

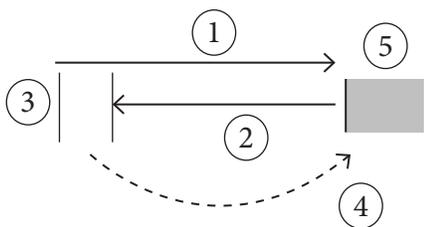
cathexis • chirality • stereognosis

Cathexis, as the operational mechanics of the Freudian drives, marks the point at which Lacan's most original concept, extimity, shows off its ability to re-organize space and time on behalf of subjectivity. Cathexis is "investment," but of what? Studying key examples from Hitchcock's *Notorious* and *Young and Innocent*, crane shots zooming in on key details show how central cathexis was for this auteur and how much Hitchcock's thinking about suspense owed to precedents in Surrealism, mainly Roussel's idea of the *procédé*.

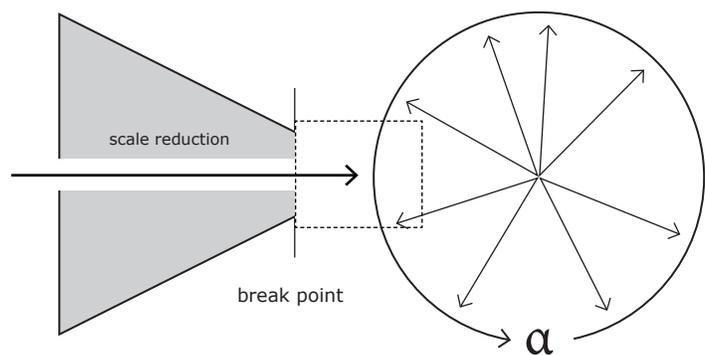
The crane shot divides cathexis into two parts, the first part devoted to an "inventory" idea of space (of being able to find everything that is there), the second part aligned with a binary-code logic and tension between centripetal "dæmonic" forces and peripheral "chases"; where the former reveals a fetishistic relationship to objects of desire (Žižek), the later phase is "sinthomatic," and as such it reveals the repetition motif of the death drive as well as a centrality established by the unconscious.

Cathexis more than any other phenomenon within the Freudian-Lacanian field, points to the issue of desire. The Lacanian slogan, "desire is the desire of the Other" represents the broad range of cathexis is creating an entire subjective world based on desire pitched in various modalities. Psychoanalysis as a treatment aims to get the analysand to be true with respect to his/her desire; so in effect cathexis is the central and critical pivot of the entire psychoanalytical model of subjectivity; and because transference love is the unconscious's "last ditch effort" to avoid discovery (M. Dolar), we can claim that cathexis, as the crane shot demonstrates, employs stages of defense that can be found in many historical forms and formats, in culture, religion, the popular arts, performance, and the visual arts and architecture. Key among these is the perennial story of Diana and Actæon, simple in the extreme, involving the violation of Diana's privacy by the hunter Actæon, who is transformed into a stag and consumed by his own dogs as punishment. Despite the simplicity of the story's details, countless commentators have missed key points; but others, including Ovid, have caught the overtones of the story and included "spurious" details as a form of "signalizing" to an audience of insiders about the secret centrality of this "cult" story.

With the idea of a two-part logic of cathexis, Diana-Actæon and related cultural evidence of cathexis expand the metaleptic logic to include key ideas about discourse (the division between impossibility and impotence, which we translate as privation and prohibition). Using the calculus of metalepsis and the related ideas of reversed predication, interrogation of the gap, and chirality, this myth finally finds the credit it deserves. Expanding through Diana's relation to Janus (Diana = "Djana"), the relation of Hermes and Hestia, conceptualized as exterior and interior space *chez* the ancient Greek mentality by Vernant and others, can finally be resolved. The full spectrum functionality of Hermes, first described by Norman O. Brown, can be employed at multiple levels, including the Lucretian "flow model" used to find sites of exception within the Vitruvian virtues of *utilitas*, *firmitas*, and *venustas*. Finally, terms thought to belong exclusively to the abstract operation of the calculus can be returned intact to their sources in myth and tradition, where they function in near-literal clarity and effectiveness (Vico).



In cathexis, the subject "invests" desire into external objects and subjects, first as a field, so that the investment is returned in the form of value as well as autonomy. This adds to whatever natural causality these invested objects/subjects themselves demonstrate but with a key gap that is transferred to a zone behind the objects/subjects, as a concealed intentionality. This feedback process constructs a break-point when the scale shifts from the perception of a field to that of a specific object-with-autonomy, where the region behind the object acquires a "circular" force bent on finding a missing component or establishing a forbidden connection.



The staging of cathexis as an outward movement that provokes a slightly-less-than-equal responding "pulsion" breaks at the point where the field-scale of inventory can no longer be sustained. Cathexis at this point is transferred to a "part-object" whose metonymical detachment functions within a scenario of loss and recovery (the headless horseman or lost key of psychoanalysis). The death drive, with its circular return to a void (the gap between reversed predication in the calculus's terms) dominates, and stereognosis takes the form of two "poisons," one to destroy the other to save life. These poisons are also interpretive frameworks that allow for inverted versions of key stories.