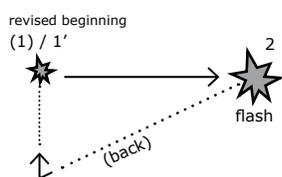# POE-TRY: Chiaroscoro and Motion through Space-Time

Five terms are linked as keys to the understanding of how motion, scale, and identity are linked in the construction of landscapes and architectures where 'self-discovery' and recursion are key. Two of these, analepsis and metalepsis, have to do with the function of metonymy within the framework of conventional meaning developed with representational frames such as fiction, narratives, painting, and film. Two others, "flash" and chiaroscuro, relate to principally visual effects that, in this context, are appropriated for processes of discovery (cf. Aristotle's "anagnorisis"). A fifth, anacoluthon, works as a bridge term between the two, specifying how reversal of the forward time-line in narrative results in retroactive meaning that can be isolated and materialized through anamorphic or "partial" objects. The context of development is the method employed by Edgar Allan Poe, which Jefferson Humphries[1] has characterized as a series of cascading analeptic structures. This system of five terms shows that Poe's method may more generally be counted as spatial, although his narratives dealing specifically with architecture and landscape are few. In these, however, there are key "tells" or give-aways that suggest that Poe employed this spatial method consciously and with considerable control. The advantage of this five-term system is that it allows Poe's method to be compared directly to filmic and other visual art examples as well as to representations of architecture and landscape.

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[1]Jefferson Humphries, *Metamorphosis of the Raven, Literary Overdeterminedness in France and the South Since Poe* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1985).


revised beginning
(1) / 1'
2
flash
(back)

metalepsis
analepsis
lost Real is restored

ungrammaticality
anamorphosis
partial objects
ANACOLUTHON

chiaroscuro 1
chiaroscuro 2

Analepsis: flashback, as in "The Mirror Tale" sequence in Cavalcanti's film *Dead of Night* (1945). The expedition to recover a lost image revives a dead scene that then rushes forward to meet its own future, and the future of the expedition to recover it. As a restoration, analepsis find a letter that was never mailed, a fact that was obscured or falsified, a document that was concealed. Analepsis is a "return of the Real," in the sense that a remainder must "drop away" from the Other in order to impose desire on the subject, and in order for the spell of this desire to be broken, the remainder must be returned. In *Vertigo*, Elster leaves behind the jeweled pendant that Scotty later recognizes from the portrait of Carlotta. The desire that was cultivated for Madeleine, acted by Judy, is realized with the discovery of this pendant. Analepsis requires *interpolation* (spatial triangulation, where one of the three locator dimensions is unknown or irrational in some way).
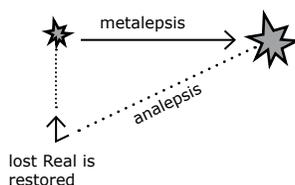
Metalepsis: a metonymy that refers to a prior metonymy, as in "Tomorrow I must get up and get the worm" (i.e. play the early bird) — hence, metonymy of metonymy, a "fable in brief," but involving analepsis, a journey back to recover a "treasure" of meaning. In narrative terms, this means that action can proceed without knowledge of the real motive; that the ungrammatical part (the worm, the first metonym) can sustain desire as long as it is missing its twin metonym (the early bird). The mystery of "getting the worm" creates a tension that is broken by reconnecting the parts of the saying, "the early bird gets the worm." In *North by Northwest*, the tension of the chase is sustained as long as the identity of the non-existent spy, Kaplan, is maintained as "ungrammatical." Metalepsis is related to Lacan's gapped circle, the return to the same impasse created by the asymmetry between demand and desire. Metalepsis induces *interpellation*, where the silencing of the antecedent metonym creates a split subject unable to respond to the command of the Other, "Enjoy!"
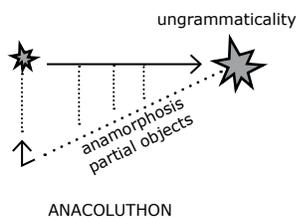
Anacoluthon: the encounter of a (final) ungrammaticality that creates a reverse-order causality revising the origins and meaning of the entire prior sequence. By diagraming a relationship between ending and beginning, the anacoluthon demonstrates the L-scheme's diagonal, the imaginary, the line along which anamorphosis and other visual effects are enacted to connect a point of view (POV) to a vanishing point (VP), the position respectively of the missing representative (Carlotta/Kaplan) and the forgotten jewel (NxNW: microfilm). The anacoluthon diagram converts the L-scheme into a composite of two orthogonal angles, each representing a relationship between a symbolic and Real component, one subjective, the other objective, whose extremities are linked by an imaginary.
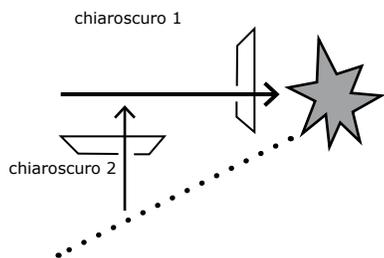
Flash (counterpart to "flashback"): The flash is the brilliant illumination, internal to the scene, that initiates the analepsis. It is the point of reversal. The flash is a collapse of dimensionality initiated by an internal or external glance or light source, as in the lightning flash in "La Tempesta" (Giorgione) or the inquiry of the lantern-bearing soldier in Caravaggio's "Denial of St. Peter." When Charlie in Hitchcock's *Shadow of a Doubt* realizes her uncle is a murderer, past, present, and future lose their distinction/distance with the realization of the proximity of a killer in the home (Uncle Charlie has "taken the place" of niece Charlie — literally; he occupies her bedroom and gives her a ring with a stranger's initials engraved inside the band).

Chiaroscuro: the framing strategies that lead up to the flash and its related mental movements. Chiaroscuro also attempts to delay or slow the flash so that it can be experienced without undermining the brilliance or immediacy of its effect as a flash. Chiaroscuro is the mirror stage as stage: i.e. a set of transactions between the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real, with its set of foreclosures and result of (subjective) splitting of the subject ($) and the (objective) creation of paradoxical free-floating partial objects (ω). These can be related to the issues of, respectively, the point of view (POV) and vanishing point (VP).

Consequences

Dysfunction rather than function. Each side of the triangle created by the anacoluthon could be regarded as a positive function, where one set of positions is actively "mapped on to" another domain. Here, the role of metonymy is invisible, acting as the filter or screen that assigns the vector of transfer; and the role of metaphor dominates as a "meaning effect" following and resulting from the functional transfer. This is a "law" in Lacanian terms, such as a law of physics where there is a continuum from antecedent conditions to results. As in the case of "action and reaction," one term necessitates the other, one term is almost tautologically implicated. There can be no action without reaction.

"Cause," in contrast, contains a gap; a point where something goes wrong, where we know cause as cause because it's not working in this particular case. Such is the case in the relation beween the conscious and unconscious. The two are related by slips of the tongue, mistakes in perception, inconsistencies, lacunæ. Through these gaps, fantasies are formed to avoid confronting the dysfunction, and the fantasies may be employed collectively, as with the case of anti-Semitism in pre-World War II Germany, or individually, as in the case of personal neurosis.

Art, literature, architecture, etc. are not concerned with Law, which may be deduced from internal and overlapping structures (neurological correlation, etc.), but with Cause, where contingency and selectivity are involved. Dysfunction's three forms result from the structure of anacoluthon, where a perceived forward (causal) motion is interrupted through the encounter with some metonymical part that asserts the powers of metaphor (partial object), retroactively generating a reverse logic where other partial objects and anamorphic conditions revise the temporal sequence using the logic of the "extimate" (both greater and less than, $<>$). Identity has to do both with the original suppression of the Real, in Lacan's system of Real, Imaginary, and Symbolic, and thus with a topological correction that returns the Real to its position within the metaphoric Other. This position operates as an "inside frame," again instating the uncanny extimacy of inversion.

Identity. The authorship in the case of these related terms, cannot be determined. The narrative voice cannot be identified or is cast into doubt (the "unreliable narrator"). The narration can be radically recast as impossible, as in the case of the death narrative. Or, the narrator can convince the reader that it is he/she who is the actual narrator through some mirror device (Vico). This results in such paradoxical reversals as "we don't have memories, memories have us" (making the seeming exception of collective memory the norm) and "productivity is the site/landscape of the void" (making place the frame and material support of chiaroscuro). In contrast to identity established symbolically or through self-image, metaleptic identity is Real, i.e. like that achieved by Zuni dancers. Identity dysfunction, or "mask," returns us to the centrality of the mirror stage, where the subject is left in metonymical pieces retroactively by the competition of the prematurely masterful imaginary image and the "replacement deal" offered by the symbolic.

Scale. The instability of the reader-writer relationship can be projected into the diagesis of the work, in the form of anamorphic objects and conditions. The anamorphic object takes on the properties of a (Lacanian) "partial object" that is capable of reversing scale conditions ($<>$) and inducing effects of the Freudian uncanny. In contrast to transitive scale relationships, metaleptic scale is dysfunctional and must be approached topologically.

Motion/Travel. The sequences initiated by analepsis-metalepsis can be enacted across a landscape, where motion takes on the aspect of the travel of a disembodied eye and narrative takes on qualities of a death narrative (*katabasis*). Hence, filmic devices such as boom shots, tracking shots, pans, and zooms can mechanically induce these effects in miniature, just as the filmic flashback can use editing to do the same thing. This travel is distinguished from other kinds of motion that can be attributed to simple mechanics, in that its aims are defined by analepsis. It must (1) return, (2) retain an account of its travels, (3) expose itself to contingency but resist being overwhelmed by it, (4) necessitate a guide or internal interpretant but resist being determined by it. In contrast to normal travel, analeptic movement is dysfunctional and, by the same token, authentic as travel, i.e. as an experience dedicated to discovery and identity (the Real as analeptic).

The relation of language to language (the global aspect of "metonymy of metonymy") is that in the unconscious, an "automaton" converts contingency into determinacy (another name for magic). The rebus-like quality of dreams affirms the role of metonymy in its analeptic-metaleptic-anacoluthic chiaroscuro. The role of the automaton can be materialized within narrative and pictorial frameworks, as Golems, monsters, Janusian doubles, etc., whose partiality activates the relation to the dream and the initiation of analeptic sequences.

Diagram 1 labels: identity dysfunction · motility dysfunction · scale dysfunction ($<>$)

Diagram 2 labels: m_2 inside frame · metonymy ('m_1') · Metaphor ('M') · fantasy · anagnorisis · causality defect / gap