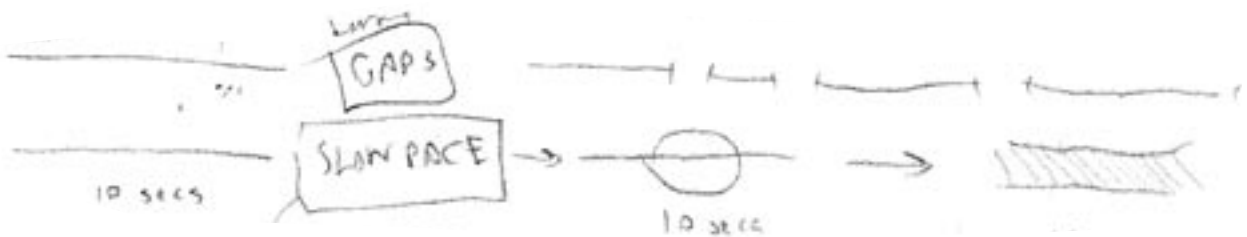


# gaps / pauses



**T**he potential of the gap or pause is fundamental to any narrative; and have interesting repercussions in graphic design. This is the designer's control of tempo in the narrative structure. Gaps are omissions on any scale; the space between letters, words, between a column of text and the edge of the page, between chapters in a book – or between scenes in a film. The gap can also be applied to content; it can be seen as the condensation or reduction of the original story to suit a new medium. The challenge in using the gap in this way is to enhance, rather than simplify the original narrative when adapting it.

Pauses are more about control of pace and rhythm – and can be applied both visually and aurally. The pause can also be seen as delay – which according to Bonitzer is one of the key ingredients in building suspense. The power of the labyrinth, which he sees as the spatial equivalent of the emotion of suspense, is the delay of resolution, *“We do not proceed straight to the exit... we move toward the goal, the resolution, the exit, and at the same time we move away from it.”*<sup>87</sup>

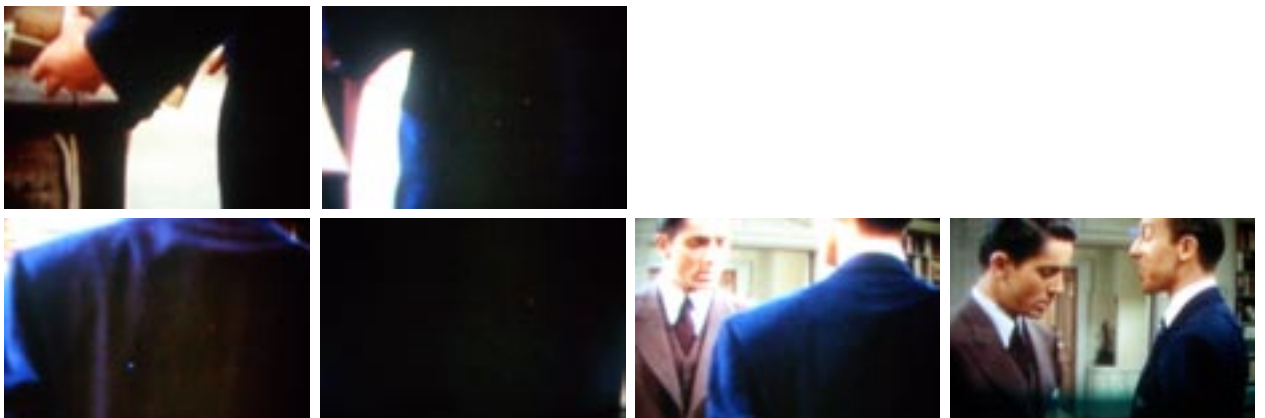
### Visual flow and visual gaps; 'Rope'

*"...the continuous flow of action meant the eye was occupied constantly. And the elimination of the conventional shifting camera excites the audience by making the picture flow smoother and faster."* <sup>88</sup>

-On 'Rope'

Hitchcock's 'Rope' uses the camera moves to create a very specific temporal and visual rhythm to underline the film's plot. The claustrophobic setting of the film for the characters is juxtaposed with continuous flow of action - a sort of optical mobility. The film's star Farley Granger described the film as "*The mixture of claustrophobia with movement.*" <sup>89</sup> The resulting experience for the spectator is incredibly tense; the sensation of mounting action and emotion that seems to never be alleviated.

Yet punctuating this continuous flow are blacked out moments in "Rope' created by the camera resting on the back of a character. These visual pauses were necessary to allow this masterpiece to be filmed in one take. But the emotional effect of these artificial insertions of blackness on the viewer? Pure suspense.



'Rope'

## pauses ‘what we talk about...’



[See DVD: ‘What We Talk About...’]

**R**aymond Carver’s writing is the perfect fodder to explore the visual pause - his stories are almost moments of pause in themselves. In this 16 mm film adaptation of Carver’s short story ‘*What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*’; I translated the gaps language can create; the cadence, rhythm and stillness, into a living space...another major gap is the absence; we never really see the story’s characters – instead narrative is built through editing, pace, light, and type.

Visually and aurally, I set up different players, each performing different parts of the story. Distinct images created a sense of domestic place; a coffee cup, a window, a table. Different hand gestures function as the story’s characters; a woman tapping her hand on the table, a man gesticulating angrily. The type layer functions as image; large nebulous letterforms bleed into the landscape itself. By filming actual type in the setting; I was able to portray the shifting mood the sequence; the growing alcohol induced haziness. I wanted to use editing, image quality, sound, and voice-over to create the sense of a constant and shifting sub-text, a layer of meaning beneath the surface that sometimes is felt, and sometimes is just sensed.



*The setting*



*Building atmosphere*



*Characterisation*



*Word and place*