



Argo Navis

A drifting circumambulation

Kyle Lemstrom

CrCrTh 694: Synthesis of
Theory and Practice

May 4, 2020



Who gets to decide what art means?

Do artistic creations need to hold set meaning?

Is the creator responsible for their creations, and how is this responsibility measured?

Do the intentions of the creator matter— does the creator have any control over how the work is interpreted?



Argo Navis

Former constellation

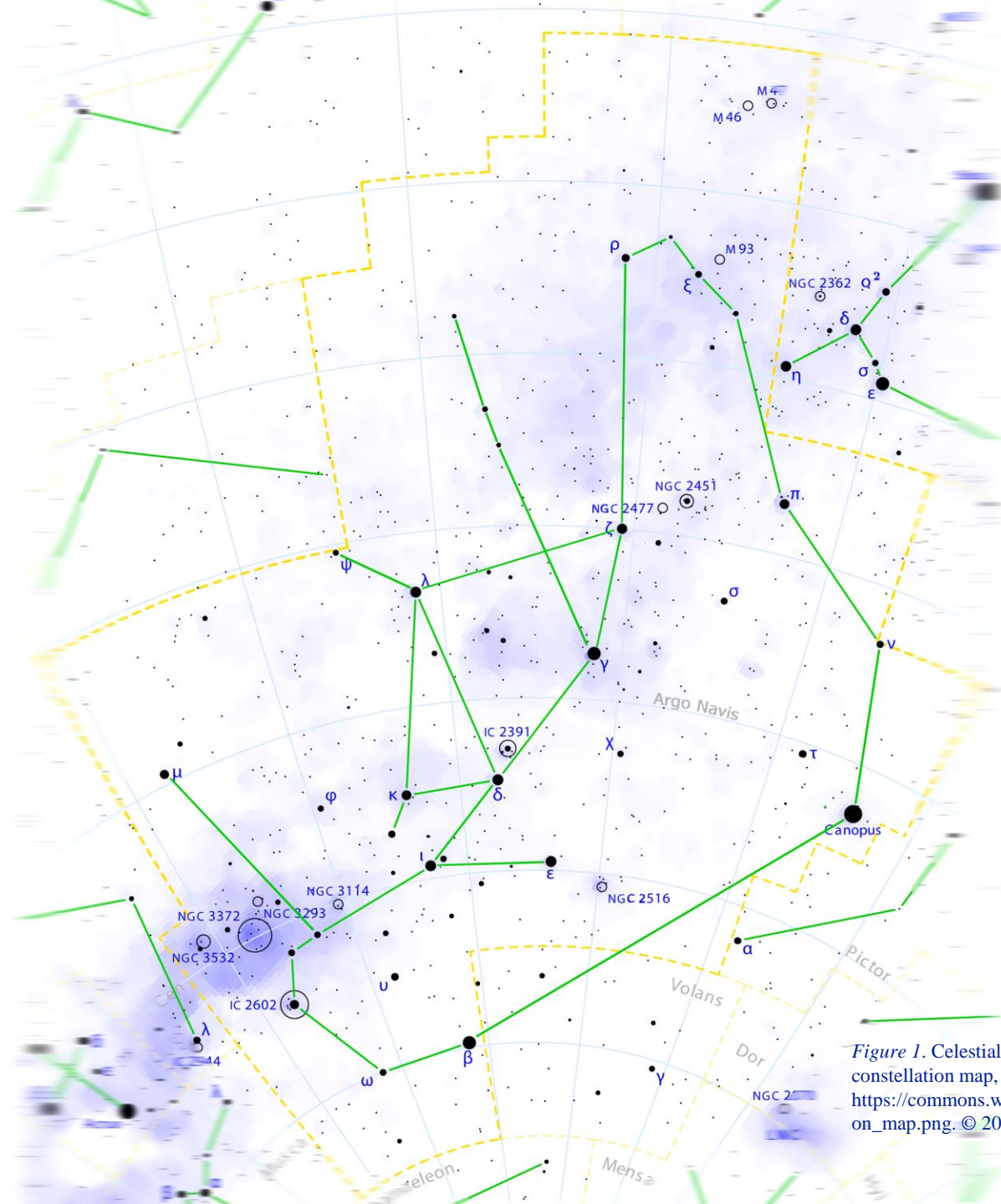
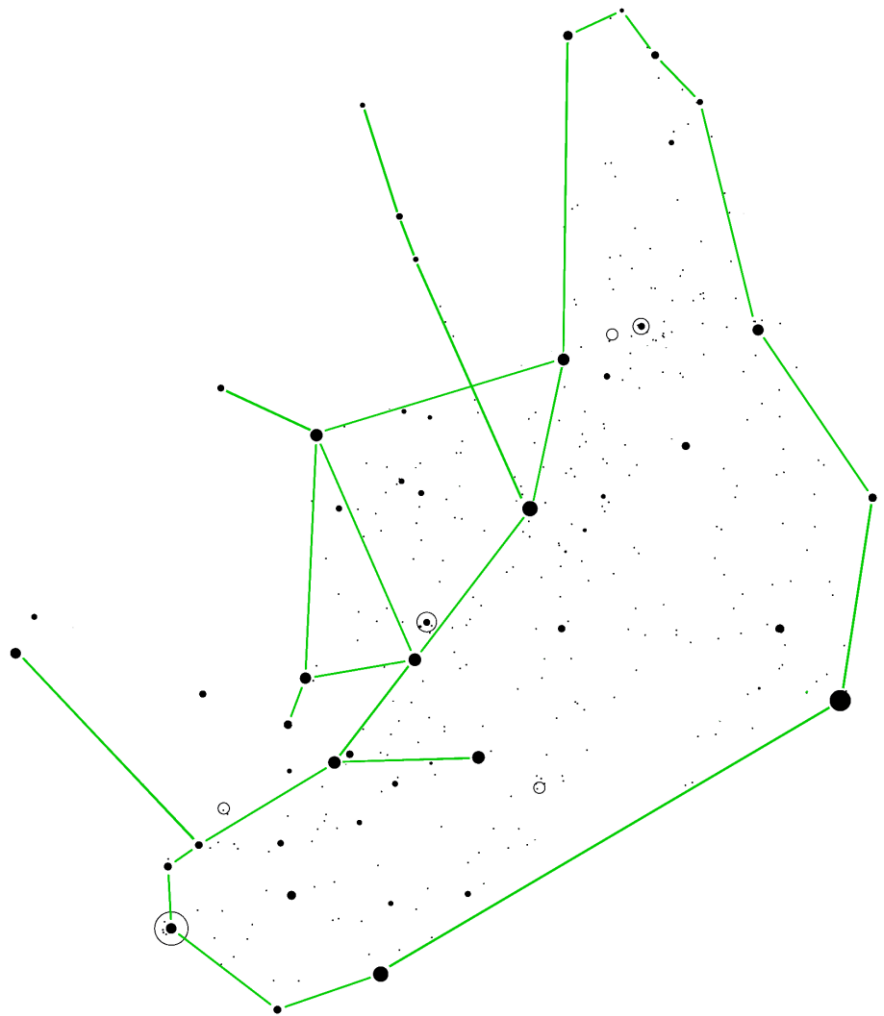


Figure 1. Celestial map of Argo Navis. Adapted from Argo navis constellation map, In Wikipedia, n.d. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Argo_navis_constellation_map.png. © 2000 by T. Bronger.



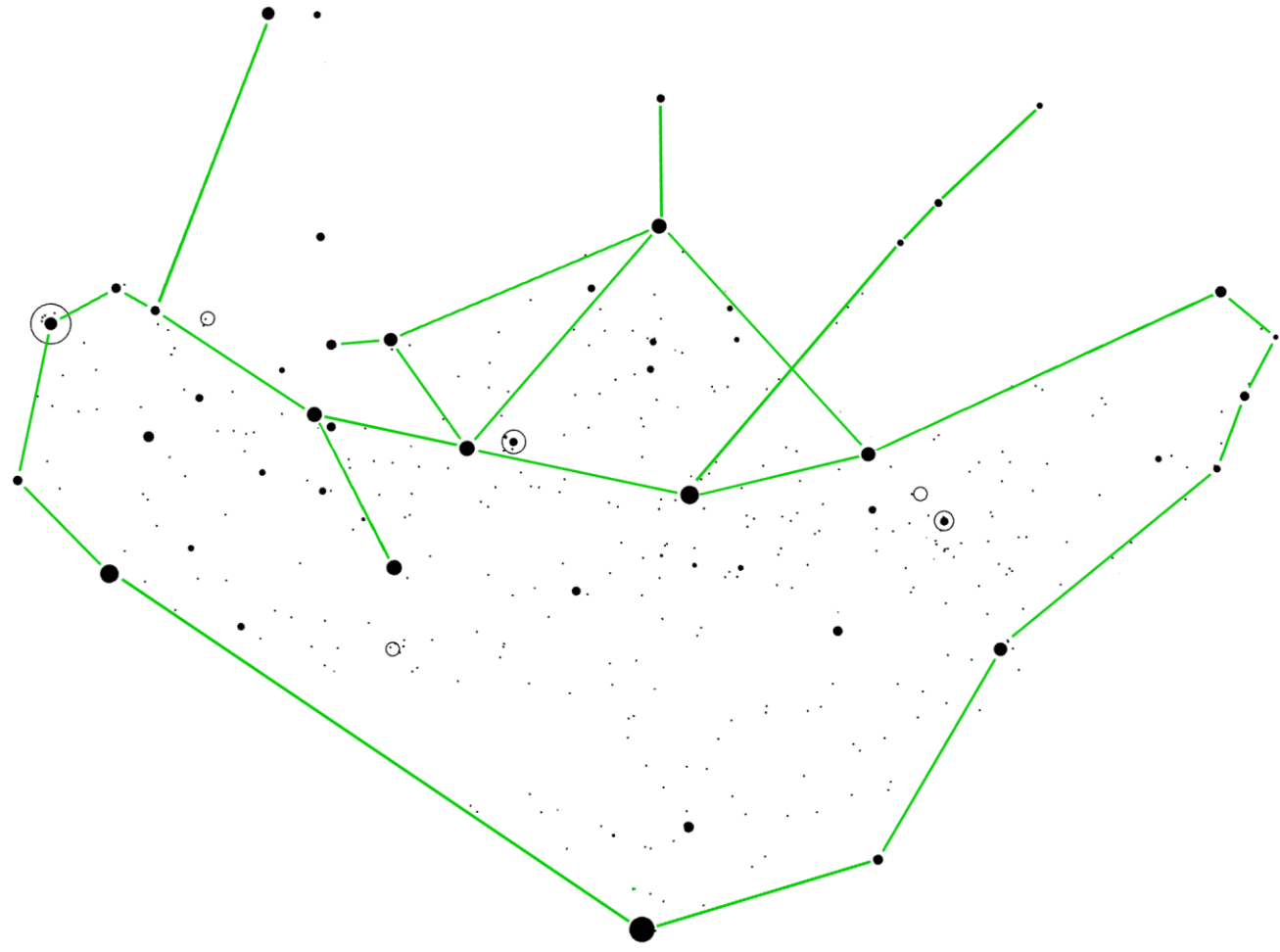
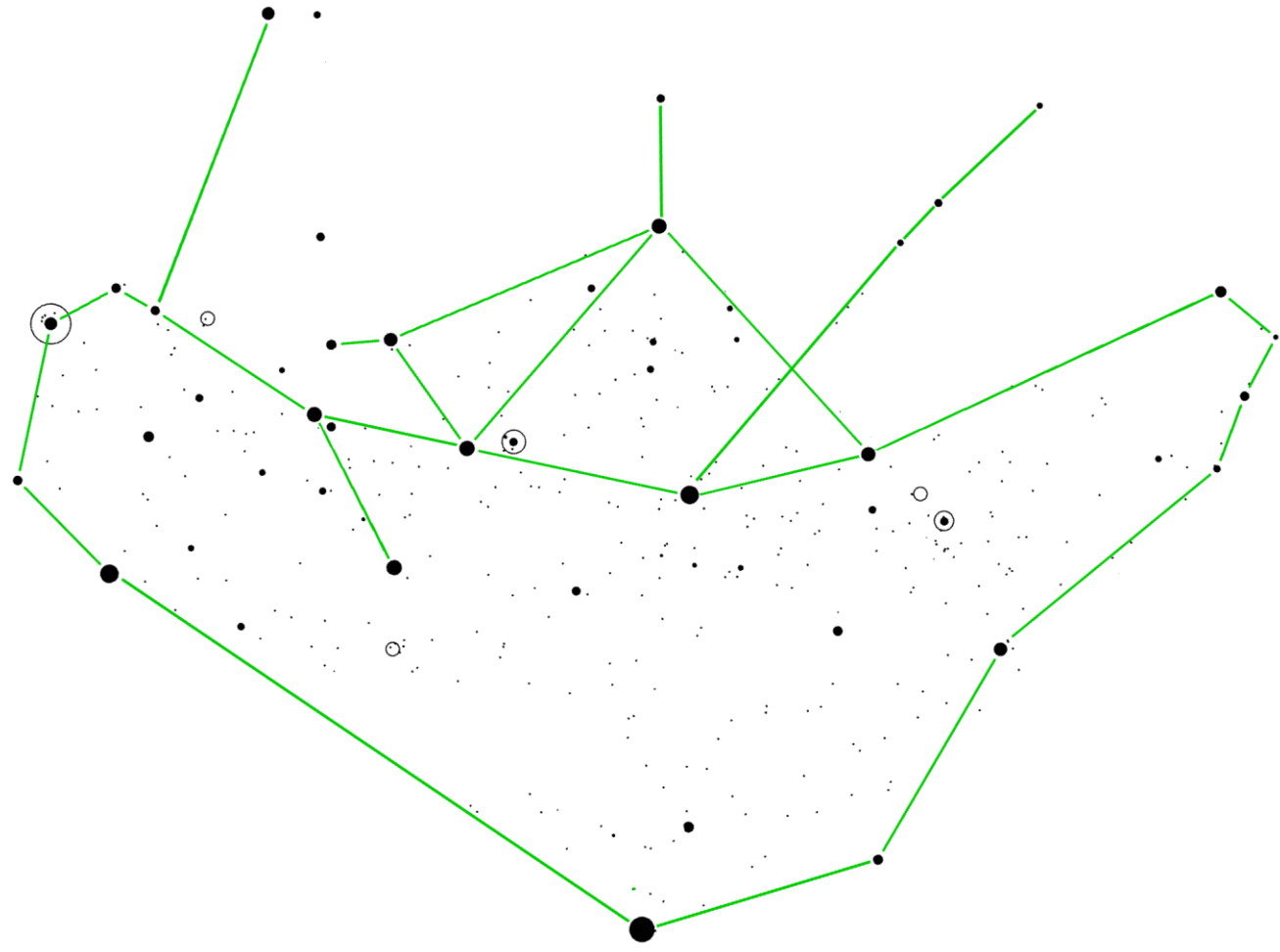




Figure 2. Costa, L. (1500). *The Argo* [Tempera on panel]. Musei Civici di Padova, Padua, Italy. Retrieved from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Argonautesch%C3%A4ff_Lorenzo_Costa_w.jpg.



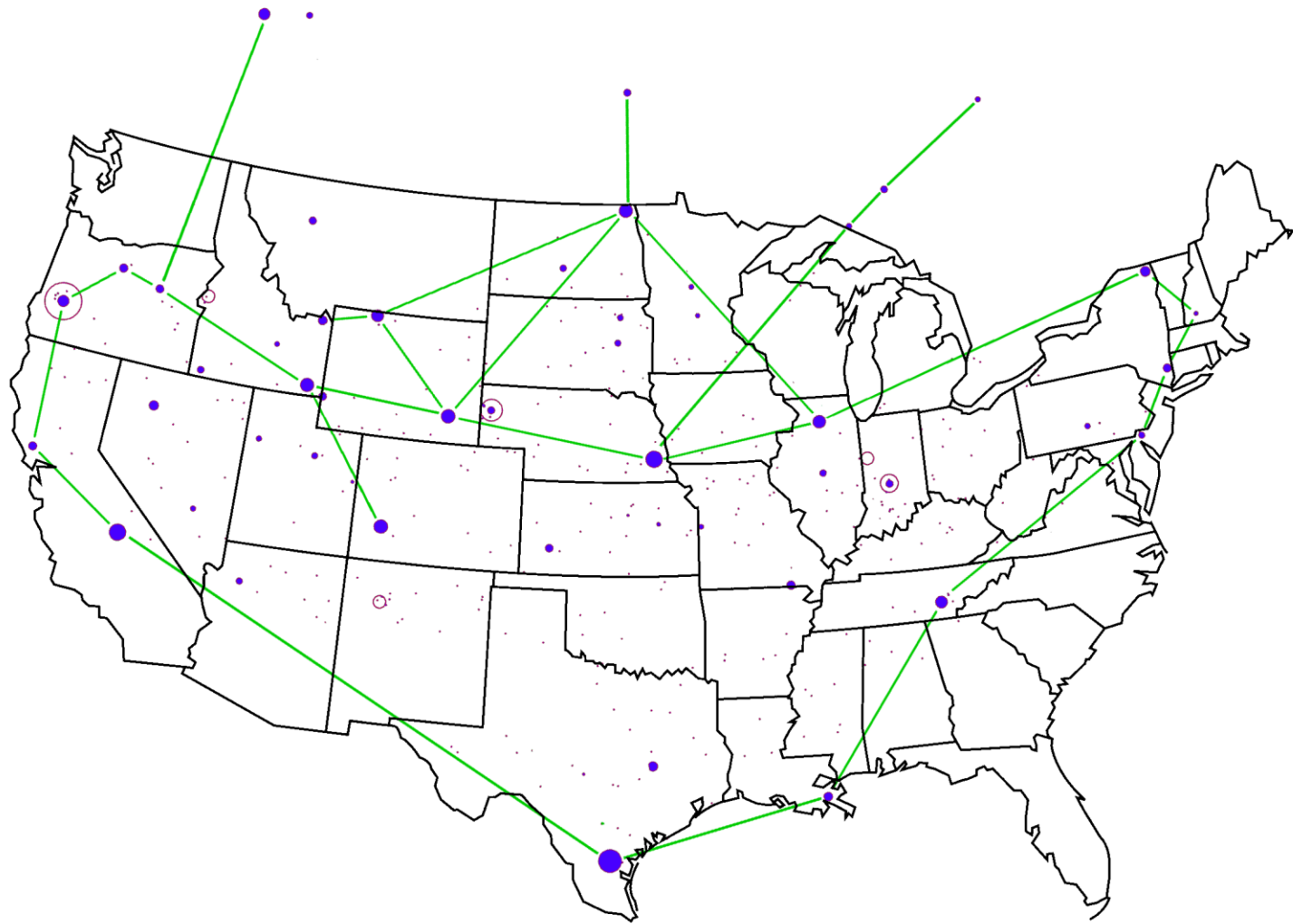




Figure 3. Ader, B. J. (1975). *ART & PROJECT BULLETIN 89*
[Photolithograph]. The Museum of Modern Art Digital Imaging
Studio, New York, New York. Retrieved from:
<https://www.artslant.com/global/works/show/160963>

"In Search of the Miraculous"



Figure 4. Knecht, F. (2010). *Fred spuckt in den pazifik (Fred Spits in the Pacific* [Digital image]. Retrieved from: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/147844800241305093/>. Screenshot by author.

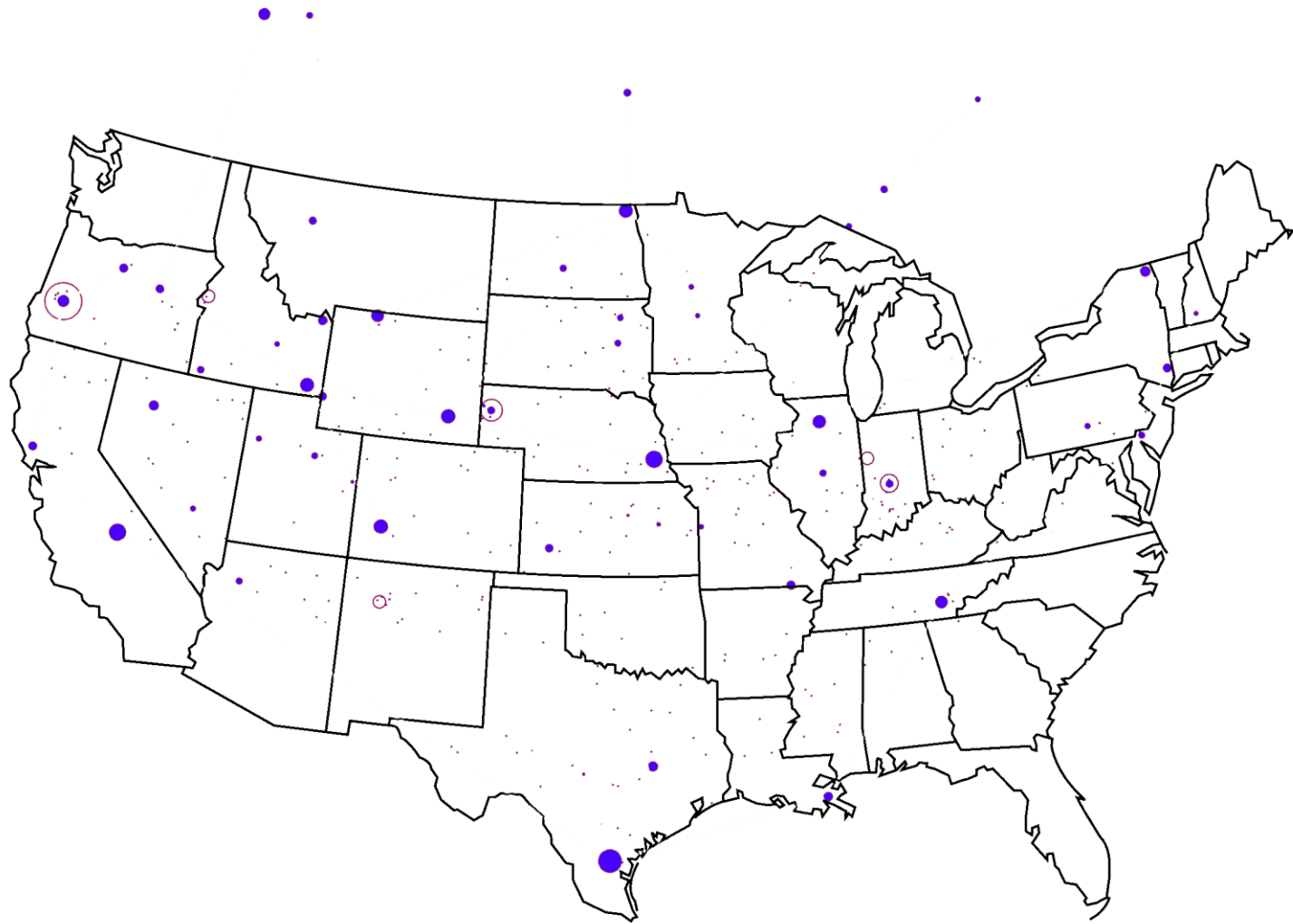




Figure 5. Writer Alfred Jarry on his cycle Clément. (1898).
Retrieved from
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Jarry#/media/File:Jarry_velo.jpg

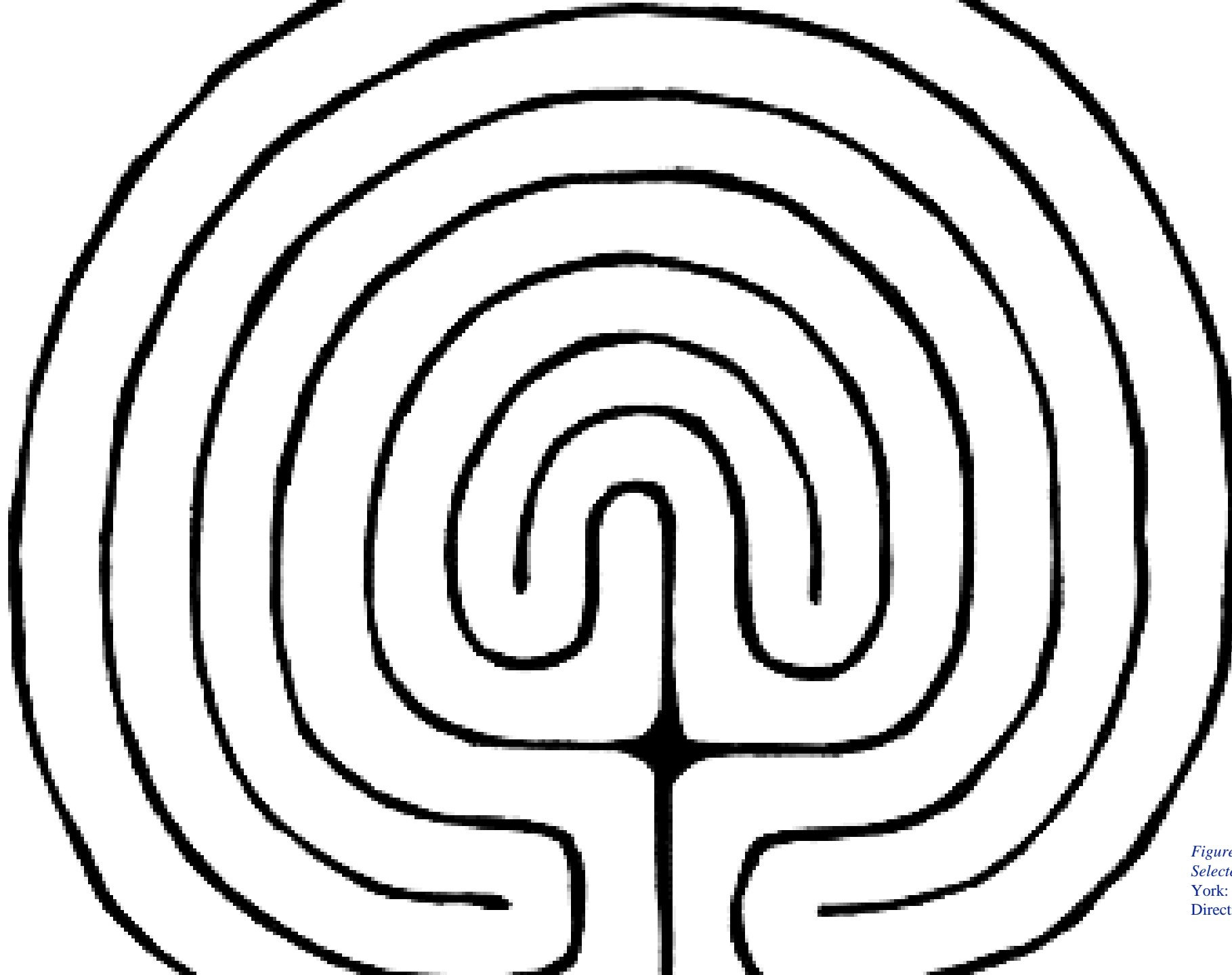


Figure 6. A classical labyrinth. Reprinted from *Labyrinths: Selected Stories & Other Writings*, by J.L. Borges, 1983, New York: A New Directions Book. Copyright 1983 by New Directions.



A search for a lodestar for the USA's "lapsed moral compass."

A symbolic forewarning.

A vainglorious act of self-discovery.

A Pierrot's Journey, as opposed to a Hero's Journey.

A purge.

Figure 7. Triton parts the Clashing Rocks. Bill Gudgeon in Jason and the Argonauts (1963). Retrieved from <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm9271088/mediaviewer/rm2815182848>. Screenshot by author.



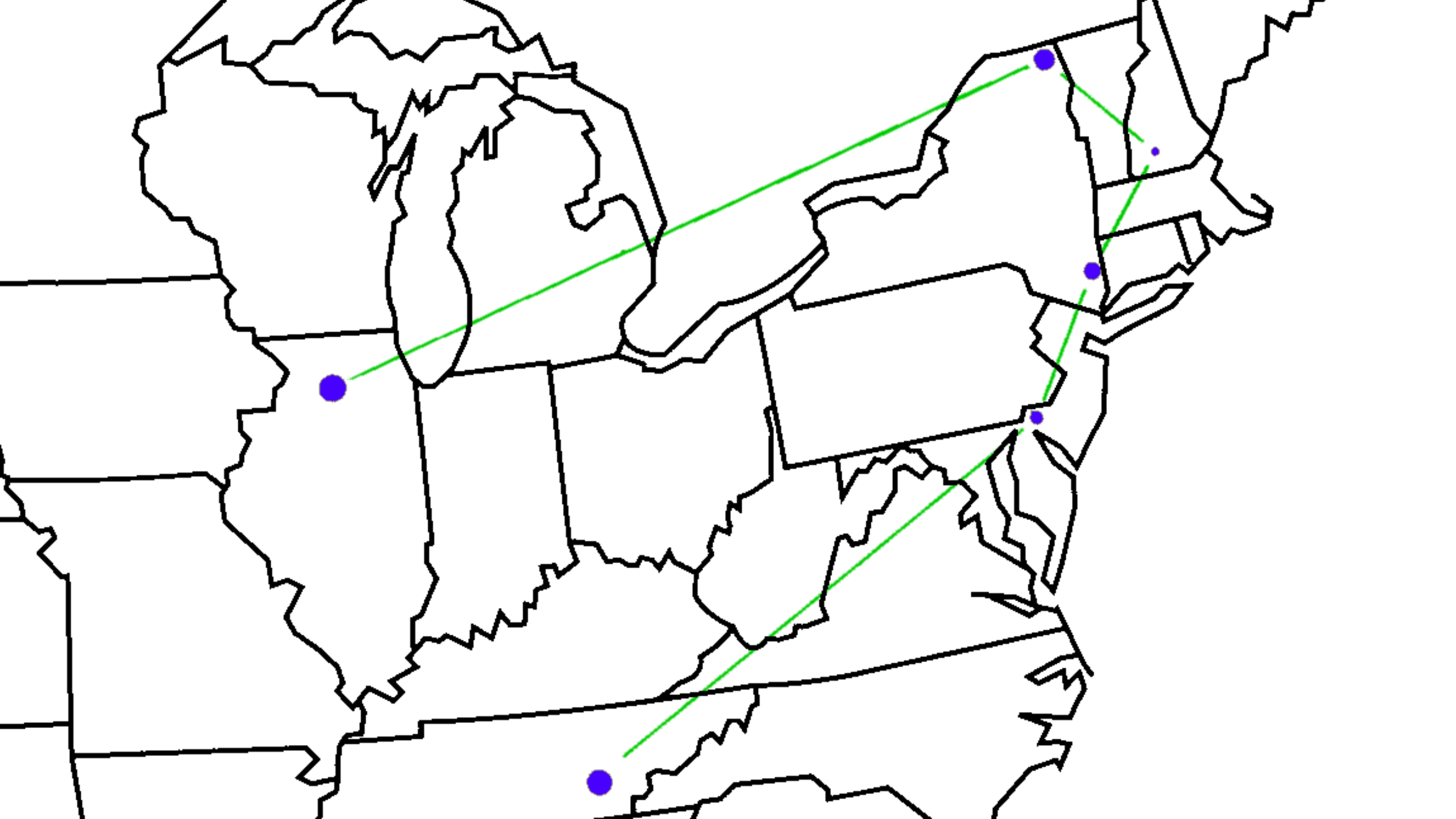




Figure 8. Hera, figurehead of the Argo Navis. In Jason and the Argonauts (1963). Screenshot by author.



Argo Navis as circumambulation, as pilgrimage:
“A transformative journey to a sacred center”

(Cousineau, 1998. p. xxiii).

“Religious historian Huston Smith finds four aspects to pilgrimage:
singleness of purpose; freedom from distraction; ordeal
or penance; and offerings” (Cousineau, 1998, p. 107).

Singleness of Purpose: *Divining Lines*

A paint can is twice pierced through its curved surface, one hole opposite the other, and rolled down a street or hill. The passage is selected for its semblance to the direction of future travel—the guiding lines of the constellation. As the can rolls, it spews paint as along an irregular, dotted line. Divining these lines, as one would read tea leaves, reveals to the traveler the halting or uncertain nature of the path ahead.

The ritual is repeated upon departure from each stellar coordinate. With every subsequent line, the traveler, unable to apprehend greater insight, imagines inscrutably deepening meaning.

Freedom from Distraction: *Logbooks for Cosmic Integration*

A traveler embarks carrying two logbooks: In the first, he dutifully reports atmospheric conditions, cloud patterns, miles traveled, interventions as undertaken, caloric intake, daily reflections, etc. The second—to an uninformed audience, indistinguishable from an authentic document—is a masterful exercise in falsity. No fabrication is too great, provided it feeds his sense of virtuosity and ensures his heroic legacy; the need to triumph over mediocrity and anonymity is paramount.

One logbook or the other carries a vague watermark or tea stain resembling a soldering iron balanced on a can of powdered milk on an empty boat in a calm sea. There is perhaps a sophisticated message to be deciphered.

Offerings: ***Dedicated Wilderness Areas***

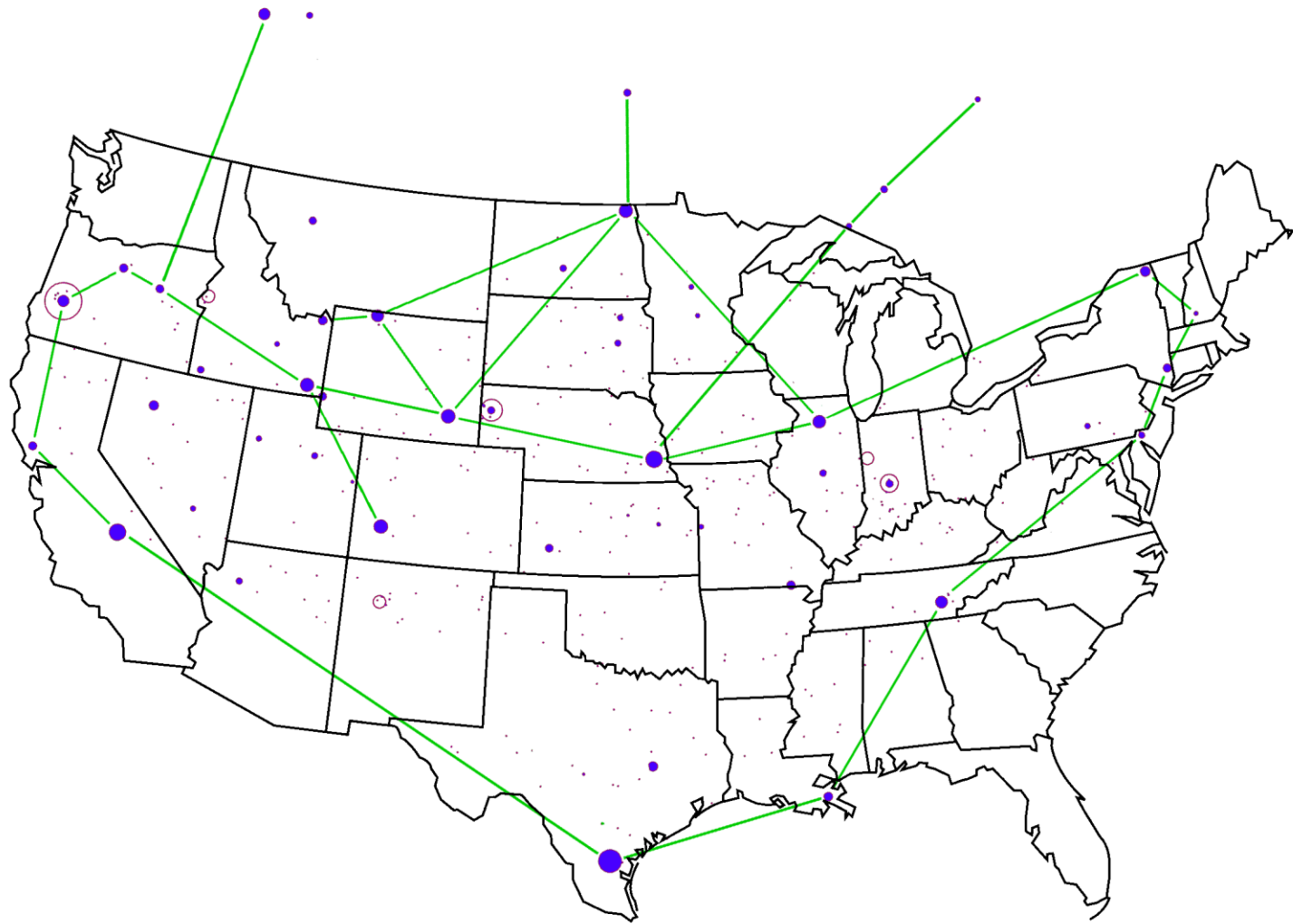
Through “soft” activism, a traveler engages in acts of seizure akin to citizen’s arrest, “dedicating” wilderness areas that have yet to be designated for protection through Acts of Congress. It is a method decidedly dissimilar to those of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

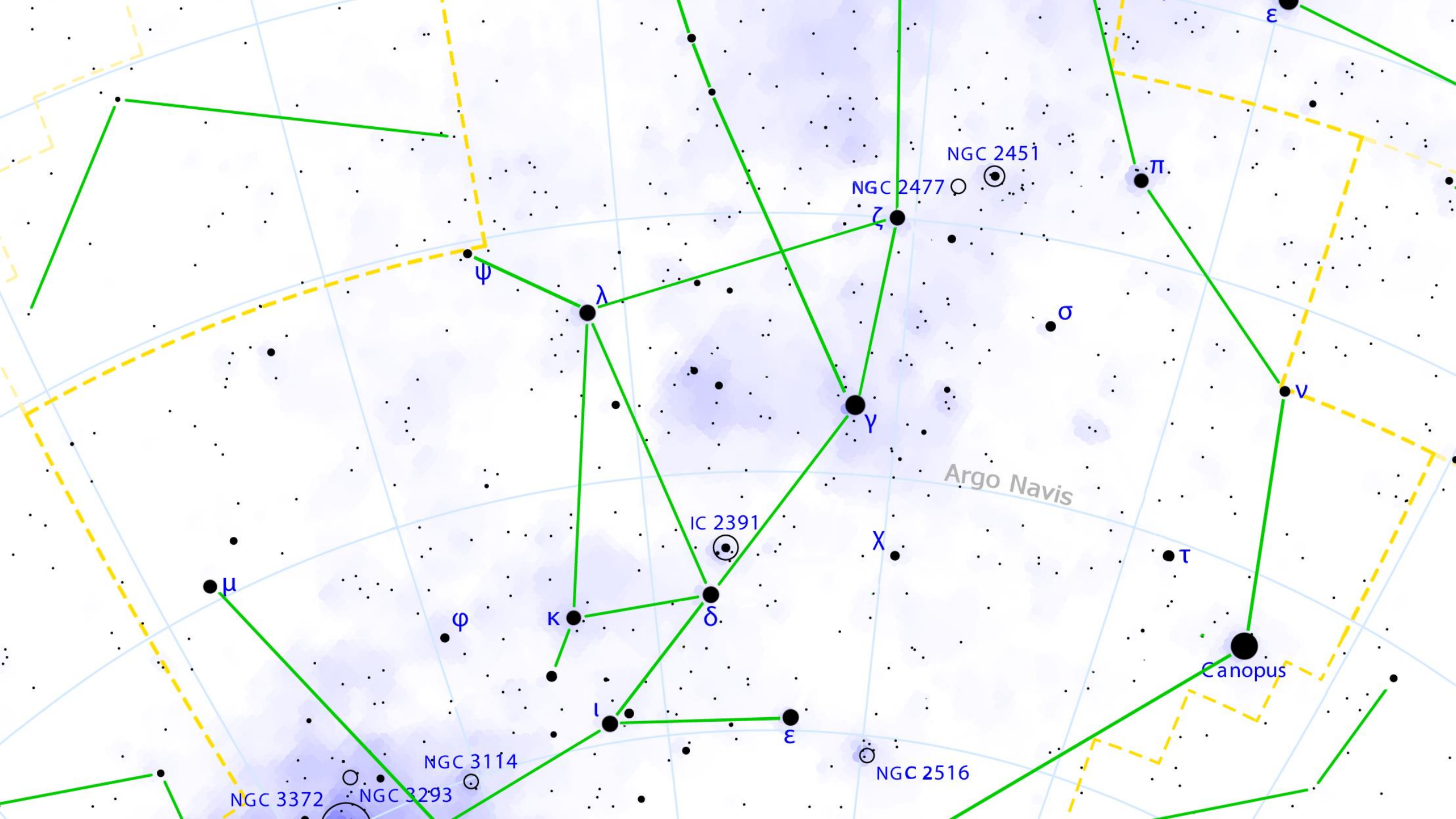
The traveler creates liminal barriers, walking circles around the site until a Longian and transitory zone of protection asserts itself. The host remains unassailable, and guests are henceforth beguiled to an inexplicable reverence for the land.

Ordeal or Penance: *Fluvial Barratry*

Like an ambulance chaser, the traveler is ever on the lookout for flash floods, “scanning the dial” for word of an impending deluge. His particular tools are ready-to-hand: a folding aluminum lawn chair on his back, a series of hats (finally settling on a Stetson), and a book or two (Leonardi & Stagi’s *The Architecture of Trees*; *Little Nemo in Slumberland*; Tomkins’s *The Afternoon Interviews*; Werner’s *Nomenclature of Colours*; etc.).

Leaned back, legs crossed, reading his stories, seated midstream and perpendicular to the current, he greedily awaits the torrent, which will concuss and sweep him away.





NGC 2451

NGC 2477

IC 2391

NGC 3114

NGC 3372

NGC 3293

NGC 2516

Argo Navis

Canopus

π

σ

ν

χ

τ

δ

κ

φ

μ

ε

ι

λ

γ

ζ

ψ



- Arendt, H. (1994). *Totalitarianism: Part Three of The Origins of Totalitarianism*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace.
- Cousineau, P. (1998). *The Art of Pilgrimage: The Seekers Guide to Making Travel Sacred*. Berkeley, CA: Conari Press.
- Dean, T. (nd). *And he fell into the sea*. Retrieved from <http://www.basjanader.com/dp/Dean.pdf>
- Dumbadze, A. B. (2015). *Bas Jan Ader: Death is Elsewhere*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Leonardi, C., Stagi, F., & Danford, N. (2019). *The Architecture of Trees*. Hudson, NY: Princeton Architectural Press.
- McCay, W., & Braun, A. (2017). *The Complete Little Nemo 1905-1909*. Köln: Taschen.
- Schneer, C. H. (Producer), & Chaffey, D. (Director). (1963). *Jason and the Argonauts* [Motion picture]. United States: Columbia.
- Syme, P. (2018). *Werner's Nomenclature of Colours: Adapted to Zoology, Botany, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Anatomy, and the Arts*. London: Natural History Museum.
- Szántó, A., Girst, T., Speigler, M., Ströbele, U., & Weschler, L. (2015). *The Sense of Movement: When Artists Travel*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz.
- Tomalin, N., Hall, R. (1979). *The Strange Last Voyage of Donald Crowhurst*. Briarcliff Manor, NY: Scarborough Books.
- Tomkins, C., & Duchamp, M. (2013). *Marcel Duchamp: The Afternoon Interviews*. Brooklyn, NY: Badlands Unlimited.

