see Kenneth Reinhard, "Freud, My Neighbor," *American Imago* 54, no. 2 (1997): 165–95.

80. Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 184 (translation modified); *L'éthique de la psychanalyse,* 217.

"strangeness" that haunts the subject of practical reason. The antagonism *between* the familial and the social is what inspires the project of converting the one into the other, but the antagonism that the neighbor deposits *within* each, as their negative intersection, prevents the success of any such translation. Familial desire does not precede and condition social responsibility, but vice versa: the response to the neighbor is not the sublation, but the *cause* of Oedipal love.

At this point in his seminar, Lacan presents the problematic of neighbor-love as a double bind for which there is no clear solution. He suggests a modification of a classic Kantian test case of ethical reason to explain his sense of the situation. In Kant's example, we are asked to decide whether to obey a despot who demands that we testify falsely against someone who will be put to death because of our testimony, or be put to death ourselves for our disobedience. For Kant, it is clear that we must die rather than testify falsely, since the biblical law against false testimony constitutes a truly categorical imperative for practical reason (we cannot imagine, according to Kant, a coherent world that would approve of false testimony). Lacan wonders how things are changed if it is a question not of perjury, but of presenting *true* testimony that will nevertheless condemn our fellow man, if, for example, "I am summoned to inform on my neighbor or my brother for activities that are prejudicial to the security of the state." Here, I am caught between two equally urgent duties, to love my neighbor and to support the general good represented by national interests. But how is my decision affected by the fact that in testifying truthfully perhaps I am satisfying a desire, unconscious or not, to kill my neighbor? Or, perhaps even more disturbing, how do I calculate the possibility that being betrayed might be in accordance with my neighbor's jouissance?

> And I who stand here right now and bear witness to the idea that there is no law of the good except in evil and through evil, should I bear such witness? This Law makes my neighbor's *jouissance* the point on which, in bearing witness in this case, the meaning of my duty oscillates. Must I go toward my duty of truth insofar as it preserves the authentic place of my *jouissance,* even if it remains empty? Or must I resign myself to this lie, which, by making me substitute forcefully the good for the principle of my *jouissance,* commands me to blow alternatively hot and cold? Either I retreat from betraying my neighbor [*prochain*] so as to spare my fellow man [*semblable*] or I shelter behind my fellow man so as to give up my own *jouissance.*[81]

81. Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis,* 190 (translation modified); *L'éthique de la psychanalyse,* 223.

To testify against the other, in the name of Truth, may indeed support my jouissance, which may include condemning my neighbor to death. But insofar as to do so would require that I speak from the place and in the name of the Law, I am thereby evacuating the conditions necessary to my jouissance, which can only be sustained by and as transgression. On the other hand, to refuse to testify, for the sake of saving the other person's life, is to treat him as my "fellow man," *mon semblable,* whose good (self-preservation, satisfaction of needs) I imagine in the mirror of my own ego. And this is to fail to encounter him as "my neighbor," *mon prochain,* whose jouissance I cannot presume to know and which I may in fact betray along with the moral law in not testifying against him. The subject of jouissance is in a deadlock from which the ethics of practical reason provides no escape. To be loyal to the paternal law is to betray the neighbor, and to encounter the neighbor who stands nakedly before me is to give up on the conditions of sociality itself.

This is the same paradox that emerges in any sustained encounter with Emmanuel Levinas's thinking, which has been the primary site recently for a renewed interest in ethical critical theory. For Levinas, ethics is based on my radically asymmetrical and nonreciprocal relationship to the other as the "neighbor" to whom I owe a debt that can never be amortized and for which I am unjustly persecuted. No one can take my place, assume my ethical burden, but I am called to assume the place of all others. Politics, on the other hand, is a relationship among equals, subjects equivalent to each other, each having the same rights and responsibilities, each intrinsically *substitutable*—this particular other's claim must be put in perspective by this other other's claim, and indeed by *all* others. Politics for Levinas is a question of distributive justice, and as such it implies a reciprocal and symmetrical relationship among *fellow citizens*. Although Levinas's work has been made into a theory of moral conscience for postcolonial and multicultural studies, the ethical basis for political criticism, the crucial point that is often passed over (indeed, that Levinas himself seems to forget) is that there can be *no relationship* between ethics and politics in Levinas's theory. This fundamental disjunction between the conditions of ethics (and the neighbor) and politics (and the citizen, on the model of "fraternity") should preclude any attempt to draw political consequences from Levinas's theory of the neighbor.[82] What is truly radical in Levinas's thought is precisely this im-

82. Although Howard Caygill is more convinced of the harmonious connections between politics and ethics in Levinas's thought than I am, he points out that the political in Levinas is not congruent with the assumptions of liberalism and, indeed, remains a troubling element in his work:

passe, the fact of the unbridgeable gap between ethics and politics: insofar as ethics involves the encounter of the *two* of the neighbor and the self, it cannot conceive of the *three,* the symbolic representation and mediation on which politics is based; ethics is inherently apolitical, must willfully ignore what would be fair or for the general good. To shift the other as neighbor into mediation with the other in the polis is precisely to *give up* on ethics; moreover, to try to bring politics to the immediate level of the singular face of the other, to see the other as a singularity, can only mean to give up on politics. Slavoj Žižek counters the political appropriation of Levinas by radicalizing his insight into the incommensurability between politics and ethics, which he presents as the opposition between justice and love: "Others are primordially an (ethically) indifferent multitude, and love is a violent gesture of cutting into this multitude and privileging a One as the neighbor, thus introducing a radical imbalance into the whole. In contrast to love, justice begins when I remember the faceless many left in shadow in this privileging of the One. Justice and love are thus structurally incompatible. . . . What this means is that the third is not secondary: it is always-already here, and the primordial ethical obligation is towards this Third who is *not* here in the face-to-face relationship."[83] Žižek argues that only by *limiting* our obligation to the singular other and shifting into the perspective of the political Other, the third, can we locate ethics on the grounds of the universal, rather than one version or another of particularism. When we hold onto this insight, despite its inconvenience for the project of an ethical critical theory, we encounter what is truly radical in Levinas. This is also where his thought approaches Lacan's insight that there is no such thing as a sexual relationship, which, in its impossibility, is itself the very rock of the real. The political is the condition of the ethical, the only ground by which we can approach ethics, and not vice versa. The love of the neighbor cannot be generalized into a universal social love, but it is only from the perspective of the political in its radical nonrelationship with ethics that love as such can emerge: as I will argue below, the *two* can only be created by passing through the *three*. It is only when we understand the neighbor in Levinas in terms of the fundamental aporia of the ethical and the political in his thinking—an aporia that resists

"War and the political assume a proximity in Levinas's thought that were it recognized would prove extremely uncomfortable for liberal readers accustomed to keeping war—as the alleged pathology of civility—separate from peace. The proximity of war and politics is a thought that brings Levinas closer to the thought of Clausewitz and Carl Schmitt than to the liberal ethical theory that issued from Kant" (Howard Caygill, *Levinas and the Political* [New York: Routledge, 2002], 3).

83. Slavoj Žižek, "Smashing the Neighbor's Face."

any attempt to appropriate either term for the service of the other—that we encounter the resources he provides for a political theology of the neighbor.

As Lacan comes increasingly to terms with the impasse that he will ultimately formulate as "the impossibility of the sexual relationship" in the 1970s, he reframes the question of sexual difference in terms of two pairs of logical "formulas of sexuation." The contradictions between universal statement and existential exception that inscribe "man" and "woman" in these formulas will serve as a template for my development of a political theology of the neighbor in the nonrelationship between ethics and politics. Although Lacan continues to draw on his earlier models of sexual difference (formulated primarily in terms of "being" or "having" the phallus), his transformation of those models in the later years of his seminar has profound implications for all aspects of his thinking. What we might call the reality of sexual difference in his earlier paradigm was the *symbolic,* based on the phallus as the signifier of lack that constituted both men and women as split subjects, "castrated," albeit in fundamentally asymmetrical ways.[84] In his later writings, the reality of sexual difference becomes *the real* in ways that alter Lacan's understanding of this central concept. Lacan's notion of "the real" shifts over the years of his seminar, both in terms of its relationship with the other two elements of his fundamental topology (made up of the imaginary, symbolic, and real) and in terms of its significations and resistance to signification. By way of a simplified chronology, we can say that, whereas in the 1950s the real was simply "reality," the manifold of sensory perception of the external world in relation to which the symbolic subject emerges; and in the 1960s the real was primarily "trauma," the lack in the Other or inconsistencies in the symbolic order around which the subject as reaction formation collected; in the 1970s the real is the *impossible,* most frequently manifesting in Lacan's axiomatic declaration of *the impossibility of a sexual relationship*. Lacan's theory of sexuation must be understood as the corollary of this new account of the real: there are subjects called "men" and subjects called "women" precisely because of the abyss of the real that separates them and that divides each from itself. Men and women swerve away from the impossibility of their relationship in different ways, and each relates instead to a substitute (a signifier or object) in lieu of meeting with another subject. Moreover, Lacan enigmatically suggests that although intersubjective sexual relations are impossible, love "makes up for" or "supplements" this impossibility.

84. See, for example, Lacan's essay "The Signification of the Phallus," *Écrits* (1977), 281–91.

But this declaration and what Lacan means by "love" remain ambiguous: are we to understand that love is the consoling *illusion* that there is something more than sex, which we experience only as failed? or nonexistent? Or is Lacan suggesting that love is *not* an illusion, but the union of disjunctive elements in a new whole, greater than the parts, that does indeed compensate us for the failure of sex with something of value? Or does he mean that love is something more than either of those readings would suggest, that there is something *real* in love, correlative to the real of the impossibility of the sexual relationship, but neither identical to it nor to its dissimulation?

Before pursuing this question of love, which must clearly be fundamental to a political theology of the neighbor, we need to say something more about the formulations of man and woman, which for Lacan are the consequence of the impossibility of a sexual relationship, and their relation to Freud's model of sovereignty in the primal horde. To be a man or a woman is to be inscribed within what we might call a theory not of sex but of *sets*. The difference between men and women—the *real* difference, rather than the distortive, imaginary one reflected in biology or the symbolic one determined by culture—lies in the nature of the participation of an element, "a man" or "a woman," in the set of which it is a member, "man" or "woman." Lacan uses the language of symbolic logic to express sexuation as a particular modality of the relationship of an element and the set of which it is a member: in each case a *universal quantifier,* symbolized by ∀ and meaning "all" or "every" element of the set, is juxtaposed with an *existential quantifier,* symbolized by ∃, which means "there is one" or "there is at least one" such element.

In figure 1, the bottom formula on the side of men should be read, "All speaking beings inscribed here are subjected to the phallic function." That is, to be a man is to be under the universal thrall of the phallus as signifier; and the name for the limitations that this signifier imposes is "castration," the price of entry into the technologies of symbolic mediation, which promise some partial and limited measure of enjoyment, in giving up the greater enjoyment mythically attributed to the father of the primal horde. To write oneself as "man" is to enter into a social contract where access to unmediated jouissance, the "impossible" traumatic enjoyment associated with the overwhelming presence of the mother's body, is sacrificed for the sake of the symbolic substitutions and displacements of culture and the remnant of jouissance that it promises. The crucial function of the phallus, Φx, is precisely that *all men* are subjected to it, which implies that a set is posited called "all men," a set that is characterized by its totality and the homogeneity of its members, as

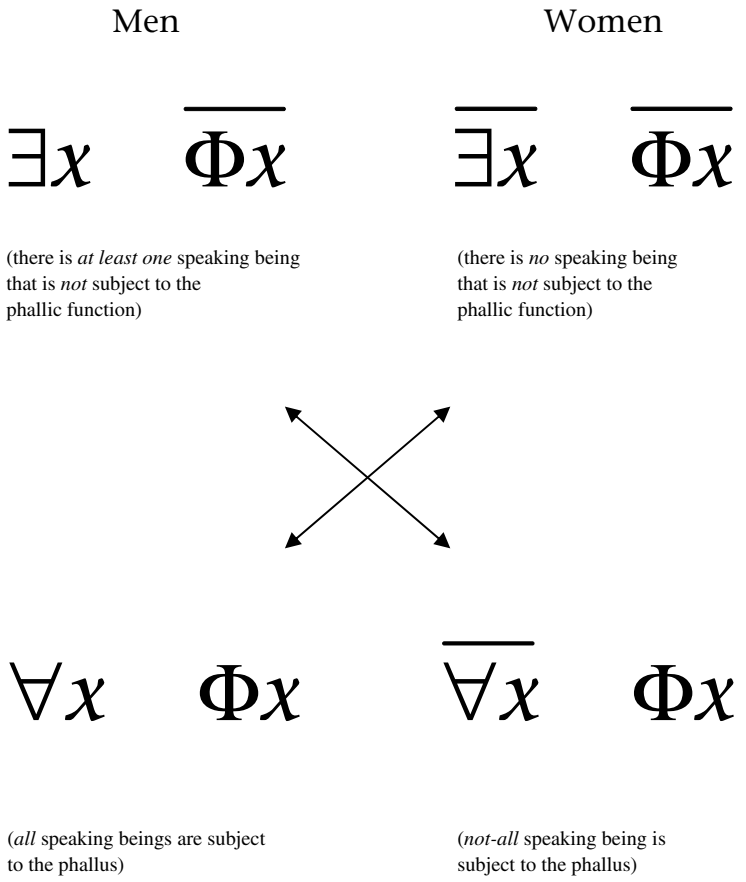

Figure 1

castrated subjects. An individual man is always more or less an *example* of the closed set of Man; each man participates synecdochally in an idea of Man, which he equally represents and falls short of. This is the democratic principle par excellence, the assumption that "all men are created equal," that they are interchangeable to the extent that they are both *represented* and *limited* by a single universal law.

Yet although castration is the inexorable condition of entering the rule of the symbolic order as a man, there is an *exception* which, Lacan says, proves the rule: the formula on the top left of figure 1 indicates "there is a speaking being inscribed here who is *not* subject to the phallic function." In political terms, we could say that this existential for-

mulation represents the nondemocratic truth that is internal to democracy, the exception that constitutes both the transcendental condition and immanent horizon of the democratic rule of law. Lacan connects this exceptionality with Freud's myth of the father of the primal horde from *Totem and Taboo:* in the unconscious, this uncastrated man supports the illusion of "having it all," the possibility of unlimited enjoyment, that enables men to bear their own castration. As if to suggest that this Father almost constitutes his own species distinct from that of *Homo sapiens,* Lacan coins the name "homoinzun" for him, a homonymic holophrasis of *au moins un,* "at least one," as in the formula "there exists *at least one* speaking being who is not subject to castration":

> I will dare to say, all the same, that people had a few more ideas in their heads when they demonstrated the existence of God. It's evident that God exists, but not any more than you do! That doesn't get us very far. So, what's finally involved is the question of existence. What is it that really interests us in this "*there exists,*" with respect to the signifier? That is that there exists *at least one* for whom that business of castration doesn't work, and it is because of this that what is called the Father has been invented. That's why the Father exists at least as much as God, which is to say, not very much.
>
> . . . Inasmuch as *there exists one,* it follows that all the others can function, that is, with reference to this exception, to this "*there exists.*"[85]

Lacan here points out that the cultural question of God's existence is not entirely a metaphysical or religious speculation. Rather, it signals the more material problem, at the level of the signifier, of the existence of a Father who is *not* subject to the law of castration. Just as in Freud's myth of the primal horde there must be, at least hypothetically, one man whose jouissance is not limited, Lacan argues that in the order of the signifier there must be at least one signifier that is not subject to its laws—an "exception," the singular signifier that remains rigid, intransigent, and around which all the other signifiers revolve. The myth of the murder of the primal father is Freud's attempt to secularize the function

85. "J'oserai dire que les gens avaient quand même un tout petit peu plus d'idées dans la tête quand ils démontraient l'existence de Dieu. C'est évident que Dieu existe, mais pas plus que vous! Ça va pas loin. Enfin ceci pour mettre au point ce qu'il en est de l'existence. Qu'est-ce qui peut bien nous intéresser concernant cet *il existe* en matière de signifiant ? Ça serait qu'il en existe *au moins un* pour qui ça ne fonctionne pas cette affaire de castration, et c'est bien pour ça qu'on l'a inventé, c'est ce qui s'appelle le Père, c'est pourquoi le Père existe au moins autant que Dieu, c'est-à-dire pas beaucoup. . . . Donc à partir de ce *qu'il existe un,* c'est à partir de là que tous les autres peuvent fonctionner, c'est en référence à cette exception, à cet il *existe*" (Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire, livre 19: . . . ou pire, 1971–1972* [unpublished transcript, December 8, 1971], my translation).

of God and provide the imaginary support of this exceptional signifier: both God and the Father exist (or better, *ek*-sist, as Lacan writes, following Heidegger) at the limit of the worlds of existence they orchestrate. Hence, both God and the Father *persist* with the structural necessity of not being castrated, of being whole, the existential exception to a universal rule. So whereas the speaking being that inscribes itself on the side of "man" is defined as the *individual example* of a *universal set* or principle (the phallus), the closure of that set is itself the function of an exception, a transcendental term that both exceeds and enforces its limits.

In describing the way in which a subject emerges in writing itself in either one set of logical functions or the other, Lacan consistently refers to the "choice" of sexuation. We see here what we might call the "decisionist" aspect of Lacan's account of sexuation: "one ultimately situates oneself there [in the man's or woman's position] by choice."[86] By this, Lacan does not mean to claim that the subject selects its gender from a subjective position prior to such a choice, since no intentional agency yet exists at such a hypothetical preoriginary moment. Nor should we read Lacan's assertion as implying that the choice is the selection from a continuum of polymorphic gender positions, contingent masquerades, or metamorphic forms of drag. Nor should we assume from Lacan's language of choice that sexuation can be retracted, revised, or repeated at a later date. The signifiers "man" and "woman" express the fact of a radical decision, a cut that divides the one from the other and each in itself, but not as a historical or phenomenological condition. Indeed, to be a man or a woman is not to assume an identity but, as we have said, to *fail* to take on identity as self-sameness, self-certainty. And this constitutive failure is both a consequence of the fundamental impossibility of the sexual relationship and its hypostasized repetition.

To borrow Alain Badiou's terms, we might say that sexuation is an *event* in being—not a static situation, but an encounter involving a "pure choice," which retroactively is named as either "man" or "woman." For Badiou, a real choice is one that has "no basis in any objective difference," but is between what he calls "indiscernibles": "It is then a question of an absolutely pure choice, free from any presupposition other than that of having to choose. . . . If there is no value by which

86. Lacan, *Encore,* 73. Also see Lacan's comments in his seminar of the next year, *Les non-dupes errent:* "'the sexed being authorizes itself.' It's in this sense that, that he has the choice, I mean that by which one limits oneself, finally, in order to classify them as male or female, in the civil state, finally, that doesn't change the fact that he has the choice" ["l'être sexué ne s'autorise que de lui-même." C'est en ce sens que, qu'il a le choix, je veux dire que ce à quoi on se limite, enfin, pour les classer mâle ou féminin, dans l'état civil, enfin, ça, ça n'empêche pas qu'il a le choix] (April 9, 1974).

to discriminate what you have to choose, it is your freedom as such which provides the norm, to the point where it effectively becomes indistinguishable from chance. The indiscernible is the subtraction that establishes a point of coincidence between chance and freedom."[87] Such a decision between indiscernibles through subtraction describes the nature of the choice of sexuation the subject makes, according to Lacan. The terms man and woman are constituted in relation to the subtraction of a third term, the phallus, which each is equally deprived of and dominated by. If we can imagine the mythical primal scene where a protosubject faces the choice between Lacan's two sets of formulas of sexuation, the choice would be between apparent *indiscernibles:* both men and women are absolutely subject to the phallic function, and in each case there is an exception to that rule. In traditional Aristotelian logic, the pairs of logical assertions that define men and women would be, in fact, equivalent: the universal statement that "All speaking beings are subject to the phallus" (male) is not logically different from the negative existential formulation on the woman's side: "There is no speaking being who is not subject to the phallus." The first makes a global assertion using an affirmative universal quantifier ("all *x* are castrated"), and the second indicates that there is no exception to the phallic function, in a double negative existential quantifier ("no *x* is not castrated"). In the case of the man, the existential assertion "there *is* a man who is not subject to the phallic law of castration" posits an exception to the universal without suspending its universality. And similarly, on the woman's side the universal quantifier is negated, also positing the possibility of an exception. But if, on the most formal level, it appears that there is almost no difference between men and women—each is the product of logically equivalent contradictions between universal and existential quantifiers—to have made the choice is to *produce* difference as such. In the "trajectory of truth" that, according to Badiou, proceeds by way of subtraction, while the choice among "indiscernibles" is the act that produces a subject, the truth that results from that choice is "generic": "Indiscernible in its act or as subject, a truth is generic in its result or being."[88] *Générique,* of course, is a form of the word *genre* in French, which means not only "kind" but also "gender." Hence, from the choice that is made on the basis of no discernible difference, sexual difference, which Badiou understands as difference as such, emerges.

87. Alain Badiou, *Theoretical Writings* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 112–13.

88. Ibid., 114; translation of Alain Badiou, "Conférence sur la soustraction," in *Conditions* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), 192.

Indeed, the *emergence* of sexuality in the speaking-being can be characterized as what Schmitt calls an *emergency,* an exigency to which the protosubject responds by choosing to write itself, in absolutely irrevocable and incomparable ways, under the signifier "man" *or* the signifier "woman." The positions represented by these two signifiers are indiscernible, but must be chosen between, on the basis of inexorable conditions that are undecidable for the normative law. Schmitt's theory of the sovereign as the one who decides on the exception, the extreme contingency where the constitution is suspended, helps explain Lacan's claims that sexuality is both an exception to a rule and a choice. Schmitt's notion of the sovereign as a "border concept," both within and beyond the law, describes the situation of the subject who will have located himself as a man in Lacan's logics of sexuation: just as the universal rule of the phallus is expressed in the lower left side of Lacan's diagram, so this determination is contradicted by an existential exception, embodied by the primal father, inscribed on the upper left side of the formulas of sexuation. The sovereign is like the primal father in being stationed at the margins of the state he regulates: it is only insofar as there can be a radical exception to the law that the law can exist and be effective. The primal father and the sovereign occupy the position of extreme dictators whose word both violates the rule of the total state and promises it *totality,* closure, drawing a line between the inside and the outside, the native and the stranger. The subjective decision that results in masculine sexuation is *the choice not to choose,* the decision to remain in a liminal position by both accepting subjection to the law of castration and maintaining the belief in the existence of *at least one* man who has escaped that law, while enforcing it on all others.[89]

But there is still the question of the woman's sexuation, that is, the consequences of the other decision, which, we might say, involves *the choice to choose,* the decision not only to take responsibility for the irrevocably past choice that brought a woman into the open community of women, but also for the infinite series of contingent decisions that follow from it. To begin with, how do we make sense of the negative universal quantifier on the upper half of the woman's side of Lacan's formulas (see figure 1), "there is *no* speaking being who locates herself on this side who is *not* subject to the phallus"? How is the double negative of the existential formulation different from its counterpart on the

89. This is closely related to the logic of fetishism described by Octave Mannoni in "Je sais bien mais quand même . . . ," in *Clefs pour l'imaginaire* (Paris: Seuil, 1968). Slavoj Žižek has commented on this logic in several places; see *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (New York: Verso, 1991), 245–53.

man's side, the universal affirmative formulation of castration? In classical logic, the negation of a universal (the bottom half of the woman's side of the diagram, "not-all speaking beings are subject to the phallus") would imply the existence of an exception to the rule of castration. Thus, we might expect that, as on the man's side, there is "at least one" woman who is not castrated. But the doubly negative existential assertion on the woman's side is different from the positive universal assertion of castration precisely insofar as it directly contradicts that possibility and insists that there *cannot* be an exception to the law of the phallus.[90] It is as if the woman's side of the formulas anticipates the question of the possibility of an exception—Why shouldn't there be, as for the man, an "exception that proves the rule," a Great Mother who escapes castration?—and flatly negates that question: there is *no exception* to the rule of the phallus for the woman. If this is the case, then what is the status of the "not-all" on the bottom right side of the equation: "not-all speaking beings are subject to the phallus"? For Lacan, the stakes riding on the not-all are very high:

> One of the following two things is true: either what I write has no meaning at all . . . or when I write $\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$, a never-before-seen function in which the negation is placed on the quantifier, which should be read *pas-tout,* it means that when any speaking being whatsoever situates itself under the banner "women," it is on the basis of the following—that it grounds itself as being *pas-tout* in situating itself in the phallic function. That is what defines what? Woman precisely, except that Woman [La *femme*] can only be written with a bar through it. There's no such thing as Woman, Woman with a capital *W* indicating the universal [*Il n'y a pas* La *femme, article défini pour désigner l'universel*]. There's no such thing as woman because in her essence . . . she is not all [pas tout].[91]

The logical consistency of Lacan's entire discourse depends on the status of the not-all; if there is *knowledge* in these signifiers, it is only because there is *truth* in the not-all, which, however, in its singularity, subtracts something from the totality of knowledge. Lacan's account of the not-all is in part negative: he maintains that the "not-all" does *not* mean that not all women are under the law of the phallus—that is, that some perhaps escape castration and in some way preserve their jouissance intact. Nor does it mean that not *all of* a woman is castrated, that some part

90. See Alain Badiou's close discussion of this question in his essay "Sujet et Infini," in *Conditions* (Paris: Seuil, 1992), 288–89.

91. Lacan, *Encore,* 72–73 (translation slightly modified); *Le séminaire, livre 20: Encore* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 68.

of her being or her body remains unscathed, free of the signifier's cut. Unlike the case of men, for whom there *is* a unified category, "all men," that they are identified as being members of, women are *radically singular,* not examples of a class or members of a closed set, but *each one an exception.* They are an exception, however, not to a "rule," but to an open set, an infinite series of particular women, into which each woman enters "one by one." As Lacan says, "You know that the not-all has been essential to me in marking that there is no such thing as *the Woman,* which is, namely, that there are only, if I may say, different ones, and in some way, [they enter] one by one; and that all that is in some way dominated by the privileged function of this, nonetheless, that there isn't one to represent the statement that interdicts, namely the absolutely-no. There you have it."[92]

There is, then, no common denominator for subjects who locate themselves as women, no way of characterizing "women in general," contrary to popular misconceptions about feminine essence and unlike the case for men, who *are* determined by the assumption that there is a totality of the set Man. No authentic positive characterization of Woman in general is possible. One should talk only about individual beings, who enter into the logic of the not-all one at a time, each as if for the first time. The relationship between particular elements of the open set of women is metonymic rather than synecdochal: one woman cannot substitute or stand for another and is not in a relationship of equality with another, but can only *stand next to* another, in an unending series that has no characteristics that unify it. There is no figure of the sovereign woman who might adjudicate the claims of individual women to participate in feminine sexuality and determine the boundaries of the set. In the language of set theory, a man belongs to and is included in the subset of humanity called "all men," a set that constitutes a unified group, guaranteed by the transcendental exceptionality of the primal Father. A woman, however, belongs to the subset of women without being included in it, insofar as that subset has no border that would determine membership and delimit inside from outside. Men are part of the group Man insofar as they are all equivalent in their failure to represent the primal Father: the set of "all men" functions according to the principles of group formation around a leader that Freud describes in *Group Psychol-*

92. "Vous savez que le pas-tout m'a très essentiellement servi à marquer qu'il n'y a pas de *la femme,* c'est à savoir qu'il n'y en a, si je puis dire, que diverses et en quelque sorte une par une, et que tout cela se trouve en quelque sorte dominé par la fonction privilégiée de ceci, qu'il n'y en a néanmoins pas une à représenter le dire qui interdit, à savoir l'absolument—non. Voilà" (Lacan, *Le séminaire, livre 21: Les non-dupes errent* [unpublished transcript, May 14, 1974], my translation).

ogy and the Analysis of the Ego. And although women are no less irrecusably marked by the phallus, the terms of their reprieve are not given by a transcendental sovereign who represents the possibility of eventual satisfaction, but *immanently,* in the contingencies of their particular inhabitations of the not-all.

Lacan clearly distinguishes woman's not-all from psychotic foreclosure, which it might seem superficially to resemble, insofar as each involves the nonfunctioning or suspension of the paternal signifier and consequent nontotalization of the field of signifiers. Foreclosure, Lacan argues, is a question of language, of saying or not saying the Name of the Father. This contingency of the symbolic order can lead either to normative (neurotic) subjectivity or to the psychotic's failure to become a subject. The not-all, however, operates at the level of the real, rather than the symbolic, as the *impossibility* of saying something or, better, the impossibility of *writing* (that is, formalizing) the sexual relationship. The phallic function is by no means foreclosed in the case of women; rather, Lacan describes the not-all as a principle of "discordance" vis-à-vis the phallus. Whereas the psychotic forecloses the phallic function, failing to submit to its sovereignty, the woman's not-all defines something more like a nonaccord or noncompliance with the phallic function, submission to it with reserve, with a reservation that hinges precisely on the impossibility of the sexual relationship that the phallic function both represents and dissimulates.[93] The psychotic's refusal of the paternal signifier correlates with the *collapse* of the space of the neighbor; the woman's demurral, on the other hand, *opens up* the space of the neighbor.

Is this all to say that the neighbor is a woman? Should we risk claiming that, if the subject of the political theology of sovereignty is man, the subject of the political theology of the neighbor is woman? First of all, we must be careful not to make the false assumption that these modes of political organization are topo-theological options that we can choose between. A political theology of the neighbor cannot replace the political theology of the sovereign, but can only supplement it, both in the sense of pointing to some structural lack and descriptive deficiency in traditional political theology that the figure of the neighbor might compensate for and in the sense of pointing to something heterogeneous to

93. Lacan, *Le séminaire, livre 19: . . . ou pire* (December 8, 1971). "Our not-all is discordance. But what is foreclosure? Surely, it is to be located in a different register than that of discordance. . . . There is only foreclosure when there is speaking. . . . Foreclosure has to do with the fact that something may or may not be spoken. And of that of which nothing can be said, it can only be concluded with a question on the Real" (my translation).

political theology, something other than itself in its very core, that manifests and finds its phenomenology in the neighbor. Moreover, it would be even more misleading to imagine that we have made a historical transition from the epoch of the (modern) All to that of the (postmodern) Not-All, characterized by increasingly feminine and neighborly values. Such modes of political messianism, whether gradualist or apocalyptic, would propose the neighbor as the path to completing political theology by restoring its missing feminine complement. In addition, just as the sexual relationship between men and women remains fundamentally impossible, so there can be no theoretical paradigm that simply combines these modalities in a unified field theory. We must avoid the fantasmatic structures such accounts imply, both as wishful illusions and as veils cloaking the irreducible trauma of the neighbor's jouissance. The political theology of the neighbor is the *decompletion* of the political theology of sovereignty, the *supplement* that both supplies something that was lacking and inserts something heteronomous into political economy. As Eric Santner has argued, if the politics of sovereignty is defined by the exception, the neighbor constitutes the exception to the exception, the interruption of sovereignty. The politics of the Not-All can be thought of as the decision to say no to the superegoic insistence on All, on jouissance as an *obligation;* as Slavoj Žižek has recently formulated it, this is to reserve the right *not to enjoy,* to desist from the insistence of the sovereign exception. If there is a mode by which Sovereign and Neighbor come together, it can only be by means not of sex, but of love—that is, as the production of something new, what Alain Badiou calls a new open set, a new open part of a world.

In a discussion of Lacan's notion of the "infinity of the not-all" in feminine sexuality, Alain Badiou writes, "the not-all, far from allowing us to extract from it the affirmation that there exists one who is not under the effect of castration, indicates, on the contrary, a particular mode of that effect, namely that it is 'somewhere' and not everywhere. The for-all [*pour-tout*] of the position man is also an everywhere [*partout*]. The somewhere, and not everywhere, of the woman's position is called: not-all."[94] According to Badiou, in the case of women, the universal law of castration is localized as a subset of feminine sexuality, which is itself an *open set,* infinite in scope. The "not-all" does not contradict the fact that

94. "le pas-toute, loin qu'on puisse en extraire l'affirmation qu'existe une qui n'est pas sous l'effect de la castration, indique au contraire un mode particulier de cet effet, à savoir qu'il est 'quelque part' et non partout. Le pour-tout de la position homme est aussi un partout. Le quelque part, et non partout, de la position femme se dit: pas-toute" (Alain Badiou, "Sujet et Infini," 291). Badiou is commenting on remarks Lacan makes in the first session of his seminar 19, *. . . ou pire* (1971–1972).

there is no exception to the phallic law within that closed set, but rather, we might say, quietly insists that this is "not all" there is to a woman. Whereas for men the law of the phallus is both inexorable and ubiquitous, for a woman the universality of castration is itself a closed subset within the open set of her subjectivity. Thus, woman's sexuality requires an idea of *infinity*—a theological concept that only mathematics can fully secularize—unlike the claim of "totality" ("the set of all men exists") that determines men's sexuality. And since dialectical relationship is impossible between finite and infinite entities, this, according to Badiou, is what makes a sexual relationship between men and women impossible. Badiou argues that Lacan's use of set theory in these later seminars remains "pre-Cantorian," insofar as his account of the infinity of feminine sexuality does not require its actual existence, but merely its negative virtuality in the finite. Lacan's point is that the infinite of the pas-tout is inaccessible, it is infinite *to men,* not in itself. According to Badiou, however, the *reality* of the infinite must be established mathematically, and it cannot be other than through a pure *decision,* that is, axiomatically: "Silently, in the infinite element of her *jouissance,* a woman must have decided that in regard to the first, phallic, *jouissance,* there exists an inaccessible point that in effect supplements it and determines her as not-all with regard to the phallic function."[95] For Badiou, the actual infinity of woman's jouissance implies that one cannot give a satisfactory account of sexual difference based solely on the phallic function; another function is required, which he calls the "generic function, or the function of humanity."[96]

We will discuss the "generic" set in a moment, but first let's follow Badiou's argument about love and humanity in his essay "What Is Love?" According to Badiou, it is only through *love* that the truth of sexual difference and the impossibility of the sexual relationship emerges, in relationship to the category *humanity:* "The existence of love makes it appear retroactively that, in the disjunction, the female position is oddly the bearer of love's relation to humanity." For a woman, according to Badiou, the human world (made up by the truth procedures of science, art, love, and politics) is only valuable insofar as there is love; when love is present, it infuses itself throughout the field of humanity, linking and correlating its elements. For the man, this is not the case; the truth procedures of life are independent of each other, love is only one field among four in which life unfolds. If for men these elements of humanity are metaphors of each other, each representing the whole of Humanity, for women the elements of life are threads that are meaningless in isolation and that only love can tie into a knot. Thus, in retroactively determining the real of sexual difference, love *creates* Humanity. Badiou writes, "the feminine representation of humanity is at the same time conditional and knotting, which authorizes a more total perception *and* in that case a more abrupt right to inhumanity. However, the masculine representation is at the same time symbolic and separative, which can entail not only indifference but also a greater ability to conclude."[97] According to the masculine paradigm, the link that binds humanity under the conditions of love is that of *metaphor,* the paternal metaphor that inflates the sphere of humanity by defining *similarities* between men and between discursive spheres of life. According to the feminine syntagm, humanity is the *knotting* of various discursive strands and truth procedures, where each element remains both irreducibly itself and intimately imbricated in the others. In Badiou's account, the masculine mode concludes by means of the symbolic technology of mourning, piece-by-piece symbolizing and desymbolizing. The feminine mode, however, is not exactly melancholic, which we might expect according to a Freudian account of their opposition, but allows for separation not only through untying, but through the violent cut that is *inhuman* precisely in getting at the dead heart of the human. Each mode—metaphor and knot—represents different possibilities of binding and unbinding the universalism of humanity: the former, by totalizing; the latter, by infinitizing.

Earlier I borrowed Badiou's terms to describe sexuation as an "event" in being that requires a decision: a choice must be made between positions without positive difference, terms that are virtually indiscernible, in order to establish difference as such—the *two* of sexual difference. However, we can now refine that characterization by further utilizing Badiou's terms and concepts. If the choice of sexuation that is called "man" constructs what Badiou calls a new "situation" from the trauma of the imperative to choose, we can infer that the choice of sexuation called "woman" names an *event,* and as such is *not* constructible, cannot be defined or discerned according to the rules of the set in which it is included. This is to say that woman constitutes what Badiou (following the mathematician Paul Cohen) calls a *generic* set, which Badiou, without further comment, symbolizes as ♀.[98] A "generic set" is included in a sit-

95. Alain Badiou, "Sujet et Infini," 297–98.
96. Ibid., 304.

97. Alain Badiou, "What Is Love?" *Umbr(a)* 1 (1996): 52.
98. Cohen uses *G* to symbolize the generic set. Badiou writes, "By a dilection whose origin I leave to the reader to discover, I will choose for this inscription the symbol ♀" (*L'être et l'événement* [Paris:

uation without belonging to it, without being proper to it or presented in it; that is, without being discernible in the terms of the situation. The process of a truth, according to Badiou, is the elaboration of a subset of elements that, although invisible and insignificant from the perspective of the situation, remain faithful to the event and testify to its truth. There are no positive predicates other than this fidelity that unify the elements of generic sets, and they remain *open,* as "sets made up of infinitely many members that share no common characteristic and conform to no common rule."[99] To say directly what Badiou implies by using the symbol ♀ to designate the generic set, the paradigmatic instance of such a set is the set of *not-all women.* Furthermore, we should pay attention to the directly political implications of this mathematical notion; as Peter Hallward suggests, the axiom of the generic set "justifies the *possibility* . . . of joining 'entirely disparate sets together in unnatural union.'"[100] That is, because the generic set has no positive characteristics other than a connection which is elaborated between it and the event to which it testifies, *new* sets that have no principle of identity can be made by combining generic sets. These new sets can be *unnatural* sets or communities that depend on nothing to hold them together and which cannot even be perceived from any position outside the set—*neighborhoods,* we might say, that exist within the political without being determined by citizenship, nationality, or any other legal or autochthonous status. Hence, the logic of the not-all suggests an *infinite* set of possibilities of social inclusion and association distinct from the principles of representation, equality, and totality that determine the conceptual closure of the political theology of the sovereign. Moreover, we can take the risk of further extrapolating from Badiou's account to suggest that such a truth-process, or linked set of fidelities, opens up the space of the political to the love of the neighbor.[101] According to Badiou, if the political truth

Seuil, 1988], 392). I am deeply indebted here to Peter Hallward's comments on the generic set in his book *Badiou: A Subject to Truth* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

99. Hallward, *Badiou,* 132.

100. Hallward, *Badiou,* 132; quoting John Randolph Lucas, *Conceptual Roots of Mathematics* (London: Routledge, 2000), 333.

101. Badiou's account of the political has an interesting relationship to Schmitt's. Badiou begins where Schmitt ends, in the sense that he posits that "a fundamental datum of ontology is that the state of the situation always exceeds the situation itself. There are always more parts than elements. . . . This question is really that of power. The power of the State is always superior to that of the situation." But if this superiority of power over situation—an incalculable, errant, intrinsically *infinite* disequilibrium—echoes Schmitt's account of the sovereign's theological ability to declare a state of exception and to act in excess of the laws of nature and the land, the political event per se begins, according to Badiou, only at a secondary phase. It begins in its ability to *interrupt* "the subjective errancy of the power of the State," which thereby configures the State as a situation, measures

procedure moves *from the infinite to the one*—the "oneness" of equality that arises when a measure has been given to the disequilibrium of sovereign power—the truth procedure in the case of *love* moves in the opposite direction, *from the one to the infinite,* through the mediation of the two of sexual difference.[102] Badiou writes, "In this sense—and I leave the reader to meditate upon this—politics is love's numerical inverse. In other words, love begins where politics ends."[103] That is, if politics describes a movement from the infinite to the one, by way of three, love describes the movement from the one to the infinite, by way of two (see fig. 2).

Politics		Love
Infinite → 3 → One	//	One → 2 → Infinite

The Neighbor

Figure 2

The political theology of the neighbor opens up where the one truth procedure passes into the other, love into politics or politics into love, precisely at the point of contact of the two "ones" and the two "infinites," the seam where the equality and sameness of the political encounters the singularity and difference of love (see fig. 3). If we think of the relationship between "politics" and "love" in figure 3 as that of the two sides of a Möbius strip, the neighbor marks the point where the strip twists and the one merges into the other—a position with no intrinsic "place" of its own, but always shifting along the continuum created by the ligature of the political and the amorous (see fig. 4). Because the three of politics remains forever incommensurable with the two of love, this moving point must be thought of not as the positive intersection of overlapping sets or topological surfaces, but as the approach of het-

its power, and in doing so achieves a degree of "freedom" by putting the state at a distance from its own power.

102. Or, more precisely, through three modalities of the infinite, one of which corresponds to Schmitt's infinite disequilibrium of the sovereign's ability to declare the exception to the situation. Badiou's three modalities of the infinite in politics are (1) the infinite of the situation of collectivity, (2) the infinite disproportion of state power over the collective, and (3) the infinite distance of the freedom opened by fixing a measure to state power ("Politics as Truth Procedure," in *Theoretical Writings,* 157).

103. Ibid., 159–60.

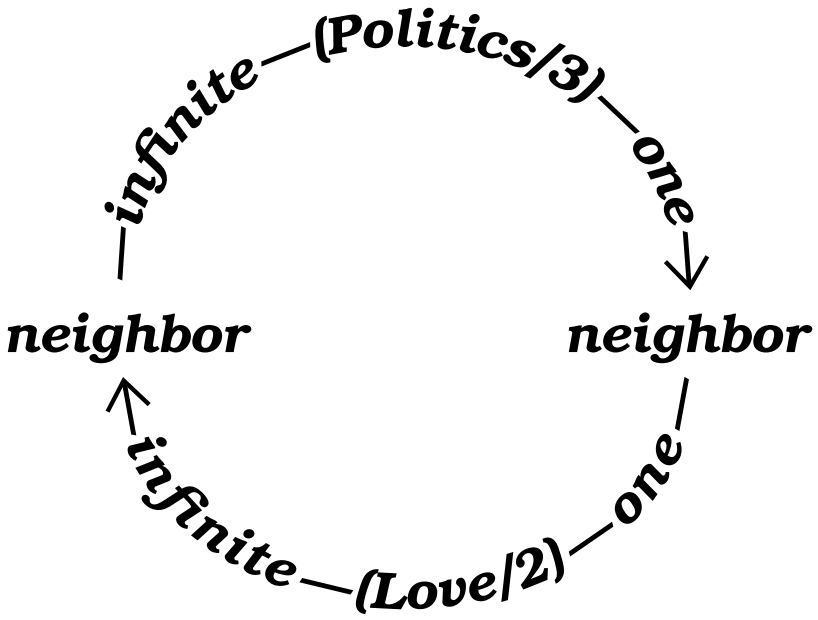

Figure 3

eronomous truth procedures in an infinite calculus of proximity that we name "the neighbor." The question of the role—if any—that the theological plays or can play in Badiou's thinking (a philosophy matched in modernity in its concrete universality and systematic multiplicity perhaps only by that of Rosenzweig) remains open. Badiou does not grant religion the dignity of the four basic truth procedures he describes—pol-

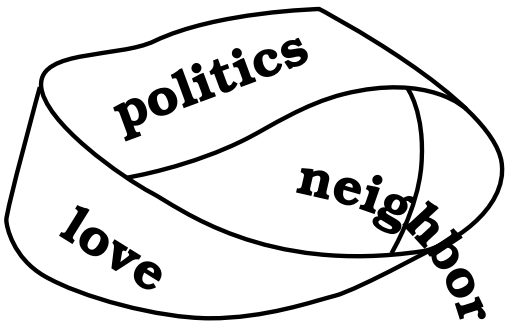

Figure 4

itics, science, art, and love; clearly Badiou's notion of "fidelity" is to be sharply distinguished from any simple notion of religious belief. But perhaps, to follow Badiou's suggestion that we should "meditate" on the fact that "love begins where politics ends," one way to do so would be to propose a political theology of the neighbor.

In a series of lectures delivered at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of California, Irvine, in fall 2003 and spring 2004, Alain Badiou presented new theories of love and the neighbor. For Badiou, the question of the neighbor is fundamentally the question of the *neighborhood:* just as there is no possible formulation of a sexual relationship, so two elements in a set, or two people in a world, cannot be directly linked as "neighbors," but only asserted as being in the same neighborhood. And what is a neighborhood? Rather than a definition based on topological nearness or shared points of identification, Badiou describes neighboring in terms of "openness." A neighborhood is an *open* area in a world: a place, subset, or element where there is no boundary, no difference, between the inside of the thing and the thing itself. Similarly, an element can belong to a set without being included in that set; there can still be a something that demarcates a difference between it and the set itself.[104] That is, merely to be on the inside of something is not the same as being included in or interior to that thing or community. For example, a Mexican gardener in Southern California who is an illegal alien is part of the subset called the workforce without being included in that subset, that is, without being proper to it. Badiou calls a set where there is no difference between it and what is interior to it *open*. Hence, to say that one element is neighbor to another is to assert that they are included in a common open set, that there is no difference between each and the set which it is interior to. Furthermore, since the union of two open sets is another open set, the union of two neighborhoods is itself open and thus presents new possibilities of neighboring.

To assert that two elements are "in the same neighborhood," that they are in the interior of the same open place, is not to make an obser-

104. Badiou distinguishes between "membership" and "inclusion" in a set in *L'être et l'événement:* "membership" is the originary relation of set theory, whereby a multiple (a set of elements, all multiples in themselves) is counted as *belonging* to another multiple (another set). According to the "power set axiom" of classical set theory, however, every set is made up not only of its elements or subsets but also of the *set* of all its elements, which must be considered as distinct from and excessive to those elements or subsets themselves. This set of all the subsets of a set does not belong to the set but is *included* in that set and thereby marks an ontological gap in the set—and, for Badiou, in being itself (*L'être et l'événement* [Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1988], 95–107).

vation or an interpretation, according to Badiou; it is a *decision,* one that involves work, a force and *forcing* rather than the passivity that "being open" might suggest. This work is the construction of a common open area, a new place of universality. The question of the neighborhood, finally, is subjective, a question that calls for a decision to be in the interior of a place and that requires fidelity and work to remain open. We may choose, Badiou insists. Either we can point to our objective differences, the things that separate us from the world, the differences that wall off an inside from an outside, or we can expose ourselves to the world. If our particularity and individuality are what we preserve in the first choice, the decision to be in a neighborhood—located in a particular place, but *open*—is for the sake of universality. And insofar as the union of open sets is itself open, an unlimited number of open sets can be united without being closed or totalized. Hence, the neighborhood opens on *infinity,* endlessly linking new elements in new subsets according to new decisions and fidelities. The political theology of the sovereign elaborated by Schmitt is based on a logic of the boundary; even if the limit is always transgressed in the sovereign's incipient decision to suspend the law, transgression is the exception that proves and reasserts the limit's rule. Badiou's notion of the neighborhood, as a set where *no boundary* separates the set and its members and *no limit* is drawn between inside and outside, can contribute to the elaboration of a political theology of the neighbor. And just as much as the political theology of the sovereign is based on an arbitrary, nondetermined moment of choice, so the opening of a political theology of the neighbor requires a purely subjective act, a *decision.*

For Badiou, *love* is the decision to create a new open set, to knot two interiorities into a new logic of world, a new *neighborhood.* Whereas Lacan argues that love is the supplement for the radical lack of the sexual relationship, for Badiou this supplementarity must be understood not as the (imaginary) dissimulation of or (symbolic) compensation for the sexual failure, but as the real encounter that occurs precisely on the basis of the impossibility of the sexual relation and that retroactively *creates* sexual difference.[105] According to Badiou,

105. The complicated question arises here as to the degree of difference between Badiou's position and Lacan's. For Badiou, Lacan's account of love is "pessimistic": he argues that Lacan's statement that love makes up for the lack of a sexual relationship makes love into no more than a poor substitute for sexual nonrelationship. However, it is not clear to me that this fairly represents everything that Lacan says about love. I would suggest that for Lacan there are at least two modes of love, one that is an illusion that merely disguises the truth of nonrelationship and another that involves a real encounter. But this is an elaborate issue that cannot be taken up in full here.

> There is at least one non-null term that enters in its place in rapport with the two sexed positions. We will inscribe this term, supposed local mediator of global non-rapport, under the letter *u.* . . . So I advance what I could call the humanistic thesis, which is that the two positions M and W share a multitude of predicatives allowing for detailing almost to infinity their common membership in Humanity. This thesis in reality hearkens back to the non-rapport, to support a detailed description: that what the two terms have in common makes a sort of acceptable approximation of a rapport. It is clear that if there is certainly an element which ties up the two non-related terms in the space of non-rapport, it is certain that this element is absolutely indeterminate, indescribable, uncomposable.[106]

For Badiou, it is only on the basis of love that the fact of two sexes can retroactively be established; it is not that sexual difference is the basis for love, but that *love is the condition of sexual difference,* love *makes* the sexes two. The point *u* of love, unlike the *objet a* of desire, establishes the conditions for an encounter that produces an authentic *twoness*—rather than the false attempts of the Romantic notion of love to create an imaginary "one" (mystical union) or the Christian notion of love to create a symbolic "three" (a child)—through which desire supports itself. The truth of love occurs on the site of the failure of sex—love is itself the truth of sex, in the sense that it creates *the two* that sex fails to bring together in relationship. Badiou writes, "love is the only available experience of a Two counted from itself, of an immanent Two. Each singular love has this of the universal—that, were it ignored by everyone, it contributed on its part, while limping along as long as it could, to establish that the Two can be thought in its place, a place supported partially by the hegemony of the One as well as by the inclusion of the Three." On the ground of the real, between the "One" of the family and the "Three" of the political, love works to find and hold fast to a Two, an immanent two, two-as-such, the result of neither addition nor subtraction, a Two that does not fall into One or reach up to Three, but to infinity: "One, Two, infinity: such is the numericity of the amorous procedure. It structures the becoming of a generic truth. What truth? The truth of the situation *insofar as there exist two disjunct positions*."[107] If the situation, the state of affairs, the status quo of a particular world, presents itself *as if* it were unified, love is what "fractures" that imaginary unity, brings out the universal truth of disjunction in a particular situation. The world

106. Badiou, "The Scene of Two," *Lacanian Ink* 21 (2003): 48.
107. Badiou, "What Is Love?" 45.

that love opens, the new neighborhood, *within* the political and *beyond* the familial, is the only place where the two may be encountered as such. Badiou suggests that to love the neighbor is to create a new open space, a new *universality* in a particular place.

In a talk on the topic of "Psychoanalysis in the City," Jacques-Alain Miller commented on Lacan's notion of the not-all in terms of changing world political reality. According to Miller, the theory of psychoanalytic practice that Lacan inherited from Freud was situated in a world in which the function of the father and the politics of patriarchy were still dominant, but that is no longer the case.[108] Miller follows Antonio Negri's description of the current historical moment as no longer "disciplinary," in the Foucauldian sense, but a new time of *empire:* "What [Negri] calls *impero,* empire, is a regime that no longer proceeds by prohibition and repression and which, thus, renders transgression and the very idea of revolution and liberation problematic."[109] Miller describes the "machines" that produce the civilizations of Discipline and Empire in terms of Lacan's formulas of sexuation and as a shift from the logic of "all" to that of "not-all":

> The function of the father is in effect linked to the structure that Lacan discovered in masculine sexuation. A structure that comprises an all with a supplementary and antinomic element that poses a limit, and which allows the all to be constituted precisely as such, which poses the limit and thus allows for organization and stability. This structure is the very matrix of the hierarchical relation. The not-all is not an all that includes a lack, but on the contrary a series in development without limit and without totalization. This is why the term of globalization is a vacillating term for us, since it is precisely a question of there being no longer any all and, in the current process, what constitutes the all, and what constitutes a limit, is threatened and staggers. What is called globalization is a process of detotalization that puts all the "totalitarian" structures to the test. It is a process by which no element is provided with an attribute it can be assured of by principle and forever. We do not have the security of the attribute, but its attributes, its properties, its accomplishments are precarious. The not-all implies precariousness for the element.[110]

108. "The entire Freudian conceptual apparatus retains the mark of the disciplinary epoch: interdiction, repression, censorship . . . which is what permitted a junction between psychoanalysis and Marxism, in the form of Freudo-Marxism or the 1968 style of contestation. . . . Lacan conceptualized psychoanalysis during the disciplinary epoch, but . . . he also anticipated the psychoanalysis of the imperial epoch" (Jacques-Alain Miller, "Milanese Intuitions [1]," *Mental Online: International Journal of Mental Health and Applied Psychoanalysis* 11 [May 2003]: 13, www.mental-nls.com).

109. Describing the current postdisciplinary era, Miller writes, "Everything is now an affair of arrangement. We no longer dream of what is outside. There is nothing but trajectories, arrangements and regimes of jouissance. The Borromean knot is already an effort to find a way out of a structure based on binary opposition and the disciplinary organization that this cleavage implies" (ibid., 14).

The formulas of man's sexuation also describe the political logic of the Freudo-Marxist era, when the world was understood as a totality, species were defined in terms of genera, and entities were assumed to be possessed of stable properties. According to Miller, the new globalism expresses not only the logic of the not-all, but also specifically feminine qualities: "the rise in society of values said to be feminine, those of compassion, of the promotion of listening practices, of the politics of proximity, all of which must from now on affect political leaders. The spectacle of the world may be becoming decipherable, more decipherable if we relate it to the machine of the not-all."[111] Miller's formulation of the relationship of the masculine "all" and feminine "not-all" reflects some aspects of the relationship we described between the love of God (structured under the Name of the Father) and the love of the Neighbor (the encounter with the Thing) and gives us some more indication of what the political theology of the not-all might be like. Although we may not share Miller's confidence that the world we find ourselves in today is one that supports "feminine values" and psychoanalytic "listening practices" any more than during the modern "disciplinary" phase of the regime of capitalism, we can take his essay as a confirmation of the expediency of developing a political theology of the neighbor in the topology of the not-all.

We must be cautious, however, about accepting the positive value of the "politics of proximity" that Miller calls for, despite its evocation of the relationship of nearness or neighborliness. Proximity in Levinas represents the infinite approach of the other, the other whose otherness "obsesses" me, excluding all other concerns, yet maintained at a certain distance from the self in order to prevent its assimilation to self-sameness. In this sense, proximity as an absolute value is changeless, static, what we might call a figure of "bad infinity." What is excluded here is the question of a community of such neighbors, the *neighborhood* that is infinite in its openness, its lack of boundaries, and its *lack of* obsession with the otherness of the other. Moreover, Miller sees the not-all

110. Jacques-Alain Miller, "Milanese Intuitions (2)," *Mental Online* 12 (May 2003): 11–12, www.mental-nls.com.

111. Ibid., 12.

as a historical development from the All, the progression from an era of "Man" to one of "women." Although at times this may have some descriptive value, I am inclined to see the All and the not-all as logical events rather than chronological situations, simultaneous rather than sequential, and to see them together as defining a structure that always determines political theology, rather than as the supersession of one by the other. Finally, Miller's characterization of the logic of the not-all as that of "globalization" risks losing the *universalism* of the political theology of the neighbor. As Eric Santner points out in *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life,* a truly psychoanalytic universalism is opposed to "globalism," at least in its current dominant understanding: "for global consciousness, every stranger is ultimately just like me, ultimately familiar. . . . For the psychoanalytic conception of universality . . . it is just the reverse: the possibility of a 'We,' of communality, is granted on the basis of the fact that every familiar is ultimately strange and that, indeed, I am even in a crucial sense a stranger to myself."[112]

How can we find the place of the neighbor between the two of love and the three of politics? According to Lacan, it is only by way of the three, by beginning with the political. Lacan argues that the injunction to "love the neighbor as yourself" is precisely the elaboration of the three and the emergence of a new two from out of it; "it's only because we count to three that we can count to two": "If I have said that religion is that of which one can make the most true . . . I'm going to draw your attention to what I've yakked on about for quite a while, right? that you shall love your neighbor as yourself—does that mean you will be three, yes or no? Yeah. The Borromean knot can only be made of three. The imaginary and the symbolic are not enough, a third element is needed, and I designate it the real."[113] Why are *three loves* implied by the injunction, rather than two (love of my neighbor, love of myself)? Love of myself is *imaginary,* the specular reflection on myself that constitutes the narcissistic ego in the mirror stage; and love of the neighbor is *real,* insofar as the neighbor harbors the strange kernel of enjoyment Freud and Lacan call the Thing. However, this twoness cannot be reached directly and does not subsist on its own, Lacan argues, except by passing by way

112. Santner, *On the Psychotheology of Everyday Life,* 5–6.

113. Lacan, *Les non-dupes errent,* December 11, 1973. Lacan argues that when we add one signifier (or number) to another, we do not get two, but *three,* since we also need to take into account the "decoding" or computation that was involved. Hence, even the primary relationship that the master's discourse describes, between S_1 and S_2, involves the *relationship* between them, indicated as $ (the subject). See Badiou, *Le nombre et les nombres* (Paris: Seuil, 1990).

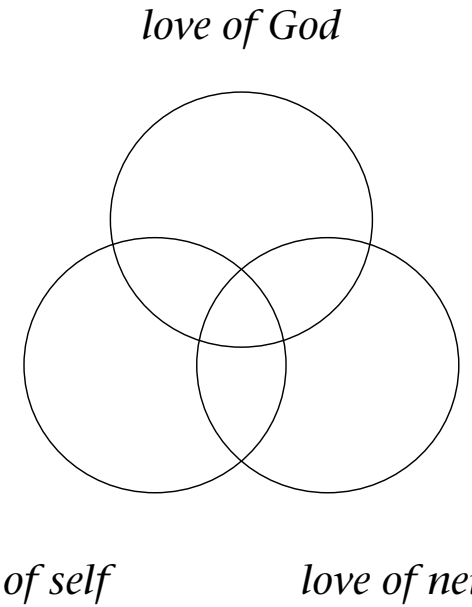

Figure 5

of the third love, never superseded, the *love of God,* which is the model of symbolic love, the love of the father that sustains the symbolic order. Hence, love of the neighbor *includes within it* the love of God, and together they constitute the Borromean knot of political theology (see fig. 5). Drawing such a knot on the board during a session of his seminar of 1973–74, entitled *Les non-dupes errent,* Lacan comments,

> If we take the symbolic as playing the role of the means [*moyen*] between the Real and the Imaginary . . . we are thus at the heart of that love which I just spoke about under the name of divine love. . . . The symbolic taken as love . . . is under the form of this commandment, which praises to the skies being and love. Insofar as it joins something as being and as love, these two things can only be said to support the Real on the one hand and the Imaginary on the other. . . . This is where the dimension of *love your neighbor as yourself* comes from. I've got to say it: be a dupe and you won't err.[114]

The Borromean knot is characterized by the fact that each loop holds together the other two; to cut one is to unravel the connection between the other two. In terms of the three loves, this implies that the relation-

114. Lacan, *Les non-dupes errent,* December 18, 1973.

ship between any two terms requires the third: the subject loves the neighbor only by means of the love of God, and loves God only by means of the love of the neighbor. Moreover, these relationships involve what Lacan characterizes as a kind of salutary "*dupery*": the nondupes err, according to Lacan, insofar as they believe themselves free of the traps of fantasy, the eruptions of the unconscious, and most of all, the chains of religious ideology. It is only those who know themselves "duped" by these structures, ensnared in their logic, who are able to find a kind of nonerrance. Lacan comments to the analysts and academics in his seminar, "I know quite well you're not believers, right? But you are all the more conned, because even if you aren't believers . . . you believe. I'm not saying that you assume it: *it assumes you*."[115] For Lacan, the force of religious discourse is not contingent on whether or not we believe in God, whether we take commandments such as "love your neighbor as yourself" seriously as binding, as *law,* or dismiss them as naive moral recommendations. Our subjectivity is itself a function of the intransigent signifiers called "scripture," which, needless to say, are often mobilized for dupery, knavery, and some of the worst crimes perpetrated against humanity. Nevertheless, these signifiers are weighted with a reality that is ignored only at the cost of even greater errors, foolery, and suffering. To be a dupe is, of course, not a guarantee of nonerrance: a "fool for God" is still a fool. But to fail to take the risk of dupery by resorting to the lures of cynical reason is surely to err.

I would like to suggest here a possible schematization that may help us describe the contours of the political theology of the neighbor (see fig. 6). If we think of these circles as both threads in a Borromean knot and the intersecting sets of a Venn diagram, the following implications emerge. The intersection of the self and the neighbor is negative, the abyss of the other's jouissance that inhabits me, in the form of the *objet a,* the remnant of the primordial Thing. The intersection of the self and God is the primal signifier, the Name of the Father, by which the subject is interpellated into the symbolic order, taken up into the All that is defined by the law of castration: $\forall x\ \Phi x$. The intersection of the neighbor and God is the place of the not-all, the field of the subject who chooses to inscribe herself as "woman," $\overline{\forall x}\ \Phi x$. And the empty place in

115. Ibid. The name of this year of Lacan's seminar puns on the famous undelivered seminar of ten years earlier, "Les Noms du Père," which, after a first session, Lacan cancelled, refusing to ever take it up again. The seminar called *Les non-dupes errent* is a way for Lacan to put something in the place of "the Names of the Father" without literally breaking his vow to leave it unspoken. It is as if Lacan is warning us against imagining that knowledge of the paternal signifiers would allow us to escape from their grasp, reminding us that we must find a more subtle strategy if we wish not to err.

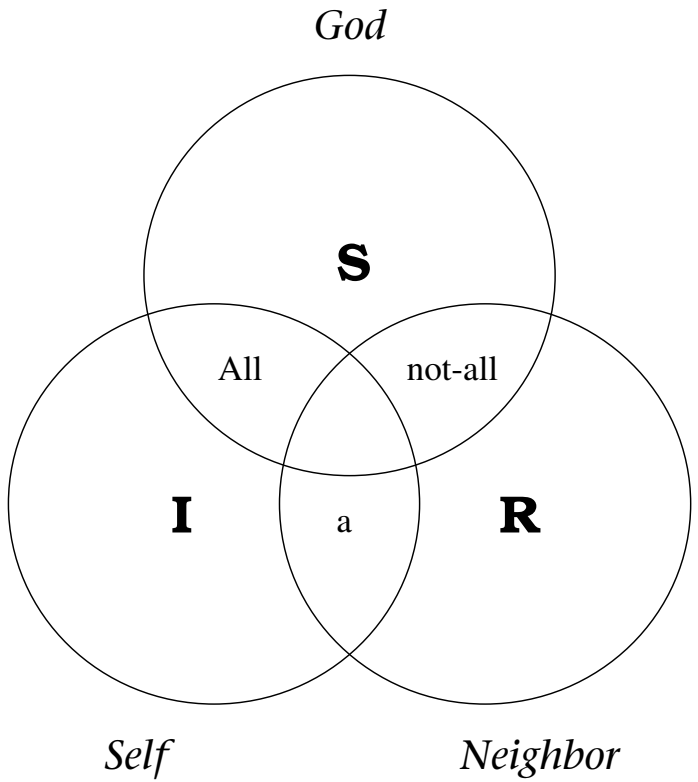

Figure 6

the center, the point of intersection of God, Self, and Neighbor? We might be tempted to locate the phallus there, as the signifier of lack whose vicissitudes link the symbolic, imaginary, and real. But perhaps it is better to leave it open, in order to allow it to signify precisely the Open, the set that is identical with its interior.

To conclude, let me propose six theses concerning the political theology of the neighbor.

1. The political theology of the neighbor is supplementary to the political theology of the sovereign. As such, it is not merely an addition to the theory of sovereignty, but *decompletes* it by subtracting something from the field of the political and naming it the neighbor.

2. The political theology of the neighbor opens up between the family and the polis; it is an act of spacing that maintains the minimum distance required to resist holophrastic fusion (totalitarianism) and possessive individualism (liberal democracy). The space it clears is open, infinite.
3. The political theology of the neighbor thinks the universal from the situation of differences. The condition of the particular comes to stand for the possibility of the universal, not in the reduction of differences, but by determining what is *singularly universal* in them. Hence, justice is not a function of equalizing differences, but depends on sublimating in thought the different to the condition of the same.
4. The political theology of the neighbor materializes the deadlock of ethics and politics. It assumes their radical incommensurability and finds its resources in their disjunction. The knowledge sought by the political theology of the neighbor is not symbolic or imaginary, but knowledge in the real.
5. The political theology of the neighbor is not descriptive but prescriptive. It speaks in the imperative, but without affect, aspiring to the condition of mathematics: "Let x = the neighbor, y = myself, and z = God . . ." It speaks in the name of a law that has been drained of its jouissance and remains as pure structure.
6. The temporality of the political theology of the neighbor is a present tense messianism; it dilates the time of the now by resisting both historicism and progressivism. It is a profane science through which redemption may make its quietest approach.