If we are content to accept that Lacan's **object a** / *objet petit a* is substantially a stop-and-shift, is there then a difference between this **a** and a dot, or a *punctum*? No. But we would have to accept that it has historically come about from a *chase* that needs *not* have its origin in language. Or *not only*: as punctuation did *not* occur in written language till of late, had its origin in cantillation (apo-strophes), in music (*neumes*), via hand-writing and type-writing, then lodged in photographic imag-es (Barthes), we realise that the **object a** behaves similar to a *wandering viewpoint* (Wolfgang Iser).

The point being that this is only *half* the story, since with the *punctum*—as a candidate *objet petit a*—cannot be reduced to this ineffable pursuit across a variety of mediations, but also will have served to pitch and prompt a *shift*: which means that more than an entity enticing a chase that is doomed to failure, it serves to *mark* a stop at which it is we (and not it) that make a leap, and move on. At each stop-and-shift it will move along and redefine across senses and media. Which is why it is likely to be of syntactical important in the *organisation of experience*: the junctures of framing.

But then we realise that there must be *small* and *big* ones: there are changes in time, and there are changes of time. If the power-law (Per Bak) applies, then there will be either few and big ones, *or* there would be many small ones. In this perspective the small ones are often overlooked because they appear as *routine*, *repetition* or *ripples*: when what they actually present *are small and in-cremental changes*. This is how the world may change without us realising. Which also means that the changes in time are *not* essentially different in nature from changes of time: only more "sleepy".

The question is then what stops-and-shifts can do—as designed interventions—to get us on board. The nature of what happens in big stops-and-shifts (phase transitions) will then be of importance for the small ones (and how we meet and deal with them). If stop-and-shift is a transition from
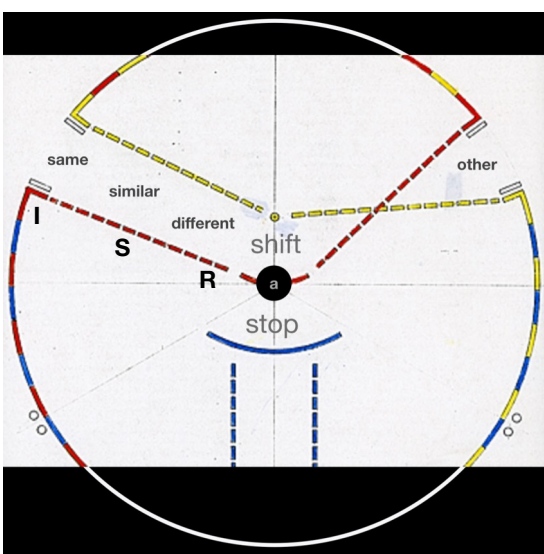

3D+time to *4D*, a similar add-on will define: i.e., *4D+a*—or, a *slip* in our understanding, marking our *categories* (rather than marking our *time* with years, weeks, days and hours). However, the major issue does not lie here: both in the big or the small, the deep or shallow, but in the *middle*. Like Christopher Alexander's centres.

Because a severe problem—of which we note a num-ber of extreme examples in our time—is the problem of *isolates*: the isolates of the top (the caricature of *states*), and the isolates at the bottom (the isolates of *ghettoes*). The one singular (nationalist state [Israel]) and the other excrete (ghettoes [Gaza]). The one is blind (state), the other is paralytic (ghetto). The one is represented (Israel), the other is presented (Gaza). Which is why the problem discussed here is categor-isation: the normal category being in the *middle*. That is, something that is both *acted* towards (**agent —> other**) and *seen* (**S₁ —> S₂**). Stand-alone these are

Fig. 2—Architect Paul Ryan's diagram of threeing, adapted to the analysis of stop-and-shift from one Imaginary-Symbolic-Real compound, to another. Today it can readily be modelled by the border-controls in security policies.

singular (acted towards) and *excrescent* (seen). If in synergy, they alternatively would *normalise*.

This dialectic continues at *multiple* levels: for instance Hamas (singular) is *acted towards* and the civilians in Gaza are *seen* (excrescent). Normalisation, as a condition for peace and prosperity, is not merely a sum of (**agent —> other**) and (**S₁ —> S₂**) but they are augmented, in a *two-loop*: *(1)* (**truth —> [agent —> other] —> impact**) and *(2)* (**$ —> [S₁ —> S₂] —> a**) in which (**truth —> impact**) is interpolated in ([**S₁ —> S₂**]), and (**$ —> a**) is interpolated in ([**agent —> other**]). Which means that normalisation is the alternative that includes *knowing*, and the stop-and-shift between *operative* and *distributive* intelligence (that is, to slow down, stop and think at critical junctures and *then* act).

Our current crisis results from this *two-loop* having somehow become short-circuited. We are becoming passive and insensitive to it. In this setting, the *learning theatre* is a studio for the education of reflective practitioners that can be set up anywhere. That is, people who want to become *better* and more *aware* of what they do, and discover the need for it after they have done some work. It is a scenario-machine designed for the education of people into *citizens* (which, then, is *not* reduced to people who happen to live in cities). And is created to create novel foundations for democracy.

That is, according to the view of *education* that does *not* aim only an output population of producers but an output of *citizens*, who are capable of living in a society where they will be able to find out together what they want to do, can do and should do. This knowing relationship is at the basis of a society with a pace and *rhythm* of stops-and-shifts. It does *not* march. Neither does it develop in all directions, at the whim of each and everyone. It is responsive and responsible in relation to the *categories* that determine time and space: how we *build*, *live and take care of an ailing earth*.

So, this is what we have determined earlier as *4D+a*—of which the *Nansen passport* is a case-in-point (the internationally recognised travel-document of stateless persons 1922-38): i.e. a right to travel and cross borders to a group of people that neither belong nor are included in a nation-state. It was recognised in 52 countries after a meeting in the League of Nations, convened by Fridtjof Nansen (July 3rd-5th 1922). It is a historically unique example of a *simple* stop-and-shift, that is *not*

based on sameness, similarity or difference: it features *the simple right to be the <u>other</u> to <u>one another</u>*.

Where the holder of such a passport can apply for residency in a country, s/he is obligated to the *laws* of that country. Whereby s/he will define in some terms of sameness, similarity and difference. *4D+a* is the affordance that allows the holder to see and cross a border/door-post/limit/page: it does *not* say anything about the territory/space/chapter of that lies beyond. Seeing the passage of which s/he has no control (paralytic) and then crossing (blindly). S/he thereby becomes a *resident* of a/the *Journey*.

If the Nansen passport derived from an international state-of-exception, this is from times of yore when exceptional measures were in place over a time-limited period. Presently, as states of exception, in some form, appear to be *permanent*, the Nansen passport could be expanded *from* stateless populations *to* everyone. The more the states are in exception the more we *all* are stateless people. And thereby making sure that lawless conditions do *not* prevail internationally, but only in states gone rogue: in the sense that the relation between state and people is unhinging from democratic governance. In this *scenario*, added Prof. Ole Møystad (architect), weapons should be swapped for home-appliances.

Fig. 3—if the **object a** (or *objet petit a*) is not something of which we are in one-sided pursuit, but we also are pursued by, in search of freedom and dignity, the stop-and-shift instantiated by the Nansen-passport rendered effective, is that idea.