

# The Topology and Mythology of the Self: Playing the Role of Oneself or the Drama of the Self

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*Received: 7 December 2011 Accepted: 1 January 2012 Published: 15 January 2012*

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## Abstract

“An actor must work all his life, cultivate his mind, train his talents systematically, develop his character; he may never despair and never relinquish this main purpose — to love his art with all his strength and love it unselfishly.” Constantin Stanislavski “You follow the same law of improvisation, which is that you do whatever your impulse — as the character — tells you to do, but in this case you’re the character, so you have no imaginary situation to hide behind, and you have no other person to hide behind. What you’re doing, in fact, is asking those questions Stanislavski said that the actor should constantly ask himself as a character — “Who am I? Why am I here? Where do I come from? — but instead of applying them to a role, you apply them to yourself.” Excerpt from the Script “My Dinner with André” (Wallace Shawn and André Gregory)

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**Index terms** — Relinquish, Stanislavski

## 1 I. Introduction

Although it is not usual to begin a philosophical paper with a reflection on film and theater, every road to philosophy comes from elsewhere: we arrive to philosophy not by making it the starting point of our inquiry, but rather our desired yet elusive goal. Philosophy thus is an achievement not a possession, and if we start every philosophical undertaking with an erotic dimension and an Odysseus spirit, then every concept or facet of our being in the world that we are trying to illuminate will not be obscured and solidified with our architectonic and constructing hands, but rather will come to light by letting it appear and flow as our ship in a windy day. Perhaps what Goethe stated about poetry and science can be extrapolated to philosophy and theater or philosophy and film, namely, people forget that “science arose from poetry and did not see that when times change, the two can meet on a higher level as friends” (Goethe 2009). Perhaps philosophy and theater/film can be seen as friends in the sense of being concerned with the same issues, though in a different language and with diverse tools, yet for the same purpose: dis-concealing the crucial facets of our lives as they unfold themselves in the very act of living.

Identity is not something had, neither something known, my claim in this paper is that identity is something played or performed in a specific Author : Universidad de los Andes. E-mail : n.parra24@uniandes.edu.co place (topos) and narrated with a symphony of stories that overlap (mythos) to make sense of who we are not, who we do not want to be and, finally, who we are scared to be. These questions are inseparable of their correlates, namely, who we are, who we want to be, and who we are fearless to be. However I will argue that posing the questions in a negative form opens up a spectrum of possibilities while it closes others, in other words, is easier to answer the question what X is not than, as Socrates thought and mostly all the philosophical tradition followed up, what X is. In short our inquiry is guided by the logic of the vague and indeterminate, not by the logic of precision and fine edging. But again, the main question that I will try to address and vaguely deal with is: What would it ultimately mean to play the role of oneself? The fact that this question is formulated in the subjunctive form is not an arbitrary fact, but rather a sign that every philosophical question that tries to address a problem of meaning is first and foremost a question grounded in the modality of possibility.

To play the role of oneself is different to play the different roles that we play in our daily lives such as father-role, mother-role, son-role, daughter-role, teacher-role, student-role, professional-role, lover-role, megalomaniac-role, writer-role, poet-role, listener-role, believer-role, and so on. As I said, I am not concerned whether we actually play the role of oneself, but rather whether we could possibly play it, and what this possibility might reveal to us. It is important to remember that since Aristotle's Poetics Drama and Theater as well as Philosophy are concerned with possibilities, more specifically, with genuine human possibilities, and consequently, are concerned with how to perform or live a life with certain possibilities in the horizon. This presupposes that human beings are the locus of endless potentiality and unimagined creativity, yet every growth of potentiality and every enactment of creativity are necessarily situated in a place, a topos, a context, a stage that is surrounded by circumstances, limitations, closures and disclosures. Thus every performance is in a stage, in the same manner as we ourselves are in the world but not as a spoon in a drawer or a marble in a hole ??Cf. McDermott 2007, 390). To be in the world means something quite different, because the preposition in not only implies a The most basic trait of human beings is disclosed by the preposition in, yet this in alone might not do justice to the performance that we are demanded to do in a stage. In a way the actor is inbetween the play and the audience, in-between the writer/director and the spectator. Every performance thus not only manifest itself in a topos, but also inbetween two mythos or narrations, namely, the text that we are following and the text that the audience is interpreting, or under a different perspective, the actual narration of who we have been and who we are going to be and the potential narration, which is in a sense a re-interpretation of the last narration. Every potential narration builds up from our past narrations and in a very loose sense overcomes them in a Hegelian sense of *Aufhebung*, that is, an overcoming that emphasises the continuity of the process. The actor or performer is a sign that stands for the play to the audience's resultant interpretations. I will sustain throughout this paper that when we would play the role of oneself, we are ultimately being synchronically the performer, the writer/director and the audience. In Peirce's semiotics we are the object, the sign and the interpretant.

Perhaps this novel approach to the Delfic oracle know thyself (gnothi seauton) would shed light to a new path of understanding the self, and more importantly, a new way to understand self-knowledge with the lenses of drama and the eyes of philosophy.

I will discuss the performing self in the two spheres that I mentioned: topological and mythological. I will draw from different sources, since the topic of this inquiry has not been a common point of encounter of philosophical discussions, and also because philosophy ultimately had had an antagonistic stance toward establishing dialogues with other perspectives. Hence I am going to glance the old philosophical problems with new ways of thinking and speaking.

## 2 II. The Performing Self: Weaving

Together the Mythos and the Topos of the Self

Richards Poirier has drawn a very fruitful analogy for our inquiry, he sees the struggle of becoming a performing self, as the struggle of the sculptor to give shape and meaning to the rock in front of him or her. In his words, "any effort to find accommodation for human shapes or sounds is an act that partakes of political meaning. It involves negotiation, struggle, and compromise with the stubborn material of existence, be it language or stone" ??Poirier 1971, viii). Although I do not agree with Poirier that necessarily every act that we make, every effort that we undertake has political meaning, nevertheless I do agree with him that we as sculptors of our own acts, have to struggle in the sense that we have to re-interpretate and re-create the past that is living within us. Our past is the somatization of ways of acting and habits of being that are deeply rooted mostly unconsciously within us. Poirier has understood that every act is a creation and every creation is at bottom a struggle, an opposition to what has been already created. And yet every opposition allows us to grasp that we as agents, are not fully in control of what we are producing, therefore the action is not a part of us, it is us who are part of the action. Performing which I take to be analogous to acting -at least with the notion of action that I have in mind 1 -is precisely a gesture, a corporeal manifestation, an utterance, a way of moving, a way of reading texts and situations and foremostly a way of being read, a way of understanding and being understood. All of these things can be reduced to "any self-discovering, selfwatching, self-pleasuring responses to the pressures and difficulties" ??Poirier 1971, xiii) one has to embrace. Performing is an act of transformative rebellion and sincere acknowledgement of our inheritances and our possibilities. However we have to recognize that performing or acting does not 'go all the way down', that is to say, there are un-fixed limits and vague boundaries that constrain our attempts of 'twistings free' from tradition, but these constraints do not presuppose a fixed identity or essential way of being.

In one of the most striking dialogues in the history of drama (*Waiting for Godot*), Vladimir argues that there is nothing we can do about our identity, or better stated, "one is what one is?the essential doesn't change" and Estragon response is emphatical: nothing to be done. ??Cf. Beckett 1954) This kind of pessimism which has been pervasive in the last sixty years, is a symptom that we are neglecting the transformative power of our performing self, a self that far from being mechanical is constantly building or creating a temperamental character that manifests itself through his or her tones, gestures, embodiment, pronunciation, voice (phone), writing (graphie) and vocabulary (lexico). 2 In other words our actions or performances make us come into being. As 1 The notion of action that I have in mind is influenced by Peirce, in the sense that for him is a dyadic category that involves always degrees of passivity and activity, hence action implies receptivity and responsiveness, or in other

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words, is a doing as well as an undoing, a giving and a receiving. In Peirce's words: "This interpretant derives its character from the Dyadic category, the category of Action. This has two aspects, the Active and the Passive, which are not merely opposite aspects but make relative contrasts between different influences of this category as More Active and More Passive." (Peirce, 499).

2 It seems to me that it would be interesting to explore the facets of the self under the light of his vocabulary, voice and writing. Perhaps a self-gramme, self-lexico and self-phone would be an interesting way to explore the dark dimension of the self, under a semiotic perspective. However this exceeds the intention of this paper.

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Edward Pols argues, "when we act, something comes into being: in the first place, our act itself: in the second, ourselves, for in some measure we come into being by virtue of our acts" ??Colapietro 1988, 158). Our being is inescapably tied up with our actions, and our repetitive and purposive actions will conform the habits of our beings and will weave the web of the self.

If performing involves, as I have shown, a struggle between our creative endeavors and the constraining materials at hand, an opposition that we acknowledge when we recognize that the world confronts us, that the world is not completely at our disposition. Then instead of talking about absolute freedom of action, or unconditional spontaneity, we might want to shift our vocabulary to the notion of plasticity or, following Poirier, to the notion of sculpting as more accurate metaphor for performativity. Our being is full of traces that point elsewhere, our inheritances are marked on us and are evident in our deepest habits of being. The vocabulary we use, the tones with which we express ourselves, and the corporeal movements of our body are externalizations of past inheritances and influences of the environment. The traces and the impress marked on us are what enables and disables certain possibilities of self-fashioning projects (Cf. Rorty 1995). This sculpting is made possible by our performing self, which has two dimensions of understanding itself. The first one is the performing self in a topological sense, that is to say, in the sense that it acts in a determinate space or place and is being acted in that space or context by the materials or inheritances that are at play. 3 The second sense is a mythological one, which, as a narrative mode of understanding, assumes temporality in a twofold manner: retrospective (narration about our past performances) and prospective (narration about our future performances). a) Topological self 3 In Dewey's paper on Time and Individuality he acknowledges the importance of the context where one is acting and the inevitable determination of our inheritances in our being. In his account: "The career which is his unique individuality is the series of interactions in which he was created to be what he was by the ways in which he responded to the occasions with which he was presented." ??Dewey 1960, 239).

of determinative histories, we can neither name nor define ourselves " (Colapietro 2003, 151). The contextual setting in which an action takes place is not something exogenous to the action itself, but much rather constitutive of its role and significance. Jonathan Lear has a very nuanced understanding of this peculiar yet neglected characteristic of action, namely, "an act is not constituted merely by the physical movements of the actor: it gains identity via its location in a conceptual world" ??Lear 2006, 32). The conceptual locus of every action qua sign determines and constitutes the framework of possible meanings of that action.

The action in itself does not have meaning without the topos that contains a conceptual world by which the action becomes intelligible or, in some cases, by which the action expands the limits of intelligibility of that conceptual world. In the former case if someone playing chess tries to move a piece in a prohibited way, his or her action will be completely unintelligible in that context, since as Wittgenstein has shown, every context or language game (which can be translated to action game) has its own normativity that rules out unintelligible actions in the game. In the latter case the peculiarity lies in that the action itself transforms the context or place where it unfolds. In other words, the action makes itself intelligible because its powerfulness has the capacity to deconstruct and reconstruct the context of intelligibility where it is performed. The action being not meaningful in itself, is not even intelligible by itself, it requires always a context that dialogues with it to constitute the significance of an action. However in some cases an action is so powerful that it transforms and displaces the field where it manifests itself. This shows how the meaning of our performance are not completely extrinsic -determined by outer conditions of the context- nor completely intrinsic -determined by inner conditions of the action-, much rather this understanding of action overcomes the dichotomy of inner and outer conditions, and by being faithful to experience illustrate the interplay or dialectics that make meaning possible.

Every action is such not only because of physical factors, as Lear pointed out, but also because of conceptual and symbolic factors that come into a relationship with the action negotiating the meaning of it and the limits of intelligibility of the context where it comes into being. When we are playing ourselves or performing the role of oneself, one has to ask, as Stanislavski suggested, three critical questions that the very act of performance answers them in every singular moment. (i) Who am I?, (ii) why am I here?, and (iii) where am I going to? 4 The last two questions are intrinsically related to the notion of topology, a notion of spatiality that not only allows us to orientate ourselves in the world, but also imposes a symbolic

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Before explaining the qualitative difference between performing the role of oneself as oneself and performing the role of oneself as other practical determination (say as a teacher, student, etc.), we have to flesh out more the understanding of performing or acting in a topological sense. Every action as it is well known is placed in a background of symbolic coordinates that give meaning to it, and "apart from determinate places as the memorial sites framework by which our action gain meaning and simultaneously expand the limits of intelligibility and unintelligibility. In What is orientation in Thinking, Kant argues that geographical orientation or what I have been calling topological orientation is always a directionality toward the other, an other that can be oneself in the task of self-knowledge. In his words, "to orientate oneself (?) means to find a direction (?) in order to find the others" (Kant 1990). Therefore one might say that orientation comes from a self that wants to get away from himself in order to find himself, in other words, a self that requires a source of spatial coordinates which allows us to familiarize oneself in the environment and feel at home in the world only by making the world where he or she acts and performs a less stranger place. The performing self is necessarily topological in the sense that only acting in and through the environment, can achieve a sense of self-awareness, only by directing himself or herself towards the other is possible to return to the self with a better understanding of himself or herself. Therefore I would argue that the other neglected characteristic of every performance or action is that it is always directed toward the other in order to orientate oneself, but necessarily comes back toward oneself when the strangeness of the other is overcome, however vaguely and never fully exhausted, by leaving gradually our impress in the world through our actions. In terms of Charles Guignon, "one feels at home with the World only when redescribing it in one's own terms, conceiving its proper coordinates, that is, grasping the deepest and most profound possibilities that one's world has to offer for the interpretation of oneself, taking the risk to dedicate oneself to realize those possibilities in one's life" (Cf. Guignon 1990, 348). 4 Platonic dialogues such as the Protagoras and the Lysis begin with Socrates' interlocutor asking him where you are coming from and where are you going to (203a7-b1/309a). This shows that Plato was aware that everyone's life is a path in which we are always coming from somewhere and going to some place else that we, in most of the cases, are not completely certain where. As the great Spanish poet, Antonio Machado, would put it this way: "wanderer, there is no road, the road is made by walking." the other is, at its core, a gesture toward oneself, a gesture that by directing to the other is making us acknowledge in a more deep sense who we are, because the question of identity is ineluctably linked with the question of difference. The road to oneself has to pass through the road to the other.

Since the Presocratics this notion of self-knowledge as a direction toward the other, has been elaborated, yet this directionality from action toward the other to self-knowledge is an endless task of finite attempts to grasp oneself in the very practices where one is doing and undoing, sculpting and un-sculpting our inheritances in us and in our world under the name of traditions. In one of Heraclitus' fragments he writes: "By setting off you would never find out the ends of your soul, though you should tread along every path, so deep a measure logos does it have." When we are playing the role of oneself, one is always setting off from some place to some place else, from somewhere to nowhere 5 . Nevertheless this perpetual journey toward the unknown is at bottom a journey toward oneself, because our performing self is leaving the trace in the environment of who he or she was, while projecting a mark in himself of who he or she wants to be. In short, action and performance is a constant remaking and re-creating the world in order to get to know oneself. But as Heraclitus advises us, we will never exhaust our possibilities of self-knowledge, because there is always something elusive about the self, something utterly unconceptualizable that cannot be grasped. However when we are playing the role of ourselves we are not conceptualizing or identifying theoretically who the self is, we are rather enacting the self in the realm of possibilities that the environment offers to us.

5 Fernando Pessoa has poem that illustrates well this point. In it he states: "Pack your bags for Nowhere at All/Set sail for the ubiquitous negation of everything (?) Who are you here, who are you here, who are you here?/Set sail, even without bags, for your own diverse self!..." (Pessoa 1998, 201). This fragment suggests that the locality of the self is always directed toward the absolute negation of the self, in other words, our trip to nowhere at all is the only route we have to get to know ourselves. Year Following Ariadna's thread, our way out of the labyrinth of the world's strangeness is by familiarizing and orientating oneself with our actions and performance in it. This doing which encompasses an un-doing is always an enlightenment in the literal sense of the word, namely, in the sense that doing sheds light not only to the environment where we are in, but also to ourselves that are acting in the environment or stage. In short, "the way an [individual] is engaged has consequences that modify not merely the environment but which react to modify the active agent" (Dewey 1958, 246). Performance or action is inseparable from reaction or receptivity, therefore every gesture toward Playing the role of oneself does not have to do with some theoretical approach to our identity, but rather is an unfolding of our identity as it is exposed in the way we relate to the world, to others and to ourselves through our actions. This unfolding manifested in our performances and located in a place implies always a risk, because every action as being a re-making of the actual conditions in light of future possibilities has the potentiality of destroying a world, that is to say, destroying the symbolic framework under which we understand our actions. Every seemingly pointless action is a re-negotiation of meaning, a displacement of the symbolic framework that we currently have.

In Medina's account every performance, every exercise of our agency involves a resignification process. This is what I call the destruction of a conceptual world, and thus the re-construction of it. If our act always

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resignifies, or at least, re-arranges the symbolic framework by which we interpret those very same acts, then in every performance underlies a dialectical relation between the intelligibility of the action and the framework that makes our actions intelligible to us and to others. In Medina's words: "In any performative chain there is always a continuum of cases of possible resignification ranging from closest fidelity available to us (?) to radical reversals of meaning and force" ??Medina 2006, 141).

The first case that Medina mentions is when our actions or performances are not subversive enough or powerful enough to modify or destruct certain facets of our symbolic framework, hence is an action that is absolutely intelligible with the conceptual background that we have at hand, there is no need to reconfigure our symbolic background, hence the amount of risk is those kinds of action are very low. In other words is an action that resignifies by repeating and consolidating and solidifying our past and present symbolic world. Yet in the second case the action is so transformative that even to make it intelligible we have to destroy and reconfigure the symbolic framework that we have at hand. In other words, is an action that resignifies by destructing and reconstructing our past and present world in light of future possibilities. In this case, following Derrida, our performances qua signs carry "a force that breaks with its context [i.e. symbolic world]". Therefore our performances have the potentiality of being deconstructive, that is to say, to break with previous contexts of signification by resignifying those contexts. However every destruction or reconfiguration of the symbolic world might involve a real loss, and this is the inevitable and ubiquitous risk that every person has to face when he or she tries to break away from established rules, traditions, other's views of oneself and one's view of oneself. ??Cf. James 1956, 206).

The latter underlines the fact that every action has effects not only in the physical sphere, but also, as Lear suggests, in the symbolic sphere where we understand it and make it meaningful. Hence when we are performing the role of oneself, we are always at the edge, risking our identities, negotiating with our actions the signification of our inherited conceptual framework, struggling between the self that we want to overcome and the one we want to instantiate. But to overcome the old self we have to perform and leave our impress in the topos or stage which is our world, and this performance is a journey toward the other, a journey of transforming the other to return to oneself. Topology and orientation in the world are ineluctably related to each other. The situatedness of our practices is in one sense a physical-spatial orientation to the world and to ourselves, and on the other hand the situatedness involves a logical or symbolic spatiality that makes intelligible our actions and thus is the place where our transactions of resignification of the world as a symbolic inherited framework, and the world as a spatial realm where our possibilities can be enacted. To put the point more boldly, this transaction of meaning between our self-creation projects and the situatedness where those projects take place are completely are completely bound up with each other. As McDermott puts it "the fabric of human man's life is a relational schema; it not only deals with the exigencies for human identity but, within conditioned structure, yields the imaginative construction of the meaning of the world" ??McDermott 2007, 363). This is precisely what the process of resignifications mean, an ongoing dialogue between our situatedness and our actions: a transformative and creative dialogue in which our identity and our world are reshaped, because in the process of resignification the world or place where we act "has compelled us to revise ourselves and remake it as part of this revision" ??Colapietro 2003, 181).

The topology of the self is constituted by two dimensions, namely, the dimensions where our performances might have an influence: (i) in the physical context where we are in and (ii) the symbolic background by which we understand our practices. The ongoing overcoming of the self by performing in a stage that belong to us and at the same time we belong to it, or following William James, a stage with which we have a congeniality relation and not a relation of dominance ??Cf. McDermott 2007, 364). A stage that is always fluctating because the actions that are performed in it imply a resignification of it and of the actors that are situated in it. This is why after every performance that involves a restructuration of the topos in its physical as well as its symbolic sense we, as agents, are also transformed. We will always end, as Pessoa would say, reconstructing ourselves and saying "who and what I was when I used to come by here (?) I don't remember. The person who came by here back then, might remember, if he still existed" ??Pessoa 1998, 198). The person cannot recognize himself or herself not only because he or she has changed but also because the transformation was due to the reshaping of the environment or stage where he or she performed. Therefore is inevitable to become strangers to ourselves if we are committed to recreate and sculpt ourselves as well as our environment. With every creation comes a destruction and with every destruction an oblivion and a memory. For the reasons just canvassed, I would say that in order to know ourselves we do not only have to direct ourselves toward the other, but also we have to forget ourselves in order to remember who we wanted to be. The mythological facet of the performing self has a very distinct nature from the topological one. The mythological trait as opposed to the topological is not synchronically but diachronically constituted. This means that the performing self in its topological nature is developing and evolving in the very same instant in which the action unfolds. This happens because the topological nature is not permeated by language directly, and therefore is not retrospectively or prospectively constructed, but rather immediately. Every time we are performing in a place, we are doing so in that instant, in that vague moment of actuality where our action might transform the environment or ourselves, while every time we are telling a story, every time we are narrating the events or actions we do so either because they have already happened or because they are going to happen, or at the very least, because we want them to happen. Language has in this sense, on the one hand, the capacity to transform lineal temporality to fragmentary and cycle temporality, that is to say, narration transforms the temporality where our actions unfold themselves, and convert that temporality into

something malleable, multidirectional and repetitive. On the other hand, language or storytelling is a perpetual re-interpretation of the past or future events that might end up in an ontological transformation of the events themselves. This occurs often when someone is trying through language either to falsify reality of past events or when someone tries to intensify the meaning of reality, that is, to reinterpretate past events with excessive generosity, which means essentially to interpret in the best possible way, to intensify the meaning of the events or performances through the reception and reinterpretation of them. Hence the potentiality that language or story telling can do an ontological transformation, is a symptom that language and reality, logos or mythos and ontology are intertwined in profound ways, as Parmenides stated in his famous poem, "being and logos are one and the same thing" (to ago auto voeintekailegin).

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The performances that we do are subjected to endless reinterpretation, because they are not fixed entities that preclude transformation, yet this process of interpretation does not entail that any interpretation is valid for any performance. In Peircean vocabulary I will argue that every action can be seen as the object of the semiosis that constrains the future interpretation, but does not establish fixed limits to a hermeneutical approach to it. To state the point more clearly, our narrations in the retrospective sense are the signs that stand for past events or actions to future reinterpretations of our interpretations of the action. In this sense the action creates a field of possible and indeterminate meaning, and this indeterminability of meaning will be made determinate by our narrations and stories about the meaning of that action or by the narrations and stories of other people regarding that action. All retrospective narration involves an interpretative constrain which is posed by the action itself, however as I have shown that constrain is indeterminate and unfixed. Mythology comes into being every time we are narrating the past events of our lives, every time we are reorganizing and reinterpreting them either to make our life a more coherent and unified project, or at least to make sense of the continuum of one's life by restructuring it in light of new events or new possibilities of life.

However mythology is not reduced to a retrospective narration, it is also a notion that is faithful to the category of the human being as a being that exists in-between past and future, and thus the past as something that actually happen and the future as something that virtually might happen are two ineluctably traits of being in the world. Moreover, both traits are what I want to call reality, because the notion of the real cannot be reduced to the events that happened already, that is, the real is not the same as the actual. Reality encompasses modality; reality is not only the actual but also the virtual or the possible.

Therefore prospective mythology is as crucial as retrospective mythology, though they have different uses. As I said before, retrospective mythology involves a re-narration, a re-interpretation, a reorganization of the past events of one's life. However this processes of what I want to call there-event have an interpretative constrain, namely, the action itself as it happened. Thus the action gives a realm of indefinite possibilities of interpretation, however not an infinite realm of interpretation.

The topological facet is therefore the condition of possibility of the mythological self, only by being in the world, in a definite logical and geographical topos, we can begin our stories and narrations about who we are, who we were, where do we come from and where are we going. This last question echoes a constant unfinished self, a self that is never created to its fullest potentiality and capabilities. Where are we going is a question that involves a virtual topos, a virtual logical framework of understanding ourselves and livening in a future environment that is yet to come. In short this prospective question discloses this unending project of self-creation: "we are what we can yet make of ourselves" (Colapietro 2003, 1). This formulation of self-identity has the advantage that the self is defined in what it is yet to come, in other words, is defined in future terms, not in what he has achieved so far, but what is yet to be achieved. Nevertheless every proposition in future terms, or every prospective narration involves in its very core and undeniable nature: uncertainty. Future is another word for an uncertain regularity, the prospective narration Year emphasizes that we are not fully in control of our lives, that Peircean tychism, and a degree of unpredicatability is inescapably tied up with our ways of life. This is precisely the drama of human life: the fact that we do not know the outcome of actions, utterances, and more generally, of our lives.

The prospective narration is implicitly a reorientation. This phenomenon of reorientation appears before us in two different ways: (i) it is a reorientation of present conditions under the criteria of future ideals and (ii) it is a reorientation of future ideals because of present experiences. In the former case we are judging ourselves, our actions, our utterances and our ways of related ourselves with the world, with others and with ourselves with the standard of a narrated ideal, an ideal that we want to achieve. Thus the ideal of who we want to be or where we want to be appears to be something fixed and stable, but the latter case shows that there are experiences in our lives that are so transformative that alterate the very ideals by which we judge our present circumstances and situations. Hence the ideal or criteria of who we want to be and where we want to be is always evolving and transforming itself under the light of profound present experiences.

Before in this paper I said that the topological facet involves a certain orientation and familiarization in the world, but now the prospective narration acknowledges that even when we feel at home in the world, there is always the remainder that we are in an Exodus, that we are in a way exiled from our Geheimniss, and therefore there will always remain an utterly trace in us of estrangement, yet our narration of what will be, what we want to be and what we will likely to do gives us the illusion that the future is in our hands, that we can control the unpredicatability of the drama of life, that we can own the unownable. Philosophy thus, as Cinema in my

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354 account, makes us recognize this trace of estrangement, but at the same time makes us tend toward the oikos, in  
355 a constante flow of re-orientation.

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Figure 1:

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