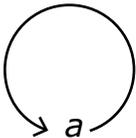


background: the 'pym'



In his 1993 work, "24 Psycho," the Scottish conceptual artist Douglas Gordon slowed down Alfred Hitchcock's well known film, *Psycho* (1960) to stretch its original 109 minutes into twenty-four hours. Each frame lasted approximately a half-second. The results were to introduce systematic gaps that were filled with extraneous thoughts of viewers. These correspond to the famous "Ø" function (psychologists point out that this is more correctly called the beta, "β," function) that glues together discontinuous still images to produce the effect of perceived motion. Gilles Deleuze has famously examined this issue with respect to Bergson's employment of the cinema metaphor in explaining the phenomenon of motion. In his view, Bergson tries and fails three times to understand the relation between the Ø and the "dynamic time section." Bergson's first thesis is anti-cinema and pro-cinema at the same time. In the first thesis, space and motion are divided. Space is infinitely divisible, but motion isn't. Thus, it's impossible to reconstitute movement with immobile sections (coupes), without

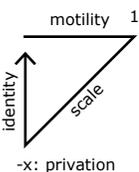
adding to the succession of immobile sections the abstract idea of a succession where time is mechanical, homogeneous, and in a sense copied from space. This relates to the mechanical sprocket driven time of the camera, same for all of the motions needed to connect the still frames of the film. In this first case, movement will always "happen" in the interval between the two sections.



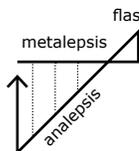
The gap, as Ø, is bridged by the "fantasy" of continuity that connects the two static images in the film (or life).



The Möbius band exemplifies the ubiquity of the passage at which the partial object reveals the "internal defect," or R2, of scale dysfunction.



Passage and identity are coupled in the <> role of the $\sqrt{-1}$ in functions of scale, extimacy, and non-place location issues.



The anacoluthon suspends the metonymy initially so that metalepsis ultimately is a "metonymy of a metonymy," as in the case of the Nobody as name.

A similar experiment, but not with art in mind, took place with the defense of officers charged with the beating of Rodney King in 1991, leading to acquittals that sparked the 1992 Los Angeles riots. The defense used video footage of the beatings that seemed to show clearly a group of policemen beating a black man severely and without provocation. Slowed down to a frame-by-frame presentation, the defense argued successfully that "no crime was evident," no event shown on any single frame that could be said to portray anything not allowed by policy and law.

One could say the same about *24 Psycho*, that without the Ø operating invisibly, there is no "unconscious" of *Psycho*'s psyche to supply the evidence amounting to our "consciousness" of the film's actions.

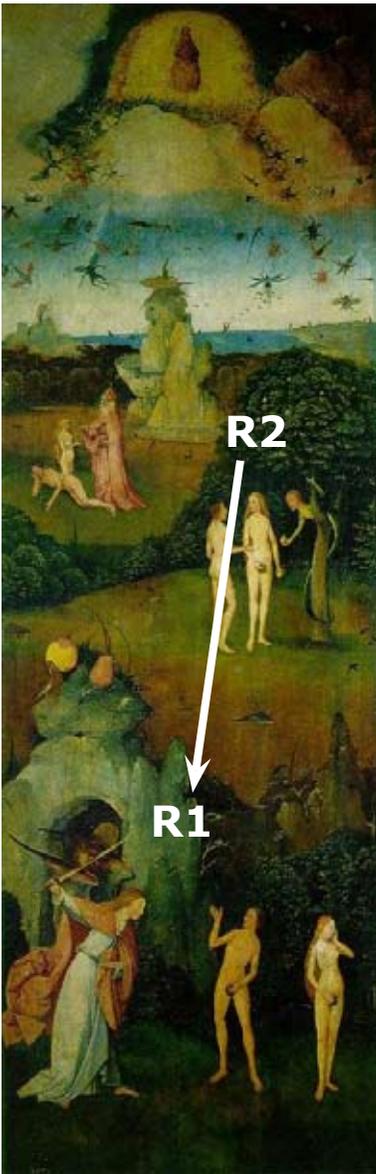
A "pym" is a fictional subatomic particle discovered by the comic book hero, Henry Pym, featured in Marvel Comics. Pym's ability to atomize himself compares in a macabre way to Michael Crichton's *Prey* (2002), where nano-particles consume human beings but retain the ability to reconstitute their form, thoughts, and actions at will. "Pym" becomes the active principle of scale change. The *poisson*, literally the <> (both less than and greater than) or the silversmith's mark of authenticity, \diamond , can explain how this scale issue can engage the Lacanian category of "between the two deaths," the pure Freudian death drive (Jentsch: Da).

The scale function is not simply a matter of size but containment: the frame within the frame, or chiaroscuro (also *encadrement*), where visual progress is momentarily paused. Chiaroscuro has two main forms: a frontal form, where successive frames form concentric enclosures, and an oblique or orthogonal form, where the point of view is shifted to the side or above some ongoing action, taking in all parts of a process at once. Frontal chiaroscuro occurs in exposition, where a character in a story tells another story (in which another character could be portrayed as telling a story, etc.). Orthogonal chiaroscuro is more flexible. It can involve multiple stories within one "cover" tale — the classic anthology form — or it can present successive temporal states simultaneously, compressing their succession as a spatial relationship. Aeneas, in Book VI of *The Aeneid*, pauses before the gates to the underworld to study the cast images of the story of Daedalus, Minos, Theseus, and Pasiphæe, seeing different stages of the story in an simultaneous spatial presentation. Commonplace images of "the stages of life" (usually seven) showed a figure crossing a bridge from youth to old age, for example. One person can be shown multiple times in a single image, indicating either a change of physical state (aging) or mental state (the different emotions) or outlook (memory of the past, imagination of the future, awareness of the present).

Scale change, \diamond , is thus both a spatial and a temporal sign, where one medium is inscribed within the other in the fashion of Jentsch's Da/Ad: possibly written as "St," an image in which a temporal sequence is shown simultaneously. Is there a corresponding "Ts," a temporal sequence that seems to be a linear encounter with different parts of a spatial form? What does this method of travel say about the Ø, the phi (more accurately, β) function that "fills in the blanks" between the succession of static images in film? Isn't Ts really a statement of what film is, fundamentally? — A time sequence, T, that has, imperceptibly, "small" s's or still images that the mind does not see as such? The corresponding St is the familiar trick of painting a "still" image that seems to both be a representation of a single moment contaminated by elements that must exist at different times. In photography, this trick can be approximated with panorama cameras, whose left-to-right shutter allows a subject to be photographed first at one end of a group and then run around to the other side to be photographed "again" as the shutter completes its run.



Leo Steinberg has identified a series of self-portraits in Michaelangelo's "Crucifixion of St. Peter." This was undoubtedly a trick played by many painters, undetected by viewers and even experts who overlooked the nuanced changes that showed a single subject in different situations or even stages of life. Cornelis Anthonisz produced a woodcut on the theme of "The Ages of Man" in 1550, but was his earlier "conventional" group portrait, "Banquet of Members of Amsterdam's Crossbow Civic Guard" (1533), which has some suspiciously similar faces in multiple locations, not possibly an example of another kind of pictorial simultaneity? Like the famous three-faced portrait by Titian, "Allegory of Time Governed by Prudence" (c.1565).



Hieronymus Bosch, "Eden," The Haywain Triptych, 1490.

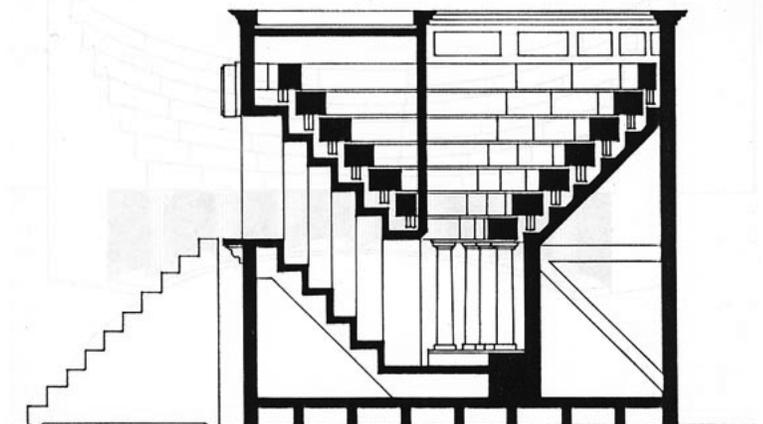
The role of R1 and R2, the external limit and internal defect, is brought to light by the Jentschian exchange, Da/Ad. The "defect" of Eden, for example, is the serpent, who demonstrates the extimacy of Eden (an interior space that whose externality will be revealed only in the "inversion" personified by Adam and Eve's expulsion. Act and agent invert, through transitivity and projection. The space, presented as static and divisible (Bergson) makes the \emptyset function the *invisible* agent of dynamism. Thus when it is materialized, it appears as a paradox, i.e. the serpent/Judas element. It is important to consider the multiple aspects of R1 and R2 — not just as spatial entities but as aspects of the privation/prohibition (*i* — Real) connections of $-x$ and $1/x$ that are the antipodes of the anacoluthon. Topological "convertibility" between Eden and the Passion and, hence, the theological relation between Adam and Christ are the results of this "unconscious" that, like the wheels of the Mayan calendar, re-set and correct time itself.

What Would Jesus Do? The pym is not just a nano-survivor of Edgar Allan Poe's first novel but a condensation of the process where the framing (*chiaroscuro*; *encadrement*) that creates narrative dimensionality within the work of art is related to the (temporal) issue of dynamics versus statics in the \emptyset/β function. The novel, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838), was (possibly) Poe's most elaborate exhibition of the encoding cipher of chiasmus, where a midpoint is placed within the text, usually at some point of exchange, and the halves then produce butterfly-wing matches, forcing the first half to "run backwards" while the second half proceeds towards the end. The rhetorical form of this technique, anacoluthon (where an ungrammatical "hypotext" coming at the end of an expression forces a revision of the meaning), and the visual correlates (winding paths leading to a central expansive space) are components of the death drive's narrative form in folklore and myth: the *katabasis* or "descent into Hell." The nano-particle, the pym, dramatizes the inscription of the 'a' into the 'D' of Jentsch's Da. It is the animating principle that transforms the otherwise inert scene or sequence of words or images into something that "lives," that "comes to life," that *is animated*. The 'a' is, thus, the equivalent of the \emptyset/β and, as Gordon suggests, a portal of the unconscious of the viewer — a machine that thinks by automating the transport of consciousness into a new medium, a "Hades" (literally, "the invisible") where each thought finds its ideal place.

When 'a' is inscribed into 'D', the antipodal condition is implied and called out of the shadows: Ad, the tiny element of fate, death, destiny that is planted as a kernel inside the living subject, the creation of a creature so similar in structure but different in fundamentals that we are tempted to make the comparison to Castor and Pollux, the twins who, in exchange for immortal life, were required to live "one at a time" while the other sibling remained in the underworld. Isn't this St. Paul's formula for Christ/Adam? Adam, the immortal being who, one cast out of Eden, became the model of all mortals — indeed, the single father of all subsequent generations of mortals. Christ, in Paul's view, is the "corrective" to Adamic death-in-life, the life-in-death or zombie-esque (to put things into popular culture perspective) resistance to death, the immortality that is *nothing but resistance*.

Lacan uses a diagram to describe how any sequence of random 1's and 0's is nonetheless the source of laws of transformation that lead to the same invariant pattern. This is his idea of the unconscious: an impersonal machine capable of transforming all contingency into a dynamic pattern, albeit this pattern is the Real, resistant to translation, forever open to misreading: a model of the "gap" that must remain open by employing the negative. The diagram displays a large circle with two small circles symmetrically opposite. Not only does this picture the situation of Castor and Pollux; it seems to be a template for the story of Eden counterbalanced by that of the Passion — where the stories themselves explain the main cycle of history that connects the two events. It is the standard speculative procedure to consider that the large and small circles are simply one scale-level slice of a fractal relationship, where any "circle" is in fact a Möbius-band condition involving a twist and a paradox. The twist is the structural "machine," the conversion process or function that maps contingency on to a domain of symptoms. The paradox is the field that sets parameters for the discourse that elaborates the primary relations relating these symptoms in the dynamic conditions of experience (i.e. fantasy). The fantasy that must be traversed in analysis (= self awareness) is this field.

Not surprisingly (for any Lacanian at least) is the way in which the twist is accurately portrayed by the elements of "folkloric" versions of this model. In particular, the role of the serpent at the Eden end of things, and Judas as the principal operator in the Passion events, show how the twist-paradox ("machine-product") effects the Ad/Da at all scale levels within the "wheels within wheels" model of the unconscious. Whether the 'a' is being inscribed into the 'D' or the 'd' into the 'A', the serpent/Judas is, more accurately, the principle of inscription. To play out this in full, it would be necessary to consult Elaine Pagels' revival of the importance of the Gospel of St. Thomas and other studies of Essene traditions, particularly as they were displaced later into practices of the Sufis and Jewish mysticism of the *Zohar*. Dan Brown beware! It is even possible, perhaps necessary, to append the occult memory treatises of of Giulio Camillo and others who detailed the mechanical aspects of uncanny inscription and asserted that the results amounted to "thinking machines."



Section, Reconstruction of Giulio Camillo's *Theatro della Memoria*