



**Diagrammatic Formatting of the Human Subject in and as Artistic
Research: Lacan's Logical Square and Hysteric's Discourse**

by

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Abstract

The article presents an argument towards the adaptation and mapping of two tables by the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan in a context of consideration of oneself as subject within the activity of artistic research. The author argues the possibility from the viewpoint of his own experience as an artist. By implication, this may be of relevance to and confer with the experience of the article's readers. The two tables are specifically Lacan's Logical Square and the Hysteric's Discourse—of Lacan's four basic proposed discourses. Lacanian theory is referenced to the extent that it should be possible to comprehend not merely the tables' adaptation, but that the latter is viable only through and as a manifestation of such theory. Given that his primary visual medium is drawing, the author begins and develops a small diagram by way of illustration, and in one section of the article demonstrates the Lacanian concept of *jouissance* through and as written language and how it can affect how one writes, both initiatives of which show oneself as subject situated within practice.

Keywords: Lacanian psychoanalytical theory, Logical Square, Hysteric's Discourse, subject, artist, artistic research, diagram, language

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Introduction

The hypothesis of the article is that two of Lacan’s formulaic tables, the Logical Square and the Hysteric’s Discourse—of Lacan’s four discourses Hysteric, Master, University, Analytic—when mapped, can suggest the route charted by the artist as his own subject in relation to a movement that concerns his work’s research process, while not ignoring but not including the artistic outcome in the movement. While the hypothesis may be applicable to artists generally, its discussion is here conveyed in the specific context of the article’s author as himself also an artist.

The concept of the human subject is articulated through psychoanalytical theory, of Freudian foundation, and substantially further developed by Jacques Lacan, among others. While the human subject is different to that of, say, the scientific- or mathematical subject, in Lacanian theory the latter as forms of subject have been used to articulate human psychological dimensionality. The theory has it that implicit in language, however objectively it is spoken or written, is the subjective *voice* of the speaker or writer, particularly through the signifier basis of words and idiosyncrasies of grammar and pronunciation. To help address the problem of subjectivity in language, Lacan invents and develops tables, topologies and mathemes (combinations of numbers and letters) that enable one to orientate one’s subjectivity, albeit gradually and with increasing likelihood as one learns the theory.

On this occasion the author develops his own diagrammatic sketch of the two aforementioned mapped tables to support the argument. Why the Hysteric’s Discourse is here considered the most suitable of the discourses is due to the origin of psychoanalysis in Freud’s

hysteric patients, the structure of which encouraged a maximal level of subjective introspection, in the context of which Lacan (2007) states: “In saying ‘she,’ we are making the hysteric a woman, but this is not her privilege alone. Many men get themselves analyzed who, by this fact alone, are obliged to pass through the hysteric’s discourse, since this is the law, the rule of the game” (33). In the process, this should lay the formulaic grounding for how the author is positioned in the midst of his art practice as his own subject. Why this should be of interest is the contention that apart from whatever is the nature of one’s artwork, there is a sense of exploring one’s own inner concerns in subjective relationship to the practice. The implication of the latter is that the practice is a medium, and it is towards the medium itself, or that as informing any other imported content, to which one subjectively identifies. The idea is based on the likelihood that Lacan’s tables are adaptable to a range of situations. Le Gaufey (2020), for example, of the Logical Square, refers to how the so-termed “universals (the concepts) go their way, respond to (...), intersect (...), clash with (...) and contradict one another” (84). In the author’s own case as an artist, drawing is his visual medium, here exemplified through the development of a single idiosyncratic sketch.

The Argument

Dynamic stasis

In each of the four discourses, the movement around them is clockwise starting from the top-left corner, whereas the movement around the Logical Square, as illustrated in Lacan’s (2018) Seminar XIX, is anticlockwise. If both movements are mapped, this results in a kind of dynamic stasis. This oppositional dynamic will be reflected in the article through a degree of alternation of reference to each of the squares. The referenced artist, at once also the article’s author, is in effect not going anywhere, so much as situated subjectively within criteria that are

potentially informative of one's psychical disposition; such is the concern of oneself as automatically one's own subject.

Logical Square/Hysteric's Discourse

Lacan's (2007) Hysteric's Discourse—along with the other three discourses—is discussed by him in his Seminar XVII, and the Logical Square mainly in his Seminar XIX, the latter of which is the source of the article's references. In each case, the criteria are presented at four corners of a square, with horizontal, vertical and diagonal implied relationships. In the Logical Square, x is equal to man, woman, object or object-elements. The upturned A with x (All x) is more of a concept and errs to the affirmative, while the inverted E with x (At least one x) is more concerned with existence and errs to the negative.

In the generic discourse, which is also that of the Master, the hysteric is placed in the position of agent at the top-left corner of what is also a square, and the movement is in a clockwise direction (see Figure 1).

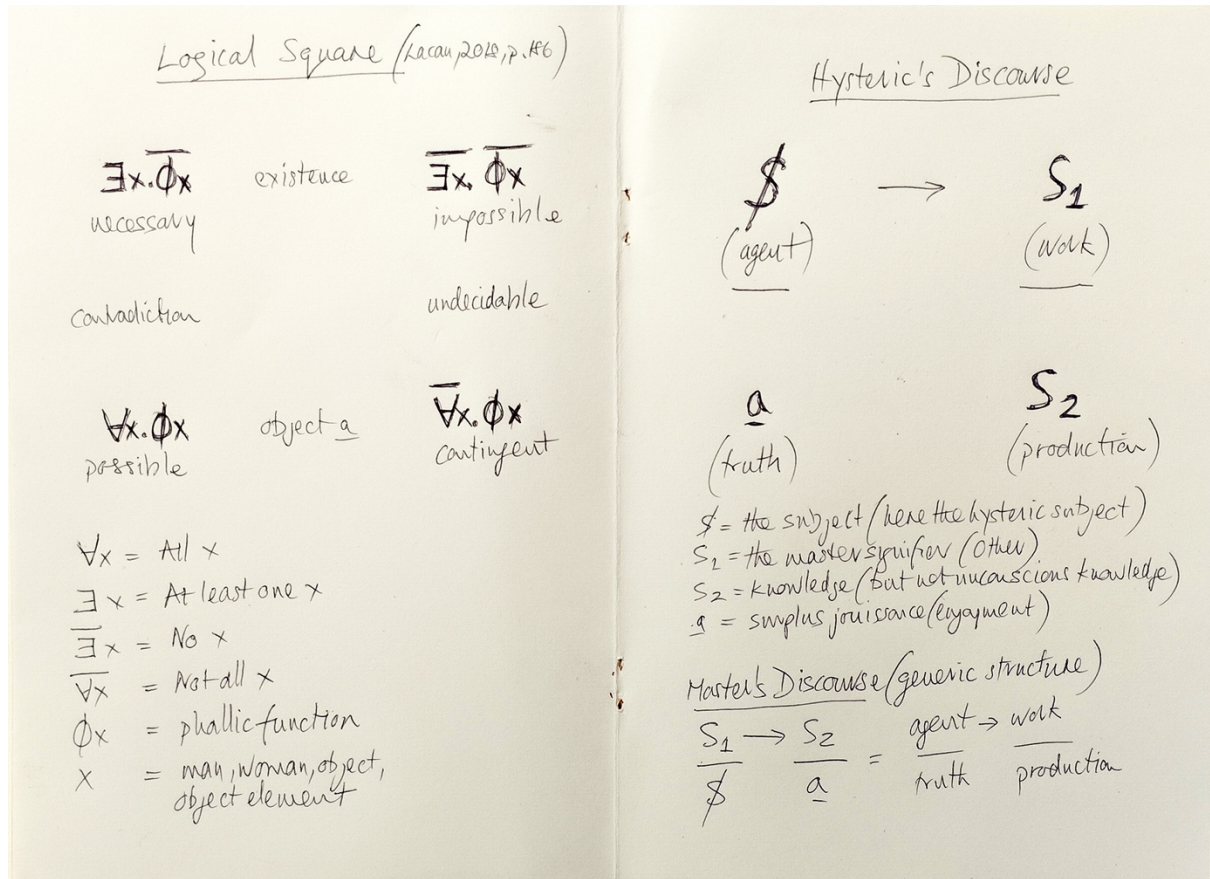


Figure 1: Layout of each of the squares with their mathemes and linguistic translations, and their keys

The Master's Discourse is shown in a smaller size below that of the Hysteric's Discourse in the diagram, Figure 1, which is also the discourses' generative structure. Each of the discourses in the order University, Master, Hysteric, Analyst rotates a quarter-clockwise turn, underpinned by the stable position of the Master's Discourse (Lacan, 2007, 43). For example, while the master is in the position of agent in the Master's Discourse, so too is the hysteric in the position of the underlying agent in the Hysteric's Discourse. While in the Master's Discourse S_2 would be the position of slave, or generically all others in a subordinate position to authority, the advantage of *work* as its underpinning is that the following argument will concern the hysteric as artist in discussion, in effect, with his artistic practice—or *their* practice, inasmuch as the argument is both generally applicable and non-gendered. While the key to the discourses is in the production of *jouissance* (to be further elaborated), in the Logical Square this value may mostly orientate around the idea of *contingency*, which is situated by Lacan at the lower right

corner of the Logical Square. Very generally stated, *jouissance* in the case of the subject of psychoanalysis concerns the psychic level of what may be considered enjoyment inhabiting the analysand's symptoms, which can involve modes of pain as well as pleasure. Such a driving force is likely to be most useful during if not *as* the developmental research basis of artistic activity. For this reason, only part of the mapping of the two squares will be relevant. The question of the outcome of research, commensurate with the top-right corner of the Logical Square—the corner which is most challenged by the hysteric in the Hysteric's Discourse—is not considered because it is less within the locus of research. The contention is that research is an in-between and developmental stretch of time, space, and subjective involvement, albeit with objective criteria variously as motivating forces. It is suggested that while the Hysteric's Discourse causes symptomatic traces of desire within one's *jouissance* through non-visible though unconsciously sensed triggers provided the subject by certain objects, termed object/s *a* (to be further elaborated), to occur in the lower-left corner of the square, one comes in at the same corner with and as *possible* because one always comes in with something—arguably, with one's *jouissance*. The contention is that the subjective motive of oneself as subject is to produce *jouissance*, which is why it may be better to have some awareness of one's subjective orientation in one's work in the first place.

The Hysteric

While in Freudian theory the hysteric is traditionally female, according to Lacan (2007), one sees “the hysteric fabricate a man as best she can—a man who would be animated by the desire to know” (34). Later in the same text, Lacan (citing Freud) states: “‘She’ is the hysteric, but this is not necessarily specific to one sex. As soon as you raise the question, ‘What does So-and-so want?’ you enter the function of desire, and you produce the master signifier” (130). Lacan suggests that the hysteric is the one “whose thinking loves to run on ahead of the speaker,” such is their eagerness to know (34). Fajnwaks (2024) mentions that for Lacan “hysteria is a two-person affair,” due not to a literal other person so much as a “semblant” (3) but to an *other* from the early formative period of development of identity in the Imaginary register of Lacan’s three structural registers Imaginary, Symbolic, Real. What holds one back, as hysteric, is that one is barred from access to the kind of knowledge that would disclose the nature of one’s enigma felt in and as one’s existence. Add to this the position of agent in the generic discourse (see Figure 1, above), therefore the master, one is also in the generic position of the listener or receiver.

The Other (S₁); Name-of-the-Father (S₂) Phallic Function

According to Dor (2004), S₁ is the originary signifier of desire of the mother, where the associated signifier is the phallus. The person who has the phallus is assumed to be the father. Knowledge of such desire, which is the domain of both the mother *and* the father, will be forever repressed in the unconscious and is symbolized in Lacanian theory by the big Other. The Other represents the law, and exerts its influence as “the product of a metaphor, the Name-of-the-Father being the new signifier (S₂) that, for the child, is substituted by other signifiers for the first and generative signifier of the desire of the mother.” S₂ stands for the repetition of substitute objects of desire that continually iterate, metaphorically, the “Name-of-the-Father”

(115-7). In the Logical Square, the latter dynamic, which is configured differently for men and women but results in a mandatory situation for men, and within which there is both connection and dissociation for women due to the biological differences that impact on the psychical, is termed the *phallic function*.

This master signifier, S_1 , is moved in the Hysteric's Discourse to the position of S_2 , which in the generic discourse involves the continual propagation of signifiers that are S_1 's unconscious representatives—in effect, the continual iteration of the symbolic father—that is synonymous with work or knowledge. There may be considered some ambivalence in the dynamic between these two forces. One pushes for return from the generic position, S_2 , in other words, while who or whatever one is in dialogue, as S_1 , is constitutionally disinclined to deliver.

Hysteric as artist

One could imagine that the hysteric as artist comes into their practice with the presumption that their aggregate artwork, in other words their accrued artistic achievement as outcome, will in a sense tell them what they need to know. The artwork, meanwhile, is in itself challenged in this respect by its artist's unrealistic expectations.

1. The artwork is pushed into the position of S_1 according to the Hysteric's Discourse, the master signifier or plethora of signifiers that run under that name, so it is right in a sense that the artist should presume that it conveys knowledge.
2. The artwork, however, is in fact at the position S_2 in terms of the generic discourse, the generator of substitute signifiers for the searched for and needed master signifier (or plethora of signifiers).

Arguably, to the extent that the Hysteric's Discourse can be mapped, the artist/artwork ratio is constitutionally confused, which is why a part of the Logical Square most commensurate with the research process, itself necessarily incomplete, is where the artist can orientate, with the

artwork more comfortably as the facilitator of whatever is its artist's inclination towards research rather than as master signifier, or assumed fountain of knowledge.

Agent mapped with *necessary*; *impossible*

Since the hysteric comes in at the position of agent in the Hysteric's Discourse, their mapping with *necessary* of the Logical Square in the same top-left corner cannot be ignored. That there should be at least one exception to everyone at *necessary* is due to the phallic function; to reiterate: an all-pervasive presumption of authority that is paternal in its orientation, irrespective of the gender of its representative at any time. Added to this, the hysteric as an example of the barred subject, \$, automatically disallowed knowledge of whatever it was, or happened, that resulted in the displacement of authority onto an abstract big Other. Dor (2004) states:

... the metaphor of the Name-of-the-Father is truly a structural crossroads.... it alienates the desire of the subject in the dimension of language by establishing a subjective division (*Spaltung*) that irreversibly separates him from part of himself as the unconscious comes into being. (119)

The hysteric is ambivalently in the position of power of the master, S₁, in the Master's Discourse, termed agent in the discourses' generic structure. While at *necessary* on the Logical Square one comes in with and as one's existence, subservient to the symbolic presumption that there will always be someone or something with enigmatic knowledge, the hysteric is in the position of waiting and expecting to be fed with knowledge from who/what they assume is the all-knowing at the top-right opposite corner, S₁, in the Hysteric's Discourse. The hysteric as the artist may assume that the all-knowing is the aggregate artwork, or at least the all-knowing's representative as the artwork. However, this is the position of work in the generic discourse, or S₂ in psychic terms, that is forever producing substitute signifiers, wholly subservient to the routines of feeding the position of S₁ – top-left. Added to which, concerning the Logical Square,

this same element is in the position of *impossible*: all that thwarts the smooth running of logical exchange and communication of knowledge by the ineffable—the simply impossible to fathom, which is the Real of Lacan’s three psychic structural registers. Since this ratio is one of ambivalence rather than either/or, one may conclude that the conduit of artist-to-artwork on the basis that the artist will learn from what the artwork embodies does not really or sufficiently work. In this article’s specific context, as the artist in a relatively autonomous position of conducting research, one might better approach the reading of the Logical Square not from coming in at *necessary* but from *possible*. The following reworking of Figure 1 shows the routes, each in green, of the Hysteric’s Discourse and Lacan’s (2018) own route around the Logical Square, proposed in support of his own argument (186) (see Figure 2).

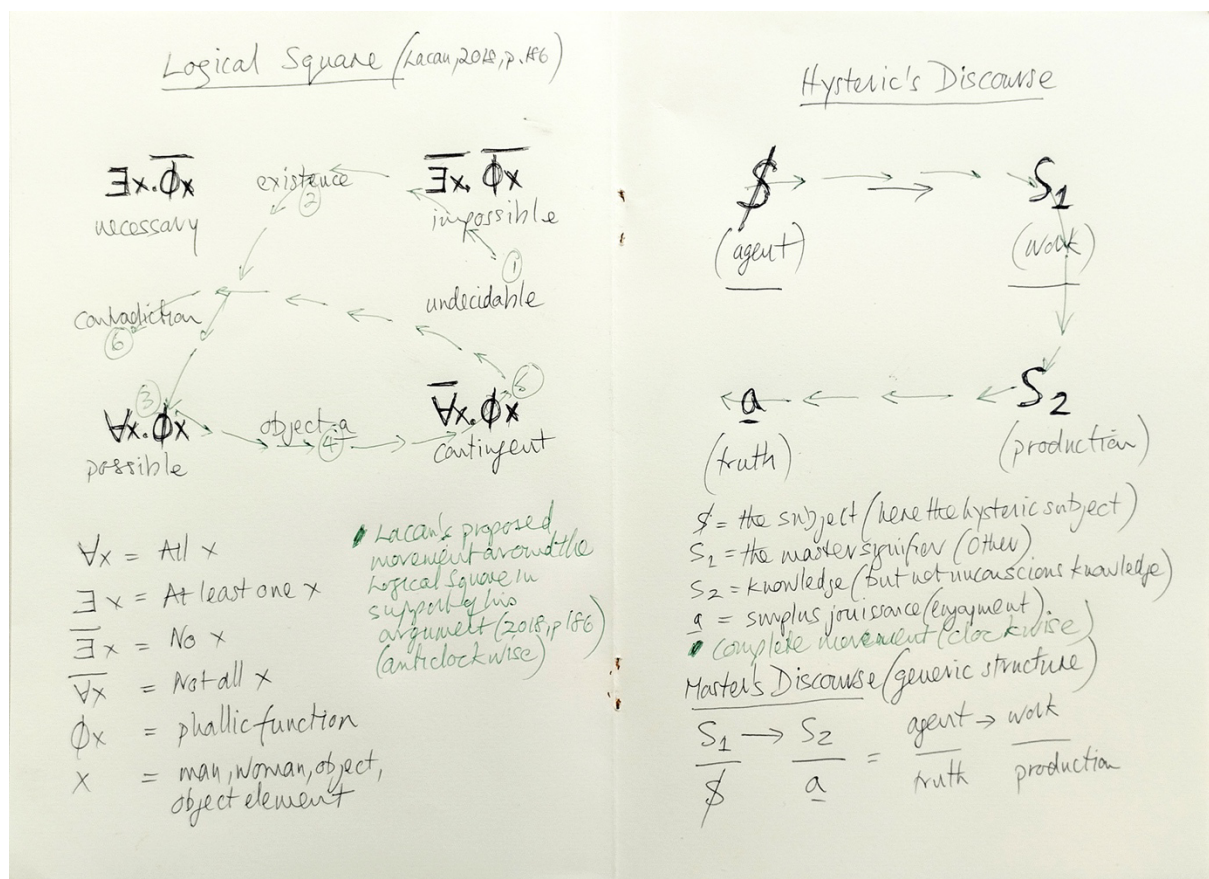


Figure 2: Routes of the Hysteric’s Discourse and the Logical Square

While the movement around the Logical Square is counterclockwise, that of the Hysteric’s Discourse is clockwise. The beginning of the author’s proposed route around the Logical

Square as artist, as the movement and development of research, is shown in red at the lower-left corner of the Logical Square, while the corresponding culmination of the Hysteric's Discourse is shown orientating lower-left in blue (see Figure 3).

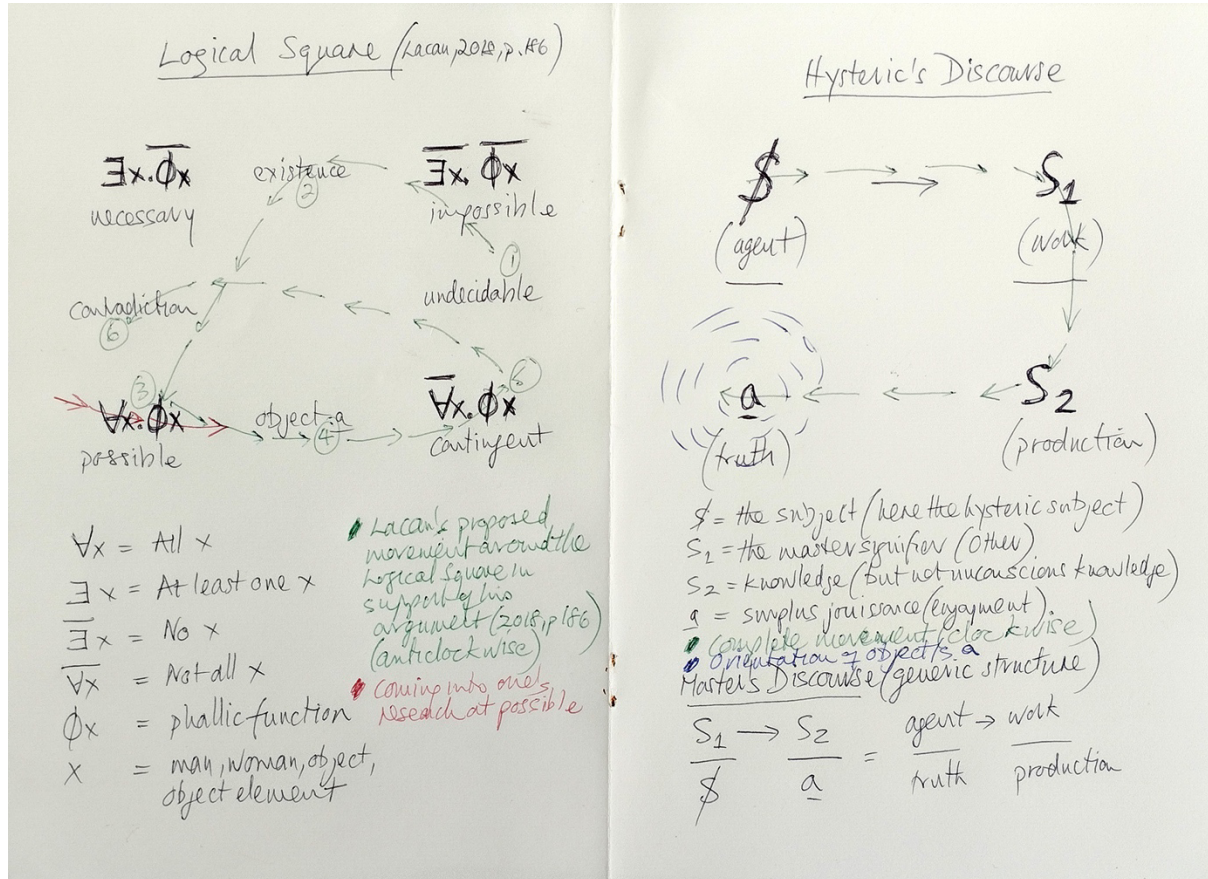


Figure 3: Beginning of author's route around the Logical Square in red at the lower-left corner of the Logical Square, and the corresponding culmination of the Hysteric's Discourse in blue, lower-left

Possible mapped with Truth

The article's author as artist comes into the Logical Square at **possible**, which maps with truth in the generic discourse, and the object a of the Hysteric's Discourse. As elaborated below, the nature of object a will in part determine the kind of truth that is here inferred. A truth of and within the unconscious, typically unknown, is located in the same position as object a , and Lacan (2007) links this not only with jouissance but, referring to Marx on his term "surplus

value,” with “surplus *jouissance*” (177). Insofar as these discourses are played out in actual situations, they will rarely be the first instances of their kind.

Le Gaufey (2020) states that the universal affirmative position, lower-left corner of the Logical Square, and universal negative position, upper-right corner, are “concepts” and go against the other diagonal pair that concern “existence.” As a concept, the term *possible* with regard to the universal affirmative suggests that “every male is a slave of the phallic function” (54). However, this pair, representing the human collective, stands for a very general sense and “without ... their enjoying any ontological weight whatsoever” (92). (The existential or practically operative positions are, in effect, the right-side pair; paradoxically, this is since impossibility is arguably as much an aspect of life as contingency.) Immediately above *possible*, as *necessary*, is at least one x that will have escaped the phallic function in their role as the instigator of symbolic castration, the big Other; in other words, anything that exudes authority as an abstraction—even while authority often finds representations. At this stage all genders are implicated, inasmuch as nobody can escape the consequences of symbolic castration as authority that presides over one’s individual life. It is just that woman, at the position of “not-all,” *contingent*, is arguably more in a position of choice in the matter. However, this sea of everyone, as it were, at *possible*, when mapped with truth or a , of the Hysteric’s Discourse, will be coming in with the indefinable surplus of their history—surplus *jouissance*—which in psychoanalytical terms is their truth; object a remnants of unconscious knowledge will have bearing on any new activity or new start to something already existing. One keys into such unconscious knowledge without being aware of it through objects and things that one is drawn to, when it can be their non-visible interest, the object/s a of them, that fuel desire.

Such truth positioned at the lower-left corner of the Hysteric’s Discourse in Lacan’s (2007) theory of course pertains to the subject perceived through the psychoanalytic lens.

Could one see this beginning at *possible* as paradoxically also an endpoint new creative beginning? Lacan refers to an entropic surplus to repetition, and that it is “through this wasting, that jouissance acquires a status and shows itself.... Only the dimension of entropy gives body to the fact that there is surplus jouissance there to be recovered” (50). The concept of object *a* relates to such jouissance:

These are various names [the names of the drives; oral, scopic, anal – author’s brackets] by which we can designate, as an object, the *a* – but the *a*, as such, is strictly speaking what follows from the fact that, at its origin, knowledge is reduced to an articulation of signifiers. This knowledge is a means of jouissance. (50)

Signifiers as the sensory- or in visual terms image-basis of the sign in Saussurian linguistic semiotics have visual equivalents (Kristeva, 1997, 35; Barthes, 2000, 114-5) and are, arguably, elements that pre-exist in terms that have re-emerged as the merest ideas and potentiality; to reiterate, those with which one comes into a situation. Lacan (2007) states: “It is with knowledge as a means of jouissance that work that has a meaning, an obscure meaning, is produced. This obscure meaning is the meaning of truth” (51).

Jouissance will therefore have filtrated clockwise from lower-right corner of the Hysteric’s Discourse, as S_2 , to its surplus as object/s *a*, or truth. Inasmuch as this corner is also that of the barred subject in the generic discourse, and the Hysteric is in fact the barred subject in the generic position of S_1 or agent in their own discourse, there is a linking tension between lower- and upper-right corners of the mapped squares. Jouissance as object/s *a* might therefore be at the start of both the research process and the hysteric’s coming into any new situation. Similar to this movement from lower- to upper-left, what the hysteric’s barring suggests is that there is a degree of *falling* involved, towards where the barred subject is in the generic discourse at the lower-left corner. Lacan (2007) states of the hysteric: “For, qua object *a*, she is the fall, the fallen object, fallen as an effect of discourse” (34). In less- or non-gendered terms, what variously oscillates and falls are myriad object/s *a*, the jouissance or signifiers in their rogue

state, as it were, in circulation in a discourse that forever reiterates and repeats. Lacan (2014) refers to the “falling away” of that of the placenta after child-birth and the phallus after ejaculation, and to the object *a* as examples of what he terms “deciduous objects” that can bear hidden jouissance (167-8), even to the “the rain of the brush” as the painter’s brushstroke terminates on the painting’s surface (Lacan, 1998, 114). Žižek (2006, citing Lacan) refers to the object *a* as a perceived object’s “blind spot,’ that which is ‘in the object more than the object itself,’ the point from which the object returns the gaze” (17) (see Figure 4).

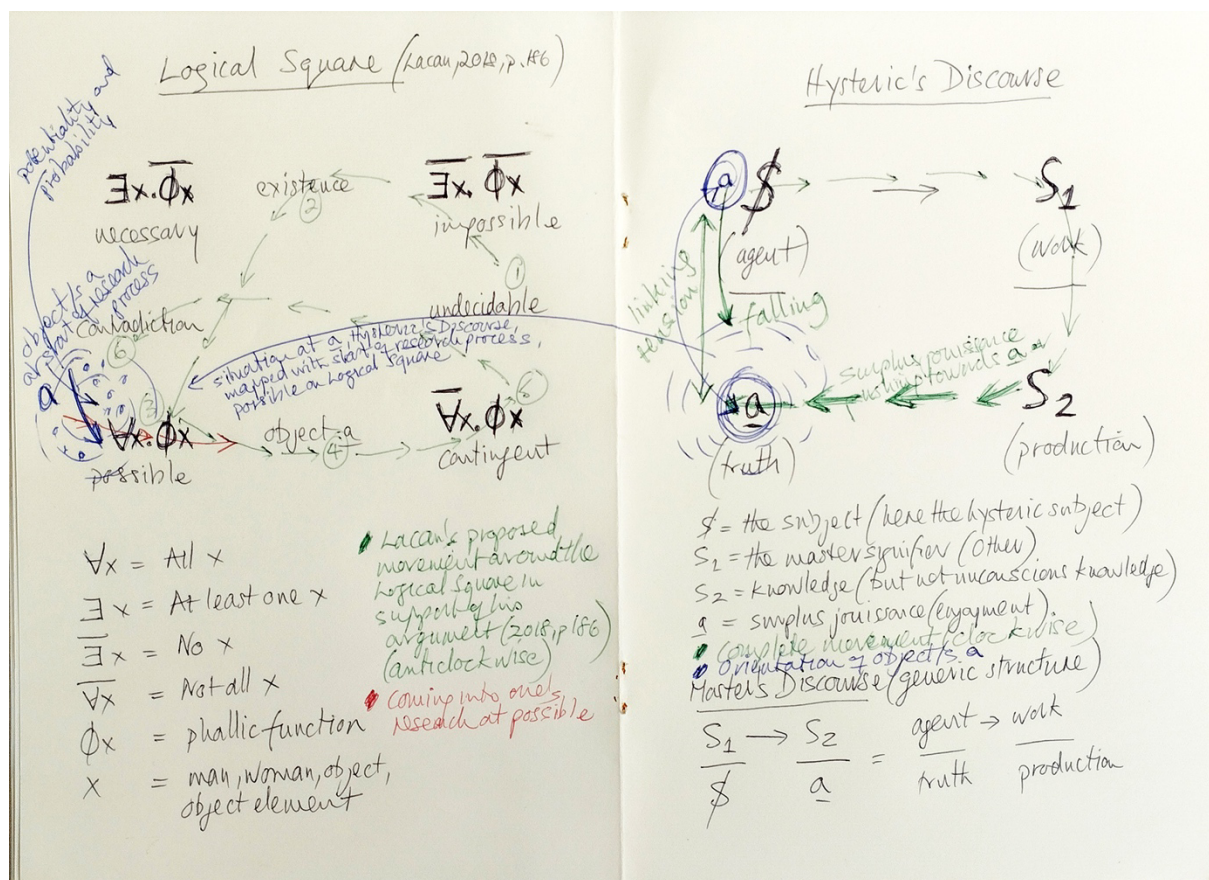


Figure 4: Ratios of “falling” of object/s *a* and tension on left side of the Logical Square and Hysteric’s Discourse

Object *a* and Contingent

There is a lower horizontal crossing at this point; it is a clockwise movement of jouissance from the lower-right corner of the Hysteric’s Discourse towards *a*, truth, and, as in this case, mapped with the Logical Square that passes counterclockwise along the clockwise stretch termed **object *a***, as shown on the Logical Square diagram. Le Gaufey (2020, citing Lacan)

refers to the object *a* as “the ‘object empty of a concept’” (32), and, in the context of sexuality, states: “It seems probable that the sexual instinct is in the first instance independent of its object; nor is its origin likely to be due to its object attractions” (68). The same could be said of the object *a* in general. However, while the object *a* in relation to the scopic sense is non-visible, Lacan (2014) maintains that it always has a relationship to the visible:

... this pivotal object *a* inasmuch as it stands, not only separated, but always eluded, somewhere other than where it sustains desire, and yet in a profound relationship to it.... It is in this respect that the most satisfying support of the function of desire, namely, the fantasy, is always marked by a kinship with the visual models in which it commonly functions, so to speak, and which set the tone of our desiring life. (252)

In terms of the artistic research process, the movement from lower-left to lower-right on the Logical Square might concern a gradual at-once spreading out and selecting of possibilities generated by, if not also as, object/s *a*. Lacan (2018) states of this aspect of his own suggested navigation of the Logical Square, seen above in Figure 2, left side, lower horizontal movement 3/4/5: “It is with the object *a* that we are in relation” (185-6). Should this mean that *x* as a human collective confers on the general inexplicability of one’s object *a* cause of desire? In terms of identification with one’s research, this would certainly seem to be where one is at-once in closest affinity and working with a high degree of unpredictability; again, the movement is not only from but between potential and probable.

Contingent is in a sense a locus of the proposed clockwise movement of artistic research, reflexively termed by the author *hotspot* on the sketch. As a language term for the lower-right corner of the Logical Square, **contingent** concerns the *not-all x are submitted to the phallic function*, where in Lacanian theory *x* is here mainly woman, but can in certain circumstances also be man, object and object element—and in today’s society other genders (see Figure 5).

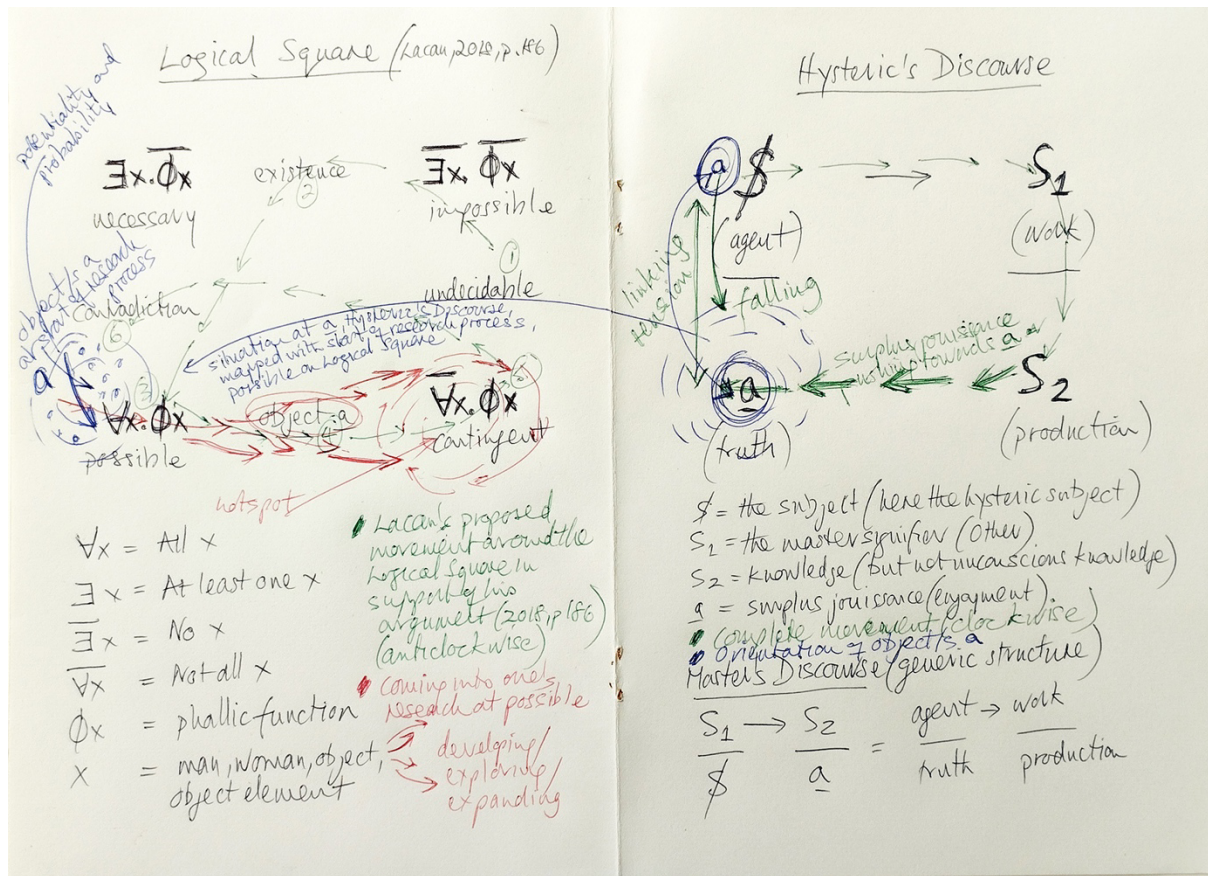


Figure 5: Movement of contingency in red on Logical Square

Jouissance subjectively inflected

I, as of course the article's author, here writing myself in as opposed to distancing myself out, need ultimately to have finished this section with: *Arguably, any psychologized subject that outwits, as it were, man's constraints as subject to the phallic function and the latter's relating jouissance is within and of this not-all.... in order to sustain the relevance of the by-now predetermined Figure 6 (on p. 19).*

Who do I come in *with*, if not Lacan himself as my choice of *subject supposed to know*, in lieu of the latter assumption's deconstruction through an analysis? In this respect, Lacan is my representative big-Other sustaining illusion for which reason, especially as a man, one encounters phallic jouissance commensurate with the Symbolic register, although within which woman participates due to this kind of jouissance's manifestation in and through language, and a jouissance more associated with woman known as Other jouissance. Zvolos (2017) states of

the jouissance pertaining to woman: “a woman can obtain jouissance of the Other, through language” (182). Such binaries where, for the woman, *not-all* constitutes woman, seems patronizing, if not for the fact that a fair proportion of me would want to personally identify with the circumstances that cause women to be *not-all*! I equate this domain with creativity, especially during those silent occasions of paradoxically loss of oneself into one’s work; one’s defensive ego is bidden out of the door.

The present alteration of my language affords a little, a hair’s breadth of challenge, so to speak, to language itself as phallic jouissance’s paternal operator, which oversteps the theory of the master with a kind of jouissance that, if not exclusively more feminine, taps into avoidance of deference *to* the master. On the Logical Square, I’m relatively confident in placing myself at *contingent*, lower-right corner, in both rapport with and deference to the *blokes* at *necessary*, top-left corner, feeling that creative involvement can save one to an extent from males’ symbolical emasculation while harboring the wish, as is our wont—arguably increasingly less so with gender diversity—sticking to the theory that sees women, as the second half of an askance pairing, search high and low for a manifestation of their ideal Other. What I’d be flattered that they’d find in me, as a kind of reciprocal imbalance, would be the coordinating strings of an Other that has in part—in aspects of the creative—avoided emasculation.

Reinhard (2017, citing Lacan) refers to two different “modes of limited access to *jouissance*” by man and woman on the basis that both are “castrated.” The differences are experienced sexually: “men relate to women primarily as objects”; “women relate to men as bearers of the phallus, the signifier of both castration and its imaginary suspension.” By castration, Lacan means “alienated from their bodies by language,” the latter of which causes a “larger symbolic order” to be available to one but at the expense of abundant “experience of jouissance of the body” (XII). This limited amount of available jouissance “obtrudes into and

distorts the network of signification.” Reinhard (2017) refers to this limitation as the “residue of phallic jouissance” and that “anything other than the phallic in our sexual experience cannot be symbolized.” However, there’s “a woman’s possibility of a ‘supplementary jouissance’ that, as nonphallic, also cannot be symbolized, hence nothing of substance can be said about it” (XV). Jeftić (2011, referencing Kristeva) refers to French feminist authors such as Kristeva, Cixous and Irigaray who have developed a “feminine language” [that] is semiotic, rhythmic and unifying ... derived from the preoedipal period of infusion between mother and child and ... linked to the woman’s body” (8-9). Inasmuch as jouissance can orientate around the feminine as commensurate with the creative process, according to Alvarenga (2022) this would be the “not all in the phallic function, maintaining a relation with an Other jouissance, beyond the phallic jouissance” (8).

How to come into this? I couldn’t, that much! In terms of the analogous language of the visual-material, I’d say that the gaze is important to me, and in relation to it the necessary articulation of fragments of my body, especially hands and arms, when other aspects are mostly redundant. In terms of language itself, where I sense that I *do* come in with an awkwardness that substantially calls relationship to authority into question, is through the disfluency of my speech, and that when phonetically transcribed does open up a very different kind of language. Cixous (2005) similarly suggests the latter in a context that also affirms the above point made by Jeftić:

A book and I are the hen and the egg. A self-fertilizing, dense, precise, polyglot and polyphonous language – in who engenders whom, who engenders who.

But how it is that I do not speak the language of writing when I speak? I cannot write in the air with my voice? When I speak – no writing, only discourse. (198)

It’s within the character of many artists to challenge the trope of the Other as manifest in language, of whatever kind, and they’ll be unconsciously encountering objects and their association with different aspects of jouissance—according to the apparent place of **object a** as a horizontal trajectory on the logical square, to *contingent*.

There is something in the theory that I *do* find extraordinary that exceeds even my usual state of deference: Lacan (2014), speaking in a biological context of difference between woman and man, where part of her *jouissance* is “tubal”—presumably thinking of the placenta and its role—and partly in copulation, states: “Analytic theory has been telling us from the start that she is not only far closer to *jouissance* than men are, but also doubly determined” (265). Further to this quote, what begins intrauterine as desire ends up channeled as the baby’s anxiety that feeding breast will dry up. As I type this modification of the first draft of the section in the article, I also feel a sense of oscillation between a desire to write in terms that offers some greater articulation of myself as subject within a context of the selfsame consideration, and anxiety that this will overly challenge the Other’s authority: will I be able to say it with sufficient determination of my own? Concerning the above quote, Cixous (2005) has previously written of her addressee: “I was in the process of writing: but the telephone rings. And I wrote: and it’s you. (I mean the telephone itself.)” (193). While one’s self-positioning is subtle—as many of us would probably confirm—anxiety does not need much as a trigger!

Woman’s position in relation to the phallic function at *necessary*, which Le Gaufey (2020, citing Lacan) refers to as the “set” of man (40), is not so much a choice but is more tempered by woman’s position as *contingent*, as “domain” (55) of *not-all*. In the process, whether consciously or unconsciously, a degree of flexibility is inferred by this diagonally formatted relation/non-relation between the sexes. Across the diagonal *necessary-contingent* there’s the oscillation between the phallicised Other of man and this so-termed “supplementary *jouissance*” of woman. While it’s the fate of all of us including the assumed masters to be “slave of the phallic function” *possible* (Le Gaufey, 2020, 54), Alveranga (2022) states of Lacan: “Besides the phallic logic, universal, for all, he demonstrates that there exists another one, that has its origin in the not-all” (3). While this is the *jouissance* of woman, it’s likely also to be that of creativity (see Figure 6).

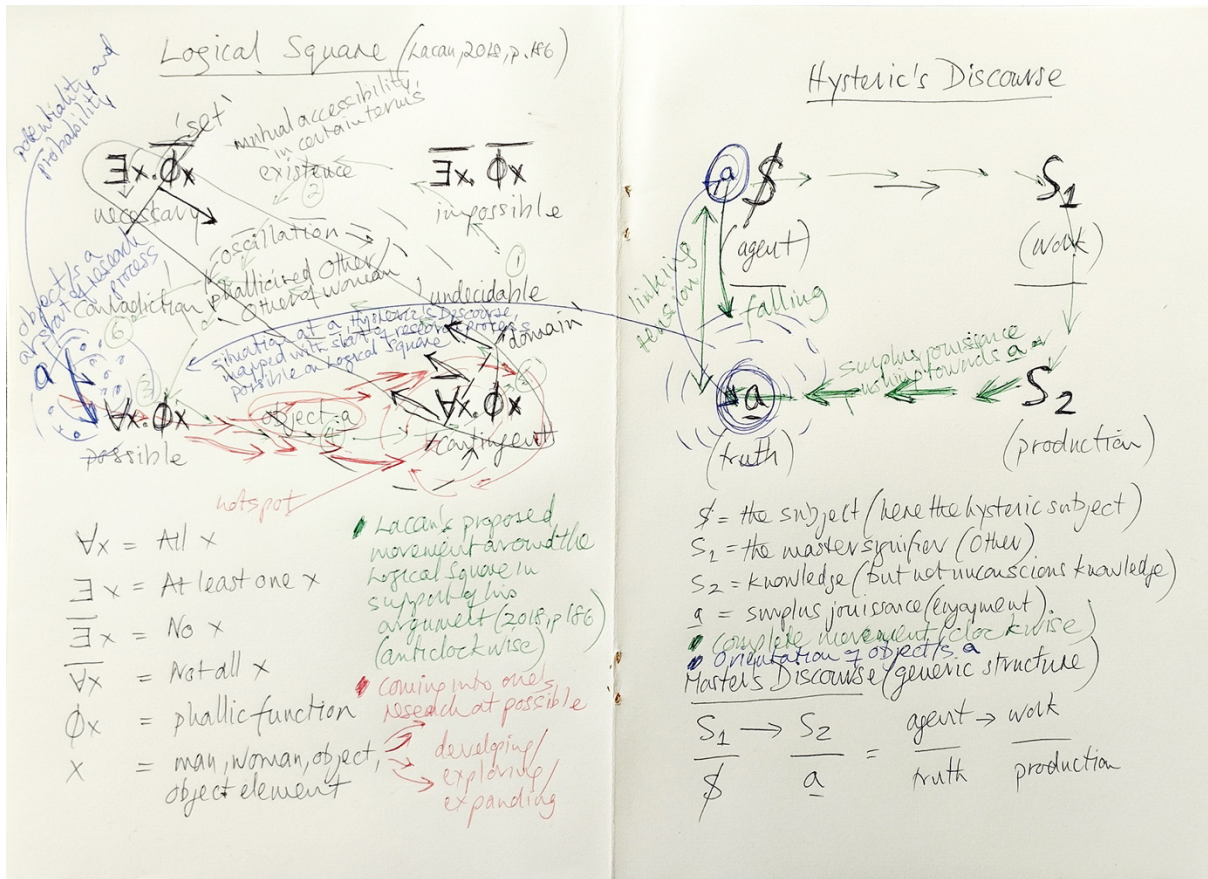


Figure 6: Interaction of *not-all*, lower-right corner of Logical Square, with coming into one's research at *possible*, color-coded red

The Hysteric's Discourse

The hysteric addresses their questions to the master signifier—to reiterate, in the present context the artist to their artwork. According to Fink (1998), “the hysteric goes at the master and demands that he or she show his or her stuff, prove his or her mettle by producing something serious by way of knowledge” (34). Ambiguously, since the master signifier is here also in the position of S₂, more commensurate with production of knowledge, it is not as if the artwork is in a position to educate. Predominantly, knowledge is produced at the lower-right corner of the square of the Hysteric's Discourse, S₂, mapped with *contingent* on the Logical Square (see Figure 7).

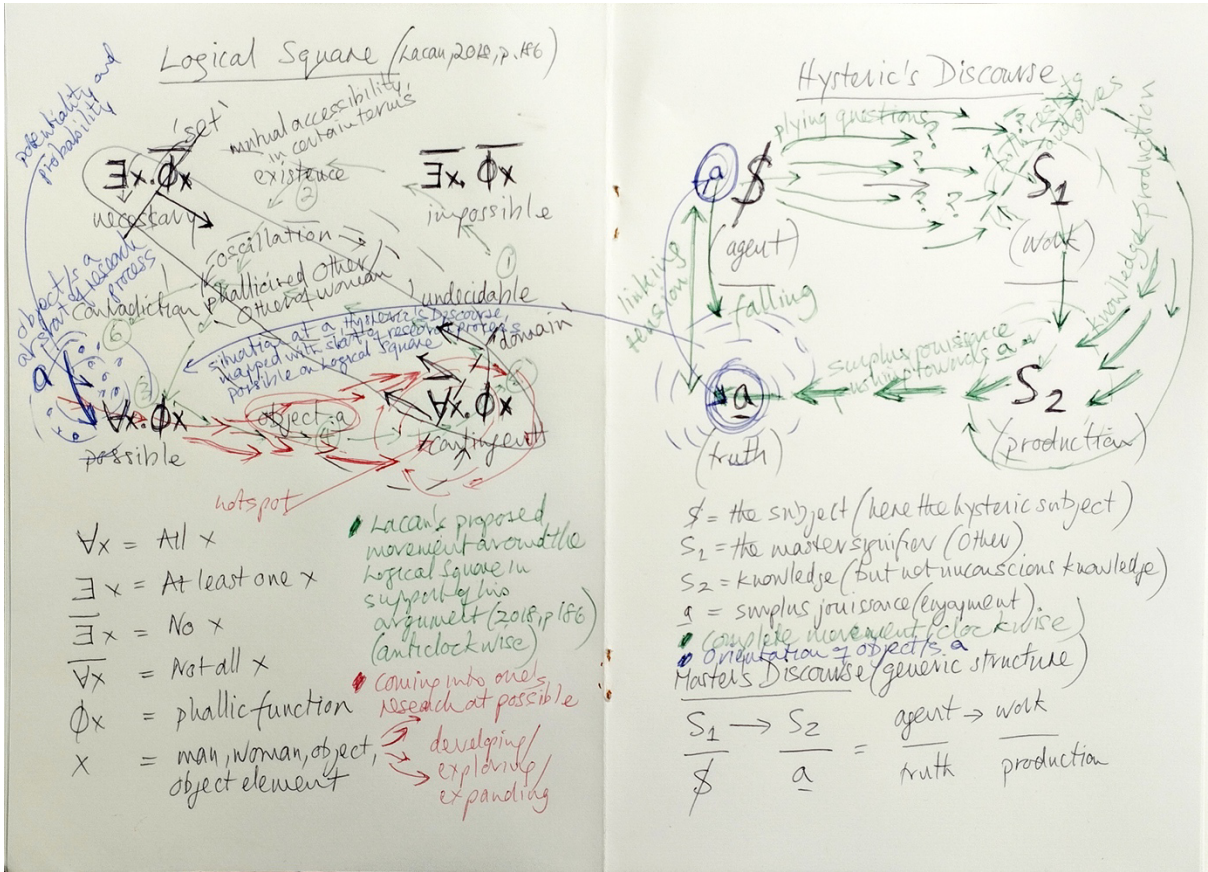


Figure 7: Where knowledge is produced, lower-right on Hysteric's Discourse, inferred mapped with *contingent*, lower-right on Logical Square

The above-mentioned idiosyncratic term *hotspot*, seen written onto the diagram Figure 7 in the context of the artistic research process, is all the more so since it confers not only with knowledge as part of the artist's demand but pushes towards unconscious knowledge, properly reaching its conclusion in the Hysteric's Discourse at the lower-left corner of the counterclockwise movement, or *possible* on the Logical Square. (Due to the self-reference now included in the "Jouissance" section above, the *hotspot* can be said to be of my own placement!) Once within the momentum of the artistic research process, oscillating counterclockwise as the Hysteric's Discourse and clockwise as the proposed movement of research as the Logical Square, this dynamic stasis may be considered the mainstay of the challenge that many an artist will present to their artwork; in other words, to reiterate from the Fink quote, above, is the hysteric's demand for and challenge of knowledge. While from the

perspective of the artwork this may be both the desired aim and absolve it of responsibility, from the artist's point of view it is tantamount to realizing that knowledge is not to be gained from and in any obvious pedagogical ratio between artist and their practice (see Figure 8, below).

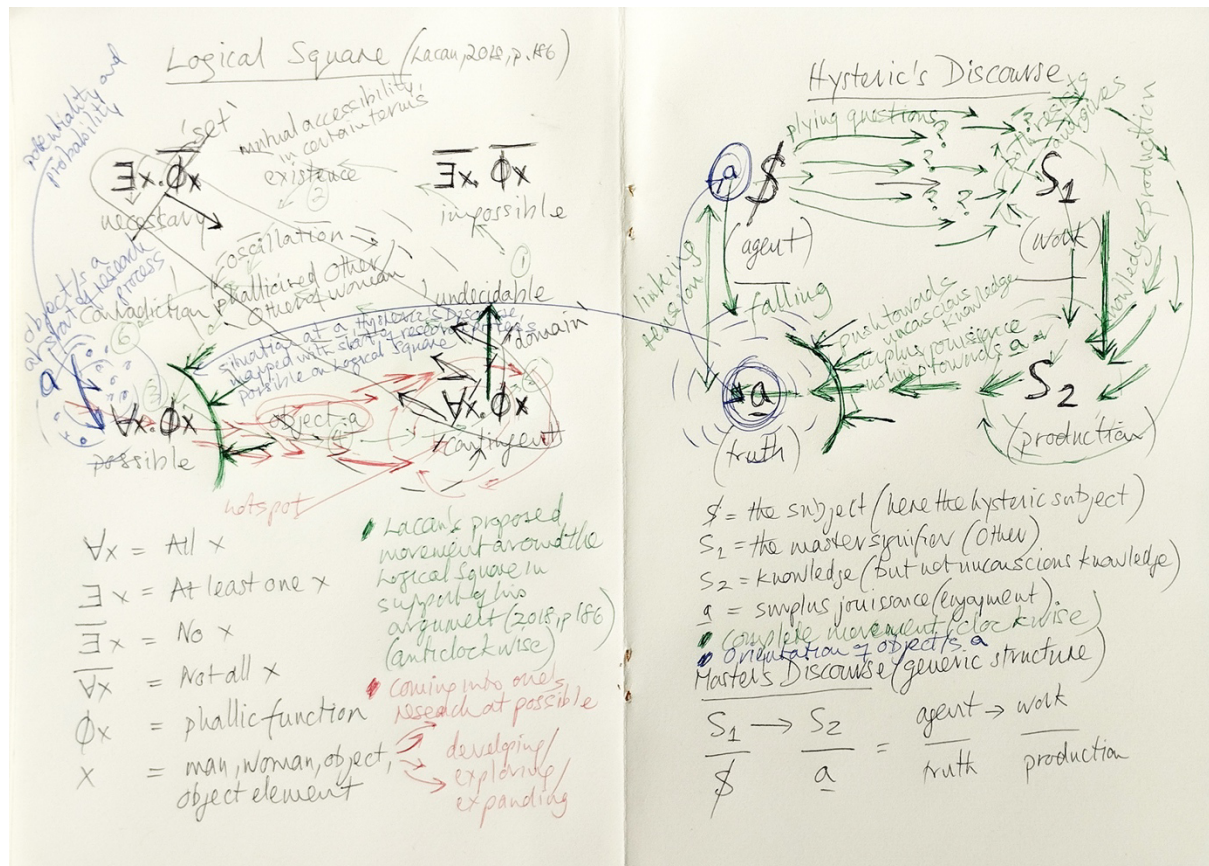


Figure 8: Hysteric's discourse pushes towards unconscious knowledge, lower-left corner, conferring with Logical Square's movement in at **possible**

Impossible endpoint

The top-right corner of the Logical Square, *there is no x that is not submitted to the phallic function*, in a sense negates the entire project of propositional arguments towards logically affirmative or contradictory kinds of relationship, since such arguments are based on the stability offered by the existential delusion of the overseeing authoritative Other. The top-right position discredits the entire presumption of any determining law. Already, the situation is suggested as tenuous in the lower-right corner as *not all x are submitted to the phallic function*.

However, the proposed movement of artistic research stops short of the top-right corner at **undecidable**, before whatever is involved in the production of artistic outcome. The top-right corner is in any case commensurate with the Real, or, as Lacan's own term for this corner of the square, *impossible*. The hysteric therefore pushes for answers from S_1 in the position of S_2 , which, when mapped with the Logical Square is not merely ambiguous but impossible. Still, however, work gets done in one way or another. While the movement concerns object/s *a* coming in at *possible* towards *contingent*, through further iterations of **object *a***, as designated on the Logical Square, the starting lower-left corner is in diagonal relationship with *impossible*.

It is not that the endpoint as at-once conclusion and negation of relationship is ignored in the artistic research process. Lacan (1999) states this in terms of the Symbolic, which may in this context be considered the meaningful domain of language in its own broader context to include that of the visual/material, in relation to the Real:

“... the symbolic, directing towards the real, shows us the true nature of object *a*... it seems to give us the basis (*support*) of being”; then, only as it nears the Real, as it were, it “dissolves (*se résout*), in the final analysis, owing to its failure, unable, as it is, to sustain itself in approaching the real.” (95)

In terms of the culmination of artistic research prior to its outcome's conceptualization, this confers with **undecidable** on the Logical Square. Where this is in the Hysteric's Discourse is somewhere in the push for answers that develops as knowledge between S_1 and S_2 , and in terms of the artist to the artwork, as the artwork's giving back that which is other and different to the imparted knowledge; prospectively, surplus *jouissance* with which one may once again come into one's research, as shown in Figures 7 and 8 of the above diagram annotated as *potentiality and probability*.

The outcome of the artistic research process could of course be any number of things in visual-material or other terms. Due to the suggested culmination of artistic research as such, at **undecidable**, the implication is of a split between the latter and the outcome—an encounter

with the Real that would have stepped beyond any threshold of logic. A paradoxical hypothesis therefore emerges in relation to the artistic outcome; it bears an allegiance to the ineffable Real that is necessary for it to succeed as a creative entity, clearly representing the negation of logic in the Logical Square but returning to the question-plying of the hysteric concretized as *question*, arguably with greater investment of the jouissance of the artist's psychic drive (see Figure 9).

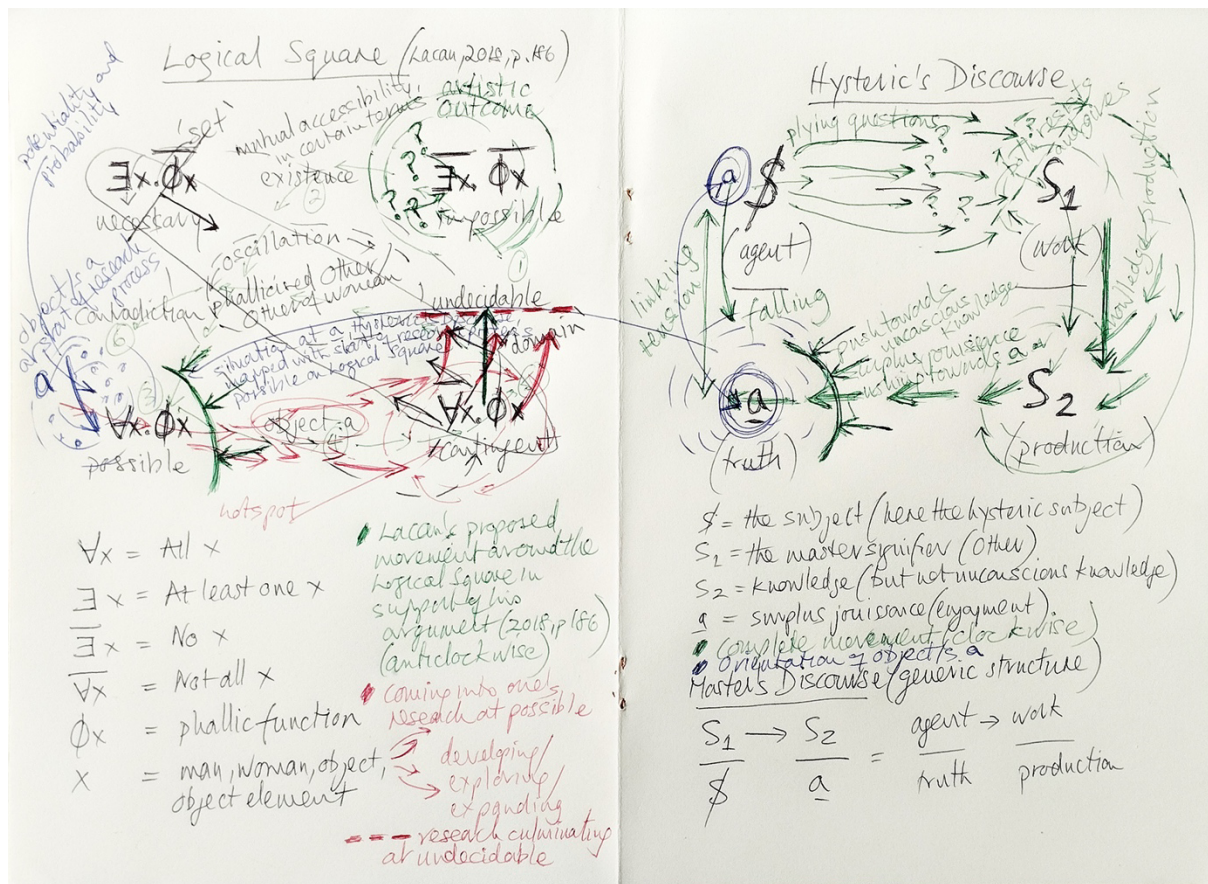


Figure 9: Outcome, top-right of Logical Square, allegiance with real, negating the logic, but in region, also top-right, of hysteric's question-plying

The finished diagram taken out of its research context and removed of much of its annotation may to an extent convey the status of finished artwork as Real (see Figure 10).

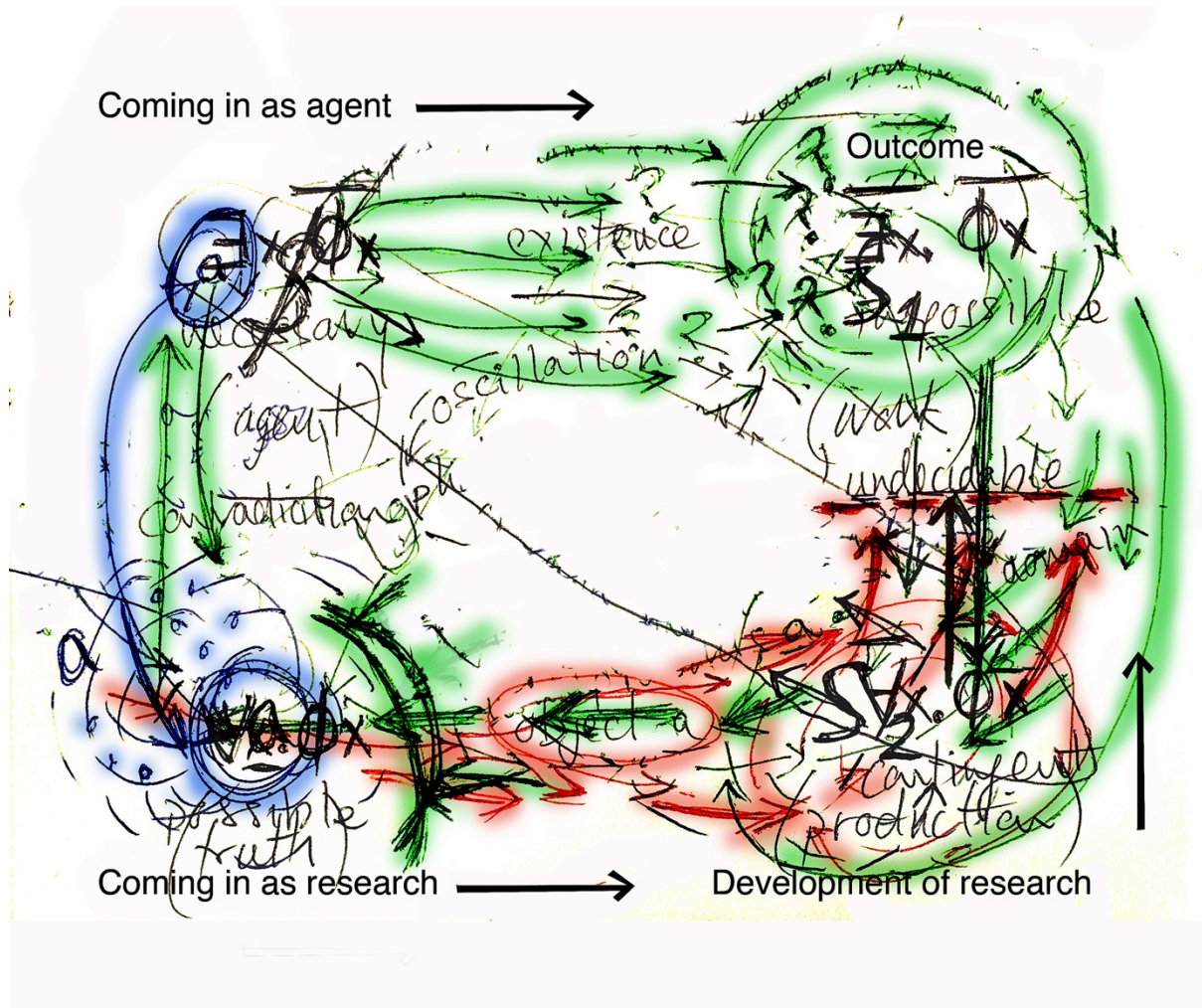


Figure 10: Finished diagram with developmental annotation removed

Conclusion

The author has taken an ongoing interest in the formalization of the human subject in psychoanalytical theory and applied it to the possibility of his own presence as subject within his practice as an artist at the level of artistic research. The context of drawing appears in practice as a diagram developed in support of the argument as it unfolds. The larger implication of the article is that there will be an ambiguous relationship between the artist and their subjective identification with what they do, even when their position may be one of denial of their subjectivity. In the section of the article, “*Jouissance* subjectively inflected,” the author has provided a degree of more personal exposure through not only what he is saying but the

language of the text. Inasmuch as an academically written article can implicitly reflect as well as convey knowledge, the developmental diagrammatic sketch is an example of how the hypothesis of the research, which concerns subjectivity, can also be subjectively visualized. The latter is the position of the human subject that the author has proposed can be seen structured in and as part of the artistic research process, using Lacanian theory. That this is no more than an existential dynamic that can in many ways be more easily ignored or negated than acknowledged is suggested by the convergence of two opposing movements around four corners of a square that result in a stasis, and of which the outcome is there at-once in the middle of and above the movements. The outcome is ineffable, both out of reach of the artistic research process and a challenge to whoever was its instigating agent, as seen in the final formalized diagram, seen above in Figure 10. What does remain active are the human subject's attempts to play with any prospective conclusion, if the latter is even expected, as a discourse that is driven by one's unconscious truth, whatever that may be that stays unconscious, or in other words *jouissance* reflected in and through the subjective *a* blind spot within objects.

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