

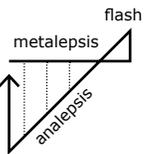
# Encadrement / Double Framing

There are alternative ways of considering the meaning of "between the two deaths," the Lacanian term corresponding to the katabasis interval where the newly deceased soul descends into the underworld to undergo a series of tests, ending with a final settlement of the soul and the second, symbolic death. The normal understanding is based on the anthropological/ethnological interpretations of this interval, the imaginary journey into Hades ("the invisible"). But, taking the component of invisibility seriously, the interval is also the "invisible visible" or "visible invisible," a visual-architectural (and mappable/diagrammatical) component of space-time whose portability takes it past the ethnographical contexts into more everyday situations: art, architecture, literature, landscape, etc. Here, there are various strategies akin to the visual arts technique of *encadrement*, or "double framing." The two main versions of this technique have counterparts in poetry, literature, architecture, and landscape — as well as in Lacanian psychoanalysis, where the in-between constitutes a gap that carries the idea of "between the two deaths" deep into the territory of the Freudian and ethnographic uncanny, as a general blurring of boundaries.



Book VI of Virgil's *Aeneid* details the hero's visit to the "Cumæan Gates," fabled entry to the underworld, where he will get essential advice from his dead father, Achis. At the gates, a delayed chiaroscuro, images are arranged in tiles to tell the story of Dædalus and the construction of the Minoan labyrinth. The whole story is relevant: why Pasiphae was cursed to fall in love with the sacred bull, why Ariadne offered help but was later abandoned ...

Anamorphosis doesn't happen on its own; it requires the double action of metalepsis and analepsis within the structure of the anacoluthon. Note that chiaroscuro, the visual representation of the discovery process, comes in two types, and that one type "necessitates" the other, anacoluthically.



**Prospopoeia: Subjective Objective (Voice).** Slavoj Žižek describes the results of the flaw in causality: we get an uncanny blurring between the rigid categories of subject and object. For "objective subjectivity," we find that the subject is born into a world that is already established through language. In the Mirror Stage, the young subject sees that it's own Other is more masterful, already organized within networks of symbolic relationships. This shifts subjective time to the "future anterior" point, by which time the subject may have acquired some of this mastery, at the cost of (symbolic) castration. The subject, therefore, is defined by a kernel of objectivity. What about objects? They two have a dose of the opposite at their heart. Subjective objectivity puts a foreign element — mind, voice, intentionality — at the very point where this subjectivity is able to re-frame the object from the inside out. This flip gets modeled in various ways: a passageway to an impossible middle, a name that gains power over the object, a key or token that gets us past the guards. Literature and art make a lot of money out of this fourth-dimensional stuff, so it's good to remember, whenever we encounter the theme usually portrayed in dimensional terms ("the fourth dimension," most commonly) that we are dealing with the consequences of flawed causality and the subjectively objective. In Hitchcock's filming technique, this led to his rule, that you can have a subjective shot of an objective scene or an objective shot of a subject, but not the other two cases. The oscillation between the two allowed shots is, after all, the standard division between action and exposition that all films use one way or another. This is only rarely used in strict sequential alternation.

Sometimes exposition has within it a nested series of alternations. But, the key is to keep the audience clear about what is happening, even when the death drive dominates as a theme, known as the "death narrative." In Billy Wilder's *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), the screenwriter Joe Gillis begins his narrative by mentioning that he is the corpse floating in the swimming pool. What follows is straight journalistic reporting, but in *Donnie Darko* (2001), Richard Kelly doesn't let us see the suture point until near the end of the film. Donnie was actually killed in the accident we take to be the beginning of his conflict at school. M. Night Shyamalan's 1999 film, *The Sixth Sense*, sets up its tells so that the audience can guess that the psychiatrist is one of the dead guys about 2/3 of the way into the film. The death narrative is more common than is acknowledged, because even some critics don't discover it. In James Joyce's *Ulysses*, for example, Bloom falls while trying to break into his flat, having lost his latchkey. The text never says he got back up, and the subsequent material could be his dream during the final moments of life. Only one critic, David Bertolini (LSU), has noticed this! We are more familiar with David Lynch's two death-narrative films, *Lost Highways* (1997) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001), where doubled actors and characters play out the full advantages of being dead.

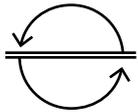
Knowing how to speak at least a little Lacanese helps on these death-drive excursions. Also, relating the *katabasis* to Henry Johnstone's "categories of travel" is useful in showing the structure of significant moments. Based on Homer's *Odyssey*, Johnstone used motion as a stand-in for discovery, but this required the graphic model of anacoluthon, with its components of metalepsis and analepsis, the management structures required for the economy of metonymy.

**Encadrement One: Head-on.** As in the case of *Aeneas* at the gates of the underworld, the first visual structuring device for the *katabasis* we usually encounter is the delay. Here, the frame of experience we usually employ without notice is brought into focus through the construction of a secondary frame. It is important to note the space between the two frames, the architectural counterpart to the temporal delay. Where nothing much is happening, the traveler becomes much like a spectator sitting in an auditorium. When the body stops, the eye continues its momentum. In *Aeneas's* case, he looks at the gates Dædalus had designed in appreciation of the favor of asylum he was granted



Albrecht Dürer's famous woodcut print showing how to construct perspectives using a "lucinda," a strung frame whose grid corresponds to a gridded sheet of paper, subtly demonstrates more philosophical kinds of truths about representation. The observer's POV, at a right angle to the left-to-right layout of the demonstration, must be employing the same drawing construction tricks that the artist we see on the right is using. Our identification with his POV must acknowledge what the orthogonal angle has disclosed: our ability to see time.

by the Sibyl of Cumæ. In the panels of the bronze doors we see cast the images his own dramatic life as the chief architect of King Minos of Crete. Like Hiram, the putative architect of the Temple of Solomon, Dædalus employed a password able to unlock the secrets of the labyrinth. This was less of a literal word than it was the poetic principle of recursion — the same structure that Dante was to use thousands of years later in his poem about the underworld, *terza rima*. Two lines are linked by the addition of a third, much as in the case of Lacan's Borromeo knot of the Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real. The Dædalan labyrinth was two ABA sequences, one large and one small, linked together as a third ABA. Therefore it is not nonsense to say that one could "sing one's way" out of the puzzle.



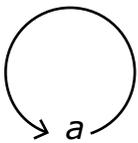
The *katabasis*, or death narrative, is the usual literary form of stories about how cities are founded. It's thus very interesting to think that architecture's relation to the unconscious is crucially a matter of sacrifice. Overdetermination means that we encounter this idea in multiple forms, sometimes corrupted, sometimes silly.

Is this also the logic of the death narrative? Given the suspension of the secret through the technique of stopping the body but allowing the eye to continue, we also have the structure of the anacoluthon, where forward motion is stopped by an "ungrammatical" element or moment (think of the falling jet engine in *Donnie Darko*). What comes next sets up a means of recovering the metonymy suspended at the beginning of the sequence. The two metonymical economies, one going forward, the other going backward, can be linked through "anamorphic" objects and instances where the two metonymies are allowed to intersect. The historical monster most famous for this is the Roman god Janus, whose two faces gaze in opposite direction. It's easy enough to domesticate such monsters and forget their monstrosity, which, as the *monstrum* and related signs (*omen*, *ostentum*, *prodigium*, *miraculum*) show, were used to tell the future. What future? The one we've already lived through, of course, the "future anterior." This triadic, *terza rima*, structure allows works of art plenty of opportunity to play through themes of motility, scale (<>) and identity.



The Möbius band exemplifies the ubiquity of the passage at which the partial object reveals the "defect" of R2. In the skiagraphy of architecture, this means that anywhere we can design an inside as an outside, outside as inside, or devise a corner that collapses scale, as in Mies's famous Crown Hall corner, we've done our job.

**Encadrement Two: Rotation.** Frontal *encadrement*, or frame-within-a-frame, is for starters. More the stuff of the first ungrammatical element that joins metalepsis to analepsis, its real genius is to introduce themes of rotation, as the anamorphic phase begins. Rotation means that we access a point of view where the whole prior process can be laid out in front of us, as in the left-to-right reading sequence Dürer set up in his famous woodcut of the artist and model in the studio. Because the point is to illustrate a process, we all too easily can forget that this arrangement is the same one we're using to look at the arrangement. It's the left-to-right version of what we are experiencing frontally, along the "sagittal" (line of sight) dimension. The rotation is more elaborately developed through themes and motifs where circles, spirals, mazes, meanders, corners, angles, and cross-points complete a series by joining the end-point to the origin. This should also suggest the Lacanian gapped circle, where the gap is the return point where some paradox should be realized. Lacan connects this to the structure of the Möbius band, where we realize that there are both two and one sides; also to the mouth of Plato's famous Cave in the allegory told in *The Republic*.



The gapped circle take us back to the premise of Lacan's thesis about desire: demand cannot be fully symbolized; there is always a remainder. This creates a gap that must be covered by fantasy; and the forms of discourse outline the principal ways of doing this, by specifying how the gaze (and other partial objects) are deployed.