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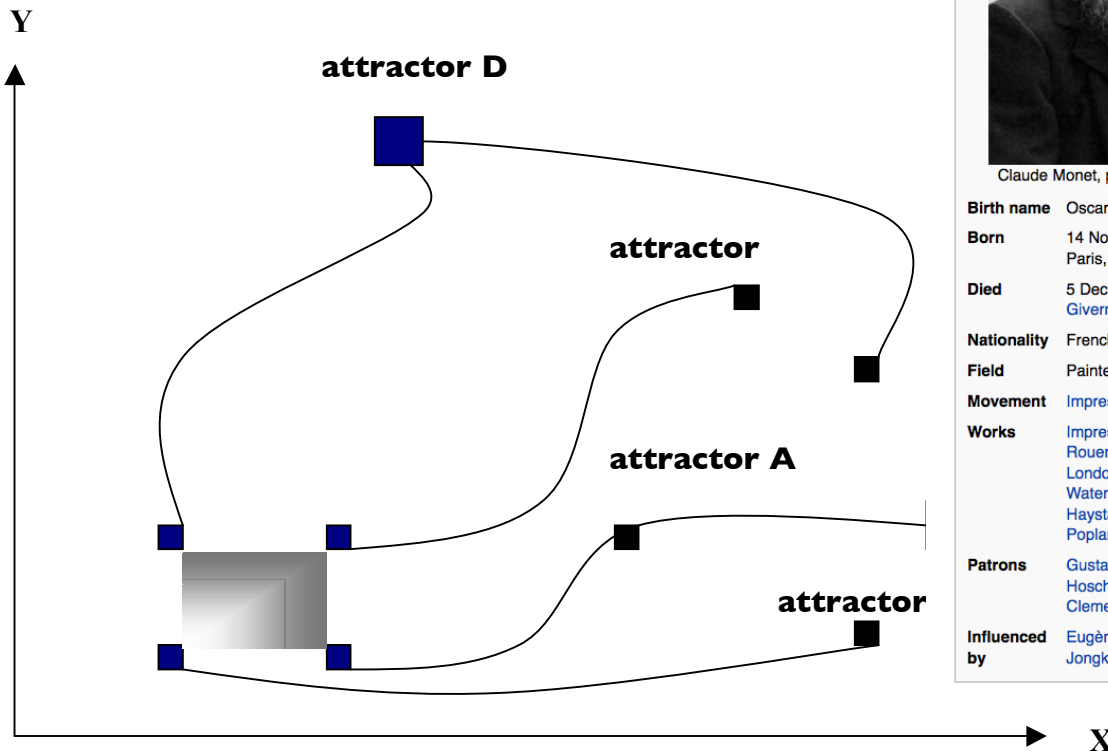
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The Monet Effect

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The Monet effect is a phrase that encapsulates the more technical notion of a disturbance in the art-space continuum. Small events that produce a minor tremor within the conditions of the dynamical system may produce large fluctuations in the long-term behaviour of the system.



Key: Blue squares represent initial states; black squares represent equilibria

Point attractors in 2D phase space

Claude Monet



Claude Monet, photo by Nadar, 1899.

Birth name	Oscar-Claude Monet
Born	14 November 1840 Paris, France
Died	5 December 1926 (aged 86) Giverny, France
Nationality	French
Field	Painter
Movement	Impressionism
Works	Impression, Sunrise Rouen Cathedral series London Parliament series Water Lilies Haystacks Poplars
Patrons	Gustave Caillebotte , Ernest Hoschedé , Georges Clemenceau
Influenced by	Eugène Boudin , Johan Jongkind , Gustave Courbet

Theory

The phrase refers to the idea that a change to the stability of the surface of a Monet painting may ultimately alter the long-term path of the art market or even prevent the continuation of the belief system that supports it in a specific location. The change in the surface represents a small change in the initial conditions, which causes a chain of events leading to a large-scale alteration of events. Had the surface not been disrupted the trajectory of the system might have been vastly different.

Of course the change in the surface of the painting in itself cannot *cause* a collapse. The adherent energy in a belief-system is enormously larger than the adherent energy in a single canvas.

Recurrence, the approximate return of a system towards its initial conditions, together with sensitive dependence on initial conditions are the two main ingredients for chaotic motion. They have the practical consequence of making complex systems, such as the art market, difficult to predict past a certain time range (approximately a week in the case of the art market).

Origin of the concept and the term

The term “Monet effect” is related to the events of the night of October 7th 2006 when intruders broke into the Musee d’Orsay and one of them punched a work by the Impressionist painter Claude Monet (see illustration below).



Christine Albanel, the French minister of culture, said the intruders left a tear close to four inches long in the painting “The Argenteuil Bridge,” from 1874.

The break-in was “an attack against our memory and our heritage,” Ms. Albanel told French radio France Info. She said the intruders, believed to be four men and a woman, appeared drunk and “left various bits of filth” before “one of them stuck a fist into the magnificent masterpiece by Monet.” There have so far been no arrests as the intruders simply disappeared between folds in the gallery space. Forensic traces of a utopian engine powered by yearning were detected.

Affect

Not only did this action tear the surface of the painting it also been shown that, simultaneously, it punctured the belief continuum of art. Scientists at the Conseil European pour La Recherche Aesthetic (European Council for Aesthetic Research) have defined this as the moment of generation of a circuit of nihilism that produced a new type of negative quantum particle. By invoking the antropic principle and the quantum suicide theory the aestheticians speculate that it is

possible that further experimentation might result in the total destruction of the art market. They are, contentiously, attempting to smash the particles against the highly toxic dark matter being generated by the current financial crisis in a 5-mile long 'cynical collider'. A number of speculations are being made as to the outcome, the most implausible being the belief that 'things will be revealed as just things'. A more likely outcome, described as the Hirst Co-efficient will see a creeping crystallization of all symbolic matter where any object placed within the white cube will accumulate vast wealth. However, this is difficult to imagine given its trans-human scale and can only be represented as a diagram. The well-established Richter Scale, measuring the shift from abstraction to resemblance, is no longer of much use. One question that is being asked is whether we can tell if the experiment has already taken place? A minority of aestheticians believe that as it happens, memory itself is altered so that it appears as if the event is continuously deferred (The so-called Bergson's Paradox).