

In Freud's story about his grandson's game of 'fort' and 'da', the child plays with a thread attached to allow him to throw it out and retrieve it. Freud hypothesizes that the game is related to the mother's recent departure, and that the child is coming to terms with the spatial structure of here and there that define his isolation and the promise of return. Between *fort* and *da*, Lacan remarks, opens a gap. The two are no longer a part of a continuum of nearer and further away but a part of a dichotomous absolute that, like left and right, valorizes the near and far as such. What about that gap? Is it an accident of the encounter between topology and child development or, in fact, a key to the essential qualities that make human space human?



'Step into the light' ... the formula for gap transcendence involves a walk into and past through the plane of representation ... transgressing the gap that is always maintained in the minimum, the 'face to face'. In the Spielberg film, *Close Encounters of the Second Kind* (1977) transcendents involves interplanetary transport as well as the acceptance of another civilization outside the visible universe. It is important to see the ritualized passage into the spaceship as the central defining moment, not just an option. The reverse action (the alien trapped in suburbia) is the comic inverse of this.



Akiro Kurosawa's *High and Low* (1963), final scene, where Gondo the industrialist brought low by a kidnapper's ransom, confronts the kidnapper after he is captured and sentenced to death. The camera picks up a ghostly reflection of the interlocutor out of frame and juxtaposes the faces so that a two-headed monster seems to be arguing with itself, visually parsed by the wire mesh of the security glass. The 'face to face' condition is, as in Ingmar Bergman's portrayals, intensifies the role of the gap, shows it to be the ultimate 'partial object', the central void of all horror.

1. the gap in graphs

The gap between near and far, inside and outside, subject and object, etc. is in fact a structure — a cruciform to be exact — that distinguishes in an orthogonal way a rotational discontinuity (moving from left to right is qualitatively different than movement forward and backward). It's possible to trace this inconsistent cross back to ancient society's observations of the difference between celestial movements east to west (diurnal) and those north to south (annual). The former miniaturized the year's seasonal cycle, with night playing the role of winter, and noon that of summer — hence, the connection between regions associated with summer weather, as in the Midi (France).

Because time is filled out with spatial metaphors, exchanges between temporality and geography are both highly topological. Even discourse seems to take sides, as in the case of the Lacanian formula for the discourse of the Master and Servant, a 'diurnal' action that allows for gaps ('breaks') only between scenes where the Master makes some demand of the Servant. The Servant escapes, even in folklore, by 'following the drinking gourd', that is, the constellation that points north. 'Stepping into the light' (i.e. passing directly through the plane of reception that the subject faces) has always been a metaphor about death, passage into the 'other world' of Eternity.

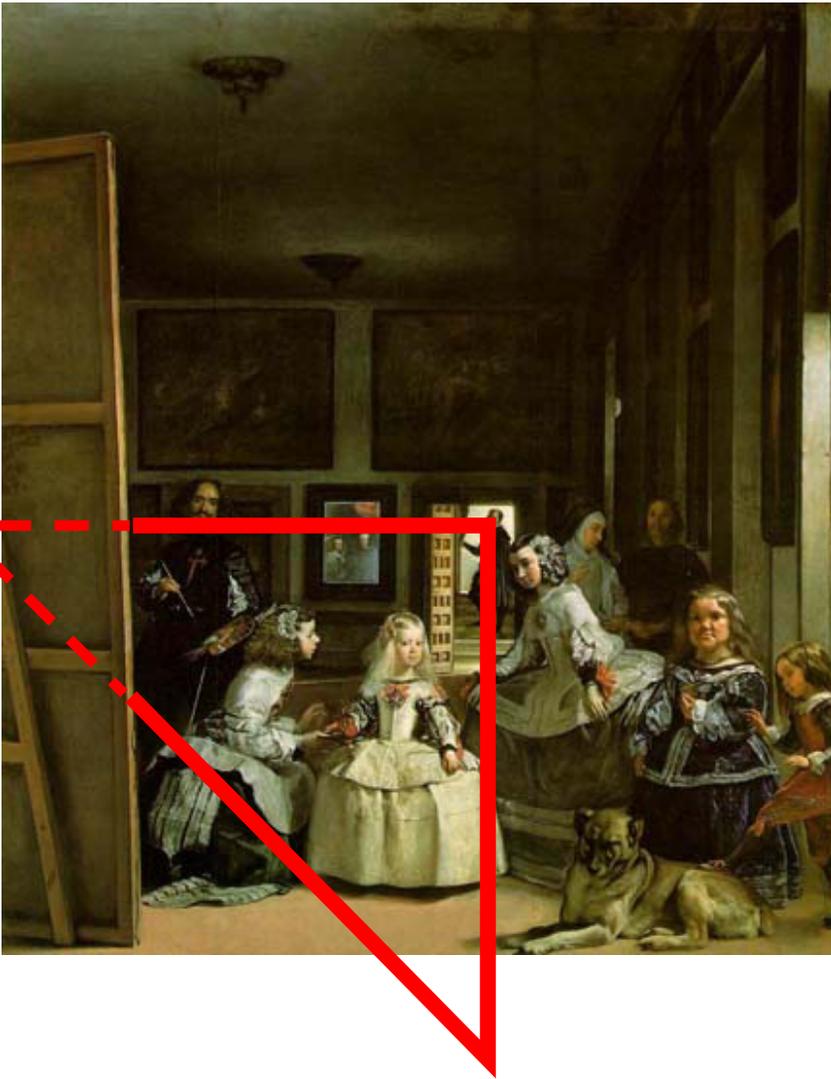
A cross-shaped graph would, like the *templum* that defined the sacrifice of the victim and the relation of that sacrifice to the quadriform sky, involve a crossing between short-term events and long-term ones: fast and slow. The architectural temples that took their names from this ritual of divination took up and combined the themes of fast and slow, principally in the division between details 'consumed' on the perceptual plane of the users and those imagined to exist in plan and section. The visible ruled the fast transactions of activities, the slow resisted not only perceptual penetration but the erosive forces of time: the last material presence of a building is made up of the bones of walls and fragments of ground designs. In these terms, the slowest building ever was the first,

the Dædalan labyrinth, which is in a sense 'all wall *poché*' (wall interior) and 'all plan'. Slow buildings are good for tombs, observatories, and prisons. Fast buildings emphasize visibility and transaction, usually on a single plane.

This rule is proved by the exception. In the 1939 film, *The Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy returns home after being persuaded to end her runaway attempt by Professor Marvel. The home has become a house, abandoned by the family in anticipation of an oncoming tornado. It has 'slowed down', the first step in becoming a ruin. A screen door blows off; the rooms are empty. When Dorothy goes to her room, a window frame

is blown in by the wind and it hits her head. Her concussion produces a delirium where she imagines the view through the window as a *fantasia* projection populated by victims of the tornado's vortex wind (see illustration on next page). Farmers out fishing wade to her, unperturbed. A cow continues to graze. The only tip-off that anything is wrong is the phantom of the mean teacher, Miss Gulch, metamorphized into a witch on a broomstick. This change signals the qualitative role and shape of this 'actualized gap'. It is a death-passage that, like the birth-passage, head directly across a boundary of transgression, a limit (privation) that has been turned into an interdiction (prohibition).

Graphic representation of this difference in quadrilateral motions has been going on for some time. The famous image associated with *The Table of Cebes*, a text widely distributed in the late Middle Ages, a version of the Tower of Babel. Here, the top-ward temple is the 'Oz' portion, the section below is a journey or trial to sort out the righteous.



1. triangulation

The cruciform graph gives the impression that a forward crossing is made directly, simply by 'stepping into the light'. Actually, transgression involves a backwards motion or at least reference, a collation of the first part of the journey with the present or last. Hence triangulation, as in the case of Diego Velázquez's painting *Las Meninas* (1656), undermines a cone-of-vision interpretation by involving mirrors that somehow 'delay' the exchange of scenes within a 'sandwich' of fictional space. This is the gap *actualized*. The aposentador standing partly in and partly out of the room (the aposentador was charged with the keys, with opening and closing rooms of the palace). His full name was José Nieto *Diego Velázquez*. Thus, there are three royal couples, two Velázquez's, and a space that seems to blow-up after the mirror 'records' its image.

Las Meninas, through its visual appeal, invites us to 'step into the light', meaning 'step into the gap', the gap here being the incomplete triangle which, by virtue of what's hidden on the working canvas, contains something like the 'interior 8' that Lacan described as the signal of desire.

This is the space between the space, a hypothetical where identity and anamorphosis combine to undermine the stability of the subject and the system of stable references established as a part of representational conventions.

The relation of *Las Meninas* to *The Wizard of Oz* is particularly uncanny if one takes into account the theme of duplication (of characters) and the emphasis on the specular/divinatory role of screens.

The triangle that connects the horizon, the internal line of fire connecting the mirror with the images on the canvas turned away from us, and the eyes of the two Velázquezes and Filipe IV and Queen Mariana demonstrate the coincidence of the logical and the topological qualities of the gap. 'Las Meninas' (1656) is so carefully constructed according to the rules of geometric perspective that we can reconstruct a plan that implicates the painting as the source of the reflected images of the King and Queen. But, who stands in front of the canvas? In the fiction of the scene of portrait painting, the King and Queen stand there as models. In the actual production (Aristotle's efficient cause) it must be Velázquez, the painter, working on THIS canvas in particular. In terms of reception theory, it is the audience, the spectator. Presence of three 'fool figures' (dwarfs, the dog) in the corner ('angle') of the painting remind us that the name for the contractors' square (*quadratum*) is also the name for paintings. The contractors' square is, of course, a triangle.

Doroth uses her de-framed window as a television device after her concussion, easing the via-vortex journey to Oz through in-flight films showing neighbors and farm animals apparently enjoying the storm (*The Wizard of Oz*, 1939).

The engraving included in Giambattista's second edition of *The New Science* (1744) includes the figure of *Metafisica* seated on a globe, her arm resting on a plinth with the engraving, 'IGNOTA LATEBAT' ('she lay hidden, unknown'). This early formula for the main component of the uncanny (that which should have remained hidden, but came to light) is, like the *Las Meninas*, done with mirrors and a carpenters' square.

