

# The Meeting Place

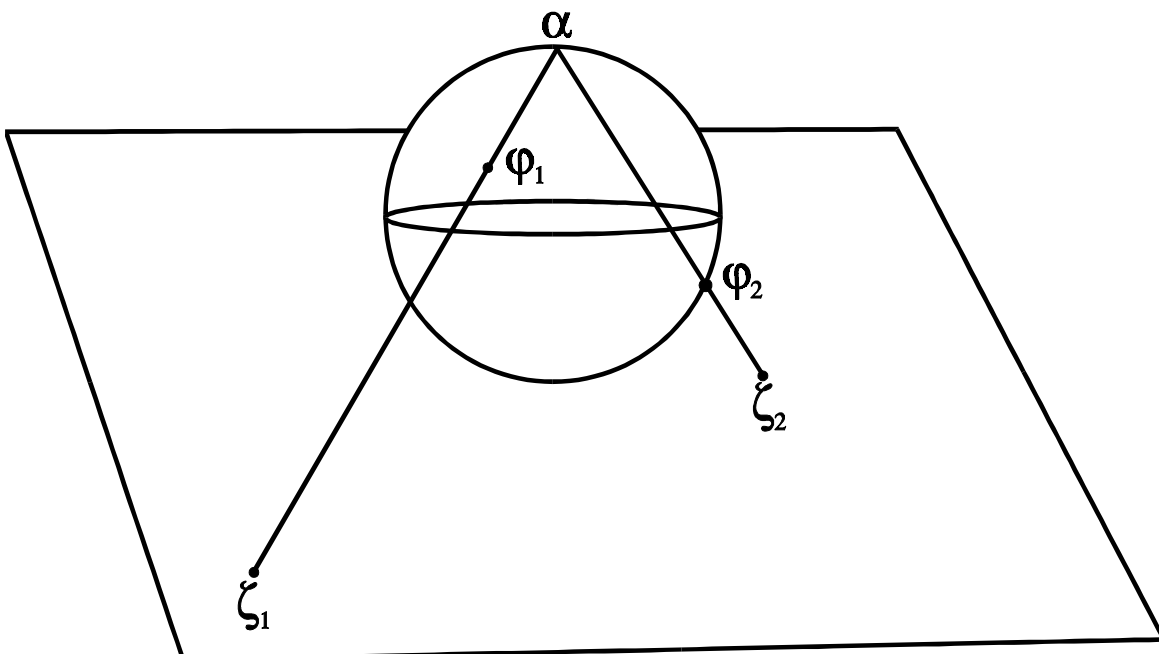
The picture describes a way to map the points on a sphere to the points on a plane. For each point  $\varphi_i$  on the sphere, a ray may be drawn from  $\alpha$  through  $\varphi_i$ . The ray then passes through the plane at  $\zeta_i$ . Point  $\varphi_i$  maps to point  $\zeta_i$ .

Any ray drawn from  $\alpha$  will touch the sphere at a point other than  $\alpha$  and then pass through the plane unless the ray is parallel to the plane or is directed more steeply away from the plane.

The point  $\alpha$  at the north pole is called the point at infinity. It maps to the point at infinity associated with the plane. Any ray drawn from  $\alpha$  that is parallel to the plane maps to the single point at infinity associated with the plane. This special point, as its name suggests, unlike ordinary points in the plane, is at an infinite remove from the sphere.

Each point on the surface of the sphere, then, finds its unique correspondent on the plane. And each point on the plane is in correspondence with precisely one point on the surface of the sphere.

This method of mapping is called *Stereoscopic Projection*.



Here is how to map each point on a sphere to a point on the plane. Some maps are made this way. We could say the sphere is the world and the plane is somewhere else. The area around the north pole is happening: it is the map of most of the plane.

Or each person is a north pole, the plane is their map of the world, mindscape. We map most of the known universe into the place immediately around us. The far reaches of the mind are those closest to us. We stare into the distance, toward the horizon, to see what is in us.

In the imaginary poem, each line is a line in the plane, traces therefore a circle of/on the sphere that is the world. Lines proceed relentlessly past all the mind's road signs. Yet trace circles on the sphere, all of which pass through the point at infinity.

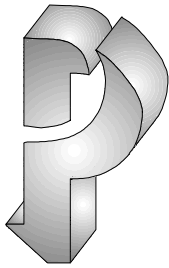
The imaginary poet's warming up an iceberg, shivering a bit. Her gaze drifts to the horizon. She wonders if "love is the delicate but total acknowledgement of what is." Contemplates also Goethe's last theorem: "To understand all is to forgive all." Wonders if forgiveness is bogus: when she's far enough out there, closest to where she is, she sees there's nothing to forgive. Blame cancels out in the algebra of need as acknowledgements grow arbitrarily numerous, as she writes each line, as each line ends, impossibly, possibly in an act of the mind. "And yet, and yet..." she tells the frosted air, "I cannot blame you for being who you are. Whatever else it was you did all of you was in it. Maybe all of us is in whatever we do, maybe not. But I know you too well to blame you. Forgiveness is for what we don't understand." The circle closes. But there are more. Always more. "How long can I do this before I fall asleep?" she wonders. "How long before it is too hard?" She considers her future: "Will I remember any of this or will I need something simple?"

She gets up off the iceberg. Her bum is numb. Where does she go from here? Good luck, imaginary poet! There is a hut or a house or an igloo near by, I take it? Go there, my dear. Do not stay out too long! We love you— do not sleep on the iceberg! Go somewhere warm and get some sleep. Everybody needs their sleep.

Well, I don't mean *right* now if you feel you're up to it for some time.

Don't worry—if you are really the imaginary poet you will be back. Not necessarily here. You will return where you begin. There will be another time. There are always more lines with their awfully opposite directions. They will goad you on as they pass so sharply through you. You will write imaginary poems and they will trace small circles, each line, on the world. Could you ask for more?





oetry is like the mapping. The poet's ambiguous so that multiple meanings may proceed into the distance. She wants to see how far the multiplicity of meaning may extend into the distance, how comprehensive a map can be made. How far, how wide? But would also have the directions meet again. Not by any curving round of the lines. Bring it home, poet, bring it home! The more intensely she drives to bring it home into the immediacy and ambiguity of where she is, the further out the map of the mind proceeds in the imaginary plane.

