



## Boundary Language

**PROSPECTUS:** The boundary language project's notation system describes and models spatial-temporal settings in terms of their fundamental perceptual, cultural and psychological components. Drawing from the works of Vico, Lacan, Žižek, Hegel, and others as well as a range of examples from painting, literature, architecture, and the landscape, boundary language lays the ground for comparative studies as well as artistic/architectural interventions. This comprehensive review focuses on the role of enunciation and framing (encadrement) in case studies from film, literature, architecture, landscape. Parallel strategies employed by Plato (the Cave), Poe ('The Purloined Letter'), and Giulio Camillo (theater of memory), confirm the central tenets and major methods of Boundary Language's topological system.

The Boundary Language Project spans 25 years of comparative spatial studies integrating geography, literature, mythology, psychoanalysis, architecture, visual arts, film, and other fields. The aim is the articulation of a 'minimal set' of graphic operators able to model the 'event basis' of places, conceived as imaginary constructs falling between two frames or limits, a field that re-materializes the subject in order to ideologize a point of view and 'anamorphic' experiential structures radically divided between the interests of *énoncé* (utterance) and enunciating (act). Enunciation, derived from Jacques Lacan's system of the symbolic, imaginary, and Real, revealed through four fundamental discourses (master-slave, university, hysteric, analysis), expands through a system derived from Aristotle's 'expanded' system of causes. The inclusion of automaton and *tuchē* into the 'standard set' of four (efficient, final, formal, material) explains the centrality of a radical materialism as the basis for critical theory in architecture and the arts. In short, this is the coincidence of theoretical categories with empirical constructs, revealed by the five 'primary terms' of frame theory: the double frame (*encadrement*), difference/defect ( $\partial$ ), the object-cause of desire (*a*), the square-wave of anamorphosis ( $\square$ ), and the acousmatic enclosure.

These five terms act as bridges between theory and 'practice', and the method of boundary language is to derive its critical principles from empirical 'texts' — places, scenes from films, architectural conditions, spatial/cultural practices, etc. with minimal interpretive embellishment. Mapping such 'found objects' using the five standard terms affords the collation of examples and refinement of the critical framework. The necessary experimental control is based in a principle of abuse: unless errors continually provoke the mapping process, the method will lose its ability to collate. It will, like other systems, become a caption technique. Boundary language progresses when the system aspires to a role of ideal stupidity/silliness (*bêtise*) related to the French term for the ventriloquist's dummy (*le mort* — i.e. 'the dead man').

When critical theory finds itself in the Lacanian position of 'between the two deaths' it activates the motifs and motives of the katabasis, the 'separation' component of fantasy associated with descent into Hades (literally, 'the invisible'). Here, as tradition confirms and Hegel elaborates, signifiers constitute a gallery that, from time to time, is elaborated as a memory theater. Theory's professional obligation is to be able to recognize such theaters when they occur in history. 'Spirit is a bone' (another Hegelian slogan), not in the phrenologists' sense (because they make a picturesque 'imaginary' out of the radical materiality of bone) but in the sense that bone is already-always a spirit because it is — even on the biological-evolutionary level — 'subjectivised'; that is, the re-materialization of the subject as a spatial-temporal field has an originary validity that transcends distinctions between the physical, the biological, and the cultural. Radical materialism is this: without being the 'swerve to the right' that attempts to normalize theory within 'primary' constraints of physics and biological evolution; and without being a 'swerve to the left' to prematurely engage issues of motive (finality, both as political history and teleology) critical theory accepts and identifies with the 'clinical' inheritance of the Freudian-Lacanian field. In short, it accepts the fact of its own subjectivity and status as voice.