

# The Narrativity of the Frame

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SINCE the all-conquering appearance of film, the word “frame” has had two meanings.\* Its standard meaning is the frame around a picture, whereas in its new sense it means the picture itself, the picture that, when projected as a whole succession of pictures, gives rise to film. Jokes build on this ambiguity – one has only to think of the definition of Hollywood as a place where they make pictures out of frames. This incidentally gives voice to film language’s claim to both elements: pictures and frames. Today the word “frame” does indeed command a whole semantic field of terminology, what with “framing” and “reframing,” with “in frame” and “*mise-en-cadre*” (Eisenstein). Or to quote associations made by Stephen Heath:

In frame: the place of image and subject, view (in early French catalogues a film is called a *vue*) and viewer; frame, framing is the very basis of disposition – German *Einstellung*: adjustment, centering, framing, moral attitude, the correct position.<sup>1</sup>

It should not be difficult to write an aesthetics of the cinema on the basis of this weighted and oft-employed concept.

In one respect this state of affairs gives pause for thought: is the inflationary use of the term “frame” connected with the fact that cinema in the narrow sense of the word knows no frame? To quote Bazin: “The screen is not a frame like that of a picture, but a mask which allows us to see a part of the event only.”<sup>2</sup> That is the aesthetic description; a formal description would point out that the frame of the picture onscreen is black, invisible, and not to be changed – neither during the projection of a film, nor for long stretches of film history. This also separates the filmic frame from its counterpart in art history, where there are countless types and formats of frame. In film the standard ratio of 1:1.37 remained unchanged for a long time after the 1920s. The tendency to juggle this relationship was pursued by such unlikely bedfellows as the film industry and a film aesthetics acting in the name of the new medium. With respect to the latter, the speech given by Sergei Eisenstein in

\*This chapter was translated by Roger Hillman.

1930 to the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Hollywood, significantly entitled "The Dynamic Square," is of relevance.<sup>3</sup>

In this lecture Eisenstein persuasively attempted to restrain the Academy, entrusted with the task of debating such questions of standardization, from further diversifying the screen's format – relationships of 3:4 (the prevailing format), as well as 3:5 and 3:6, were under discussion. Eisenstein rejected the wide screen as alien to the medium. According to him it had been derived from historical pageants and the theater, or else oriented toward "ideal" determinants of relationships like the "golden mean" whose relevance for the cinema remained unproven. Admittedly he could not deny that panoramic formats were necessary when it was a matter of longing for the limitless horizon, a "longing" without which both Russian and American film is inconceivable – the Far West and the vast breadth of "Old Man River," just like the steppes of Asia and the plains of the agricultural collectives, could be depicted only in broad format. But Eisenstein sets against this the far more modern underlying tendency to the vertical, one of the givens since mankind walked upright, which in modern times has been satisfied by chimneys, skyscrapers, oil derricks, pylons, and so forth. What Rodchenko and Mendelsohn had first demanded for contemporary photography was translated by Eisenstein into his medium, namely a recognition of the "sense of direction" of modernity – of height, of steep, dynamic proportions – that wrench our perception out of its narcissism.<sup>4</sup>

So how were these extremes to be approached? Pure tendencies to the vertical and the horizontal must encounter and contest each other on the "battlefield" of the square. This, claimed Eisenstein, was the basic shape, which in its "cosmic inviolability" must impress itself on the psyche of the viewer before undergoing change or reaffirmation in the course of the film. The term "dynamic square" means that the basic shape when covered over is changed from its full size to smaller squares either vertically or horizontally disposed.

This idea is not new. Eisenstein himself refers repeatedly in his lecture to Japanese art, which indeed employs extreme formats such as the "endless" horizontal and vertical scrolls. In the nineteenth-century cycle this art operated with diverse framing proportions: Eisenstein cites Hokusai's views of Mount Fuji in which the ratio fluctuates between 1:1.47 and 1:1.35, and simultaneously all kinds of frames are tried out. In the West, too, the device of changing format was employed in the nineteenth century and ultimately became the standard. Max Klinger's 1881 series *A Glove* consists of a sequence of ten etchings, whose proportions vary as follows (in each case I give the height before the width): 1:1.4; 1.2:1; 2.7:1; 1.4:1; 1:2.3; 1:2.3; 1:2.23; 1:2; 1:2.3; and 1:2.1. The reasons for the change of format are generally readily recognizable. Prints in the series like "Triumph" (triumphal procession) and "Homage" (a seascape) are given a landscape (panoramic) format that correspond to their horizontal expansiveness. A dream landscape (print 3), in which wishes grow and unfold, is rendered in a strict portrait (columnlike)

format. So this is a tautological procedure, just as Eisenstein proposed – landscape formats for the steppes and the Wild West, and portrait formats for the “narrow alleys of the Middle Ages, or mighty Gothic cathedrals towering above them” and for the Paramount Building in New York.<sup>5</sup> But it is not just the harmony between format and object that is involved here. This kind of consonance does not really have anything to do with the “narrativity of the frame,” or at best is covered by Billy Wilder’s pointed comment on cinema-scope (1:2.35, a format that Eisenstein fortunately did not live to see): “This is a great process for filming the life of a dachshund.” With Klinger and all the more with Eisenstein, for whom montage was the building block of film, the cycle and the film must be considered in their entirety. Eisenstein imagines film developed from the “dynamic square” to be a “rhythmically organized combination of various screen formats.”<sup>6</sup> Klinger anticipates this process when he follows an “establishing shot” in his first etching, illustrating in the old standard film format the overall composition of a skating rink with seventeen people, with a close-up perspective of five roller skaters in portrait. The vertical tendency of the latter provides a nice contrast with the skaters veering to the right and left. Furthermore, the continued change of format contributes considerably to the veering motion fundamental to the whole cycle, a motion that begins with roller skating in the first two pictures and continues through changing configurations of dreams.

A change of format with narrative effect, but realized quite differently, is also to be found in the precursors of the comic strip in the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Eisenstein refers indirectly to this when he appeals to the graphic designers to defend the portrait format. These artists assembled the picture pages of contemporary journals from a variety of photographs in different formats, and naturally allowed the skyscraper an extreme portrait format. This composite manner of arranging pages was developed into a high art form in book and newspaper illustrations of the nineteenth century as well as comic strips from the 1890s on.<sup>8</sup> Rodolphe Toepffer was probably the pioneer. In anticipation of Eisenstein he forsook the regular tableausque format of his great model Hogarth in favor of dividing up the landscape format of his lithographed pages into frames of various sizes (Fig. 1). With him almost everything is possible, right through from detailed exposition in the appropriate horizontal band of the whole page to the extreme of portrait format, which no longer aspires to being a picture per se, but merely a fragment, a section in a sequence.

Crucial here is less the relationship between prolongation and extent of the subject and format, than that between the increasing speed of the narrative and the chosen format: shorter sections within a sequence are understood as signs of acceleration. But with Toepffer we also find forms of parallel montage, even of the symmetrically contrasting variety such as would have interested Eisenstein. The first frame shows Monsieur Jabot, who has accidentally set fire to himself and is crying out “Help! Fire!” In the next room the Marchioness of Miriflor hears him, but thinks it is a profession of his love for her. Frame 3 again takes place in Jabot’s room: his hunting dogs are barking

wildly. In the marchioness's room her lap dog answers (two examples proving that you can also tell tales about dogs in portrait format!). Finally in the fifth panel, Jabot's hunting rifle goes off.<sup>9</sup>

If for the moment we leave aside reasons like variety, attraction, or adaptation to the object, then the change of format finds its particular narrative justification in the temporal aspects of plot motivation. Through visual fields of varying size processes of acceleration and deceleration are expressed, and, as in our example, actions or persons are emphasized or added with an attributive function: large fields for Jabot and the marchioness, small fields for the dogs – first the people, then the dogs. Eisenstein would have lent only partial endorsement to this solution, since beyond the filmic construction of the development of an event out of individual pictures or frames (he calls this “coupling”) he was also above all aware of the principle of collision, where frames are arranged according to their potential for *conflict*. This is no longer primarily a matter of representing processes – that is, of preserving continuity – but of creating “thematic effects.” From this collision of relatively static pictorial units the spark for the association of more wide-ranging concepts is supposed to originate: hunger, hatred, love, revolution. Eisenstein's aesthetics of film and film formats is thematic rather than narrative.

Establishing this scenario enables a smooth progression to an earlier art that employs a conscious change of format, namely Christian, or more accurately post-Constantine art. For roughly a thousand years, from 400 A.D. until 1400, the inversion of Friedrich Schlegel's dictum was applicable: “Every work of art brings its own frame into existence,”<sup>10</sup> becomes “The frame brings the work of art into existence.” With respect to the aesthetics of production this means the familiar phenomenon that, for example in the production of altarpieces, the makers of frames were often the leading artists, that frames cost more than the works of art they enclosed, and that they often made more of an impression than the works of art.<sup>11</sup> But in terms of the priority of the frame in pictorial aesthetics, it functioned under these conditions neither as an excerpt, as in the cinema, nor as the aesthetic border of the picture, as in autonomous art. Its task was the organization of the pictorial material. The frame is the necessary presupposition for a composite art, an art of many pictures and of “figures de relation” (Valéry).<sup>12</sup> Here I would be inclined to speak of an aggregate stage of visual communication, that actually contravenes everything that later established itself as the main tendency of Western art production and everything that film in the literal sense internalized: the integrative, continuous, unified nature of the single picture.<sup>13</sup> In Christian art of late antiquity and the Middle Ages the frame thus holds the elements together not just in a material sense like a scaffold, but also guarantees their connectedness. Under such conditions of viewing it is inconceivable that the observer might prefer not to see the frame so as to be lost in the picture. The frame is the necessary condition for perception being possible, for any kind of structural perception. From our perspective, of course, the question automatically arises as to how pictorial narratives can be fitted in

Rodolph Toepffer, *Histoire de M. Jabot* (Geneva, 1833).  
 Caption: "Help! Help! Fire!" – The marchioness, who mishears this as "What fire! What fire!" is strengthened in her misapprehension. The dogs notice a smell of roast and grow restless – The marchioness's dog does likewise – The fire reaches the gun, which goes off.



here – narratives that we probably far too readily assume to have an egalitarian aspect innate to their law of motion, to their unfolding in time, an aspect pressing for uniform segmentation.

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I shall endeavor to illustrate this thesis with just two works of Christian art of late antiquity and the Middle Ages. A glance at the door of Santa Sabina in Rome, which originated in the first half of the fifth century A.D., proves that questions of format and structure are approached in new, intelligent ways very early in the piece (Fig. 2).<sup>14</sup> The wooden frame is secured in its structure (and not just materially). What is striking about it is the prominence, in a quite literal sense, of the frame. The reliefs look like smooth, flat pictures positioned between the broad sculptured outgrowth of vine leaves and surrounded by three further framing elements. Two orders of framing can be made out: an inner, secondary one that relates to the pictorial field of individual panels, and an external, primary one, which defines each of the four vertical sections by virtue of the columns that rise from bottom to top of the door. This vertical arrangement can be explained in a practical sense by the fact that it is a folding door, so that not just two wings are involved, but four mobile elements. At the same time, of course, the question arises as to the ordering capacity of this arrangement.

Our second object of attention is the distinctly different formats of the pictorial fields and their combination in alternating horizontal rows. The frame of the door accommodates twenty-eight panels in seven horizontal rows, with four rows of four small and horizontally formatted panels alternating with three rows of four large, vertically formatted panels. It is easy to underestimate the effect of this rhythmical constellation, but the alternation



FIGURE 2

*Portal of Santa Sabina.*  
Rome, c. 430. Courtesy of Bildarchiv Foto Marburg im Kunstgeschichtlichen der Philipps-Universität.

achieves the effect of the horizontal structure also being perceived in a structural sense. (If panels of equal size were to overlap, the expressive potential of the horizontal disposition could easily be limited by the pregnant vertical elements of the prominently framed sections.) But as things stand, there is a contrast at the level of the syntagmatic, a vying between axis and line, and this contrast continues in the different formats of the reliefs, which involves more than just a difference in magnitude by creating a variety of senses of direction. This in turn is a highly effective structural tool, for it points to both horizontal and vertical capacities for linkage.

VII	Three Marys at the Sepulchre [VII, 2]	Christ Appears to the Three Women [V, 2]	Christ Appears to His Disciples [V, 1]	Christ with Peter and Paul [VII, 4]
VI	Acclamation (?) [IV, 2]			Advent of Christ [VI, 4]
V	Christ Prophesying Peter's Denial [V, 3]	Christ Before Caiaphas [III, 4]	Christ Before Pilate and Carrying the Cross [III, 1]	Crucifixion [VII, 1]
IV	(Nativity Scene)	(Baptism of Christ)	Miracles of Christ [VI, 1]	Ascension of Christ [VI, 3]
III		Adoration of the Magi (?) [VII, 3]		
II	Calling of Moses [IV, 1]	Crossing of the Red Sea [IV, 3]	Miracles of Moses [VI, 2]	Ascension of Elijah [IV, 4]
I	(Jonah Cast into the Sea) (?)	(Jonah Disgorged by the Whale) (?)	Rescue of Habakkuk (?) [V, 4]	(Daniel in the Lions' Den) (?)
	1	2	3	4

FIGURE 3

Diagrammatic reconstruction of the original placing of the panels of the portal of Santa Sabina, Rome. *Key:* (?) = the original position of the relief is uncertain. ( ) = the relief has not been preserved, but can be reconstructed with a fair degree of certainty. [ ] = the position of the relief today.

From observing the framework alone we thus proceed with the following premises to testing the relationship between the door itself and the structure. We shall need to consider the claims of two forms of organization, the line and the axis. And we have to see how we can accommodate the two formats, how we can approach the question of conceiving them independently, or in relation to one another.

The issue of reconstructing the pictorial program has never been seriously approached. Without becoming immersed in a long discussion of questions of detail, I base my analysis here on an argument I have elaborated elsewhere.<sup>15</sup> An Old Testament representation and nine New Testament stories

are preserved as exemplars of the small panels. A written tradition has documented the earlier existence of one further small panel of *Jonah and the Whale*. In the case of the large panels we still have four reliefs with themes from the Old Testament and two with themes from the New, as well as two depictions of a representative or thematic nature. So from the outset, the notion of a typological structuring is present. The existence among the large panels of two pairs of pictures that are both theologically and formally related (the *Miracles of Moses / Miracles of Christ*, and the *Ascension of Elijah / Ascension of Christ*), cries out for a continuation of the quest to complete the reconstruction.

My reconstruction starts with a dualism that is not simply preestablished by the configuration of the panels – that is, the two door wings equal the two testaments – but arises through the interaction between the framework and the door itself. The hypothesis continues in the direction of a dual pictorial program being formulated with two formats and directions, a program consisting of two narratives, or rather two ways of molding a (hi)story with Christian intent. One order articulates the linear and consecutive aspects of the narrative – the story of salvation as a syntagm. Its form comprises the panels in horizontal format that form a sequence. The other order additionally gives expression to the vertical and relational aspects of the model – the story of salvation as syntagm and paradigm. Its form comprises the panels in vertical format, which are read in two directions. They are positioned underneath each other in terms of their axes, and through an additive effect become narrative sequences.

From the scheme in Figure 3 it becomes evident how I conceive the distribution of narrative. If we pair the *Rescue of Habakkuk* with *Daniel in the Lions' Den*, and the scripturally attested *Jonah Cast into the Sea* with his equally necessary evacuation (*Jonah Disgorged by the Whale*), we have filled in the positions of the lowest line (I) with two paradigms of Old Testament salvation that predestine the New. This observation does not necessarily entail structural consequences; that is, it does not require overarching connections and the harmonization of individual elements, as does the other ordering. The Old and the New Testament bear a relationship of sequence, not of figuration. Above this line, which forms a kind of predella to the door, the life of Christ is narrated in rows III, V, and VII. Of the third line, which would require the caption *Childhood and Public Ministry*, we have only the *Adoration of the Magi*; the fifth, with its four Passion scenes, is most probably complete; the seventh, which is likewise complete, would then have as its theme the Resurrection and its consequences.

Rows II, IV, and VI, with their vertical-format reliefs, may then be read horizontally. Four scenes from the story of Moses and Elijah (II), four stages in the life of Christ (IV), four states – probably the best way of putting it – of the age of perfected salvation (VI). But additionally these reliefs have a vertical connection, as is suggested by their format and the essential framing elements. The Old Testament prefigures the scenes of the New, and these in turn give an inkling of the supratemporal relationships, of the ultimate kingdom of



the Lord (a relationship that cannot be established so easily through the other temporal stages because the quality of sequentiality is missing). Carrying both orders through to their logical conclusion requires that an element or a line of the other order has to be disregarded to progress with reading or to move up or down the typological axes. To rephrase that in positive terms: both narrative complexes begin to cross over and to form a kind of texture in the course of reading. The two orders reconstructed here exist in their own right, but they also show solidarity with each other. They share the story of salvation, so that there are no repetitions, but instead the twofold development demonstrates that this material has the potential for many narrative versions, each making sense in its own right, and all with the capacity to be correlated, a tribute to the logos “polymeros kai polytropos” – to the Word proclaimed “in many and various ways” (Heb. 1:1). In terms of shared structural features it is worth emphasizing that the linearity followed by both narrative orders is not without the higher seal of approval of the systematic order: each row is tantamount to being a sectional or strophic division of the narrative into chapters or books.

To summarize these thoughts, the complex pictorial system, determined in equal measure by framing and change of format, does indeed have an involvement with time, but not in the sense of those narrative properties that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries cultivated – sequentiality and acceleration (Toepffer) and/or simultaneity and contrastive value (Eisenstein). This portal is, rather, imbued with the Christian notion of ranging across all temporal levels (Old Testament, New Testament, the eschatological future), of their vertical correlation and horizontal logic. The configuration of the framework is both the expression and the means of a theology that finds its revelation in history. One could say that the immanent aim of such achievements in structuration is not the temporal figure (Toepffer, Eisenstein), but the historical one.



In the last section I turn my attention to the Gothic stained-glass windows of northern France, which just after 1200 A.D. developed a previously unknown complexity in their medium and in the art of ordering. For a relatively short time stained-glass windows in the cathedral embrace a whole, undivided window opening. As early as 1215 the era of the architectural window begins, meaning that the opening is subdivided by stone pillars or tracery into relatively narrow fields or complicated forms.<sup>16</sup> Before that it had been in the power of the *dispositores* to subdivide the whole surface into large geometric shapes through armatures of iron, lead settings and fields of various stars, blossoms and quatrefoil compositions that appear once or repeatedly. These larger forms, which constitute the primary framing system, are in turn subdivided into fields that serve as frames for a narrative scene or part scene. We are dealing with an age that feels the manic compulsion to divide and subdivide.<sup>17</sup>

It is hard to imagine a narrative text required to arrange its episodes into such dependent, fragmented framing forms – into semicircles or quarter circles, blossom leaves, half or whole quatrefoils, and so forth. Frequently only small parts of the action are accommodated within these frames, with the action continuing in other fields comprising of up to three further segments. In view of this structure it seems almost impossible for a pictorial narrator to plan a narrative in such a way that the shape of the field is adapted to the requirements of each narrative moment. He can, of course, adapt the number of frames required to the significance of the event, or through them shape the rhythm of the narrative flow, but he cannot, in the way that (for instance) Toepffer does, make the form of each frame conform individually to the particular events of each scene.

Does that mean that narrative and framework appear in an unequal relationship, that a desire to ornament and subdivide reshapes and stands in the way of the narrative delivery? First of all we have to realize that the technique of structuring surfaces presented the narrative with a great number of fields, always easy to read. Never before had so many different stories been present in the Christian church. At ground level cathedrals like Paris, Chartres, or Bourges had forty or fifty medallion windows, each with fifteen to thirty scenic units. Two things followed from this: first that the art of narrating in pictures experienced an enormous upsurge, and second that a climate of competition, of experimentation and of rapid exchange, arose. Both individual pictures and more extended narrative cycles point to the fact that the narrative can develop with more freedom, more creativity, and a coherent internal structure. Short and long sequences, and structural divisions such as beginning, end, or climaxes, were worked out more precisely than previously, since much could be assumed and other aspects needed only be alluded to.

A further question is then directed at the relationship between narrative and geometric structuring of the window surface. It is clear that something equivalent to an organization by chapters can be expected of a five-pointed star shape or a quatrefoil with a central motif. August Schmarsow, the first investigator of the narrative structures of windows, had applied this expectation to the windows of the Chartres cathedral and pointed to the fact that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries totally new forms arose in literature, proclaiming a need for comprehensible structures.<sup>18</sup> (The best-known example is the sonnet, which we owe to this epoch of the lyric.) Certainly it is not altogether easy to demonstrate this coordination of figure and narrative. Schmarsow himself did not succeed; others after him approached the issue from the wrong angle, namely the iconographic aspect, and wanted to read “meaning” into the geometric shapes, or else they demanded too much and required all medallion windows to have a consonance of narrative and structural underpinnings.<sup>19</sup> The real state of affairs, on the other hand, is that many *dispositores* could not meet the new challenge of a narrative in figures, while others invented forms of interaction between framework and narrative that probably eclipse everything possible before or since.

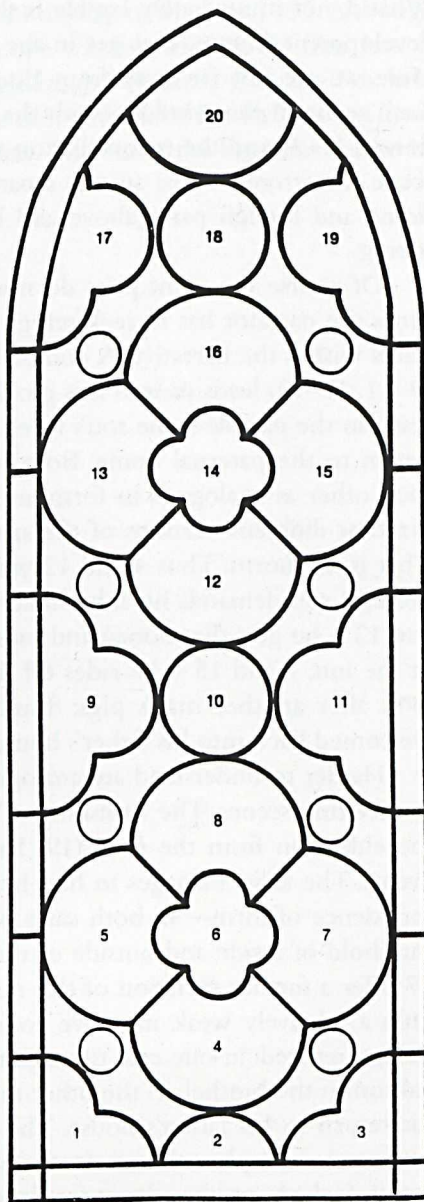
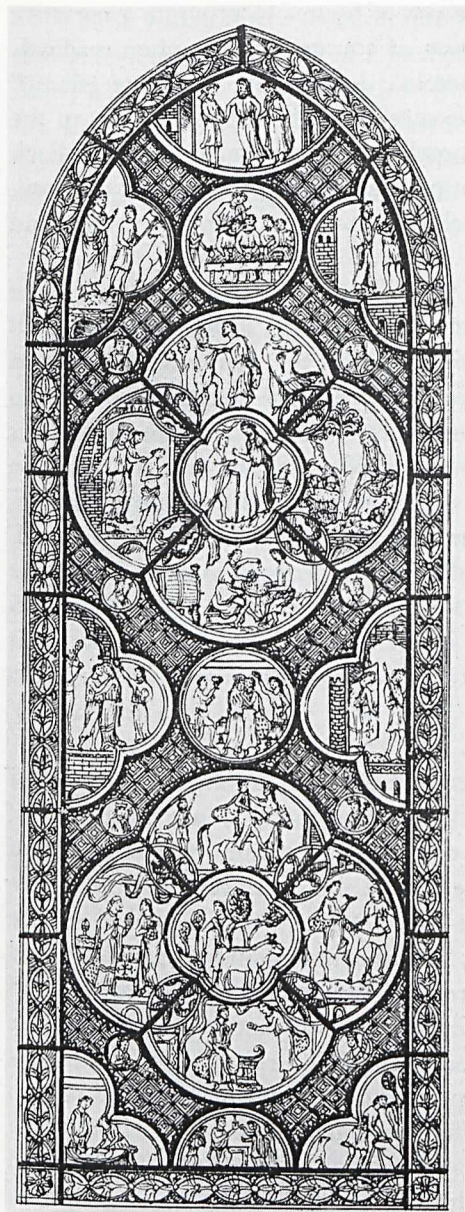


FIGURE 4

(Far left) Prodigal Son Window, Bourges Cathedral.

FIGURE 5

Diagrammatic representation of the Prodigal Son Window, Bourges Cathedral. Key: 1, 2, 3, signatories of the Tanners' Guild; 4, the prodigal son demands his inheritance from his father; 5, he receives his inheritance; 6, the elder son in the fields; 7, the prodigal son leaves his father's house; 8, arrival at the tavern; 9, prodigal son met by the harlots; 10, crowning of the prodigal son; 11, he is cast out; 12, he gambles away his inheritance; 13, he is cast out a second time; 14, he hires himself out as a swineherd; 15, he experiences remorse; 16, he returns home in clothing of a swineherd; 17, slaughtering of the fatted calf; 18, feast at his father's house; 19, return home of the elder son; 20, the prodigal son is reunited with his father and brother.

I am speaking of several forms of cooperation, but here I can go into only one of the most spectacular cases. In the Prodigal Son Window in Bourges (about 1210 A.D.) we find the biblical parable expanded at great length (Fig. 4). In seventeen narrative fields the life of the prodigal son is depicted in great detail. The narrative flows with incredible continuity through the difficult figures of the quatrefoils with their five sections and of the tripartite rows formed by a circle and two half-quatrefoils.<sup>20</sup> This much may be reconstructed from the illustrations and the explanation in the key (Fig. 5).

What is not immediately legible is the use of figures to promote a narrative development (figures that get in the way of comprehension when reading). Here we are not far away from Eisenstein's demand for "thematic effects." Each scene in the window (with the exception of the representations of the donors [1–3] and the reconciliation scene) has a narrative counterpart. Each scene is mirrored across an axis separating the various orders: good and evil, home and foreign parts, above and below, before and after, seriousness and joking.

Of course the eight pairs do not yield consistently smooth rhythms. At times the narrator has to seek refuge in mere analogies of form that have no status within the narrative. A comparison between the two three-figure rows (9–11, 17–19) leads us into this problem area. They are dedicated to the two feasts in the parable – the son's revels in the tavern and the celebration of his return to the paternal home. Both round middle sections (10, 18) relate to each other as analogous in form and event, while the details can be recognized as different versions of the same process, divided into good and evil. That is the norm. Thus 4 and 12 yield "smooth rhythms" of this kind – the prodigal son demands his inheritance from his father/he loses at gambling; 5 and 13 – he gets the money and bids farewell to his father/he is thrown out of the inn; 7 and 15 – he rides off like a knight into the distance/he has to look after another man's pigs; 8 and 16 – he is received into the tavern/welcomed back into his father's house.

Harder to understand are analogies such as those intended at the sides of the feasting scenes. The banishing of the prodigal son (11) and the return of the elder son from the field (19) have nothing in common at the level of events. The artist manages to find here at least the common factor of correspondence of form – in both cases we have a scene with two figures on the threshold of inside and outside of the field of representation. Episodes 9 and 17 offer a further variation of this mirroring, bearing no formal analogy and only a relatively weak narrative concordance. Above and below the feast is being prepared: in one case through the greeting and crowning of the prodigal son in the brothel, in the other through the slaughter of the fatted calf on his return to his father's house. The mirroring here creates sense more as a humorous metaphor than from the positive–negative ordering – the prodigal son is decked out like a beast for slaughter by the harlots, and feted so that afterward he can be "taken apart."<sup>21</sup>

Compared with the portal of Santa Sabina the relationship between panel (narrative) and framework has been both complicated and simplified. Simplified, because the story told has a strong sense of sequence. Complicated, because this narrative flow – that is, a whole story and not just single episodes or sections – is transformed through framing into an argument. A sequence and a system, both a structural and narrative connection, are combined with each other. It looks like the question of the correct format and the claims of Christian art were inseparable right to the end.

I close with a final excursion into film history, to the year 1953. Although the wide-screen technique of CinemaScope was first used in the film *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (directed by Jean Negulesco), Twentieth-Century Fox held this film back so as to bring out first the film version of the Passion of Christ titled *The Robe* (directed by Henry Koster). The era of the big films was to be ushered in by the biggest theme of all.

## WOLFGANG KEMP - THE NARRATIVITY OF THE FRAME

1. Stephen Heath, *Questions of Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), p. 11.
2. Ibid.
3. Sergei Eisenstein, "The Dynamic Square," a lecture given to the Technicians Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Fox Hill Studios, Hollywood, 17 September 1930, published in *Close Up* (March-June 1931); translation used here in Sergei Eisenstein, *Das dynamische Quadrat: Schriften zum Film* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1991).
4. The key texts are collected in Wolfgang Kemp (ed.), *Theorie der Fotografie*, vol. 2, 1912-45 (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 1979), p. 76. On the question of extreme high or low viewpoints see idem., *Foto-Essays: Zur Geschichte und Theorie der Fotografie* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 1978).
5. Eisenstein, *Das dynamische Quadrat*, p. 162.
6. Ibid., p. 176.
7. David Kunzle, *The History of the Comic Strip: The Nineteenth Century* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).
8. G.V. Graevenitz, "Memoria und Realismus: Erzählende Literatur in der deutschen 'Bildungspresse' des 19. Jahrhunderts," in A. Haverkamp and R. Lachmann (eds.), *Memoria: Vergessen und Erinnern* (Munich: Fink, 1993), p. 271.
9. Rodolphe Toepffer, *Histoire de M. Jabot* (Geneva: n.p., 1833), p. 39.
10. Friedrich Schlegel, *Fragmente zur Poesie und Literatur*, edited by H. Eichner (Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel edition) vol. 17, no. 1 (Munich: Fink, 1981), p. 92.

11. C. Gilbert, "Peintres et menuisiers au début de la Renaissance italienne," in *Revue de l'Art*, 37 (1977), p. 44.
12. On the composite character of medieval art see Wolfgang Kemp, "Medieval Pictorial Systems," in B. Cassidy (ed.), *Iconography at the Crossroads* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).
13. This does not refer to Eisenstein's aesthetics of film, which we have already seen as aiming to create its effects from precisely this confrontation of visibly different pictorial units.
14. B. Jeremias, *Die Holztür der Basilika S. Sabina in Rom* (Tübingen: Wasmuth, 1980).
15. Wolfgang Kemp, *Christliche Kunst: Ihre Anfänge, ihre Strukturen* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 1994).
16. On the relationship between window opening, ornamentation and glass painting see Wolfgang Kemp, "Parallelismus als Formprinzip: Zum Bibelfenster der Dreikönigskapelle des Kölner Doms," *Kölner Domblatt*, 56 (1991), p. 259.
17. At that time it was possible for a theologian to define the art of proclamation in church – namely the sermon – in the terms, "the interpretation of Holy Scripture by division and subdivision." Cited in Raymond F. Howes, *Historical Studies of Rhetoric and Rhetoricians* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1961), p. 82.
18. A. Schmarsow, *Kompositionsgesetze in der Kunst des Mittelalters* (Bonn-Leipzig: Kurt Schröder, 1919–22).
19. S. G. Nichols, *Romanesque Signs: Early Medieval Narratives and Iconography* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 95.
20. For a more detailed discussion of the window see Wolfgang Kemp, *Sermo corporeus: Die Erzählung der mittelalterlichen Glasfenster* (Munich: Schirmer/Mosel, 1987), pp. 46–56.
21. In a favorite book of the Middle Ages devoted to the sayings of Solomon, there is a tale about a "foolish lad" who falls for a wench dressed up as a prostitute: "He immediately follows her, like an ox to the slaughter."