

1 The Topology and Mythology of the Self: Playing the Role of 2 Oneself or the Drama of the Self

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7 **Abstract**

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

18

19 **Index terms**— Relinquish, Stanislavski

20 **1 I. Introduction**

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

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

44 To play the role of oneself is different to play the different roles that we play in our daily lives such as father-role,
45 mother-role, son-role, daughter-role, teacher-role, student-role, professional-role, lover-role, megalomaniac-role,
46 writer-role, poet-role, listener-role, believer-role, and so on. As I said, I am not concern whether we actually play
47 the role of oneself, but rather whether we could possibly play it, and what this possibility might reveal to us. It
48 is important to remember that since Aristotle's Poetics Drama and Theater as well as Philosophy are concern
49 with possibilities, more specifically, with genuine human possibilities, and consequently, are concern with how
50 to perform or live a life with certain possibilities in the horizon. This presupposes that human beings are the
51 locus of endless potentiality and unimagined creativity, yet every growth of potentiality and every enactment of
52 creativity are necessarily situated in a place, a *topos*, a context, a stage that is surrounded by circumstances,
53 limitations, closures and disclosures. Thus every performance is in a stage, in the same manner as we ourselves
54 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
55 the world means something quite different, because the preposition in not only implies a The most basic trait of
56 human beings is disclosed by the preposition in, yet this in alone might not do justice to the performance that
57 we are demanded to do in a stage. In a way the actor is inbetween the play and the audience, in-between the
58 writer/director and the spectator. Every performance thus not only manifest itself in a *topos*, but also inbetween
59 two mythos or narrations, namely, the text that we are following and the text that the audience is interpreting,
60 or under a different perspective, the actual narration of who we have been and who we are going to be and the
61 potential narration, which is in a sense a re-interpretation of the last narration. Every potential narration builds
62 up from our past narrations and in a very loose sense overcomes them in a Hegelian sense of *Aufhebung*, that is,
63 an overcoming that emphasises the continuity of the process. The actor or performer is a sign that stands for the
64 play to the audience's resultant interpretations. I will sustain throughout this paper that when we would play
65 the role of oneself, we are ultimately being synchronically the performer, the writer/director and the audience.
66 In Peirce's semiotics we are the object, the sign and the interpretant.

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

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

75 2 II. The Performing Self: Weaving

76 Together the Mythos and the Topos of the Self

77 Richards Poirier has drawn a very fruitful analogy for our inquiry, he sees the struggle of becoming a performing
78 self, as the struggle of the sculptor to give shape and meaning to the rock in front of him or her. In his words,
79 "any effort to find accomodation for human shapes or sounds is an act that partakes of political meaning. It
80 involves negotiation, struggle, and compromise with the stubborn material of existence, be it language or stone"
81 ??Poirier 1971, viii). Although I do not agree with Poirier that necessarily every act that we make, every effort
82 that we undertake has political meaning, nevertheless I do agree with him that we as sculptores of our own
83 acts, have to struggle in the sense that we have to re-interpretate and re-create the past that is living within us.
84 Our past is the somatization of ways of acting and habits of being that are deeply rooted mostly unconsciously
85 within us. Poirier has understood that every act is a creation and every creation is at bottom a struggle, an
86 opposition to what has been already created. And yet every opposition allows us to grasp that we as agents,
87 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
88 of the action. Performing which I take to be analogous to acting -at least with the notion of action that I have
89 in mind 1 -is precisely a gesture, a corporeal manifestation, an utterance, a way of moving, a way of reading
90 texts and situations and foremostly a way of being read, a way of understanding and being understood. All of
91 these things can be reduced to "any self-discovering, selfwatching, self-pleasuring responses to the pressures and
92 difficulties" ??Poirier 1971, xiii) one has to embrace. Performing is an act of transformative rebellion and sincere
93 acknowledgement of our inheritances and our possibilities. However we have to recognize that performing or
94 acting does not 'go all the way down', that is to say, there are un-fixed limits and vague boundaries that constrain
95 our attempts of 'twistings free' from tradition, but these constrains do not presuppose a fixed identity or essential
96 way of being.

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

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

110 2 It seems to me that it would be interesting to explore the facets of the self under the light of his vocabulary,
111 voice and writing. Perhaps a self-gramme, self-lexico and self-phone would be an interesting way to explore the
112 dark dimension of the self, under a semiotic perspective. However this exceeds the intention of this paper.

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

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

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

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

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

164 4 The last two questions are intrinsically related to the notion of topology, a notion of spatiality that not only
165 allows us to orientate ourselves in the world, but also imposes a symbolic

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

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

210 5 Fernando Pessoa has poem that illustrates well this point. In it he states: "Pack your bags for Nowhere at
211 All/ Set sail for the ubiquitous negation of everything (?) Who are you here, who are you here, who are you here?/ Set
212 sail, even without bags, for your own diverse self!..." ??Pessoa 1998, 201). This fragment suggest that the
213 locality of the self is always directed toward the absolute negation of the self, in other words, our trip to nowhere
214 at all is the only route we have to get to know ourselves. Year Following Ariadna's thread, our way out of the
215 labyrinth of the world's strangeness is by familiarizing and orientating oneself with our actions and performance in
216 it. This doing which encompasses an un-doing is always an enlightenment in the literal sense of the word, namely,
217 in the sense that doing sheds light not only to the environment where we are in, but also to ourselves that are
218 acting in the environment or stage. In short, "the way an [individual] is engaged has consequences that modify
219 not merely the environment but which react to modify the active agent" ??Dewey 1958, 246). Performance or
220 action is inseparable from reaction or receptivity, therefore every gesture toward Playing the role of oneself does
221 not have to do with some theoretical approach to our identity, but rather is an unfolding of our identity as it
222 is exposed in the way we relate to the world, to others and to ourselves through our actions. This unfolding
223 manifested in our performances and located in a place implies always a risk, because every action as being a
224 re-making of the actual conditions in light of future possibilities has the potentiality of destroying a world, that
225 is to say, destroying the symbolic framework under which we understand our actions. Every seemingly pointless
226 action is a re-negotiation of meaning, a displacement of the symbolic framework that we currently have.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

326 The topological facet is therefore the condition of possibility of the mythological self, only by being in the
327 world, in a definite logical and geographical *topos*, we can begin our stories and narrations about who we are, who
328 we were, where do we come from and where are we going. This last question echoes a constant unfinished self, a
329 self that is never created to its fullest potentiality and capabilities. Where are we going is a question that involves
330 a virtual *topos*, a virtual logical framework of understanding ourselves and livening in a future environment that
331 is yet to come. In short this prospective question discloses this unending project of self-creation: "we are what
332 we can yet make of ourselves" ??Colapietro 2003, 1). This formulation of self-identity has the advantage that the
333 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
334 far, but what is yet to be achieved. Nevertheless every proposition in future terms, or every prospective narration
335 involves in its very core and undeniable nature: uncertainty. Future is another word for an uncertain regularity,
336 the prospective narration Year emphasizes that we are not fully in control of our lives, that Peircean *tychism*,
337 and a degree of unpredictability is inescapably tied up with our ways of life. This is precisely the drama of
338 human life: the fact that we do not know the outcome of actions, utterances, and more generally, of our lives.

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

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

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

356 **6 Year**

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Figure 1:

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