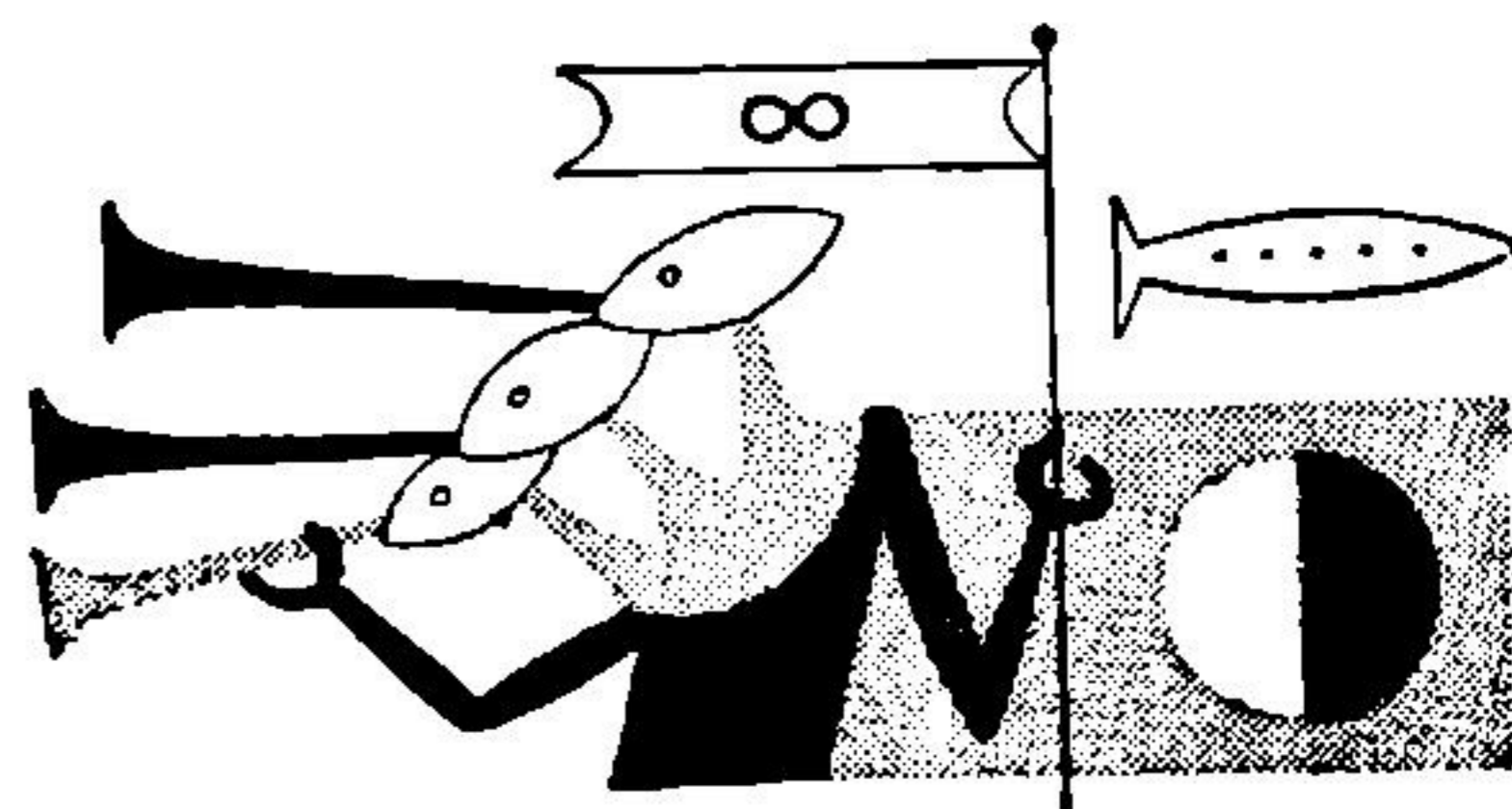


# Fanfare



## The Use of Geometry in the Modern Novel

by NORMAN J. CLARKE

*Whenever something of suitable quality can be found, INFINITY will reprint an item from a "fanzine"—one of the amateur journals published as a hobby by the more enthusiastic devotees of science fiction. "The Use of Geometry in the Modern Novel" originally appeared in Wendigo, published by Georgina Ellis, 1428 15th St. E., Calgary, Alberta, Canada.*

**I**F ONE SIDE of a triangle is divided externally into segments which are proportional to the other two sides, the straight line which joins the point of the section to the opposite vertex bisects the angle at the vertex."

These words (I am almost tempted to add, "my dear brethren"), taken from the text of any geometry book are, incredible as it may seem or not, the basis of a plot which is most familiar, ex-

cruciatingly common to the rabid reader of the modern novel. As it stands, there is little into which the fanatic reader can sink his dentures or the sharp fangs of his mind, but a truly skillful writer would encounter no difficulty in translating this meager framework into a well rounded suspenseful piece of Literature, replete with those fine old cliches which we all know and love, and without which a book would be an empty thing. If our skeleton plot were transformed into the glowing prose with which our modern, most popular authors attract and hold our complete attention, the story would run somewhat as follows:

THE TRAGEDY OF X, Y AND Z  
by Corollary Queen

Young, lovely, amply be-breasted X stared pitifully around the room, as though

trying to see that which she could not see, or trying not to see that which she could see, or both. Her eyes were red and their color was running as a result of her excessive weeping.

"Oh why, oh why?" she glurped.

"Were you calling me, my dear?" dark wealthy Y inquired solicitously as he stepped into the room. His glasses were slightly askew, as was his moustache; emotions affected him strongly. "Why, X, you've been... crying. What is the matter?"

"Oh, it is nothing, Y, nothing, nothing, nothing."

This convinces Y, who immediately goes out to get drunk. What *he* doesn't know is that he is only a vertex, as is X, in a triangle—a romantic, or, if you are inclined to reject euphemisms, a sex triangle. As a matter of fact, what is troubling X is the fact that one of the sides of this triangle is about to be produced, in full view of the public eye, and, naturally, the exterior angle so formed will be equal to the interior and opposite angles, and, as X phrased it, "bigger than both of us."

Well, the story totters on for pages and pages, words and words, getting steadily,

or obstinately, more involved, until striding grandly into the stream of the narrative with his muddy hip-boots, comes the third person in the sinister triangle. This is Z, a bounder of the worst sort. He is swarthy; he is coldly handsome; he is a foreigner; he is obviously up to no good. Also, he is immensely attractive to women... is any further evidence required? However, X, although married to Y, is infatuated with Z and is in the midst of an affair with him.

The crucial point of the story occurs when...

Y confronted Z, a frown creasing, and rendering quite impressive-seeming, his forehead.

"I know all, all; do you hear me? All, I tell you, I know all!" he mouthed.

"Eh?" gasped Z.

"I know all, all, all. ALL!"

Naturally, Z does not take kindly to Y's knowing all, and so, quite efficiently, kills him with a notched and rusty butcher-knife. He slices the hapless Y into little pieces. To be quite frank, he divides him externally into segments.

Now into the story comes the Straight Man, the Infallible Detective, who is known as I, or Private I... a title which he retains from his

former brilliant military career. He, after scouring about diligently, comes up with a clue, but not before he has shown himself to the reader to be a superhumanly intelligent being, a veritable Hercules, and a man with artistic inclinations. The clue is Z's upper plate which I finds clamped to the still, cold ear of the unfortunate Y.

He immediately connects the crime with the coldly handsome, swarthy foreigner: Z. That is to say, he joins the point of section with the opposite vertex, which, in this case, turned out to be the miserable, grovelling Z. Dirty old Z.

Private I then comes between X and Z... that is, he bisects their exterior angle at the vertex. He falls in love with X, and she with him. Z

is carted off to the local Bastille, where he lives happily ever after, devoting his life to the writing of a book, which he entitles, "After Existentialism—What?"

All, need I say predictably, turns out well in the end when X is later bisected by a careless construction, and dies—thus saving Private I from the discomfort of marrying her. But he, being loath to deny himself the joys which spring from junction with the opposite sex, soon attracts—and by this it is meant he draws—an angle equal to a given angle (the given angle being the—unfortunately—late X.) He is still having a huge time trying to make his latest amour supplementary to him when the story, mercifully, comes to a close. ∞ ∞

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