

# ARTIFICE AND WITNESS

REPRESENTATION JUDGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN A NON-TRANSCENDENT FRAMEWORK

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis considers the notion that it is the future which judges the present and that judgement is always guilty. In effect to understand modernity on its own terms one would have to inquire if we have any more right to affirm a given future than to deny one?

The question arises as follows. If a subject exists prior to the process which is its being, an uncomfortable aporia ensues.

Firstly, if being human is understood as "becoming", i.e. humans can and do appear through the enactment of change, then "being" itself is temporal. How then does this self secure its appearance other than through the very process it assumes itself to be prior to? Such a securing would imply an absolute uniformity and homogeneity not predicated on human-enacted change. If securing is in fact the aim of appearance, and therefore the operative term in judgement, what then are the consequences of action in terms of created results?

In other words, what are the consequences of the temporality of "being"? It continues to produce a world. The second question then is: how does one judge, make and act, toward a future which properly speaking, cannot be our rightful concern?

The question is approached initially through a discussion of the integral terms. In the final chapters, an attempt is made to understand the premise of Marcel Duchamp's *Étant Donnés*. Duchamp's work is taken as paradigmatic of making circumventing the aporia of self-revelation through becoming.

## ARTIFICE ET TEMOIN

REPRÉSENTATION, JUGEMENT ET RESPONSABILITÉ SELON UN ENCADREMENT IMMÉDIAT

Cette thèse considère l'idée que c'est le futur qui juge le présent, et que ce jugement est nécessairement coupable. En fait, pour comprendre la modernité dans ses propres termes il faut se demander si nous avons plus le droit d'affirmer un futur particulier que de le nier.

Si un sujet existe avant le processus qui le révèle, on aboutit à un aporia.

Premièrement si "l'être" est compris comme quelque chose qui est toujours en cours de création, comment peut-il donc se concrétiser sans ce processus de création. Cette concrétisation, qui implique une uniformité et une homogénéité absolues, ne doit pas être basée sur la reconnaissance humaine du changement. Si la concrétisation de "l'être" est en effet, l'intention, elle est donc par conséquent la base du jugement. Quelles sont donc à terme les conséquences du résultat des créations.

En d'autres mots quelles sont les conséquences de cette temporalité de l'être: Elle construit un monde. La deuxième question est comment juger, créer et agir à travers un futur a proprement parlé celui-ci est le fait d'une projection du passé.

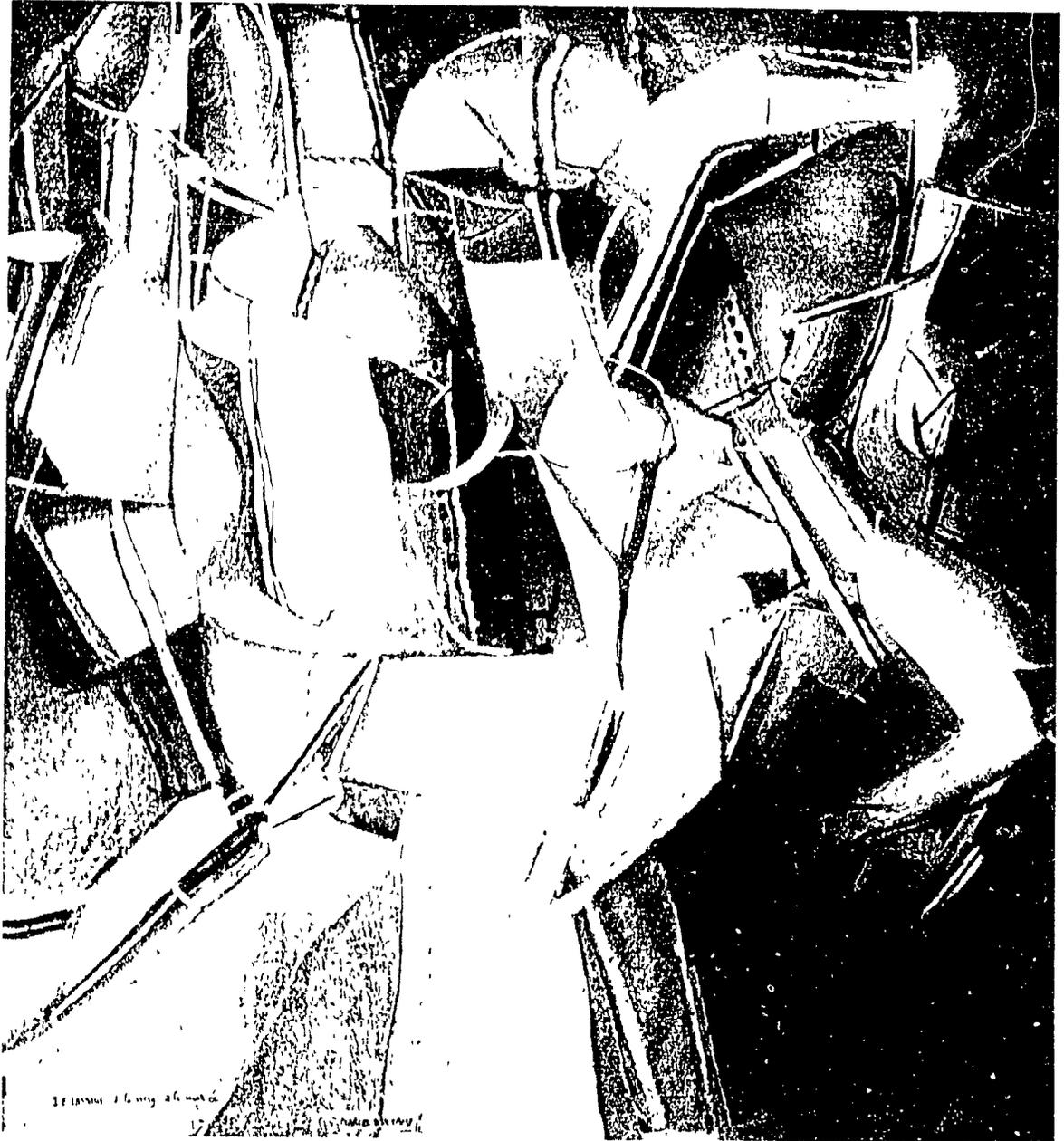
La question est abordée initialement à travers une discussion concernant les termes intégrants. Dans les chapitres suivants, l'effort est de comprendre les prémisses du État Donnés de Marcel Duchamp. Le travail de Duchamp est pris comme modèle de contournement de l'aporia dans la révélation à travers la création.

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*The Passage of Virgin to Bride,* 1912  
(*Le passage de la vierge à la mariée*)

## PREFACE

The word "history", could it be innocent, would be nothing but a (dis)order of which one has taken note. But that differences from one moment to the next should even appear as "difference", is already an orientation towards its use. History, in taking note of differences, is characterized by change. The fact that history moves means the future will come to pass. For one submerged in this process, a name is required for the vantage from which one gazes toward the unknown future: A future which will surely pass this way, and which will become a past which has not always been so. Having created this position out of nothing more than an orientation, the potential of change becomes both apparent and valuable. The future which appears on the horizon and the being which enacts that future are mutually credible in their resonance.

A vantage from which change is enacted is nothing short of godly. In a finite world of prescribed but ultimately unknowable limits, such a potent vantage can only be understood by that which prescribes the vantage in the first place. A human endeavouring to occupy such a position, must do so in the name of whatever has created him. History appears as History, with a monumentality fitting such consecrated change.

This makes both the necessity of change and a being which changes, not only workable assumptions, but heirs to a tautological truth in their circular appearance. The reverberation is from the most basic level of experience. The

prescribing limits are as real as that experience. One does not appear without the other.

Moreover, there is a coeval tension in these limits. If things appear now by virtue of "change", a new experience -- the appearance of an origin and an end -- must be named and reconciled.

This tension can play itself out through a number of paradigms. However, the most simplified (though perhaps the most presumptuous) would apparently be this: How things appear and subsequently are valued is a function of the process of creation itself. In other words, the ends remain entirely within the means and no external agent is called upon to consecrate or justify the "being" of such a subject. The presumptiveness lies in the attempt to disregard the external, or transcendent portion of a temporal engagement of the world. But can this ever be done away with? Take for example an ordinary stick. What, if not transcendent, is the simplest gap created and employed in rendering undifferentiated matter into that very recognizable stick? Further, how can then, a stick appear as a spear? If the ends were entirely within the means, what magic would be called upon to provide that crucial gap: to allow something to be other than what it already is; to give a future that does not yet exist, a face so that we may even act toward it?

What must be present for the opening of possibility? To whom, first of all, may this possibility appear?

What happens when, eventually, the ends of change appear within the very institutions humans recognize as their own

creations and not those of some distant deity? The pride they feel may justifiably lead the truth of resonance, so long enacted, to appear as a truth of correspondence

Accompanying the freedom from a demanding deity, is the humbling realization that action is not only overcoming but the necessity of passing in turn<sup>1</sup>. If the attempt is to claim the vantage from where one greets the future, as a human's own, one is responsible for both its making and the emergence of its meaning. One is indeed left with only the process. One can then refer to no more than the vantage's temporal nature: it is simply "modern".

Is 'modern' then a resignation to change for change's sake? While these changes may be enacted in the name of a greater agenda, what is the necessity of such an agenda? Initially we stated that appearance and the being to whom that appearance can occur are coeval. We have not investigated this yet, but we can already surmise that in the appearance of meaning, judgement must already be at work. This is only because appearance itself is either *ex nihilo* or the product of some process. If it is *ex nihilo*, one must account for the possibility of further change (itself a creative process). If it is a mere natural process or the result of an external agent, one is still called upon to account for the possibility of properly human initiated change. The point of this is the absolute non-neutrality of appearance. Judgement is apparently not a dis-interested function.

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<sup>1</sup>See Hans Jonas, "Gnosticism Existentialism and Nihilism", *The Gnostic Religion* p. 122

To return to a 'modern' stance, or one predicated on pure change, one must again ask if it is indeed the least encumbered of paradigms, free of obligations to cruel and exacting deities?

Two hundred years of hard labour within a process' known ends leads to a certain malaise. The 'modern' comes to be classified as a historically-dated position characterized by a naive attitude toward human action and 'truth'. The period to which this attitude belongs is called modernity. To speak this way is to intimate that one is outside it and no longer naive.

If this characterization is uttered from the standpoint of one beyond modernity, one would have to ask the relation of the one looking back to the object of description. If one does not belong to modernity, to what exactly does one belong? It would seem modernity is hardly something unto itself. It belongs squarely to a temporal engagement predicated upon change.

While this thesis is not specifically about the limits of modernity per se, it must establish a basic relationship between appearance and temporality in order to attempt a discussion of fabrication and meaning. We should begin with whether modernity merely makes explicit a specific paradigm implicit in a historical orientation. If then, by definition, it is critical in its attitude to what it is and what it will become, what are the assumptions of a critical stance? Is a critical stance necessary?

This thesis draws primarily on the arguments and issues brought to light in W.T. Darby's The Feast: Meditations on Time and Politics. Darby considers Alexandre Kojève's "Hegel", and as such, is obliquely via Heidegger. The object of the meditation is specifically an account of political action as a form of <making>, in light of Kojève. What is particular to this thesis, is the attempt to make sense of the tremendous importance attached to Marcel Duchamp in 20thC. while understanding the implications of a "work" as such. In this respect, I have merely explored the terrain laid out by Octavio Paz.

Rima McGown and Alexandre Vuillot aided in the preparation of the final text.

## MOBILINE: ANOTHER PREFACE TO THE INTRODUCTION OF DESIRING DESIRE

Père Ubu' (Cornequidouille) Nous n'aurons point tout démoli si nous ne démolissons même les ruines. Or je n'y vois d'autre moyen que d'en équilibrer de beaux édifices bien ordonnés!  
-Alfred Jarry

Modernity, if it can be said to exist at all, takes as its ground pure change. Modernity then in its appearance, is always as it already exists and is therefore, past. And as such, the movement it engenders is always reactive. One must overcome that which exists already in order for one to appear in the future. Modernity is such by virtue of the absolute constancy of its movement: things which not only change but appear because they are given by change. The appearance is by virtue of the fact that not only can they be succeeded but indeed must be succeeded in order to legitimize the very ground of that appearance. Thus modernity is characterized in countless terms varying from outright nihilism to the more circumspect but cynical, "spirit of critique"<sup>2</sup>.

A critical movement is distinct from movement as such, much as a vector is distinct from a force. The added dimension does not refer to the force alone but to the appearance of that force. The force is understood as an object in its relation to a perceiving subject. How an object is revealed for an "other" is to make explicit the object's usefulness. It is already a THING, recognizable in its significance, both past (actual) and future (potential). Explicit in the usefulness of this appearance is the concept of an atemporal relation. The vector does not merely reveal the thing and the

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<sup>2</sup>Octavio Paz *Children of the Mirg*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974)

observer, but similarly the observer secured in that relation. Given in any relation is the possibility of the significance of that relation enduring. This means, in the immediate sense, that all relations and their significance form the matter, the very substance of the human condition. It is this matter which is the natural given being of a being becoming human: the ground from which one continually re-starts, judging and acting toward a future. Furthermore, implicit in each and every relation is an Archimedean point not disturbed by the vagaries of situation, a vantage which renders the appearance always useful: fully recognizable at all times, in all places, for all individuals.

To return to modernity and the question of a "pure" becoming vs. a necessarily critical becoming, our own questioning must consider the nature of ascribing value to this Archimedean point. In essence, can one engage a future opened up by possibility free of its necessity?

Is it only chance that "time" should find its way into the natural sciences at the same point Science (*episteme*) first endeavours to treat human history as a worthwhile category of accountability. The natural sciences, heretofore, had been predicated on a geometric (but still unknowable ) scheme of nature. Similarly for philosophy, history and accountability were mutually exclusive only because if it was History, it was in God's hands, and if it was history, it was subject to the whims of men, and therefore changeable. Change and the limits of knowledge, as change and geometry, were irreconcilable. But here, Newton's vectors appear quite

naturally alongside notions of human being as becoming<sup>3</sup>. We would in fact be led to posit a social requisite at work to account for individual human initiated change as a universal. But are these just isolated examples of human experience. If anything, the embracing of time would appear in all spheres of everyday life and be explicit in precisely how those spheres were manifest. Thus one would expect to find a certain consistency in all aspects of life from bodily preservation to fabrication of a world to political action within that world. In detail, this would include attitudes to the body, medicine, sexuality, the production of culture, political reform, education and the general institutionalization of normative processes.

Since we are connecting the scientific revolution and the overall blossoming of modernity with the attempt to treat human time as a quantitative facet of the physical world, we would expect to find parallels between developments in the applied sciences, and the explosive specialization of the social world. The fracture of everyday life seen as synonymous with modernity can also be viewed as a parcelling up into workable portions of what amounts to a very cohesive project: construction of the fully recognized social individual.

Looking back, does a separation actually ever occur between making, ethics, and our biological existence as natural beings? Is it possible to separate ethics from our

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<sup>3</sup>One may argue over who this development in ontology belongs to: Vico or Kant. While Vico implicitly raises the question of man's historical becoming, Kant specifically phrases it in terms of the individual.

making, nay, from our sheer existence in the world? Or have we never separated them but rather enacted precisely that which we hold to be dear and by which we appear in the first place? Does our attitude to all three precisely affirm an understanding of the future which secures the future beforehand and therefore already acts upon its judgement of that future? What are the consequences of this action, given a capability to achieve a desired end?

Ethics implies a responsibility to a plurality of individuals on the part of an acting individual. The responsibility, however, is not a question of duty on the part of the individual but is born of what allows that individual to appear *Ex Nihilo* to himself and to the others, before all of whom stands that action. If action in its wellspring is political to the degree that it secures the actor in his recognizability as a human being, then everything that humanly appears is political in its essence, either directly or in its absence. The sphere of action in which one makes, judges and appears humanly is the polis.

To return to the tripartite distinction of making, ethics and the biological, is not the modern *polis* precisely this identification of the body politic with a plurality of flesh: of individual, distinct persons, each fleshly unit being equally recognized, secured and protected by the whole, by virtue of its biological existence<sup>4</sup>? It follows that all action

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<sup>4</sup> If abuses or failures exist, they do so as such. Inefficiencies either on the part of the individual or specific applications of the system, not as privileged occurrences. The principle itself remains not only as tenable but necessary and absolute.

appears *vis-à-vis* this securing of an atemporal freedom, a condition of actualized recognition wherein protection (force, will) is not imposed from outside but is entirely consistent with an individual's own aspirations. This is of course equivalent to removing the human dimension of change or difference<sup>5</sup>. Thus the operative condition by which all action appears (what allows the crucial space of difference wherein a human future may appear) is itself the actualization of a non-differentiated condition of being. Biological = fabricated = appearance<sup>6</sup>.

It also follows that the splitting up into facets (naming, objectification), i.e. human life, is none other than a permanent process of deferral allowing a constant dialectical movement of appearance and action to occur. This is negating action. Since the appearance of an absolute would mean no negation could take place, the unaccountability of the dialectic from within (a standpoint within time) is requisite to its very existence by its own terms. Similarly, the end of the process is given internally and not by some externally

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<sup>5</sup>One may of course ask here the necessity of actualizing a conceived condition. The answer must be implicit in the operative terms and not externally imposed.

If one removes all external directives as to how one should act or why one should act, one is left with only that one can act. Yet this already has assumed the possibility of being other than what is (change). Having understood or conceived of a possibility, one is required to enact it in order to create a new possibility. One's own appearance as a human is as dependent on the passing of what one enacts as it is on the enacting itself.

Similarly, having understood the necessity of acting, one is also faced with being able to act in more than one way, yet being able to enact only one possibility at a time. One realizes a certain equality of actions. In effect I must recognize other possibilities by virtue of the fact that I act. Remembering what makes the modern different from all other humans is that he/she claims to have removed all pretence of external masters. He/she is its own master. Therefore while there are a plurality of possibilities, their paradigmatic orientation is rendered the same. For example, in a modern state such as Canada, a Muslim, a Hindu, and a Jew all enact their own meaning under precisely these conditions (willingly of course) thus formalizing their religious attitudes and rendering them historically mute.

Of course this is only a crisis in the first place for a being predicated on change.

<sup>6</sup>This condition is of course both the philosopher's stone and what we commonly call truth or authenticity.

imposed condition, by definition. Thus the end is reached at the moment the process appears as such -- when abuses can appear only as abuses. And action -- all action, no matter its degree of sense, non-sense, or wilful anti-sense -- appears as work, the labouring alignment of theory and practice.

But how can we speak of processes with known ends, and action as only labour, in regards to a being who takes negating action as its very condition of being, and therefore requires the possibility of the entirely free act? Is there an irony in the modern *polis* which maintains its legitimacy in light of the Greek formulation of the concept, and not in spite of it?

The Greek *polis*, as a privileged sphere free of necessity existed by definition in stark contrast to that which gave it its form: namely, necessity. The modern polis is a social sphere, as opposed to a political one, because privilege becomes right by virtue of existence. This inverts the relationship of necessity and freedom by establishing the ethics of necessity as a temporary but necessary evil to be overcome within the framework of an atemporal freedom.

The notion of the *polis*, the public space where the truly human emerges, is coeval with an understanding of why and how one makes. To begin with, the political situates itself as distinct but relative to the human as a natural being (a fabricating being continually rewriting the meaning of its condition) vs. a purely acting being (one that can always do otherwise). Inherent in the latter is a being that does not

simply continue the natural movement of its condition but can momentarily break it, and if only for an instant, enter the realm of the gods by achieving that which is not natural. Conversely, what is enacted must have an appearance: it cannot be simply different or "other". Its recognizability would imply some sort of reiteration. What characterizes the political then, is not only acting other than in the natural foreseeable passage of past to future, but by humanly taking the future in hand by way of the past. The action is recognizable not as a re-enactment of a specific past but of an atemporal universal (the godly). What is specific in the iteration is what binds the action to the givenness of the world which gave birth to it. The scaffold, so to speak, of human action in its epic or universal sense, is "making", pure and simple. The political, or that which concerns the *polis*, has always been *vis-à-vis techne*. When the framework of action is necessity, the human is framed by the privilege of excess: I can -- a limit condition. "I can" does not specifically engender the necessity of further change.

When the framework of action becomes freedom by necessity, as opposed to biological necessity, all action becomes production: the production of freedom, or the necessity of history. The necessity of history amounts to the future

realization of an atemporal or non-changing condition, i.e. the actualization of that freedom<sup>7</sup>.

To repeat, if all action is production, then all making is according to a very human and divivable order (logos). *Techné* can only be technology. Moreover, since the *polis* is action's means of appearance, which is to say technology, then the *polis* is technology<sup>8</sup>.

The issue for this thesis is not to prove the appropriateness of architecture as a mode of thinking or the worth of actualizing thought. Nor is it to catalogue events in order to arrive at a description of the present, the question being neither one of fault-finding nor pondering how things could have been otherwise. The usefulness for the future of such observation is much too apparent. Resentment toward the past does not lie in the fact that a wrong step was taken somewhere along a historical unfolding, but exists because the endeavour of reflection itself is historically-given. Since neither reflection nor action are intrinsically reactive, the reactivity lies in how the hermeneutic appears. In other words, the very terms by which the enacting subject is revealed humanly. The political aspect or human aspect of the

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<sup>7</sup> Emergence of the properly human then becomes dependent not on the re-enactment of a tragic given but on the re-enactment of the all inclusive. In short the godly as opposed to the tragic, the geometric as opposed to the temporal.

An account (now a phenomenology), to be adequate must in fact be not an adequate description of becoming understood from the stand point of one still becoming (impossible) but indeed from and for the ones who have already become.

<sup>8</sup> Technology is a catchword which encompasses *bios* (pure natural existence), *ethics*, and *techné*. To separate any of the three terms and assume they can be understood separately is to defer ad infinitum ever arriving at the essence of any one of the terms except in terms of some always future appearance.

revealed self appears diametrically opposed to the action which reveals it -- the absolute usefulness of the hermeneutic performed. This inherently demands a further overcoming and a deferral of the tension. The satisfaction of a humanly free action, one of excess, is preempted by the terms of its appearance and the aporia is explicit.

The very nature of the aporia allows one to see that a so-called decisive historical slip-up, as a negation of one existing condition, now appears to be an affirmation of its operative world-view. The present, in that it appears as such, is the only means of acting towards its own future. The future appears as a "thing" beyond the abyss which separates it from the present, and a thing is always intentionally loaded by what has already appeared. An observer wishing to approach the past would acknowledge that he must understand his own present, the present of the past, and the path between them, in order to unfold the circle. He is then confronted with the frustration of being bound by his relationship to a past action -- bound by his very understanding of that relationship. It forms a precondition to his existence and he is already constrained in a way that the original action appears not to be.

One can raise a question as to the nature of The "original" action in all its implications, or dismiss its possibility and name the reactive process as the very form of the human condition. One could then take solace in an

open-ended process by which frustration is sublated as elation by the necessity of exploring possibility<sup>9</sup>.

Whether one is elated or depressed, in either case one's relation to the future is one of avoidance: One wishes the continuity of the present into that future in order to guarantee it. No matter what the stance, the future by definition must judge the present guilty in order that it, the future itself, can come to exist. It must be "other".

Thus the aim of this thesis is to take seriously the notion that it is the future which judges the present, and that judgement is always guilty. In effect, to understand modernity on its own terms we must ask whether we have any more right to affirm a given future than we do to deny one.

The problem is twofold. First there is the *aporia* which demands that a human given by *becoming* appear in a way other than through enacting change. In other words, other than through that which is his being. And secondly given that that still requires the production of "stuff", of a world, and "worlding", how does one judge, make and act toward any future which may or may not possibly be our concern?

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<sup>9</sup> It should be evident that the attitude of frustration or elation is completely beside the point given that the fundamental relation to a temporal condition is identical. It is not a case of whether one adopts a pessimistic or an optimistic demeanour for in both cases, judgment toward the future is based on a personal willing toward that future: both springing from the same exigency to guarantee a direct continuity of an understood present and to flee the perilous demand of acting into error.

## A SHORT DIGRESSION

\*in lieu of a lexicon of terms<sup>10</sup>

First is the question of theory. It refers to the discourse of what is true where truth is both the means of defining what can and ought to be known, and the standard for judging these rightful ends. This is also an attribute of philosophy, so to be clear as to the specificity of theory, we would have to establish its adequate definition. As to the etymology of the word, it is generally taken to be derived either from *Theos*, of or pertaining to Gods directly, or from the *theoros*, the silent observer who graced the political activities of the Greek City State, with only his presence. Now these two sources are in essence equivalent. This in itself is important and we will examine why in the course of the paper. For now it matters only in that we can proceed safely. Derivative accounts in no way fundamentally change our assessment.

Theory, while sharing its end (what is "True") and means ("discourse" or "dialectic") with philosophy, functions at the level of the universal. Philosophy, however, is contemplation of the soul in its singularity vis-à-vis its own death. Conversely, just as a city, through its political actions, could not be said to share in the realm of *episteme*, were those actions not recognized by an equally free and worthy representative of another state (the *theoros*), the philosopher can hardly abstain from all human contact. In fact despite his interaction at all levels of human society (from the marketplace to the political forum to the private feast), the forum where he is ultimately called upon to account for himself, literally at the risk of death, is education. That is

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<sup>10</sup>This chapter is a rapid historical survey, brazenly committed as a means of explicating why certain historical events and understandings remain central to our own accountability. In effect it is a rather forceful argument against current misuses of the margins of history, or "minor literatures" vs. the mainstreams of Western thought. For the moment, the argument here is historical. It pertains only to the West as "history" is itself, a western understanding of <being>.

to say, what is the meaning of his speech in its universal sense. How does it stand paradigmatically.

Philosophy, then, is an account of the particular as a universal.

Ultimately then, what is the difference between philosophy (actualized thought as speech at the level of the particular) and theory (understood as speech in light of the Good as a universal and actualized in practice through the specificity of an action? What is wholly necessary in the philosopher is his refusal to go on at any point with the dialectic until he can give an adequate account of his self at that moment. Thus both philosophy and theory are discursive, and that discursiveness moves through and by accountability.

Now it is not by accident that the good of philosophy and the gods of theory should be equivalent but, apparently not identical. Or rather, that they are identical but philosophy should, initially opt for a different term. As we said, theory is by virtue of the divine (the means of defining what can and ought to be known), therefore it is theory because it is in relation to that which is and does not become: that which is identical to itself (in the fullest sense of the word, I-I). Now for the man of action, who acts for glory and his city's glory, his actions must be guided by what is universally recognizable as glorious or else he cannot act. This is not to say he creates a god by brute force in the image of what he would like to be; it is only to say that the nature of his actions allows only an account of an individual as a universal. This is because the risk of life for honour's sake is the action paradigmatic for all action which is truly human. The risk of life itself accords nothing to the specific person beyond a universal attribute: the overcoming of biological necessity. Risk of life is essentially the same in all cases and does not reveal anything particular in the way of "worlding". In no way is anyone transformed in any terms other than life and death.

Now political speech and action, i.e. the activities of the *polis*, properly speaking, do not involve risk of life. Then

how can recognition be accorded the deeds as universally honourable and therefore good? The *theoros* then, as an equally free and worthy citizen of another state accords the recognition of an equal in battle where neither of the combatants submit. Hence the recognition accorded, is that of equals universally worthy of honour. Thus in the case of the *theoros* there is no risk of life. One might also note that a civilization structured entirely on the universal, with no recognition of the particular, has no interest in any transformation properly speaking of either man's world or the natural world. Truly an age of Heroes.

This is to say that neither wisdom, nor self-consciousness, is revealed, properly speaking, merely by political action. For self-consciousness to emerge, the philosopher must imagine (construct) death (the overcoming of which led to the recognizable glory of the politician/warrior), in the particular of his own person, and upon failing to achieve it (actualize it), must understand it, i.e. give an account of it.

Thus the divine is understood as that which is other than me, but not completely other, for while I cannot know it, I can speak of it. This "of which I can speak" is relational, and specifically not identical to itself. What is more, if reduced, it must reduce to the relation itself. This is a theology and a monotheistic one at that. What is crucial to the philosopher is the appearance of the particular in the face of the universal. This is an issue which, as we will see, appears regardless of its articulation in philosophy. What is crucial to us, is that it should appear at all and the necessity of that appearance in the first place.

To recapitulate, if death is the well-spring for the revelation of meaning, both for the person of action and the one who contemplates it, it is so because of the specifically human feature it raises which is time. Further, we have established the primary difference between the divinity represented by the *theoros*, and that of the philosopher. The former allows only an immediate sentiment of man-vs.-divinity,

which in turn allows only the universal in man to appear IN DISCOURSE (an oxymoron which must be accounted for). The second introduces into discourse the notion of a human who becomes, a human who transforms a world through his speeches and actions.

This discourse of self-consciousness, of accountability, obviously belongs to a being who becomes and not one who merely is. Now the politico-warrior of whom we spoke becomes human in the sense that he risks his life, and in fact chooses personal recognition, and that of his city, over his own biological life. This then is the most human enactment of freedom in that the warrior lifts himself out of a clearly foreseeable relation of past to future and acts in terms of a completely unforeseeable one. This is to say a truly human action is "thrown" and by necessity precedes its meaning or concept. This we see as the politico-warrior who overcomes biological time ( pure natural existence, a straightforward flowing of past to future) through words and deeds not born of necessity but of possibility. Now if this is <becoming> the recognition he receives is insufficient for he is recognized only as having overcome his biological nature. His action, per se, does not necessarily transform the given world in any substantial form. In fact, there is no necessity of any "thing" having become. No change has been effected in what constitutes the natural being of that human. Pure action as such, does not result in a world, properly speaking. Thus, since the results of his actions are not beyond their own means, in order to maintain his free status he must continue to risk his life, until death. Thus the <becoming> of which philosophy speaks belongs to the one who faces death and fails. i.e. the one who, facing death, sees his own non-being and chooses life. Choosing life, he does so with the understanding of why, but it is a knowledge to which only he is privy and to which the warrior cannot be. This understanding does not alleviate the responsibility of the free action but rather reveals to him the concept <freedom> by virtue of his having opted against it. It is the concept which allows him to understand both what he is and what his

limitations are. Thus the concept <freedom> for the philosopher is the possibility of acting outside of the very relation which allows his self-consciousness to emerge. Freedom exists for angels or non-discursive mystics, but the wise-man is at best a lover of wisdom<sup>11</sup>.

To return to our concept of god, or "God: The Concept by virtue of which I am", it should be clear that I exist in time by virtue of my own death (which is mine), but exist also, by virtue of a relation: God (the eternal concept). Now if I am free, i.e. can enact in time that which has never existed, and therefore does not exist in concept, how can an <I> as such exist by virtue of something outside of time? Moreover, if we say the concept exists in time as eternity the <I> is even less free, for the biological is raised to the level of the ontological, and I cannot even speak of God the Creator for everything is God in the Being of its species: an eternal return of the individual.

Now even if I modify my philosophical discourse in terms of the Christian God, the same categories remain: namely, a transcendent concept which is itself eternal by virtue of eternity. Except where freedom was relegated to an angelic soul that chose its future before its incarnation as a human, now the human chooses only whether not to comply with a "divine will" -- at stake not merely his human life at the hands of a brutish master but his eternal life at the hands of God the Master.

The crucial point is that once the world as "Christian" is a world on the road of history, history plays the all important role of reconciliation for the Christian individual with its proffered future reward. History itself, however, offers no metaphysical path in terms of its accountability. Thus, while one places every importance on the eschatological

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<sup>11</sup> In a world which esteems the universal, the philosopher is more to be distrusted than exalted and poses similar problems for the politico/warrior as those posed by the mother, the family, and the slave (as opposed to another warrior). Christianity raises the status of the "particular" person as a universal problem, thereby forcing the issue which is already implicit. Arguably philosophy would have to contend with it anyway: Spinoza's recuperation of the Parmenidean model: The Concept - Eternity.

significance of the future, a future meaningful by virtue of the concept of particular freedom, one cannot even recognize that freedom by the very terms that one understands oneself. Thus in contradiction of its very foundation, philosophy must recognize for the first time the ontological significance of history.

Furthermore, if History (or metaphysically speaking: the eternal concept related to Time) is to stand valid as such, it must be accountable, within all experience universally to date: The progression of the concept, itself, is meaningful and sense can be made not only of all terms but of the movement from one term to the next<sup>12</sup>.

But I have been talking about philosophy: therefore we still have not accounted for philosophy (or my death) as a universal, and therefore "in theory".

Before proceeding to a condition which would allow philosophy to reconcile its differences with theory, the implications of metaphysical accounts should first be assessed in various general categories which are pertinent to the "theories" of various disciplines.

As discussed above, the principle philosophical model is one in which the concept is related to Eternity and hence is itself Eternal. As it is not identical but equivalent, Man who speaks, in some way has access to something beyond both the thing he refers to and the referent he uses, i.e. he can share in this Concept -- if only to the degree that a singular big "C" concept is implicit in the most banal little "c" concept of any symbol (speech). Now if he wishes to address the concept directly: i.e. think it, in establishing an equivalence of terms, to say this is that, the relation is purely spatial and excludes time, hence it is geometric. Note that in the first

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<sup>12</sup>This understanding specifically recognizes the openness of the future, by necessity, and further explicitly raises the question the historical subject who being aware of this, must pose his historical self as a worthy question of knowledge. It should be noted that as the question is posed still as a relation, the self in question is still not THE self but a-self-as-... In other words the "nothing" which first philosophy identified but identified as being "outside", and therefore never possible as an object in itself, remains in fact even here. Thus while one now requires that the self be understood not as a thinking I but as an I (who thinks), the phrasing of the question prohibits that account

alternative conception offered above, where the concept is in reference to an eternity present in the world of change (cosmic time as revealed by nature here on earth), both temporal and spatial terms are limited to the degree that the biological particular can align with the universal of its species, i.e. its *telos*. The word biological is indeed very important here, for the phrasing of the question demands that there are no purely spatial terms and therefore everything in reference to eternity is in terms of time (change) and therefore <becoming>. This is a *physis* alive, an eternal return of becoming<sup>13</sup>.

This could be a sort of pantheism, but in essence it still reduces to an embracing single Concept by virtue of all the world-specific concepts, hence it is in no way contradictory with philosophy or a monotheistic theology. Theory (if it can be said to exist here at all) is merely that which accords with dogma<sup>14</sup>.

This conception, however, also harbours an unreconciled tension. If all thoughts and actions exist by virtue of a concept which is eternal in nature, how can I think of things which do not specifically exist or have no temporality in their conception at all? In other words, if the concept exists as such, how can there be a creative God, never mind creative humans<sup>15</sup>?

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<sup>13</sup>One does indeed recognize the Aristotelian world view.

<sup>14</sup>This is borne out by the fact in architecture, that there is no theory of architecture, properly speaking during the middle ages (Aristotelian world view).

<sup>15</sup>Thus the so called "Galilean revolution" is inevitable and therefore necessary, not as a philosophical reaction to the Aristotelian world view but in accordance with what allowed that world view in the first place. Here the question emerges: what is the connection between philosophical discourse and the lived world of everyday experience? It would seem, one cannot yet answer fully but it has been adumbrated already through the connection between the philosopher, the artisan, the mother, and the slave, i.e. all those involved in the process of worlding. They all act toward an end outside their own biological needs but as an imperative. Thus it is they who become through transformation of a world and hence live moment to moment with the tangible concept of "freedom" through its very deferral. It should be clear that philosophy and specifically the Socratic formulation of it is as much anathema to the dogma of the church as it is its essence. I specify the Socratic one for it is here that the particularity of the creative individual is open-ended and in fact demanded. Again in terms of architecture it should be noted that the single architectural theory recorded between Plato and the Renaissance is Vitruvius: a citizen of the Roman Empire. Rome anticipates the Christian individual with its concept of the Legal Person -- An individual recognizable before the law (a universal) and hence raises a theoretical problem beyond the capacity of Aristotelian theology (i.e. Roman Catholicism through Medieval scholasticism).

One is in effect forced to abandon such a conception or reformulate it. Having raised the creative aspect of the concept (in both God and man), we have shifted the emphasis of the question. Theory returns then, in terms of geometry or a universal regarding the actions of the now accountable artisan. Whereas in our earlier discussion, theory pertained to the only domain accountable in terms of universals, namely the politics of the warrior/citizen, now the problem has been rephrased to account for the particular, and hence a rapidly changing and emerging world. This is to say that the universal is called upon to recognize that which properly <becomes> and transforms a world in so doing. Inherent in recognition is the accountability of those responsible for transforming the world. They are accountable to that which is recognizably right (good or true) as a universal. I am referring specifically to all forms of fabrication : philosophy, art, crafts, and the new politics<sup>16</sup>.

We can now formulate a more modern understanding of theory: one which accounts for the universal in the particular, not only in its universality but in its particularity as well. Theory and philosophy are made equivalent. HOWEVER, in rendering them equivalent, one must by definition recognize the universal in the particular but also the particular in the universal. This is to say one must fabricate the universal.

Our account at this point requires that our Science, Knowledge, or Episteme, begin with what we make. It becomes as such an epistemology rather than an ontology. Now our original metaphysical/theological paradigm is back in place, i.e. as an eternal concept relating to Eternity. We must ask what this requires of our new conception of ourselves.

First of all, in order to fabricate the universal, I must be able to recognize it in the first place. If the universally

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<sup>16</sup>Philosophy is seen to be pure contemplation and therefore cannot result in a world. This is true should the paradigm of making a world always be excluded from the universal model of what is worthy. However self-consciousness is itself the transformation of something (a becoming) and therefore in conjunction with making can never be pure contemplation. note it also follows that architecture should be elevated to a liberal art.

valid is that which is true at all times for all humans but is such by virtue of its relation to that which is outside of time, how can I recognize it? To be sure, I can propose an account of nature, but to be Scientific (of or within Science) I could not use any temporal terms (all symbols by definition are temporal). Hence once again, the account is geometric or purely spatial. But having understood as much, I can only go to the limits of my temporal experience, and from there, God the Concept must do the rest. To be more explicit, while the question is posed in terms of the "knowing I", the "I" cannot yet pose itself as the object of its knowledge without the help of God, the Eternal Concept.

Let us, again, modify our metaphysical categories. Instead of relating the Eternal Concept to Eternity, either temporally or atemporally (the two paradigms we have discussed thus far), we can relate it to Time itself, i.e. the becoming of man as a whole. This is not the same as the earlier conception of Eternity in the world, which merely recognized Being as the unchanging state of the natural world. To relate the Eternal to Time is to recognize Man's <becoming> as a process<sup>17</sup>.

This in turn makes certain terms explicit and implies others. For one, man's being is somehow revealed through History. If this is the case, and if history is a process, and that process was in turn made by man, then implied is an account of man as a <creative-process-becoming>. But this is just a radical explication of what was implicit before. Moreover, since man is a creative being, that creativity explicitly demands from metaphysics, an account of what freedom must be.

Again, if the metaphysical paradigm is understood as relational, that freedom, as well as man, proper, is still relational. Therefore man himself, in addition to the meaning

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<sup>17</sup>Vico is apparently the one to first conceive of history this way. But as he does not pursue the consequences in terms of a metaphysics, it is really Kant who frames it in viable terms. Thus Kant discovers the necessity of Christian categories for metaphysics, heretofore ignored. It can also be observed that while Vico avoids some of the implications of his discovery he is nonetheless, a very good Christian.

of his freedom, is still unknowable. This is to say that man's rightful end is freedom (the creative act becoming) but the end is necessarily future, and that future is open.

The implications are as follows: Firstly, we can now give an account of Nature in terms of both absolute space and Time, where force, a vector with both direction (space) and movement (time) has complete ontological value<sup>18</sup>.

Secondly, the very symbols which form this relation, i.e. the words of the account, are understood in their historical sense. Everything in discourse and action exists in terms of its human historical ontological value. And that value is freedom.

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To speak thus is merely to say what was implied but could not be articulated in earlier conceptions. Poetic making and poetic speech are themselves the Concept revealed, and this concept, as does any process, holds its own overcoming as its essence: every process is directed toward an end outside itself. To rephrase the central question of this thesis, when reconciliation through a mimetic act appears as a dialectical synthesis in the space of a reverie, namely as a theoretical project, or a fiction, must it by its own terms entail its own actualization? Furthermore, how does this occur within the finitude of man's existence? If, as we have understood, a discursive account and actual making, collapse the space between themselves so that theory is practice, must self-conscious poetic making understand itself in terms of a future? Can it be something else which relates purely to the present and has no future term implicit at all? The first understanding in attempting to take the future in hand, assumes it in principle to be already present, thus allowing the synthesis of meaning i.e. between theory and practice, to take place. That place is no more than a substantiated future occupied by the transcendent "Concept". This simply explicates

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<sup>18</sup> Again, as with Galileo, the Newtonian revolution is both inevitable and necessary both in terms of the original questions of first philosophy, and the requirements of a lived world becoming. The two demand the same result

the tension between what is and what must be in that future. The second alternative points to something wholly other than a theoretical project. The question then, is can whatever we are after exist only by being removed from discourse or accountability completely, i.e. existing in pure space not modified by human Time.

# MALIC MOULDS

## RECOGNITION AND APPEARANCE

In a relatively inconsequential moment of the plot, the protagonist of *Neuromancer*<sup>19</sup>, already "jacked-in" and "flipped", surveys a distant gallery through the eyes and perceptions of another human, the woman into whose body he is "flipped" and is "riding"<sup>20</sup>. While he himself, is desperately trying to read the names on the book spines and artifacts, to his dismay, her disinterested eyes hail past the titles without pause. The only title he manages to glimpse, in the slightest hesitation of her gaze, is on a small brass plaque beneath a large sheet of glass. It reads: *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même.*

Now this is perhaps only an author's self-indulgence within a fast-paced sci-fi novel. Most of the book is concerned with the ageless theme of mortals caught in a web of greater forces, acting their way blindly in a tragic human fashion. As usual, they suffer the whims and capricious destinies of those forces. The only aspect particular to science fiction is the nature of these powers -- they are none other than *daedelons* of artificial intelligence which achieve, through the course of the book, full self-consciousness. The realm in which they exist and operate is geometric. It is pure space. There is no conception of time.

Humans, acting as instruments along with their cybernetic counterparts, serve to bring about this condition. More importantly, they continue to exist after its actualization. The assumption of Gibson's story is that humans can and do operate in this realm, and that the concretization of this notion as part of our human condition precedes the techniques which explicate the specifics of that condition. In fact it is

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<sup>19</sup>Gibson, *Neuromancer*, (New York: Ace Science Fiction, 1984)

A drug-store paperback sci-fi novel. Many of Gibson's words have since been adopted in popular usage when referring to such modern phenomena as "virtual reality", "cyberspace", etc. Gibson, as such, has been heralded as a prophet of "Cyberpunk"

<sup>20</sup>The terms "jack in" and "flipped" merely refer to a device in Gibson's story. The instrument allows one human to simultaneously receive the perceptions of another human

precisely the lived reality of the condition which gives these techniques an appearance and a comprehensibility. As we said, the only thing particular to science fiction about these assumptions are the mechanics of the situation. The fact that we can identify with them humanly (imagine them) means that what is "politically" essential to these future humans in the light of cyberspace technologies is identical to what is essential to us in the present.

This would lead us to make several observations about science fiction, and indeed fiction in general. First of all, fiction is an exploration of existential possibilities<sup>21</sup>. A possibility has a certain credibility in that it has already appeared. It arises when one projects an already existing, and therefore viable, present into a non-existent future. One can already envisage a circumstance in which it is possible, whether desirable or not. Exploration of these possibilities cannot be undertaken without the recognition of change (possibility) as a necessity. The exploration of existential possibilities in fiction and the exploration of creative possibilities for their own sake are tantamount to the same thing: the negating action of a being already recognized in concept but still incumbent on its own self-production to appear. A being which recognizes possibility as valuable before it exists does so because it has already made coincident, the two polarities of experience by which that being recognizes itself and says "I" in the first place. The two polarities are a) that which I make, experience and enact in my own embodied reality, and b) that which comes to me mediated through the simulacrum of language -- what we might broadly term our cultural experience.

This "I" would indeed value the paradigmatic role of the novel. *Le petit narrative* would stand proud (and equal in

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<sup>21</sup> See Milan Kundera's, "The Depreciated Legacy of Cervantes" in The Art of the Novel, (London: Faber and Faber, 1986). His thinking is perhaps even more clear in the later novel, *Immortality*, where the paradoxes of an individual subject, character, and novelist, are explicit

stature) beside the grand narrative of History. They can only be commensurate if the Grand Narrative is already recognized completely. The concept "Paradigm" is coeval with "a paradigm". Put this way we see that the two are not quite the polarities they initially appear to be. My own existential enactment, with all its inherent implications of personal destiny, can itself stand paradigmatically as a universal only if I am ALREADY recognized universally: not as a being <becoming>, but a being <become>. This is to say, substantiated<sup>22</sup>.

We have yet to show the connection between <making> and the appearance of the self. However we may intuit why Gibson, a sci-fi writer describing life in virtual reality, should pay homage to THE paradigm of self-conscious artifice. But will *La Mariée mise a nu* hold up as a work of self-conscious virtual reality? Is it a matrix of pure geometric meaning in which meaning is present at once by virtue of itself, in itself, for itself? If so, then error, as that which remains hidden and "other", disappears. And time, as the intentional, has no form and no deferral to a future.

Neuromancer is a story spun out of a conception of virtual reality. As such, it does have its own idiosyncratic set of mechanics, but the point is this: The already-encountered-and-faced actualized human reality of "virtual" reality is a part of our history.

Virtual reality means the intentional aspect or meaningful aspect (humanly speaking) is guaranteed before hand. The physical world is then equated to the human world beforehand, and the concept "reality", the symbol "reality", and physical reality are given equal status. To be specific, they are emptied of their intentional differences. Intentional refers to the degree to which human <being>, free becoming in error, is given face. Thus the means of drawing distinctions is solely by physical or actual differences. Judgement is consequentially based on physical attributes. One either

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<sup>22</sup>cf. the heroic deeds of the politico/warrior

labours to render them all the same or ascribes equivalent value to each, thus allowing them all to stand equally. This is to say, their differences are formalized. Either case excludes meaningful change, properly speaking. Again "le petit narrative" is coincident with History, and there is no tension engendering further change.

Thus virtual reality is already part of our shared past, and not merely the property of science-fiction. Its implications and possibilities form the fare of everyone from philosophers and political scientists to hack novelists and programmers, but much more importantly, its *raison d'être* is everyone's -- assumed and defended as such. It is what we claim as natural and given: the right to say "I exist" as a free and human individual.

An awareness of this *raison d'être* in itself, guarantees nothing. Neither does an awareness of the circularity of a work such as Duchamp's *Large Glass*. At best it reveals only a sentiment of this "virtual self". One might discern from the start that our ability to ask the right questions is not guaranteed by the work itself, any work for that matter. We can ascertain already that the issues at stake precede particular actualizations, at least actualizations as conscious works, and this in itself is critical. An examination of neither *The Large Glass* nor cyberspace at this point, however, can illuminate or describe the essence of the issue. We hope at some point to be able to come back to the work in an entirely different light, specifically Duchamp's, but first we must understand the terms which underlie the works of which we speak, and of course how we understand who is speaking.

We will attempt to distinguish through the course of this paper, the difference between a self revealed through <making> as opposed to merely producing on the one hand, or acting without enacting change, on the other. But first, we still have to understand more fully terms which are prior. We will begin, however, with the term "appearance". We have already seen how "appearance" is anything but neutral for it already assumes

recognition to have taken place on the part of the observer. The first question concerns whether something's existence depends upon its being witnessed.

Physical or pure natural existence, and that which can appear, are two different things. Perhaps the hackneyed example of the tree in the forest may bear some light. As we have said appearance demands recognition. A monkey can recognize a banana, yet it does not use symbols with the same aptitude as a human. Therefore are we referring to the recognition that belongs to self-consciousness or the recognition that may belong to mere sentiment-of-self? This amounts to the same difference between natural existence and appearance. Appearance (and therefore recognition, which properly speaking belongs to self-consciousness) refers already to the existence of the thing as a symbol<sup>23</sup>.

Specific to a human action, which includes the act of cognition, is that it is free. <Free> is the error of being possibly other than what is foreseeable according to an already given present. However the recognizability of that freedom is possible precisely because its past IS known. Known means the ground from which that action springs has already been negated: it already makes sense, is meaning-loaded, and can be judged and stand paradigmatically in the future for all who have access to it in the form of a concept. To return to our hackneyed tree, its value is in how poor an example it is - how much must already be assumed in order for the tree to appear in the first place - for prior to the question of recognition is the question of symbol. Recognition already assumes the presence of symbol as the means of reconstituting the past in the present. Recognition thus can only belong to a being given by the possibility of self-consciousness<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup>Thus in the example of the monkey and the banana, we are already guilty of a certain anthropomorphism.

<sup>24</sup>Of course, in no way does the use of symbol alone guarantee that self-consciousness should appear.

Obviously, the question of the tree's existence, the tree, or the concept "existence" could not be named, i.e. thought, outside of symbol.

As we said above, appearance through symbol implies a paradoxical tension between freedom as error and recognition through that which has already been negated into a past. The past here is equivalent to natural or given being. Again, the term recognition takes as its *conditio per quam* a plurality of self-conscious beings. The paradox of freedom refers to recognition of the free aspect of an action, and therefore takes as its object something which cannot exist naturally speaking. Assumed in our exemplary tree is not only the presence of a potentially self-conscious being, and therefore a being immersed in symbol and in time, but a multiplicity of such individuals. Plurality is the first condition of being human.

The second condition, therefore, is the necessity of the recognizably free act, which in fact secures the appearance of humanness, a quality only recognizable by (and therefore only of interest to) other humans, and of no consequence to the purely natural (or to gods).

To fully answer our first question whether something exists if it is not recognized, we should note that recognition is already more a matter concerned with the perceiving being and her/his standing as a human among humans than with the natural or given object of the referent. This is because the perceiving being is only revealed to the degree to which it transcends the given being of its speech. One could venture then that what is specific to these speaking and acting beings, what is coeval along with the conditions of their existence, is that their essence (these conditions) emerge only to the degree to which their words and deeds give appearance to this essence. Therefore a distinction exists from the start between that which is given human appearance and that which is merely actualized as part of human existence. The latter may be named, and symbols employed regarding it -- to be sure, humans must continue to expend energy on maintaining and organizing their

biological being. But the point is that even these actions are given in light of the possibility of a purely human or free act. Furthermore, both sides must be present for one does not appear without the other. Since both are relative terms, relative to each other, one does not appear alone, never mind endure as a meaningful symbol.

Both given being and intentional being must be actualized at all times in order for either one to appear for both exist because of the other. Both are given through intentionality. We can now answer the question regarding the tree: No. Natural given "being" has no appearance and therefore does not exist, *properly speaking*, outside of recognition. Appearance is intentionality and assumes a plurality of potentially self-conscious beings.

Again, since both human being and given being are given through intentionality, they continue to stand for the future as meaningful. The distinction between them is present at every moment that a human acts, and gauges the meaning of his/her actions. Since actions are revealed through precisely the same mechanism of symbol (gain an appearance), one could say that everything is already revealed or <exists> humanly speaking. Everything is already "intentionally loaded" and this is what we mean when we say the human world always makes sense and must make sense in order to act humanly into a future.

As we have said, the means of distinguishing is coeval with the possibility of a symbol itself. It is therefore equally impossible for the act of distinguishing to be neutral. The appearance is the judgement of meaning implicit in the act of naming itself. Therefore any self which names, brings to bear in the act, the judgement of that which is already established for it and by it. We can call this the "intentional ground" or the "ground of meaning" since it already has an appearance and is therefore, by definition, shared by a multiplicity of individuals. The individual's actualization of that ground then, the act of judging and acting, cannot be neutral for the existence of possibility is itself the possibility of intention and that intention implies the

community by virtue of which the individual exists. What is at stake is the self, itself.

If the basis of meaning is the intentional basis of the self, and that ground is secured through the intentional actions of the self, then to that self everything appears loaded in terms of the other selves. Only in its recognizability lies its own securing, and the securing of which we speak is obviously not mere biological existence, but as an intentional being. If the self is a self by virtue of other selves, and reveals itself to itself and to others as such, then that which is given appearance is political by definition.

Does a tension exist then, *de facto*, between the individual and the community? Is the ground a matter of consensus arrived at through the actualization of intents, or does it exist *a priori*?

To repeat, the scope of possibilities raised by a "*thing*" appears in its intentional aspect, which is to say according to the intentional being of the one perceiving it, and as such is limited by that which underlies the intentionality of that being. On the most mundane level, therefore, a being judges based on that which secures it in its very being.

Judgement distinguishes that which serves only to sustain my biological existence, that which changes the context of that existence, and finally that which serves neither but secures my name in appearance.

Even without having yet investigated the nature of this "I" revealed through intentionality, one can see that the revelation of a self through action necessarily creates a tension in time, always requiring further action. Those actions which change fundamentally the context in which an individual acts, i.e. those actions which result in something lasting, which endure beyond an immediate biological negation to support immediate needs -- create a context both human and natural in its given being: create a world. This is <making>, and <making> results in a world becoming. The process of <worlding> is the resulting content of becoming being. This is

the world of things and beings as they appear intentionally-loaded.

What is specific to a being whose actions are situated in a world where every action is recognized not as an actualization of possibility despite necessity, but precisely as the necessity of actualizing possibility because that possibility exists<sup>25</sup>? As we emphasized at the beginning of this chapter, this is simply the situation which proceeds from recognizing an individual prior to the process of appearance. If the individual is recognized beforehand, it is incumbent upon that individual to produce its own meaning. Hence it must enact change, <make>, in order for that meaning to emerge. As we also emphasized, properly human change is emptied of difference for the same reason the self is guaranteed prior to action. Thus <making> bears a prior designation of necessity.

Technological <making> is the paradigm of actualizing possibilities so that what is made can stand for anyone universally. Use is pure use and does not differentiate among its users. There is only the question of how it is used. What we must discover is what is the difference between <technological making> and <making> per se. We may conclude already that <making> as action, provides the ground necessary for an emerging intentionality. We can conceive of this role in a number of ways. a) The action itself changes nothing in the order of given being, and is given appearance only to the degree that the form it takes is universal. In such a case, no work is done, nothing made, and no fundamentally different future would result. This of course would be the human action par excellence. We can also note that this possibility does not

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<sup>25</sup> Technical possibilities as phenomenal reifications of concepts, may indeed be infinite, their meaning, in terms of what they can fundamentally reveal about our human condition, however, is in the last light rather limited. Mathematical or mechanical speech may change continuously and drastically, but language as a conglomeration of signs alone is inadequate in its ability to reveal a humanly acting and speaking individual. Human speech is speech only to the degree that it reveals that individual as a one among others. What is finite is the political aspect of that speech if only for the reason that human recognition is never concerned with "thingness" alone, and as such speech comprised of names of things may be infinitely open-ended but alone without its human component, it would still fall dismally as speech. What we wish to show is that it is entirely beside the point whether we build cyberspace or not, whether we close the technological gap of simulation or not, the issue is what am I when my temporal condition is reconciled through making as opposed to acting. The paradigm is constant whether I am an artist, a politician, or an astrophysicist.

exist for the being understood as prior to the process of appearance. In fact it results in exacerbating the crisis of the alienated self<sup>26</sup>.

If, on the other hand, the action results in any kind of process of worlding - an evolvment of symbol as much as an evolvment of things - then the product of that action creates a tension in the being of the actors. Obviously as we have already seen over and over again, neither the physical sign nor the thing can appear without its intentional (symbolic) aspect. Thus if that which is changed in the natural order of things is not given any particular ontological merit, then neither is the future opened up by that work. In this case the value of making lies in the degree to which what is made transcends the given future of necessity and supports the universal: that particularly human notion which lies alongside honour, namely the beautiful.

The key condition here, of course, is whether any changes brought about in <given being> are given ontological merit or not. To the self whose very appearance is based on its own a *priori* being, then the beautiful is a function of alignment. a self, given a *priori* is radicalized vis-à-vis the other selves, and all aspects of appearance are loaded as such. Thus the beautiful as a universal becomes a dialectical function of the social "truth". Again formalized differences gain a pejorative connotation.

The third case results when that future appears as a problematic. In this case all making is undertaken with the

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<sup>26</sup>The alienated self has been the fundamental condition of the Western self for the last two hundred odd years. It can be traced explicitly in its modern form from Rousseau through Romanticism to the present. The principle orientation of the alienated self is to secure its individuality as a universal. The alienated self sees its self separated from the social body (which gives it its being) by an irreconcilable gulf. Satisfaction can only lie in substantially narrowing the gulf. Again note in this radicalized condition, we are dealing with a social being as opposed to a political being.

See Paz, *Children of the Mire*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974.)

For a thorough consideration of angst and alienation, see Jonas, *Gnosticism, Politics and Existentialism*. Cf. Eric Voegelin, *Science, Politics & Gnosticism*. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1968)

A further note: a demonstration of the problematic raised by formalism, or empty change, for the <fabricating> self, is the pejorative connotation of the word "style".

future in mind. This is to say, the foreseeable future is combined with the process of worlding. The foreseeable future (in a traditional paradigm) is the responsibility of the servant. It is the realm of silence, void of possibility over and above necessity but dictated solely by that necessity: production. The process of <worlding>, or the incumbency of transcending the given, is the traditional realm of the artist<sup>27</sup>. Thus when the future is necessary, worlding becomes a function of production. Not only in order to make that future appear, whatever future it is decided should come to exist, but already with a view to the "new" future's overcoming. Within this paradigm, all making not only carries with it the inherent actualization of a foreseeable end but also that that end itself must give way.

Now what can be necessary about enacting pure possibility as that possibility arises? It would seem to be an arbitrary act of will which could just as easily be controlled or curbed by another act of will. Note that the first two instances recognize (ascribe value to) only the universal aspect of that which could appear, hence only the universal appears. The third is promulgated upon the assumption of the particular: the particular MUST appear. Hence any wilful act is equally a denial of a particular as it is the celebration of one, and thus maintains a tension vis-à-vis the universal. Hence the value of the Archimedean - the particular recognizable as a universal.

This is indeed technological making, and while it is the paradigm of actualizing possibilities so that what is made can stand for anyone universally, it is also the means of securing who ever uses it, both substantially and in appearance. Thus the social truth, previously thwarted, is now actualized. To repeat: actualization is not the removal of a dialectic through substantiation. Actualization is merely the rendering obsolete of "making" per se, as a viable means of revealing the properly

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<sup>27</sup> Tom Darby, "Introduction", *Sojourns in the New World*. (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1986. See also the essay, "Nihilism Politics and Technology"

human. Actualizing is specifically the substantiation of the self, itself a historically produced artifact and therefore a universal<sup>28</sup>.

But how can one remove the very essence of being human if all appearance is itself the process of worlding and hence, making. Making is becoming. If one removes becoming as a means of revealing the human, the potentially self-conscious individual also disappears. Either self-consciousness is actualized or it is denied outright. Either way all terms by which we appear, live and act are voided, and all sense disappears.

Apparently we are left with an either/or situation in which one is either God or animal. There seems to be no middle ground, and lived experience would certainly deny either possibility. Since we have not yet any reason to jump to conclusions, let us dwell a little longer on the necessity of the self as an enduring entity, a self given *a priori*.

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<sup>28</sup>As we mentioned in the introduction, it is not a question of actualizing the "ideal". The end of the process is given, when the process appears as a process. The first appearance would be the guarantees secured in the French Revolution, and subsequently the underpinnings of every modern state. As Pres. Mitterand said in his historical visit to Viet Nam, "The respect for human rights has become a universal demand. With its inseparable companion, economic development .." One is left speechless when it comes to the "social truth". Quoted in the Japan Times, Thursday, Feb. 11, 1993. p.1

# THE OCULAR WITNESS

## ACTION AND REPRESENTATION

Cowboys didn't get into simstim, he thought, because it was basically a meat toy. He knew that the trodes he used and the little plastic triad dangling from a simstim deck were basically the same, and that the cyberspace matrix was actually a drastic simplification of the human sensorium, at least in terms of presentation, but simstim itself struck him as a gratuitous multiplication of flesh input.<sup>29</sup>

*note: "flipped into" - a "simstim rider": I feel what you feel, I perceive what you perceive, and I know your thoughts, yet I am not you: I exercise no will over you, your will is your own, I am merely a sentient mirror, your most-complete other, your fullest recognition.*

The technology of a simstim presents itself as one of those limit condition technologies, like the grail of an instant dream gratification machine. Alas, it is nowhere as elusive.

The note above describes the simstim's implication for the one who is being "ridden": In actively submitting control over my perceptions to your will but all the while maintaining my own judgement on the meaning of those perceptions, I maintain a fundamental difference from you such that my judgement is of value to you. If I did not remain an individual as such, I could not be said to be distinct, and as such could offer you no more recognition than something you validate by your own imagination. As for me, the significance is equally loaded. My own particularity is entirely submerged, in that the connection is one way: I cannot talk back to you, I cannot influence your will or your actions. I cease to act, properly speaking, vis. a vis. you, the other. As such, my status as an individual is temporarily effaced in the face of

<sup>29</sup>Neuromancer The "simstim" is Gibson's idea of the ultimate simulacrum. It is no more than an entertainment device in which the user enjoys the perceptions of the music that he is listening to, as if he were the star. "Simstim" is a contraction of the words "Simulated" and "stimulation."

the human world which stands witness to your words and actions. I become the flat universal: your other.

[The "other" is always flat. A universal is flat. Nature is flat. Flatness is. It does not "become". Depth is the necessary illusion of my intentional being.]

To return to its value to me, I remain conscious of this effacement at all times for it is my will which controls the switch: I flip in, and I flip out. This ability to submerge myself while maintaining myself, applies equally to me (as the universal) looking back on my self as a distinct and separate individual of disinterested attachment; i.e. to positing my own self as an object. I can vicariously become the represented object -- an object for myself. Hence I can come to affirm myself as an object for myself through a simple act of imagination. However this affirmation is in no way equivalent to the recognition I give to another. What is of value in the latter is precisely the offending limit in the former. Any use to be made of an enduring self is truly satisfying, properly or humanly speaking, only if it remains fully cognizant of the difference.

*[Thinking about what has just been said: I'm asking something that I just said didn't fully exist to remember, think and act: i.e. to exist and to exist cognitively. If the self doesn't exist at all times what is there when "it is not existing". If I call it the private self have I not already recognized - negated it - it by giving it a name (i.e. a public face). ]*

First question: Must one already possess this limit condition technology in order to achieve this position of mutual recognition, i.e. the sophisticated technology of a SIMulated STIMulation device<sup>30</sup>? Would real-time representation -- our own so-called technologies of simulation -- suffice? After all

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<sup>30</sup> . or at least live in a world free of discrimination and the abuse of power , with utterly fair distribution of wealth, free from disease and natural disaster, and contentment reigning throughout the land...

this is clearly the mechanism of film, video, and television<sup>31</sup>. But then again, is it a function of the mode of representation at all? Or could it apply equally to language and therefore by extension to the very means of thinking my self in the first place?

To say "I", or to already conceive at all about anything, in a properly human or intentionally-loaded way, does it already assume my very own negation in the face of some eternal universal?

*[Thus we return again to the question of appearance, and what is implicit in the ground from which our being -- our acting and our judging -- spring.]*

In a sense we have already begun to offer an account of the mechanism of speech. In our discussion of symbol, we grouped the whole circular construct -- recognition of the possible free act engendering intentionality and thereby creating the necessity of the free act for its recognition -- under that which is implicit in symbol and the political being which lives in symbol. We saw that both the symbol and the intentional being who lives through symbol are coeval. One does not create the other. Symbol, to repeat, does not refer merely to language, but to intentionality, or an intentional being's entire existence. Language is merely the most efficient currency of that embodied intentionality, the constant transformation of given being and its constant engendering of further action.

Let us recall further that for the concept, the name and the recognition of THINGS as such, to appear, there is an implicit standpoint outside the givenness of the things referred to. If the mechanism were a pure process of negation, the substitution of one THING for another, the "I", would not appear in the first place (one need only think of the monkey's

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<sup>31</sup>similarly.. "or will the principles actualized in the modern state of free individuals with equal rights before the law, suffice to understand the mechanisms at work?"

"negation" of the banana). Therefore, to appear, a humanly acting and speaking individual has to take as its object -- act toward or negate -- something beyond the given. It would have to act toward that which cannot be negated. That which goes beyond the given is the act of negating itself. Negation which takes negation, proper, as its object is pure becoming<sup>32</sup>.

With respect to symbol, we called it the possibility of error or the free act, which is no more than the proper definition of action, humanly speaking. The being of this intentional body would in fact be negating action, or negating negativity. In other words, a being which is <becoming> in essence and takes as its form, "time" as opposed to the identity of "space".

Now any action, any negation, results in a transformation, both on the part of the acting subject and the thing (person) acted upon. And following what we have said regarding intentionality and its ground, any transformation enacted in the present poses a future for that acting subject. That future, in turn, becomes a present requiring a further negation. The orientation to that future is the reconstituting of the acting subject as a being for and by virtue of other acting subjects. This orientation becomes the perpetual present. Given with that transformation, then, is the distinction between that which reveals me in the form of given being -- matter for further negation, and that which reveals me humanly -- that which cannot be negated.

We can now begin to understand why any traditional society takes as its foundation human honour as opposed to mere preservation, and would hold that the risk of life for honour's sake is the paradigmatic action for all human action: that which is truly human.

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<sup>32</sup>One must be careful not to fall into cliché attempts at digestion of abused terms. For example, "negation" as used here, is not the opposite of "affirmation". The argument cannot be dismissed through some sort of self-righteous yea-saying as opposed to nay-saying (eq. the discourse is male, hierarchical, nihilistic, etc.). Negation simply means in order for something to appear (my self included) some interaction must take place with the world. This interaction is not neutral, everything is transformed by virtue of it.

Let us recall our initial discussions regarding appearance. If only that which is truly human, or rather celebrates the human, is given face (a name, a place in language, a means to think it and a means to repeat it), then a number of implications follow. First of all, individual time (an individual's life with its own personal destiny) is contrary to Time per se. The line he/she cuts is a chord stretched across the perfect circle of the natural order of things. Becoming belongs to the line and is of no account to the circle. Thus the words spoken, and those human actions performed, in that they necessarily point beyond the immediate, must be gifts<sup>33</sup> from the circle. By definition of what it is to be human, caught between the perpetual motion of nature and the immortality of Universals (gods who play and do not die), there can be no question of origins. For if there is an origin there is movement, and if there is movement then the straight line of human life coincides with the circle. Practically speaking then, there is an absolute equivalence between the natural and the human. In terms of accountability, the very definition of what one is and how one acts disappears. The origin of the "gifts" is the question of Human Origins: the original words and actions of humans are by definition of the human to whom they are of concern, Godly. Our words and actions must be potentially equivalent to the Gods' BUT cannot be identical. Intentionality in its first appearance then, is sacred: The first speech is poetic and the first human movement is dance. Everything that follows, in its specificity and its moment, must bear the same name to be repeatedly enacted *ad infinitum*, the human tragedy of perpetual acting in the shadow of unknowing. The terrifying alternative is to face that most awesome of human responsibilities raised by the question of origins: creation *ex nihilo* and the question of freedom.

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<sup>33</sup>Notice one can substitute those who go before one for the Godly; or more accurately the hierarchy extends from the gods (the first "born") through those already born, down towards you. Thus the hierarchy of respect is towards the past instead of the future (c.f. the obsolescence of the aged in a progressive society). This notion will become exceedingly important in our discussion of judgement.

We must repeat the question here: Why should this alternative have appeared in the first place, and given that it did, did it have to be so? We began to account for the mechanism of speech, but we cannot as yet account for the speaking, acting individual to whom speaking and acting appear: in other words, who is this "I" and why should it appear? Obviously self-consciousness is not guaranteed by the mere presence of either the mechanisms of speech or even a speaking, acting individual. Is it even initially required in order to appear at all?

We know self-consciousness appears coevally with the symbol "I" only because the "I" then arises as a question unto itself. But self-consciousness by definition is atemporal, while conversely it takes time to think it. Therefore the relationship of self-consciousness to the <I> is ultimately unknowable, but must exist *ipso facto* for the <I> to exist. Again one does not create the other. They are coeval. One may just extrapolate, as in chapter 4, and substitute Big "C" concept for little "c" concept. "Implicit in any and all symbols, is the thing, the name of the thing, and the idea of the thing. Nothing exists humanly speaking, i.e. can be thought, outside of all three appearing together." Again the Archimedean point is both embodied and removed.

Similarly, the "I" is no more existent than a relation. How it appears as a question for itself is always limited to the "I" as an "I as...", what that <I> would be in itself, is necessarily beyond the given. The "I as..." is always vis-à-vis a universal, or in the terms we have already discussed, negated being. Thus the <I> emerges as a thing to the extent the terms that reveal it are insufficient. Difference.

As to origins, it becomes a very simple question: given "the first encounter" (we might venture, a first encounter repeated innumerable times), of two potentially self-conscious individuals, does anything necessarily gain an appearance? Recalling the discussion thus far, it becomes a question of degrees in terms of the implicit appearance of self-

consciousness as the appearance of properly human gestures and, subsequently, the point when self-consciousness becomes explicitly named (gains an appearance). Nonetheless, the point holds. Again one must take note of degrees in ascribing such landmark status to the "original" encounter. The point is that even my dog "plays" similar games, enticing me to vie with him for a "valued" piece of cloth (...a flag?), a rag doll or a twig). So must intentionality appear? Given the existence of a potentially self-conscious individual, the answer would seem self-evident<sup>34</sup>.

In describing the mechanism at work in Gibson's limit-condition Simstim device, we discovered we were describing equally that of television. For that matter, however, we could have been talking about the role of the *Theoros* in the Greek *polis*. Obviously there is a crucial difference between the first two instances and the latter. What then serves to differentiate them?

Let us proceed with television as an example.

The crisis of a self existing in the ether of a suspended particularity, of living wholly vicariously through the processed (human) reality of representation, is of course explicit in television -- "processed reality" and "representation" being as much the simulacrum of language as the simulacrum of television. The crucial shift is from an explicitly symbolic mediation to real-time mediation. The symbol aspect does not disappear; it is merely concealed by the authentic banality of the means of representation. Banal, because its "truth" becomes one of correspondence: it is

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<sup>34</sup>It should be noted that while my dog is not potentially capable of self-consciousness, he is nevertheless capable of a valuing and play of sorts. After every meal he masturbates happily with his favourite rag doll, and then jostles me to try and take it away from him. He apparently possesses all the attributes of the ideal modern. He does not become (therefore he does not wage war) and his understanding of "possession" is purely for sport. Moreover he has no need of an analyst

"apparently authentic" because nothing is left out (the camera never blinks).

If the appearance of my own particularity to me, the master of my intentions (and the slave of my own intentionality) is based on the very solidification of my self as a recognizable thing, it is something which must be done energetically and constantly. Further, to make sense of that particularity, (i.e. in its universal sense as meaning and as if from the distance of another), I would have to submerge myself, temporarily, in that worldliness. If one were to lose the ability to separate one's own particularity from all that was outside it, a self in crisis would result. Thus one must first embrace the world (become it, in a sense) in order to materialize and recognize a self which is other than that world. Being submerged in the thingness of the world, one soon learns how to get back to the self. The crisis is being unable to differentiate the relative states. To be somewhat crude, the traumatic condition of schizophrenia is no more than the loss of control over the switch whereby one "flips in" and "flips out". One can no longer actively differentiate oneself from the world.

It should also be noted that this condition is radicalized (made acutely explicit), when the self in its cultural recognizability, is already a purely productive self. "Production" as a form of action, contains its ends within its own means, and therefore acts according to necessity. To repeat, the self is thus limited in its appearance and therefore its existence, to its productive capabilities. The very appearance of intentionality is in crisis<sup>35</sup>.

One can now differentiate the meaning of the *Theoros* from that of the television public. The difference is in the

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<sup>35</sup> psychoanalysis is as much a historical condition, as are the neuroses which serve as its object and ground of appearance

fundamental value ascribed to the self and the ability of a self to make or produce that self. In the former, the mark the individual leaves on the template of the universal is secondary. In the latter it is precisely the issue at stake.

Thus we return to the question of <making> as properly human action, and the nature of judgement at work.

## TRANSCENDENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Let us begin with the most fluid form of fabrication, and the most prevalent: the concept given form through language. Any concept or name, as we well know, is essentially a metaphor in action. In its initial conception (before it is completely taken for granted as a condition of being), it ropes the beast and ties it to a recognizable flag, creating a monster. I say "monster" only because our understanding of the concept, prior to it being flagged, is inarticulate. Its origins are vague at best. Such is the nature of all monsters. They are monsters because their origins are unknown<sup>36</sup>. Moreover, they are monsters only until the poetically violent but objectifying action of the metaphor is itself domesticated and accepted as natural.

As has been reiterated throughout this thesis, origins may be black boxes, but names (or norms), accepted in their own right are immensely useful in the possibilities they open up; all the more so as they become distanced from the site of their initial disclosure and slip into the fluid horizon of a given condition.

There are two issues here: use and accountability.

First of all, I am referring to the inevitability of the passing of the "new". The novel becomes the everyday. The new is grown accustomed to, reconciled and digested to become part and parcel of what one is. However, because one reconciles it in some manner, one cannot presume accountability as to its being. For example, one learns and uses language from the earliest stages of one's life, but one may never be required to account for the *being* of language. This, however does not prevent one from using and creating through it<sup>37</sup>. Moreover, the very fact that one's creations may be useful, even stylistically so, regarding the securing of a self, renders

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<sup>36</sup>Marco Frescati, "Some *Mostri Sacri* of Italian Architecture" in AA File #14, (Spring 1987). pp 42-47

<sup>37</sup>This would appear paramount to the actual revelation of the process: that self-consciousness itself doesn't and indeed initially cannot emerge as an object unto itself.

plausible an apparent truth of correspondence. The words one uses are most often understood. Techniques appear reasonable and comforting. Technologies reify specific selves in their universality.

Accountability is, however, requisitely implicit in all cases. Recognition of a metaphor, indeed of any appearance, has already implicated the user as an accomplice in the non-neutral creation of the monster. The meaningfulness of a concept denotes one's debt to it. Moreover, the concept doesn't exist apart from its semantic flag. Thus it is metaphor itself, or a concept in action, which reveals the self as a self distinct. This as much as it reveals the monstrous other<sup>38</sup>. To simplify even further, all language, and therefore all being, binds one to an original metaphor (appearance) by which all appearance follows. Again one may deem the original unknowable, deem the elucidation worth waiting for in an ultimate revelation of truth, or just deem it indeterminably absent. No matter what, one must draw brackets around "IT" in order to create and continue the chain of appearance.

Now if the condition in which language is used is understood to be separate from the transcendent, accountability is seemingly denied. Simply put, this is the condition when the creation of meaning is taken to be incumbent upon the individual. Or rather, the individual exists *de facto*, therefore prior to the process of appearance. I simply exist.

Does accountability then, for speaking and acting humans, disappear in the face of a godless condition?. One is faced with the uncomfortable inconsistency that one still speaks and acts, ostensibly, anyway. Since by definition the two conditions are mutually exclusive, do we claim the impossibility of a non-transcendent framework for being, or do we seek elsewhere? Is it in fact a Sisyphean stalemate in which we return to the paradigm of waiting for an ultimate

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<sup>38</sup> It would do well to recall, as in chapter 5, that while language is the currency of human intentionality, this is only because it is the most fluid reification of that intentionality. Thus metaphor stands only to point to intentionality in action, or the relational nature of appearance. The self can no more be a thing, than can metaphor be the animating force of human intentionality.

accounting? It would appear we have two choices. Either, A) a "godless" situation is unequivocally irreconcilable with the human condition: Human by definition assumes the transcendent. Or B): one reconciles dealing with absolutes, and concurrently, absolute accountability. Absolute accountability amounts to absolute self-consciousness in which the individual accomplishes the supra-human: the trinity of Universal, self and other. Seemingly overcoming the human condition, this amounts to "Godliness" (or godlessness) and indeed contradicts daily lived experience.

Thus a third option must be entertained, in which the two co-exist and are not mutually exclusive.

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If the self is prior to the process of appearance, appearance is dependent upon the self fulfilling all the necessary conditions by itself, in itself. Recalling our earlier discussion, the necessary and sufficient conditions for the emergence of intentionality (appearance) are a plurality of potentially self-conscious individuals.

Since a plurality means individual recognition and individual destinies are always *vis-à-vis* the "other", the universal by which recognition and destiny appear is implicitly the potential of self-consciousness. Thus if the three are coincident, it is no longer potential self-conscious, but must be actualized as such. If the self exists prior to the process of appearance, then self-consciousness is inexorably incumbent upon the individual for the properly human to emerge.

We must recall at this point that much of this paper has been spent demonstrating the impossibility of the self prior to the process of becoming. The self cannot exist as a thing. So why not end this discussion quickly and simply claim the impossibility of being in a non-transcendent framework<sup>39</sup>?

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<sup>39</sup> In this case one could view the last five thousand odd years of western history as a bloody array of accidents committed in the name of some gross misunderstanding. One could also proceed to re arrange the pieces in a more comforting order, resigned to the fact that we have burdened ourselves with a proportionally large array of powers and capabilities. Again while our collective being may be concealed in a black box, what it has been understood as in the instance has been extremely potent in creating possibilities. Note also, that such a

Here we would do best to recall the aporia of <becoming>. This merely points out that a self given through the potential of self-consciousness and actualized through properly human action must both create and secure recognition at the same time. Thus in a condition of a subsumed individuality, there is no crisis, for it easily makes its mark upon the surface of the universal. However when the process is radicalized, the self is thrown back upon itself and finds its own being the specific object of its actions: Its own appearance (which it is already in the midst of reacting to for time does not stop) is entirely dependent on its ability to synthesize and enact both the "other" and the universal. All this in the space of its own being.

First of all, let us again consider what godless means. As we sought to demonstrate in the introduction, an individual welded to the social is in fact seeking to secure his/her individuality, naturally. The natural, in that it exists *de facto*, does so quantifiably. It is measurable. It holds actuality as its truth. Thus the transmutation of a revealed deity into a social end actually changes little. The standard of judgement remains substantiated salvation. Salvation remains either witnessing actual truth in the next life, or realization of truth in this one. A social truth can only be, by definition, a quantifiable or substantiated condition of universalized recognition.

While one can easily dismiss the possibility of such a situation as "ideal" and therefore of no consequence, one nonetheless remains bound to the social. This is only because the individual self remains inviolate as a substantiated entity accordingly endowed with natural rights. The paradox of a "thing", engaging in such un-"thing"-like activities as <becoming>, remains largely unfroneted in the projection of the imagined present on to a non-existent future. This is deferral, and properly allows one to continue to act in the

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re-ordering of history is entirely within the same paradigm by which one discovers and creates those powers in the first place

name of that future. Transcendence, the gap by which difference and hence intentionality may emerge, here amounts to a temporal blip in an otherwise uninterrupted passage of past to future.

This in itself we have encountered before. Human intentionality requires at the very least a temporal delay in order to gain appearance. But is this sufficient. While seemingly all paradigms allow at least a space in the flow of past to future for the human to appear, what is the nature of that space in specific cases?

We implied it was a rather inconsequential movement from a transcendent idea of universal Truth to its insertion in the world as a human institution<sup>40</sup>. But is this entirely correct? To start with, either case assumes a historical becoming, or "progress". A historical becoming, in relating the individual to the history of its species, must account for the ultimate reconciliation of the individual in terms of the revealed end. Thus the concept of grace is coeval with the revelation of the symbol of that end (Christ). Where that reconciliation takes place beyond the world of humans, grace may be assured through an objective body (i.e. the Catholic Church). An objective body IS the universal, or the political foundation for the appearance of the individual. Thus worldly moments as a series of distinct presents are left very much in tact. They may be accounted for afterward and forgiven. But upon removal of that objective body, Grace is called into question. However, what is primarily at stake is not Grace itself as a fundamental concept, but the inherent tension between the individual and the historical paradigm per se, the same thing that necessitates Grace in the first place. The crisis occurs when the individual, itself radicalized by the creative aspect of "history", recognizes its responsibility for its own eternal appearance. Thus it is enough to see even the church as mutable, to call its political ability into question. Grace is no more than the eternal accounting of present judgements. When grace is no longer sufficient or can no longer be

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<sup>40</sup>The modern state predicated on: Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood.

guaranteed, every "present" becomes critical, and gains the unbearable weight of being historically consequential. As such it is no longer a human present, properly speaking. While individual moments are the moments of an individual's life and are specific to that individual's destiny, history belongs to no one and everyone. The moment becomes a historical building block. While one may become bound to history, history's pronouncements on one's actions are not immediately forthcoming. Hence the delineations of judgement which normally guide action into the opaque, but humanly-created future, disappear. The imperative to act does not. Hence the resurrection of a remembered past - tantamount to an idealized future - emerges as the social end by which the self appears.

Our specific example was the assuredness of "grace", something specific to a Christian paradigm. However since the issue is immediate judgement, what is critical is the presence of an immediate standard as opposed to a deferred one. This simply amounts to the political nature of the human world. Thus the Christian paradigm leaves most human affairs intact so long as the Christian soul is safe. It is only when that security is removed that the political is substituted with the social, and "politics" is rendered mute. Politics becomes the pure efficiency of "housekeeping"<sup>41</sup>.

What is foremost and essential to all paradigms is the possibility of the political emerging. The "political" is no more than the "self" actualized vis-à-vis the "other". The critical difference between paradigms lies in the nature of judgement and the nature of the individual.

The implication thus far is that since self and appearance are coeval, the paradigms are not mutable. One cannot simply decide to switch. That is unless they are truly stepped out of: revealed from a truly Archimedean point. And this can only be a function of absolute self-consciousness.

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<sup>41</sup> Politics becomes primarily economics Cf "ecumenical". (GR *oikos* household. Necessity preempts speech. One is left to debate only the means, in which case the proof lies in the future's pudding.

Thus to progress further, we must first understand this worldly magic of coexistent human <becoming> and realized self-consciousness. It is only now that we can turn to Duchamp. Ultimately we will be able to approach "Given", a work which may be understood to be circular. To be circular is to be complete, and thus pertains to the absolute. What is paramount in exercising judgement upon such a work is an "absolute" understanding of both the paradigm from which it springs, and an "absolute" understanding of the Archimedean point where it arrives<sup>42</sup>. It demands that we be already self-conscious when we greet the work and the artist. In a sense, nothing will take place, no revelation, no salvation. No work will be done, for if we are already self-conscious, no meaningful change will occur.

Now work by definition changes things in that it offers a momentary respite in keeping the future at bay. Thus on the one hand, no artifice, no earthly work by the terms of being human we have understood so far, could accomplish the revelation on its own. Conversely, <being> requires a constant substantiation of that being to recognize its own form. This would apply equally to fully self-conscious <being>. Being does not exist apart from what it takes as its nature. Therefore can we assume that not just any work could satisfy the conditions whereby self-consciousness continues to appear? There are two issues we must pursue concurrently: The nature of the self-conscious self and that of the circular work.

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<sup>42</sup>One must not confuse this and an understanding of the "hermeneutic circle". There is no accomplishment here of a new circle. There is no creation of a new future and there is absolutely no deferral of a pretext of absolute accountability.

## The Nude (pig skin)

THE PARADOXES OF IRONY AND SYMBOL, SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND DESIRE

Let us begin our discussion of Duchamp with the meanings of some of the more common terms associated with his work. There are a number of platitudes generally associated with Duchamp. One is that he is a "conceptual artist". This rather ambiguous categorization, if contested, is usually qualified by the adjective "ironic". Other common understandings tend to focus on specific aspects construed as alchemical, Jungian, Freudian, deconstructive, Anti-art (DaDa), etc.. The most interesting of these monsters combine in varying proportions the aforementioned elements. Imagine for example an ironic alchemical stance, or an ironic surrealist/dadaist understanding.

A phenomenology has much to offer on the appearance of enigma (Enigma: monstrous work, not easily translated into apparent concepts), especially where the enigma's delivery into symbol is intentionally precipitated through the simple addition of a title: Enigma, pre-packaged with referents included. As we have understood the term up until now, a phenomenology is a description. It pays careful attention to both intentionality and appearance (the two being coeval and mutually dependent). Thus it springs from an attempt to understand how something appears, to whom it appears, and the appearance itself. I specify attempt, for if it is to include the means of appearance, and by extension the perceiving subject, it must qualify all observations as having failed by their own premises. No matter what, contemplation of an object, even if it is primarily concerned with the subject, reveals the object as such i.e. as an object. Thus the subject always remains blind to itself (its phenomenological blind spot). This qualification is given as understanding itself: understanding is a temporal engagement. I cannot see the back side of a cube; I "know" it is there by experience. For all I know or care, there may be some magic involved tricking me into believing it is there, when in actuality the "far side" always ceases to

exist. Nonetheless, my understanding, correct or otherwise, presents a world entirely whole to me upon which I base my intentions and create a very whole future in which to act. There are never holes or missing parts in a human world.

Now since a human world is then given temporally, the means of understanding it, even in the past, to the degree that it is the same world, is the degree to which it includes a future which is both hidden and makes sense. Irony can only appear when something that is past is severed completely from an evolving human world: in other words, when the future that something once opened up has entirely come to be or played itself out. If one only thinks of the common usage of the term, it refers to a situation once hidden as having appeared in a way surprisingly related to a chance series of events. It is always used in reference to the past. An ironic stance and a phenomenological stance are then completely and unadulteratedly mutually exclusive. How then, if one is in the midst of employing symbols (and how can one not?), and symbols are, by definition, intentionally loaded, can one claim an ironic stance towards anything open? Is not irony, phenomenologically speaking, limited to highly finite situations, whose meanings have already appeared in their entirety?

So what is meant when the "ironic stance" becomes a platitude? Should we take it as an observation so self-evident as to be almost superfluous in its verbalization. Ironic would be similar then in meaning to sarcastic: Barbed humour deftly used to expose a latent condition. In this case, the work would stand as a critical one carefully balanced between an already given historical condition and its necessary (but perhaps yet to be...) overcoming. Necessary by definition only of a critical stance, and nothing else.

Can we dismiss this interpretation, and any other interpretation which can be similarly reduced to a dialectical representation? After all, is this not exactly what Duchamp referred to as "retinal art" and subsequently threw out as a

waste of time in 1913<sup>43</sup>? [For the duration of this essay, we will also refer to this as "meaning art", that is, the use of recognizable symbols in a slightly dislocated fashion so as to "re-invent meaning".] Recalling our observations about phenomenology and irony, a critical work which simply replaces one mechanism of meaning with another would fail in both respects and certainly on its own offers no insight into any questions raised so far.

So perhaps after all, irony will have to be combined with some other understanding, though we have yet to show there is anything remotely resembling irony occurring at all. Assuming irony stays, it would seem to indicate giving up on accountability, since we already said irony and symbol are mutually exclusive. Furthermore, symbol, meaning and concept presume accountability. Even the perpetual deferral of a handicapped phenomenology includes self-consciousness as a relative term i.e. recognizing the subject as an intentional being, its appearance tied to the meaning it creates. The subject and its world of meanings evolve concomitantly in time.

So if Duchamp dismissed art aimed at pure meaning creation, what protects his actions from the very aporia which confronts the rest of us?

The preceding chapters roughly phrased the question this way: If my appearance is human to the degree that it is accountable, given that a pure sentiment of self comes to understand itself through symbol and the difference between the two, then my appearance is human to the degree that I transcend the given conditions from which I emerge. What happens when all transcendence is denied by virtue of its condition being a matter of course?

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<sup>43</sup>From the beginning there is no confusion as to the givenness of intentionality. Hence meaning is understood as already present in the first instance of sensual appearance. Duchamp is absolutely clear from that start that one, there can never humanly be something such as absolute relativism or "empty-formalism" (they amount to the same thing), and two, there are in the end, the antithesis, and therefore part of the same dialectical movement, an "Art as representation" and straight-forward theory into practice dialectical thinking.



### After "Nude Descending Stair"

With Duchamp, we could probably phrase it like this: The more art attempts to distance itself from taste on the one hand and the abstract universal on the other, the more it reifies a subject which is both. In other words, artistic production is a slow and laborious process towards actualising permutations of an already understood meaning. But to what extent must meaning creation serve such an end? Surely it is a matter of ceasing to produce meaning. Or more specifically, one can engage Anti-meaning, and the more subtle form, Non-specific meaning.

On their own, both forms of production turn out to be identical to meaning production, already rejected beforehand. Not only are they dialectically understood, but they make obvious the fact that neither taste or non-sense appear neutrally, but rather through what makes them so.

### The Green Box

Given the position Duchamp has already articulated at this time, it is difficult for him to continue the practice of difference and not engage in some sort of synthesis. Endless difference is tremendously efficient at driving home an understanding of inertia -- anathema to a temporal being. On the other hand, straightforward synthesis or dialectical enhancement, bears the standard "retinal art" and amounts to the same inertia. The third form, non-direct meaning, is simply oblique, and in areas of accountability, discussion usually ends with a blanket "it is ambiguous". This is because direct understanding or conceptual negation of the work is indeterminably deferred. This is both advantageous to Duchamp, and once again anathema. Deferral means reification of the subject is postponed. However the world makes no less sense in the interim. Work and human production carry on apace, the only difference now being there is no responsibility assumed by the actor, for there is no concept, no name by which to identify

it. The implications are manifold. First of all meaning production continues. The result is the same as was already seen with the cubists: an attempt to distance the work from the subject conversely magnifies the subject's role as the central figure. Again, without accountability it amounts to a totalitarianism of liberty. This is not a criticism of the work but its appearance. In other words, its cultural grounding. Since the work can't be separated, any more than can the artist, from that appearance, the phenomenological tautology becomes the issue. As we said, this succeeds in opening a space in which to operate for Duchamp, but should it be taken no further, it degenerates to self-aggrandizement of the artist, and Duchamp becomes no more than a producer of retinal entertainment.

It goes without saying that while meaning-art, the direct production of "retinal-work" was vocally singled out on its own as redundant, Duchamp nevertheless did not stop working. When it came to distancing himself from the Dadaists and Surrealists, he was more discreet in leaving those avenues open as working methods. Thus at times one still might be tempted to group them together.

In terms of the three possible approaches to working, Non-meaning or "meaning-temporarily-deferred work" is perhaps the most employed by Duchamp. This obviously lends it to copious interpretation by any technique specializing in the enigmatic. This is to say responsibility for closing the circle of accountability (in effect, wisdom, the only standpoint from which the phenomenological blind spot disappears and irony is possible) is assumed in the name of some exterior force or ideal. These must by definition be atemporal or universal in their conception and would include any Platonic, Christian (neo-platonic), or Gnostic interpretation. This responsibility can either be in the form of devotion to a future revelation (more deferral) or perhaps through an ecstatic or non-linguistic leap: the only other way by which meaning can appear without the use of symbol. However this is not a viable mode

of being for those engaged in fabrication and interpretation. Art does not lend itself to speaking in tongues.

The point is that while Duchamp specifically recognizes the necessity of opening up a respite in the dialectical movement in order to "work" rather than to "produce", this in itself cannot become an end to the work. Once again, any such interpretation is categorically undercut by Duchamp himself. Ultimately he will have to give face to this respite in order for it to satisfy both the conditions of a "work" and the recognizability of a properly human action. It would seem that the issues revolve entirely around the subject of accountability, or the realization of an atemporal, fully self-conscious work. The work then is secondary and the onus on those to whom recognition belongs.

Can any work reveal self-consciousness?



### The Large Glass

If one's thinking moves progressively along lines such as those attempted here, one would assume that at a certain point this body of thought and its partial condensations, Dadaist barbs (intellectual terrorism), enigmatic openings on desires and explicit representations of concerns would crystallize into a single cohesive work. And if someone else were to walk along exactly those lines, they might understand such a work, and recognize the perfect model of that thinking in that specific crystallisation.

Given all we have said about Duchamp, if such were the case, *The Large Glass* would, in the last light, be no more than a concise labour, and its aftertaste, frustration. Of course that realization occurs anyway once the thinking is understood: so why have bothered with the representation? *The Large Glass* then, must remain "finally unfinished". Duchamp retires from the public service to play chess.

### Given

It may seem criminal to some to take a conceptual overview of an artist such as Duchamp, whose development produced some of the most enlightening and humorous visions in its specific negations, and seemingly force-fit it into a theoretical straight-jacket. But for the last time, let us recall the premise of this paper: One, an intentional world is closed by definition: as a projection, it is acted into. And two, by definition, if closed, then one is accountable to it. This is to say, every negation, to varying degrees, carries forward un-negated implications which stand as future possibility. This does not mean that the political or "human" meaning of an action is immediately apparent. One's articulation of how one understands one's world may be directly contrary to the specific nature of the very world which allows one to act. One carries on as such, continuing to explicate the nature of that world, until one is either forced to give up one's conception or that conception is built (actualized) to become one's being. Either way involves radical transformation.

However the degree to which one's action is negated into one's own given being, i.e. the degree to which one's articulation of that negation is identical to its political reification, is the degree that intentionality is secured both individually and universally<sup>44</sup>. Furthermore, if successive negations continue to hold seemingly endless reserves of un-negated being for future actions, that in itself is wonderful, but it makes nothing explicit regarding that accountability. Again, if possibility exists one either labours in its name towards its actualization, hence surrendering one's own ability to act, properly-speaking; or one seeks to secure humanly one's own being within those same actions, by making explicit, hence recognizable, the fully self-conscious nature of those actions. Given the limiting conditions of a temporal understanding, let us consider this in two ways. Firstly, from the standpoint of a thinking/acting being towards other similar beings. And secondly, from the standpoint of a thinking/acting being towards his/her own immortality: The secured position of human appearance, and the other standpoint from which irony is possible.

It is obviously assumed that after finally "unfinishing" *The Large Glass*, Duchamp has grasped its actual, reified impact; something he does from a distance rather than from the immediacy of his initial intentions. This in itself is no different from what he has done all the way along. One only need consider the tremendous rate at which he engaged and negated absolutely post-impressionism, cubism, futurism, dadaism, and even surrealism<sup>45</sup>. The major difference between

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<sup>44</sup> If the reader would remonstrate with an implied "Truthfully objective" reading being inserted into an otherwise phenomenological argument, it should be repeated that objective simply means the degree to which intention and recognition align, thereby revealing the extent of the gap between the symbol as such and as a sign. Duchamp takes as his principle focus this slippery ground between the object, its name and its meaning and specifically the explication of the "metaphysical" mechanisms at work. Hence it is about self-consciousness and accountability, and the difference between those conditions which denude the mechanism, and those which simply are subject to it. To paraphrase Paz after Apollinaire, Duchamp is entirely concerned with the nude, and there is absolutely nothing hermetic about this investigation.

<sup>45</sup> Octavio Paz, "The Castle of Purity" in Marcel Duchamp, *Appearance Stripped Bare*. (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1990) See also "★ Water Writes Always in ★ Plural" (same edition)



and a future, through its "otherness", is exterior. And second, since according to the above equation, Human Being is only what you have become already, what is to say what you can or cannot become?

Curiously, there is a logical contradiction between these two arguments. They both appear to exploit different aspects of experience respectively. For example, the first case, in stressing that the future is "other" but not entirely so (it is of significance to me, it is my future), gives up immediate accountability through the opacity of that which makes me human. Hence we must have a specific nature, but it is hidden. Human appearance is related to something which is beyond the given. i.e. it is dependent on the transcendent for its appearance and the transcendent is simply a delay in time. Thus the possibility of appearance, and hence its being. It divorces "human" from "natural" being on the basis of a future revelation of its own truth and simply limits the extent of its accountability in the present. The world as it appears is by virtue of a specific future (a relative truth) and therefore mere fodder for its actualization.

The position that I have no nature, and that by definition I am pure possibility, is by far the more interesting. We can, however, disregard at the start any interpretation aimed at pure relativism. That would fail blatantly to take into account what allows appearance in the first place.

We are now back at the very beginning: "Ok, Hegel, everything is this way, but must it have been so?" Is the initial appearance of human intentionality based on overcoming?

This sends us back to chapter 3. The future exists no more than the past. It is simply given through the intentionality of a being. But it is no more neutral than that being. That being exists through work: it creates its appearance to itself through its own selfness and otherness. In other words, through that future.

It is a tautology. But what of its representation and what, if any, of its import<sup>47</sup>?

If I am such a tautological monster, a successful representation as such amounts to a complete and utter negation. i.e. one in which no un-negated given being is carried forward. There are obviously two alternatives: One can account for (recognize) every possible permutation and combination of physical matter in the universe -- as in Borges' "Library"<sup>48</sup>. Or one can understand (same as "represent") pure time. This oxymoron, as an enduring *fait accompli* is as paradoxical as the human condition, since both representation and understanding require symbols which include given being. But as something that can be temporarily engaged and then retired from, it is a different story.

The first recognition is the illusory or temporal nature of the "I". This must be reconciled with the equally immanent imperative that the "I" be revealed humanly. This amounts to a temporal chimera being allowed to sojourn momentarily among the gods. Gods, being immortal, are concepts not subject to negations, not prey to the ravages of temporality.

The first project, securing recognition by potentially equally self-conscious beings, requires such a subject. This is not to say one must be able to articulate the process in order to appreciate it. If the mechanism is you, you will partially recognize it despite an articulated understanding which differs (is incomplete). As, we said before, one's articulation of an understanding may be directly contrary to the specific nature of the very world which allows one to act. One carries on as such, continuing to explicate the nature of that world, until one is either forced to give up one's conception or that conception is built (actualized) to become one's being. If a transformation is opened up as a result of

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<sup>47</sup>One can of course do Escher drawings and meditate on the mobius strip (Their significance verging on the revelatory once one has identified ones being as such (cf. Eisenman's short-lived affair with topological geometry.) But no sooner thought, one should be board stiff. Having emptied my being of time, I am no more than a stiff.

<sup>48</sup>Jorge Luis Borges, "Library of Babel" in *Labyrinths*, (New York: New Directions Books, 1984).

the work, deferral is still in place, and the recognition secured is only partial<sup>49</sup>.

To begin with, it serves to recall the aporia faced by the warring master encountered in chapter 2. First of all, the only recognition he could secure was through fear, thereby surrendering his humanity into the hands of a slave. Further, his position as master is such only so long as a slave remains so. His mastery is coveted because of the condition it both reveals and denies for the slave. The master cannot rest. That which reveals him is dependent on constant action, just as the slave is dependent on the constant production of a future. The only difference is that the master is able to secure immortality through the epic nature of his deeds, while the slaves are doomed to pass.

The Greek city-state with the replacement of a tyrant by an elite democracy, and the insertion of a *Theoros*, circumvents this problem. It maintains the framework of privilege but within that circle of freedom, the enactment of it is understood as granted. Granted means given and implies consent. Consent refers to others.

In other words, in any situation, human recognition, properly speaking, requires the presence of given being in order to emerge. Given being is simply that which has reified in a form. The option of free <becoming> no longer exists for it, for it has already become. This means that the very act of putting forward an "I", of acting, demands politeness: a certain modesty *vis-à-vis* those others who are rendered <given being>, objectified, in the very throwing of that action. After all, one must reify a world of some sort in order to create a future into which to act<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup>Given tends to have a largely mediocre impact if approached otherwise - ranging from just plain boring, to kitsch, to a glorified alter of sexuality

<sup>50</sup>Of course, politeness falls by the way side if everyone is recognized beforehand, for the action itself is understood as insignificant. It is not even a case of a conspicuous absence of manners. As Kundera notes, a culture that ceases to cover its collective mouth when it yawns betrays a state far beyond poor manners. This in itself is perhaps of little concern, but it is symptomatic of a condition where action is voided of human content. Actions literally amount to nil if anything less than labouring toward actualizing a non-differentiated condition. (Once again the paradox of Virtual Reality.)

Any properly human action requires a witness who temporarily stands to be objectified. The witness is simply the disinterested party, the representative of an order which imbues meaning in the being of the interested parties. If everything is changing and there is no constant, how can one make sense of where one has been and how one got to where one is? The witness then is the representative of the Archimedean point, the universal implied in every symbol, and in every aspect of intentionality.

I can, of course, be that witness for myself -- especially since I need not apologize for my immanent objectification. The difficulty is being all three at once: witness, master and slave; actor, benefactor, and *theoros*; subject, object, and universal. Herein lies the phenomenological blind spot. However, to stand in the archimedean position and be revealed as all three is to be a human assuming the role of Ocular Witness.

The most significant difference between *Given* and *The Large Glass*, is the literal substitution of the observer for what was a representing device in the earlier work<sup>51</sup>. *Given* is a mirror of *The Large Glass*. We know this because we immediately recognize a number of the elements and themes named in *The Green Box*, half of which were conspicuously missing from *The Large Glass*. Missing even more conspicuously now, however, are the Malic Moulds and the Ocular Witnesses.

The observer is frozen, his/her perspectival view solidified in Durer-like fashion, left to confront an intensely "artificial scene" through an already defined vocabulary of symbols<sup>52</sup>. But why the extreme kitsch as the mode of

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<sup>51</sup> "Water Writes Always in \* Plural", p.117.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid* p 110.

I will continue to use the term "symbol" in the sense that it has meant throughout this paper, namely as an intentionally understood concept tied to both a sign and a thing. For opt's for the word "sign" to avoid confusion of the wider use of the term symbol as representative.

representation? Are we to understand it as Richard Kearney defines the modern trend toward artistic self-consciousness<sup>53</sup>?

It is precisely the circularity of the referents which allows Duchamp to play: *mimesis* in its most vulgar form. Duchamp confronts the viewer with the most literal simulation imaginable (is this a simulacrum in the commonly (mis)used sense as inherently unauthentic). But what exactly is it? With our gaze immobilized, we stare head-on between the legs of a young girl. But the vagina over which we must traverse with our eyes lies decisively off-centre. We are so acutely aware of her monstrous artifice (The two adjectives do not necessarily have to be paired, but they do serve to heighten awareness of what exactly is the operative mechanism). Desire aroused by the monstrous? by artifice? The eroticism of the monster is perhaps best expressed in the challenge of the unknown. The known as partially negated is obviously more susceptible to dissolution in the amnion of our condition, and less able to serve as the "standing reserve" of human becoming. As for artifice, it is never the issue that the representation is a substitute for the real thing. One never confuses the one for the other. One is more amazed at the fact that the mechanism works at all, *in spite of* the knowledge of an operative simulacrum, thus leading one to posit the aphrodisiac as being even the slightest awareness of the existence of a mechanism at all. Authenticity is obviously irrelevant. One also repeats Socrates' discovery of the love of wisdom and the desirous affection it arouses for an ugly old man. We are back at the beginning with the introduction of intentionality: Human desire, if it is to reveal a properly human being capable of consciousness of self, rather than a mere sentiment of self, must take as its object

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<sup>53</sup> Richard Kearney, lecture notes: "Address to McGill Architecture History and Theory", (Montreal February, 1991)  
Is this how we are to evaluate for example a David Lynch-like self awareness

A current characterization of trends in art over the last decade is toward so-called "self-conscious kitsch". While being dubbed "Post-modern" it is still employing exaggerated "modernist" techniques. The so-called self-conscious (deconstructing) camera work of the post-modern director is disturbingly similar to many less pretentious "self-referential" techniques of (now dated) "modern art". Compare the constant shaky video camera of MTV to Warner Bros. "Duck Amuck" where Daffy gets into an argument with his cartoonist.

something which is beyond the given. It cannot be a lump of flesh, the word flesh or the concept flesh, though all three implicitly point to that proper object. Similarly, the mechanism itself can no more be thingish than can be the proper object of desire. The object then must be the process itself<sup>54</sup>. Thus the only operative mechanism in *Given* is the action of my desire. What is more is that as it is made explicit by my supplanting of the bachelors, I understand it at a distance, as I understood their role in *The Bride*.... It is absolutely crucial that I am presented with myself taking as an object some thing which lies beyond myself. The "Malic Moulds" are empty and in effect doomed, for their essence lies beyond them. As it is beyond them, they are at most a representation of that essence. They are as such "thingish I's". They are dependent on the bride for their animation. It is by this loaded representation of me (in which I am utterly caught the moment I recognize that nude), that I understand this paradox. It is the action of desire which creates me. A sort of onanism as Duchamp would have it. Not a desire for a thing at all, but that I can create a self out of a patent simulacrum. Desiring desire.

There is of course, much more. We are told in the notes from The Green Box that the essence of the bride, as opposed to the bachelors, lies within her, but requires the mechanism of the Ocular Witnesses. Nailed as I am to my wooden door, I am somewhat relieved that I can be of service to the bride. At least I can provide her with the image of her stripped which gives her so much pleasure.

But who is the bride? That dyed expanse of pig-skin leather stretched over a steel frame? And is this whole

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<sup>54</sup>This discussion could conversely open up the subject of love. For love returns us to the condition of my being and the circle, i.e. the original gift. Love is in essence a debt. For the image of oneself that one recognizes as complete is a gift of the specific person who enabled that recognition. Specific is the operative word for it is what allows one to appear humanly, to come home and rest (remember the warring master). The circle must be closed. This would return us to the political realm on two counts. One, it is closed only insofar as the individual, and therefore must move (become, cannot rest) insofar as the individual is problematically distinct from the universal. Secondly (as with young Nietzsche, Kundera, and others, one realizes what an utterly dehumanizing concept, Christian love at a distance is. For the interim result is the reduction of being to a single mode of resentment.

discussion no more than glorified anthropomorphism? Intentionality is anthropomorphism. The bride used to be an amorphous expanse brushed upon a sheet of glass. Was she more tenable (less threatening) in an ambiguously reified state? Perhaps it was the fact that the whole erotic transference was carried on by representative figures.

But there is no mistaking now that the bride is me. What is more is that the pleasure is real. For once, the phenomenological blind spot is removed, and my reified fleshly form, as it appears humanly, is presented to me. For as above, it is appearing caught in the midst of all three roles at once which is both ironic, and satisfying. Notice my appearance as the bride is not vicarious ("delay" being the temporal form of human appearance, of how I appear as an object to myself), for in this case, and in a tautological construct only, is my being as desiring desire aimed at myself, and revealed as such. What is revealed in the bride as myself, is only a meaning creation in mid-act.

The witnesses (plural) are nothing more than the symbols employed, and ever-present. They are me in my continuity (also plural). They are that which is recognizable and hence already particular and universal.

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Stop. Objections. First of all, it takes time to think all this. One is not all three at once (as in life). Furthermore, grasping the meaning as such, even if it makes sense as it is presented above, leaves one only with a mental construct of a mechanism. A definitively thingish object, a vicariously presented subject, and a phenomenological blind spot securely in place.

This leads us to the last aspect of *Given*. Our very understanding of the human condition, developed in the first parts of this thesis, assumed the presence of <given being> in order for the properly human to emerge. In other words, it just wouldn't do, if following the *satori* of understanding, one was simply to be severed from one's mode of being. It is neither viable nor necessarily a condition one desires. Thus such an understanding is reduced to usefulness, the very condition it escaped in its inception. It may be disheartening that we do not achieve the status of gods, but the fact that all returns to <given being>, does have some benefits. First of all, we must recall that recognition requires the presence of <given being>, only because it must be recognizable by a human (temporal) being. Remember also that recognition only matters to a temporal being and has no value for either the natural, or gods<sup>55</sup>. As to <given being>, it is simply that which has reified in a form. To repeat, the option of free <becoming> no longer exists for it. The Duchamp revealed by "Given" is similarly already reified. Duchamp himself, though the creator of the arena, is no more excused from the imperatives of living. Thus the recognition secured is no different from that implicit in any gesture belonging to a traditionally oriented culture, from epic words and deeds to the most banal gestures of politeness. As we said at the beginning, these mental gymnastics in making self-consciousness explicit only become an issue when the ordinary means of securing the human is deprived and the properly human emerges as a problematic. But while Duchamp remains a thoroughly historically given being, his labours are nonetheless informed by a very "historically become" situation. The condition where the intentional or "free" aspect of the very *anima* of being can be removed belongs to a circular culture, even if it continues to define itself as still becoming (still working). In the latter understanding, it is not a question of "can" be removed, but appears as "is

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<sup>55</sup> Gods-to the extent that they are Gods properly speaking and engage only in play. The Judeo-Christian God is as such an entirely questionable construct given that he is a "jealous God" and engages in anything as humanly tainted as history

removed in principle", leaving only the process of elaboration. In other words, the self that can appear is extremely limited by virtue of its own self-understanding. It tends to encounter change with surprise, while the former assumes difference to be the only given. In other words, it is an inverse relationship. A society predicated on becoming (change) moves in a singularly linear direction, while a society predicated on stillness moves with incredible ferocity in all directions simultaneously. The process of valuation which creates the future into which one can flow is obviously a function of one's past, and is wholly predicated upon it. An already closed paradigm, AND ARTICULATED AS SUCH, reveals itself as pure possibility. Conversely, a paradigm understood as open-ended sees all possibility in terms of closure, whether in fear of closure, or in pursuit of it. In an apparently open understanding, the appearance of closure is itself tied to the function of human judgement implicit in how possibility appears. In other words, when closure appears as an issue, it is merely because one has reached the point when one's articulated self-understanding and one's being conflict, and properly human judgement cannot appear without a fundamental change in that very self-understanding. This change occurs regardless of the articulation of the crisis.

Culture then is always circular. This circularity remains intact regardless of specific phenomenal reifications. However those reifications are formalized the moment that circularity appears. Virtual reality is its appearance. That one's cultural being may be entirely threatened by this appearance has absolutely no bearing on the limits of possibilities. In that respect one need not worry if perturbed by the concept "End of history". The crisis is the subject's and merely determines how possibilities appear and how their meanings can be understood.

## NOTES

This thesis has itself come full circle. If one is left with an empty feeling, wondering just how optimistically to believe pronouncements about new possibilities, then one should remember that it is not a matter for pronouncement. Optimism and pessimism belong to the same ground. The orientation of one makes sense only in terms of the other and the two, only in terms of a limited horizon. To the extent that it is possible, one must realize the absolute opacity of the future. Not in some naive "objective" sense of not knowing what will happen. But that its appearance is always by way of the past.

Insofar as it is absurd to argue a natural right or a natural law regarding the human world, it would be equally absurd that the human world presumed to create its own nature *ex nihilo* for its appearance. In a sense, it has already paid a price in its appearance in that it cannot judge neutrally toward its future. What is specifically human about that nature, is that it changes. The most critical question we can consider at this point is how it changes.

Hence the hesitation. One is left with only what one knows. This is the past (as Vico observed) but one can no longer be naive about its future. One is left with the following dilemma. On the one hand one has no right to affirm any given future over any other, by any rationale. This is to say one cannot deny change or "progress". By the same token, one has an absolute debt to that which permits one to act at all, the ground by which things take on an appearance. Are these polarities of human experience, inherently mutually exclusive?

We have already seen that critical for an understanding of intentionality, was an account of the paradoxical relation of appearance and freedom: i.e. proper thinking and proper willing affirm the conditions which create them in the first place, but similarly exist only in error.

From the start we are faced with the phenomenological blind spot but we are accountable to the conditions of both its

initial appearance and its removal. Regarding its appearance, initially, we can avoid the issue by dismissing its occurrence as a necessity. Regarding its removal, we can choose to view it solely through the historical circumstance which render self-consciousness a problematic in the first place. In this case we would be lead to confront the fundamental political movement of the west. If we continued to maintain that things need not have been this way, implied is the conclusion that humans can change things. If humans can change things, they are not at the mercy of exterior forces. Thus change is human to the degree that it reveals the properly human, rather than chance forces beyond one's control. One is hamstrung on the horns of an aporia: one defines oneself fundamentally as historical (change is the basis of one's being) yet the inability to account for that change deprives one of the free aspect intrinsic to it. Rightfully or wrongfully, judgement must be enacted immediately, not according to some deferred standard.

Another alternative is to affirm the necessity of appearance through a complete account of the appearance of intentionality in the first place. This implies that one is no longer accountable only to the specific conditions which gave rise to the explicating problematic, but to world history in its entirety. One is accountable to the appearance of the "I" rather than an "I as...". Thus one is accountable to the meaning and appearance of absolute self-consciousness.

In the first case one was left with only the appearance of a self in crisis, a self scrambling to secure its own appearance.

That crisis is "how does one judge". From what we have seen thus far, if the future is properly speaking, opaque, then judgement is toward the past, and is in effect identical to securing one's appearance humanly. This amounts, in the context of a historically-become being, to the appearance of self-consciousness. But regardless, judging remains securing.

This is to say, judging is always directed towards the past. Hence action is always backwards. The paradox lies then in the understanding of the difference between action and appearance. Again let us consider the situation where this is radicalized and thus explicit.

If one can only speak "backwards", speech is formalized in the context of the historically-become individual. If everyone is culturally given by this situation, it is simply taken for granted and need not arise as a question. Regarding a political agenda, the elaboration of an already implied condition does not qualify as either "political speech or action". It is simply labour that has to be done. This does not denigrate the value of such labour, it must be done by definition of the world which gave it an appearance in the first place. The labour amounts to the actualization of what can be conceived and thus gives form to the being to whom that appearance belongs. The wider the range of possibilities which can appear, the faster one can move.

Thus the paradox. An individual already secured in its being, understands both the limits of appearance (the debt of formal speech) and the privilege of acting in its name. The world, that privilege opens up cannot be judged from here. We will have already been judged.

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