

FOUR TYPES OF ENCADREMENT

Subjective Objects, Objective Subjects. Slavoj Žižek describes the results of the flaw in causality in terms of a blurring, overlap, or gap (they amount to the same thing) between the rigidly separated categories of subject and object. The frame, which would seem to be the ideal device for maintaining this separation, conspires to form this blurring, overlapping, and gap when it doubles itself in the practice of *encadrement*. Because there are four main strategies of this doubling of the frame, there are four relations of the artworks employing double frames to the gaze, which is the logical key behind suspension and discovery. In the gaze's four modes (presence, absence, obfuscation, confrontation), the model of chiasmus, devised by Edgar Allan Poe to stage positive and negative, visible and invisible, known and unknown elements of narrative works of art, becomes central. Because the four Lacanian discourses (master-slave, hysteria, analysis, university) also constitute formulæ for relating the double frame to narrative; and because the discourses also define how metonymy and metaphor are deployed to "manage" the circulation of meaning around the "empty position" created by partial objects, the three domains, discourse, double framing, and the partial object (voice, gaze, etc.) can be diagrammed as a chiasmic (Λ -shaped) map, where Lacan's formula for fantasy, $\$ \diamond a$, is played out as the "cycle" completing the relationship between alienation (the subject's submission to the Other) and separation (the confrontation of "partial object-ivity" through anamorphosis and metonymy). Lacan emphasized that this is not a reciprocal relationship; there is no balance of forces. The double frame shows how this chiasmic system is, instead, an "economy" of metonymies (elements "dropped out" in the process of framing/metaphorizing).

Encadrement's Four Types. Because the point of view (POV) can take up four relationships to the chiasmic model, there are four kinds of double framing that manage the temporality and viscosity of the work of art. In the simplest example of framing, a point of view is established as the position of the subjective. The frame limits the objective in terms of what will be represented inside its bounds, as representative of what lies outside these bounds. The vanishing point (VP) may be located within the represented field or elsewhere, but its presence indicates that the frame has only momentarily clipped off a piece of represented reality, organized by an objective center, the point at which the horizon serves as a "back frame," a counterpart to the "front frame" of the subject's representational view.- In some paintings, the vanishing point is given cosmological or existential value, as a goal or unreachable ideal.

In the "frontal" type of *encadrement*, the POV finds itself represented within the framed view, related to a frame within the frame. This is the most literal use of the term, a frame visible within the framed field of view. The second POV is "delayed" from the represented one, since the represented scene is defined as being temporally prior to the viewer's present view of it. "Delay" is another name for this kind of *encadrement*. When a POV and frame are represented at an oblique (usually orthogonal) angle to the viewer, the scene shows objective and subjective fields side by side. This spatialization of a temporal process allows us to say that we are "reading a process," that of looking or representing. This is called "oblique *encadrement*." Because it one POV's line of sight is at an oblique angle to the main one, this is also called "rotational *encadrement*."

In some cases, the represented frame is related to the main frame in a symmetrical way. As in the case of Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. M.)*, the sky-curtain at the back of the painting, guarded by a masked figure, echoes the curtain guarded by a similar figure that opens on to the main subject of the painting, the "desmoiselles," accompanied by a seated figure of Melancholy. This symmetry calls into question the relationship between the two frames and the space sandwiched in between. This is "reciprocal *encadrement*." The fourth form of *encadrement* occurs when there is an inside frame, sometimes invisible, such as a concealed surveillance camera or microphone. In the famous example of Jeremy Bentham's ideal prison, the Panopticon, the tower in the middle of the circle of cells was shielded so that prisoners could not see if guards were present inside. This inside frame was more effective than the walls that enclosed them, because they were forced to behave at all times as if the guards were present at all times, even though guards might be absent for any or all of the time. Because the frame in this case is internal to the scene, this is called the "inside frame," or "internal *encadrement*."

Encadrement 1: Head-on. As in the case of Æneas 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 Æneas's case, he looks at the gates Dædalus had designed in appreciation of the favor of asylum he was granted 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.

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.

Encadrement 2: 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*.

In the ancient story known as "Scipio's Dream," the nephew of the famous (deceased) Roman general meets his uncle in a dream. The uncle invites him to the place where the souls of the dead reside. From that point, they are able to look down on earth. In contrast to the suffering and imperfection the nephew sees on earth, those about him in heaven appear to be glowing with health and happiness. His uncle explains that what is good for the soul is bad for the body, and *vice versa*. On earth, the soul is sick, trapped within an imperfect mortal shell. Liberated in heaven, it enjoys perfection although the body had to be left behind. Each bodily pleasure, he continues, is a torture for the soul, tying it ever closer to the source of suffering. The POV from "above" is one that intersects life on earth at a right angle, an "orthogonal" view. This 90° angle also stands for the complete independence of the two "vectors," life and death. The relationship is not of two regions connected by a passageway, but of a point of view set at a proper angle to see the truth of the temporal relationship. To reach this POV, one must "rotate" out of the direct line-of-fire that connects subjects and objects. In mortal terms, there seems to be no escape from this line, so rotation takes on the aspect of a magic escape, an impossible passage requiring a password or special assistance. Just as Scipio the younger was aided by his dead uncle, the "mortal" POV must be

assisted by a function known as a "dummy" (*le mort*, "dead man" in French), or automaton. The password enabling this rotation is, more generically, the "Turing sentence," a voice that, from behind the curtain, acts on behalf of the subject and requires no intelligence of its own.

Encadrement 3: between the two frames. When two lines of thought or action are functionally distinct but parallel, their intersection constitutes links that demonstrate two kind of "Real." The first real (R1) is an enclosing and original Real, the kind of reality that exists in the street outside the theater before the play begins, or, inside the building, the reality of the audience sitting in its seats before the show, chatting and rustling through their programs. When the play begins, the reality behind the curtain takes precedence, and the audience is commanded by convention to remain quiet and receptive — in other words, they must "play the dummy" (*le mort*) in order for the play to reverse the polarity of the frame of the stage. The other kind of real (R2) is an internal defect within reality that suggests the existence of an R1. In *The Truman Show*, the dupe, Truman, whose whole life is televised to an avid audience, is unaware that the neighbors of his small Florida town are actors. Only when his radio accidentally picks up the director's instructions as a scene is being filmed does he begin to conceive the trick. This internal defect is negative and non-descriptive. It serves as evidence without any content or meaning, in fact it is meaningful *in that it is meaningless*.

Because R1 and R2 are structurally related (the internal defect is the key clue that there is an R1, an enclosing, higher order), the two orders serve as two frames. Having heard the director on his defective car radio, Truman now can imagine an escape to R1, the "real world" in his case, the space outside of the stage that he thought was ordinary reality. In the theater example, the audience must play dead just as the director of Truman's show must stay behind the scenes, concealed in the artificial moon that hovers over the ocean. Their R1 is effective *because it is silenced*. Their surveillance is totalizing. They have access to all parts of the stage, although they suspend this access in order to create surprise from the work of art. The director of Truman allows Truman to move and think "on his own" because he is able to limit the outer bound of this movement. Suppression of R2 (= the injunction to the audience to sit quietly in the dark as the play is going on, the "dummy function") is key to the security and effectiveness of R1.

Taken as portals in a more literal sense, *encadrement 3* is the structure of the system of twinship that, in ancient mythology, allowed one of a pair to be divine, the other mortal. This was the case where a god impregnated a mortal married woman; one of the twins would be the offspring of the god, the other of the mortal husband. This motif drew from the even more ancient idea of the shadow soul, the soul born along with the mortal that followed it as it proceeded through life, but silently and secretly conversed with the dead and occasionally sent some message through dreams or other divine signs. Most heroes were originally twins, and twins figure prominently in the foundation myths of cities. Romulus and Remus founded Rome and secured it from danger *by virtue of* Remus's sacrifice. Jumping over the boundary Romulus had plowed symbolically to mark out the territory of the city, Remus performed the spiritual duty of ruling in the underworld while Romulus ruled on earth. Without a twin in direct contact with the gods, Romulus would have no basis for his authority among mortals above.

Encadrement 3 is a cosmic frame, one essential to any religion based on eschatology. Therefore the space between the two frames takes on metaphysical importance as a place of instruction, correction, and revelation. It is the space between the two frames of *encadrement 1* rotated sideways so that its temporality of delay can be given a spatial form, the length and turning of a journey. The model of this journey is the so-called *mons delectus*, a magic mountain whose lower parts link together obstacles, puzzles, and trials, and an upper *templum* that is the inverse of the labyrinth below. Because of the relationship of *encadrement 3* to the Lacanian/folk idea of "between the two deaths," the theme of *katabasis* (descent into the underworld) is instructive.

Encadrement 4: the inside frame. The distinctiveness of Lacan's theory of the gaze is that it is not, as Foucault's or Derrida's gaze, a "natural object." The Lacanian gaze is a subjective object, but an object nonetheless that inscribes subjectivity "impossibly" within the objective scene. Its location is problematic. It cannot be seen, but it cannot be said to be fully invisible either. It is the point from which the visible stares back at the perceiver, turning the POV into a position that is also a fate or indictment. This shows how "interpellation," Louis Althusser's term for the subject's voluntary presumption of the presence and authority of the Other, is related to "interpolation," the association of place and placement with this injunction of the Other. Interpolation is about "being in the wrong place at the wrong time," the subject's

inevitable misfit into a position assigned to him/her. It is about being misrecognized, of being taken for the role one is forced to assume in order to work with the network of symbolic relationships.

Encadrement 4 works along the "line of fire" that is the sagittal dimension connecting the viewer with the viewed. Any "natural object," ordinarily definable by the laws of physics and chemistry and positioned within an objective map of space and time, can acquire a *partiality* that enables it the power of the primary partial objects: shit, the breast, the phallus, the gaze, the voice. Once acquired, this partiality makes the object "stand out" or, alternatively, become invisible. It will not yield to strategies of representation: photography, mapping, scientific analysis. Most notably, its orientation (front, back, left, right, top, bottom) breaks away from the framing systems that govern objects and spaces around it. Like the herms of ancient boundary-marking practices, space was radically curved by objects that broke the rules of circumnavigation, by which one could "sneak up behind." These objects, "all face," were modeled by the god Janus, whose two faces were really the four of the four "corners" of the edge of space. The temple of Janus, for example, had four doors, not two, indicating that the powers of the *templum* were an inverse of the circle of the horizon, which framed the celestial order of the planets and stars. The inside frame used topology to state the obvious: it makes no difference whether one says that the world surrounds such objects or such objects surround the world. Such objects subtract themselves from the symbolic order and are cases of the "outer real," R1.