

WHITE SHADOW
Falke Pisano & Armando Andrade Tudela



EPILOGUE

Too many shadows seem to be condemned in our cultural industry not to be even seen. If not seen then no one talks about them although perhaps precisely this second condition is the defining feature of what gets to be known as reverse shadow, one that casts its invisible light onto the realm of unfathomable action. Unutterability is one of the key themes of European literature at the cusp between the 19th and 20th century. Rainer Maria Rilke's ninth Duineser Elegy projects the image of the threshold as the limit of utterability as the space to inhabit, a tragic condition in contrast to the concrete and measurable reality of crystal clear discursive pragmatism:

*"The wanderer does not bring a handful of earth,
the unutterable, from the mountain slope to the valley,
but a pure word that he has learned, the blue
and yellow gentian. Are we here perhaps just to say:
house, bridge, well, gate, jug, fruit three, window –
at most column, tower... but to say, understand this,
to say it
as the Things themselves never fervently thought to be.
It is not the hidden cunning of secretive earth
when it urges on the lovers, that everything seems transfigured
in their feelings? Threshold, what is it for two lovers
that they wear away a little of their old doorsill,
they also, after the many before,
and before those yet coming... lightly?"*

Here is the time for the unutterable, here, its country."
Rainer Maria Rilke

How can we translate such an incitation to access the unspeakable shadow of things? This is a shadow whose passivity is reverted into the mysterious capacity to perform a magic agency over



the known, a social and cultural effect over the humans. As we are dealing with a negative concept – the reverse of what common sense blissfully calls the darkened outline of a body determined by some light projected onto it – we cannot but delineate it as a concave empty mold that receives and deforms our projections. The latter are hypothesis thrown at the unspeakable concept similarly to sonar positioning instruments, deep sound waves aimed to verify through the means of reverberation our possible knowledge. It is therefore uncertain whether the energy that the empty mold emanates is generated by the object or by the gaze – the human act of participating to it; although this distinction is perhaps not only irrelevant but pertinently undistinguishable. Marking such boundary in fact would be the quickest way to kill the agency of the white shadow.

What role does such neg-idea occupies in the shaping of the social and cultural existence of an art object? From a metaphorical point of view a shadow is the negative sign of a presence, a trace of individuality. Subsequently because of the effect of a double negative, its reverse double could be the positive sign of an absence, the hint of a meta-individual force that something exerts onto its surroundings. It is the feeling that an empty space urges for our attention and fascination, but rather than expecting to be filled with a definitive form of signification such ‘empty symptom’ is able to perform despite its unattainability a verifiable action onto the world.

This paradox articulates a space in which a void presence is perceived but translated as not declarable. Although it might seem yet another approximation of the surplus of signification that certain objects (in particular in the realm of the art objects) generate, pretend from their viewers or seem to be magically endowed with. What we are facing in this context is the active presence of a negative concept. The remarkable and unavoidable problem seems therefore to be not the void itself, the non-sense articulated as a space for the emergence of meaning, but rather the successful agency that a non-concept lends to the object to which it is attached. How can we speak of a phenomenon, which puts into crisis the very notion of the language that can be used to unsuccessfully articulate it?

The white shadow is perhaps the secret effect that objects can carry as negative presence, this action should be considered, in a reversal similar to the one of our neg-idea, an overt secret whose secrecy consist of its openness. French philosopher Jacques Rancière writes about the possibility we have to elaborate a secret reign of thought, according to him we can trace this rhetorical device to Freud and his precursors Nietzsche and Schopenhauer. He introduces the idea that non-thinking has nothing to do with an absence of an activity but rather is to be conceived in relation to thinking as the efficacious presence of its opposite:

“Il y a de la pensée qui ne pense pas, de la pensée à l’oeuvre non seulement dans l’élément étranger de la non-pensée, mais dans la forme même de la non-pensée. Inversement, il y a de la non-pensée qui habite la pensée et lui donne une puissance spécifique. Cette non-pensée n’est pas seulement une forme d’absence de la pensée, elle est une présence efficace de son opposé.” (Jacques Rancière, *L’inconscient esthétique*, Galilée, Paris, 2001)

The white shadow is not a shadow but rather a beam of light projected by an object’s negative presence, the materialization of its immaterial agency. Its most important task is to become unknowable while exerting its influence, to be irreducible to any ‘blue and yellow gentian’, to be heard but not believed as the wanderer says to his shadow in Nietzsche famous dialogue within *Human, All too Human*. As in every respectable detective





story the architectural construct of the fiction is entirely based around the hiding of a nucleus – the whole story is a constant delaying the utterance of a secret word whose shadow projects the story into life. Our intellectual task then is to attempt to conceive the white shadow not as the reverse of our common understanding of the idea of shadow, but that our common world is the reverse of the secret world where the our notion of shadow is a reverse concept.

FM

PROLOGUE

*We thought about a sculptural problem. We turn around (move) some thoughts and possibilities for/of objects that will represent us thinking about sculpture. We arrive, inevitably, to an obvious and perfect fissure: two people thinking about an object are two people imagining a different object. We agree to wind back and stab the object (subject) from an opposite direction. That's how we came across the idea of the **White Shadow**.*

Armando Andrade Tudela & Falke Pisano

PART 1

The first thought I had was quite literal and involves inversion: in order to create a white shadow you would have to first place it under the rays of a black sun, of a sun that poured out darkness, or perhaps ink, rays or streams of ink: perhaps - to move from ink to writing - the white shadow is already cast by what is left unsaid about the object in the texts that surround it. The white shadow could then be the blanks that space the words - as Derrida comments on Mallarmé in *Dissemination*.

The other idea was that the white shadow would be the shadow of the outside of the object as it is cast inside the object. An internal fracturing by the objects own exposure to its outside...

Anyway, hope that helps,

Oliver.

PART 2

a) “The novel *Impressions of Africa* by Raymond Roussel begins like a boy's adventure story: a group of shipwrecked passengers are captured and held for ransom by an African king, Talou VII. To while away their time and keep their captors entertained, each captive is allotted a theatrical task or test of mechanical ingenuity based on his inherent skills, to be performed at a gala before their release.

But in a reversal of the plot of *Among the Blacks* and in defiance of all the rules of detective fiction, Roussel first explains and then describes his mysteries, somewhat like the playwright who, in the opening scene, tells us who the murderer is and then spends the rest of the play explaining why he did it. Suspense is thus dispensed with at the opening of the adventure. But it remains one of his greatest triumphs as a storyteller that after all the mysteries have been





unraveled and explained away, they become even more mysterious--hence his appeal to modernists and ourselves. A further aspect of his appeal resides in his manipulation of people. Not exactly as a puppet master, but one who shuffles his characters around to serve the same purpose as words, strictly to unfold the story (no one could be less interested in psychology than Roussel). The surface of things is paramount, characters being defined by their *rituals* and *attributes*, not their personalities. Their belongings as a result can be more animistic than their owners.

One of the most remarkable peculiarities of *Impressions of Africa* is that nearly all the scenes are described twice. First, we witness them as if they were a ceremony or a theatrical event; and then they are explained to us, by their history being recounted. The author went as far as, after the publication *Impressions of Africa*, inserting a slip of green paper on which he suggested that "those readers not initiated in the art of Raymond Roussel are advised to begin this book at p. 212 and go on to p. 455, and then turn back to p. 1 and read to p. 211.'" (Trevor Winkfield *Reading Raymond Roussel*, 2008)

"Was it not from India that Raymond Roussel sent an electric heater to a friend who has asked for something rare as a souvenir?" (Roger Vitrac, 1928)

"Afraid of being injured or causing injury in conversations, he used to say that in order to avoid all dangerous talk with people, he preceded by asking them questions: "Language is a form of human reason, which has its internal logic of which man knows nothing.'" (William Clark, *A Lovely Curiosity*, 2002)

b) The ineffable mystery of an object is told to be present in its aura. In the force that is said to surround the object, usually described or discerned as a 'bright glow'. Aura definitions go as far as suggesting that perception of auras is more common between people of unusual psychic activity. Auras are all about the external. What is happening inside a bending spoon as Uri Geller (Telekinesis Master) unleashes the full power of his mind is still a mystery. The truth is, if Uri Geller is able to do what we, with a sinister smile, believe he does, then something in the structure of the spoon must either cooperate with him or defect (betray?) its structural composition. Or both: *cooperate to defect*. In any case, the aura of the object is mitigated and the object itself is reduced to dysfunctional behavior (the spoon is not working as a spoon any more). The external gives way to a/the broken internal which, in a paradoxical shift, is celebrated as the proof of Geller's muscular telekinesis (the spoon as a token of Geller mental strength). Telekinesis being again an act of pure exteriority: you cannot perform telekinesis against your own mind for the powers that sprang from your psyche need to influence, animate, the outside. In telekinesis two single (independent) elements (bodies) contrive or expand or affect.

The rather less ineffable mystery of a detective novel is clearly not (in) the resolution of the riddle but the mechanics of the argument, in how that argument came to life. Plotting is the practice of interests and difference because- as we privately configure discordant elements that would ultimately rouse (animate) a full argument, we give ourselves to manufacture an interior reasoning that is purely instinctive and yet singularly logic (both characteristics of the individual- the *internal*- and not of the collective).

Since the sublime quality of a plot is only possible when its material





exteriority, the novel, is shaped as *all* mystery novels, then we could oppose the pure exteriority of ‘the aura of the object’ to the pure interiority of a ‘sublime plot’. It is in this division where *Impressions Of Africa* is pertinent and in this moment where *Impressions Of Africa* seems to gleam over an idea of Helio Oiticica: “(art) based upon structural transformations always oppose the passive role of the support, and the conflict reaches a point where there can be no evolution unless it is resolved. In reality, whoever represents upon something, will better represent “through” something. There is the intermediary between the sense of space and structure and the spectator who receives the idea.” Roussel ‘represents’ his circles of thought through the canons of a mystery novel but breaks the novel pattern (and logic) once he determines to place the resolution of the mystery up front. Such defiance of all the rules of detective fiction transforms the book into an intermediary between the argument and the container and makes *Impressions Of Africa* be *simultaneously the image of a well-oiled machine and the image of the same oiled machine broken in pieces.*

PART 3

I.a) You write: “I really start to think the white shadow is the result of a auto-affecting process in the object, a kind of reflection of the object on itself, and the next phase of that which is created in this short-circuit, this "new" thing needs to be externalized and needs to relate itself to something else than the object that has reached its ultimate state of independence, but I haven’t found a way how this process can be made autonomous.”

I.b) When occasionally thinking about the riddle of the ‘white shadow’, I could never find (still can’t) a balance point between all the processes that enable an object to project a reverse shadow (not black but white). I could never decide if the defect would be in the light (pre-object) or in the internal structure of the object (present object) or in the surface where the shadow is cast (post-object). The most accurate feeling seems dead obvious: that the defect happens halfway through the all stages and that it happens in synchrony, through all of them at once and always. Like you however, I still don’t know how this construction should be employ. To clear some air and to place the problem in a ground than is not just ‘object based’, I’ve recollected some data which could refer to the opaque ‘see-saw’ division between two or more things: splitting guilt, refuting others presence (in front of the other), escaping and coming back, singers running out of voice, accidental forms of potlatch (if they exist), voices coming from within and from afar, manuals to write detective stories, novels or films about ‘viajes iniciaticos’ (initiation voyages – rituals), different kinds of imprints left by objects (thumbs, meteorites), bloody fingers in the post.



2 quick samples or existing references to this list:

A brief line by singer Will Oldham: “I stopped the car; we got a beer, and then ease down the road. A little guilt and some guilt spilt and added to our load” (*Ease down the road*, 2001) and a line of Michel Houellebecq about H.P. Lovecraft: “From his journey to the penumbral worlds of the unutterable, Lovecraft did not return to bring us good news. Perhaps, he acknowledge, something is hiding beneath the surface of reality that at times allows itself to be perceived. Something truly vile.” (*H.P. Lovecraft: Against Nature, Against Life, The Believer*, 2004)



If I think too much about this small Catalogue of Divisions (*Catalogo de Divisiones*) I don't get anywhere because, I know, it doesn't hold much water. So quickly: my feeling is that the list enrolls a number of 'splits' or 'dual confrontations' where the sides involved refer more to the void between them than to the reasons why they are divided. Take the singer that runs out of voice for instance. Silence, which is the product of running out of voice, is the problem not the consequence of the/a problem. This is what Houellebecq might refer to when he said that Lovecraft *didn't bring us good news*. Yourself had mentioned Lovecraft as someone valuable in our conversation: James Turner writes: "Lovecraft's imaginary cosmogony was never a static system but rather a sort of aesthetic construct that remained ever adaptable to its creator's developing personality and altering interests... [T]here was never a rigid system that might be posthumously appropriated by the pasticheur... [T]he essence of the mythos lies not in a pantheon of imaginary deities nor in a cobwebby collection of forgotten tomes, but rather in a certain convincing cosmic attitude." (James Turner, *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*, 1990)

The underworld, the unseen, the otherness; all these words have been present/used in Lovecraft discussions and now they seem to be part of ours. Why? Because, as you said, his mythos was never intended to be cohesive and singular (but was). Non-cohesion is what makes some of the examples of the list pertinent- things that are not in conditions to return to their matrix (the classic bloody finger). Others like the reading of Chesterton's *How To Write A Detective Story* which figures in the list as 'manuals to write detective stories' are maybe useful because of the opposite; because of the strange kind of cohesive engine one has to manufacture to make a detective novel argument create its own riddle and in doing so, its own solution. If we cannot find the fissure or openness that would make the shadow become white, "I could never find (still can't) a balance point between all the processes that enable an object to project a reverse shadow (not black but white)", then we could say: all things can be (as in a detective story) manufactured as long as, like in a perfect pin ball game, every side, corner, party, obstacle involved produces and preserves movement. Or else, fabricates a thin organized line, sometimes visible sometimes not, that would create the 'end effect of a lucid mystery: a closed form inside an open content'.

I.c) But then a further problem arises; a problem is one of emphasis or positioning. We seem to be drifting between structures that are 1) non-cohesive because they are internally broken (divided & defected) or 2) almost platonic images of impeccably organized arrangements that yielded together can cast a white shadow. Both logics take equal part in our understanding of the 'white shadow' problem but they don't look as if they will match- even if the idea is that they don't match.

So, where do we place the emphasis? If the drive is 'not to look' as you said, 'for symbolic meaning but for ways in which to understand the world as a world in which this phenomenon (objects projecting a white shadow) will appear', then we should NOT write about the ultimate holographic projection or use your reference to Nathalie Sarraute as our private cobweb. Sarraute in the preface of *Tropisms*:



“I gave them this name [tropisms] because of their spontaneous irresistible, instinctive nature, similar to that of the movements made by certain living organisms under the influence of outside stimuli, such as light or heat. This analogy, however, is limited to the instinctive, irresistible nature of the movements, which are produced in us by the presence of others, or by objects from the outside world. [Movements perfectly arranged of which] we are hardly cognizant, [that] slip through us on the frontier of consciousness in the form of indefinable, extremely rapid sensations. And since, while we are performing them, no words express them, not even those of the interior monologue (...) it was not possible to communicate them to the reader otherwise than by means of equivalent images that would make them experience analogous sensations.” (Sarraute, Tropisms, 1963)

Instead, we could push towards concrete exemplifications (not hardly cognizant as in Sarraute but fully cognizant) like in two of your following descriptions:

“(...) The images of Chillida’s sculptures, all consciously photographed as objects and their shadows, bear deep black shadows. What if I imagine them to be a play of matter, space and white planes? The shadows are the places where the photograph doesn’t present the 3-dimensionality of the works. The shadows in the photographs have a strange relation to the object they are attached to: they do not seem to reflect the object in the photograph but another object, that is the same but exists in different circumstances.”

Or: (...) “I was given a next clue by the image of the sculpture that is an old man sitting on a rock and looking out over the land. There is something the sculpture that is strange. The man’s gaze has become a part of the sculpture, in a movement that starts with the gaze of the spectator (or does it start at the sculpture?). It is the gaze of the spectator reflected back, but not only reflected. It is as if the gaze of the spectator is made to inhabit the sculpture because of the gaze of the sculpture. It is either a play of total co-dependence or an ingenious trap.

So then I thought: maybe with the case of the white shadow something similar happens: something external is made part of the object because of a parallel existence in the object that the object projects outside itself. Because the external existence is a positive addition, the shadow is not the absence of light but the over-completeness of the object externalized and materialized again.”

In between these two sides of the same coin we are divided.

II) As Sarraute is writing about these hardly cognizant movements, for me the most beautiful thing would be the (imagined) experience of the ‘normal’ object recomposing itself into an object that would cast a white shadow. This would of course not only imply an internal crack, twist or reversal. It would be a silent (r)evolution in the whole constitution of relations this object has. I am not saying we should not look for symbolic meaning, I think we should, but also the symbolic meaning is a part of the whole structure of change.





PART 4: Reactions to the Divide

I.a) I have realized you were looking for the divisions between things, but I have to admit that I don't exactly understand why. Is it because of the idea of the pre-, present and post object? Or do you feel that the shadow is dividing the object from something else? You say to place the problem on a ground that is not just object-based. But maybe it has to do with the void you realize those divisions point to, rather than to the reasons why they are divided.

I.b) Yes, I'm looking at the problem from 2 sides which seem to have unfold naturally and yes, it has to do with the pre-present-post thing we talked before (where that the reaction happens, the burst of change). See, according to all the material we've collected and tagging along the forks we been finding, there is a permanent 'repositioning' of the idea-of-the-divide. For instance, you move around the problem (boxer studying his opponent kind of thing) and say: 'let's remove the riddle of the white shadow from the space of the symbolic and think of a real orbit (world) where this problem could appear'. We do so and give ourselves, from the outside, to the study and listing of say 'art' objects: the found sculpture of the old man sitting on a rock (art? yes!), Chillida's work plus two personal (and new) additions: Rauschenberg's *Erased De Kooning Drawing* and a Broodthaers piece on Mallarme's *Un Coup De Des Jamais N'Abolira Le Hasard*. These new examples can open a stream of sight into (about) something which, seen from the outside appears to be full; a totally organized system which, due to some specific characteristics (erasure, absence) can give us a chance to 'go backwards' & reverse the motion of the structure. In doing so, the plan would be to crack the object from the outside in and see where a 'white shadow' could be placed or produced.



On the first, Rauschenberg did what the title of the work says he did. The result is a dirty blank paper that validates it self through the 'presence of the absent' image (this is a Blanchot rip off). In the case of the Broodthaers work, the piece is what you might call a 'cancellation' of language as a 'vessel of signifiers'. M.B covers all the verses that compose the poem with black stripes. These stripes take the length and thickness of the words, making even clearer the way (form) the words are placed on the paper- the area they cover, the space they leave open. In doing so, Broodthaers proposes that *language can preserve its consistency and its dimension as an existing discourse but not necessarily as a structure of significance*. Thus suggesting that language is not a space to be shared by consensus (cohesion?) but by piling up individuals forms (of meaning) that alternatively suffocate and renew each other.

Rauschenberg and Broodthaers works, and I say this being careful not to undermine the seriousness of both works, pave the way back to what we wrote about the bended spoons. The original impression (mark on paper- useful spoon) has been mitigated and the piece is left working on a different order. From the optics of 'a world in which this phenomenon could appear' the white shadow is like the echo of the original impression- mark-word. The mechanics that produce the division between the first line drawn by De Kooning to the last bit of line erased by Rauschenberg are of no interest as its less interesting what made the singer run out of voice. Its the presence of the silence in his voice that becomes the problem as it is the echo of what is not

there that props our interest (in the specific case of the W. Shadow argument). As you said, it's the *parallel existence*.



I.c) Of course it is less interesting what makes the singer run out of voice because the silence is the moment in which the crack takes place. The silence is the *place of the problem* because it is a false drop, you remember in contrast 'the drop of irony' in which everything becomes so unavoidable: the silence in a voice is only an apparent drop of the discourse of the voice. By the proposition of this void, the conscious mind of one engaged in the perception or conception of this idea is suddenly split in two. Or put differently: the "existing discourse" and the 'structure of significance' are rigorously separated. At the moment you take the silence as a 'real'

void, it is placed in a situation in which it can only re-orientate and re-organize a structure around itself by attaining a symbolic meaning that connects, not to the singer's sore throat, but to a broader symbolic realm (?). When the silence is not seen as a void but as a negative of the voice that has a symbolic meaning already, namely within the discourse of the voice, it won't be able to break free or extend its meaning.



I.d) Ok, I agree. But I go back to the Broodthaers work. There's a present mark that has taken upon a previous mark. The idea is not to conceive what exists now as an autonomous, self-sufficient discourse but as a presence that come-to-exists through the suffocation of a previous one. This means there is a system of co-dependency that is absolutely necessary and (almost) symmetric. I'll explain:

Like the spaces left in between the words- the blanks that space the words, as Oliver put it- that help keeping the pulse and flux of the verses in the poem of Mallarme, what is beneath the black stripes drawn by Broodthaers over the verses could be seen as silenced- not silent- spaces which 'presence' preserves the flux of the black stripes. As if the blanks in between the words have shifted from category (condition) and now they have taken the place of the words beneath the stripes: *if the blank spaces were the shades of the words in the poem of Mallarme, in the version of Broodthaers the words have become the shades of the stripes*. And it doesn't matter if beneath the black stripes there is nothing (no real words), it's enough that all the stripes respond precisely (symmetrically) to a preceding order: the words that were written and placed in space by Mallarme.

So the existing discourse and the structure of significance are separated because: the existing discourse is a by-product of something that was meaning one thing and now is meaning that *that* thing is not meaning (is not there) anymore. Instead, the fabrication (animation) of meaning is placed on what you called the *place of the problem* or else somewhere, anywhere out-of-the-field-of-vision. As a structure of significance one could say that black stripes unfolded on a paper are the equivalent of someone spitting on the street or rolling a joint. It just can take almost any form because it's formless, for the fuselage that was holding its *raison d'être* is unseen (I know this is very, very disputable). Let's say, the black stripes are significant as an action, as a radical gesture meant to trace the circuit between what is there and what its not. After the circuit is recognized the action loses its place in the chain and decomposes. Rots.

So when you say: 'the moment you take the silence as a 'real' void, it is placed in a situation in which it can only re-orientate and re-organize a structure around itself by attaining a symbolic meaning that connects, not to the singer's sore throat, but to a broader symbolic realm' I agree but

there's one idea derived from the work of Broodthaers that can be of use: his work is a kind of 'double binder' that operates as a symbolic gesture of cancellation-of-a-prior-significance and, in unison, as a 'discursive groupie' that accompanies the movements of a previous effort. Remember this quote you sent me: "*There are fewer terms of designation than there are things to designate - is itself a two-sided experience: it reveals words as the unexpected meeting place of the most distant figures of reality. (It is distance abolished; at the point of contact, differences are brought together in a unique form: dual, ambiguous, Minotaur-like.)*". It is again Foucault referring to Roussel.

Before moving to another view, I just read this fragment of an interview with Billy Hare, a Peruvian photographer, which could be of some use.

Q: It is surprising that for one series, which one could say is, until now, your most clearly defined statement regarding the landscape, you chose to use the circular frame, incorporating a device as part of the image, a sign that these pictures are, undeniably photographic.

A: The North America Emmet Gowin was the first to do it.

Q: But before talking about Gowin...For the great North American modernist, the main interest lies in the image articulating a metaphor, in creating a visual form where the emotional and real world merge, not in making the viewer aware of the process that produces the image he is looking at.

A: In this case, it wasn't a pre- meditated decision. I had a camera with a normal lens and I found a wide- angle lens in the shop. What happened is that, if you're familiar with a 4"x 5" cameras, one can have a lens that fits the camera, but does not have the scope to cover all the surface of the negative. The lens I used to make those images belongs, in fact, to a smaller format.

Even though I knew Emmet Gowin's work, I did not set consciously to imitate him. *I simply found a lens that did the same thing.* In such situation you might think: "I cannot do it because Gowin already did it". But I answered myself automatically saying "that's stupid". (Billy Hare interviewed by Jorge Villacorta and Ursula Freundt, *Billy Hare Fotografias*, 1997, my italics)



It is distance abolished

*There are fewer terms of designation than there are things to designate.
(These are) forms that alternatively suffocate and renew each other*

II.a) Now we shift positions. You again: "It might be necessary to extend the object in another way than expanding it to its interaction with its environment, in order to broaden its interior possibilities, for instance by giving it more dimensions."

It might be enough to extend the object so that it possess too the features of a poem or as a try out, a parable:

The Shadow of the Players "In one of the tales, which make up the series of the Mabinogiom, two enemy kings play chess while in a nearby valley their respective armies battle and destroy

each other. Messengers arrive with reports of the battle; the kings do not seem to hear them and, bent over the silver chessboard, they move the gold pieces. Gradually it becomes apparent that the vicissitudes of the battle follow the vicissitudes of the game. Towards dusk, one of the kings overturns the board because he has been declared checkmate, and presently a blood-spattered horseman comes to tell him: “Your army is in flight. You have lost the kingdom.”” (Edwin Morgan in *The Book of Fantasy*, ed. by Borges, Casares, Ocampo, 1940)

II.b) Yes, still my problem is the object. My problem consists of the question of what position I should take in order to, well, to get somewhere where the relations between myself and the object-as-it-is-being-constructed or the object-as-it-comes-to-exist (which should then be one and the same) are least distorted. Which does not necessarily mean that the object should have an objective existence.

So, I wonder what is the exact relation between those objects casting a white shadow and the plot or story explaining their existence and consistency. The object casting a white shadow needs to be constructed and the stupid question is why? Because it needs to be constructed by us, the implications will derive from the associations and symbolic meaning we project on its possible existence. So this means that its construction is a process in which we try to relate/combine our desires and imagination around the “idea” into an object. We cannot avoid that. In this process some ideas will be transformed slightly, other will be left out and new ones will be developed by the connections that come to exist in the construction. But how to transfer the structure which is first the support into the object so it becomes the collection of conditions that make up its existence?



1) To designate the object by the verb ‘estar’. I read that Oiticica designated his later Bolides by the Portuguese verb ‘estar’, to be, “as a quality of things as they are in themselves” in contrast to ‘ser’, to be as a quality of beings: “I call these Bolides ‘Estar’ [because] I want to draw attention to their real meaning as immanent structures. (...) The fact is that the need to give a new structure to colour, to give it “body”, brought me to the most unexpected results, one of which was the development of the *Bolides* from opaque to transparent, to a stage where colour not only represents itself in the oil and glue techniques, but in its pigmentary state, contained in the actual *Bolide* structure. (...) In structures totally made by me, there is a wish to objectify a subjective structural conception, which only realizes itself upon becoming concrete by the “making of the work”; in the ‘Trans-Objects’ there is the sudden identification of this subjective conception with the previously existing object as necessary to the structure of the work, which in its condition of object, opposed to the subject, already ceases to be opposed to the moment of identification because, in reality, it already existed implicitly in the idea”

2) To designate the object by the verb ‘ser’. Not to animate it but to open the door to the subjectivity of the (interior of the) object.

“I immediately seized another sheet of paper and wrote, also straight off, the six poems that make up Fernando Pessoa’s *Chuva Obliqua*. Immediately and completely...

It was the return of Fernando Pessoa Alberto Caeiro to Fernando Pessoa himself alone. Or better, it was the reaction of Fernando Pessoa against his own non-existence as Alberto Caeiro.” (Fernando Pessoa, 1935)

Pessoa’s invention of his heteronyms provided me with a clue on how to make it possible for someone (or something) to react to him/her/itself. This is important because it breaks the object-existence from the inside out. Because, by reacting to something that is internal, room is made in the consistency of a singularity: in order to be able to react you need to have space. As in the quote before: Pessoa writes this, after Alberto Caeiro just arose inside him and he had written 30 poems straight off as him.

Pessoa is reacting against his non-existence as Alberto Caeiro, so everything is suddenly inverted. His non-existence is concave instead of convex and his reaction I think would have to be too, so two concave forms inside someone/thing make an empty space. (I saw this making of space inside a singularity, which could be an object, as a step in the right direction. It felt as if I was trying to make space not only in order to be able to implement the mechanism necessary to produce a white shadow, but to give myself the idea that I could move a bit inside the object and around the riddle)

The philosopher Chuang Tzu dreamed he was a butterfly, and when he woke up he said he did not know whether he was Chuang Tzu who had dreamed he was a butterfly, or a butterfly now dreaming it was Chuan Tzu.

II.c) There’s music. There’s music stretching in space. No shadows follow sound but sometimes music is dark and severe as shades are. In this room, the room I’m in at the moment, there’s music and the room has turned into a heavy metal congress of shadows. The dust, the piles of paper, the ash tray, the metal box is wrapped by sound. Everything is taken by the gloom of this specific music. When sound is gone things get back into place. Everything is restored into its real, primary consistency. Yet, for a fragment of time sound and object became mutual: one taps, the other allows to be tapped. Both sides seem to derive some sort of benefit. Now another quote, one about mutualism I found in the net:

“The question how and why species might cooperate has received much attention from evolutionary biologists. One way to tackle this question is to look at an interaction between two individuals of these species, and estimate their costs and benefits from each kind of behavior. Researchers have used the Prisoner's Dilemma known from Game Theory, to model a situation with two possible strategies: 'cooperate' or 'defect' as one way to understand how cooperation might persist. In a one-time encounter, the safest strategy to use for each side would be to defect.”

To defect means that you still allow the affected thing to function, to be, lets say, *material*. No matter how profound the imperfection inside the internal structure of the object is; the object, a crystal set for example, would have enough qualities left as to operate. Remember ***Impressions Of Africa*** as being simultaneously the photograph of a well-oiled machine (the detective novel with a cohesive plot) and a photograph of the same well-oiled machine destroyed (a plot so

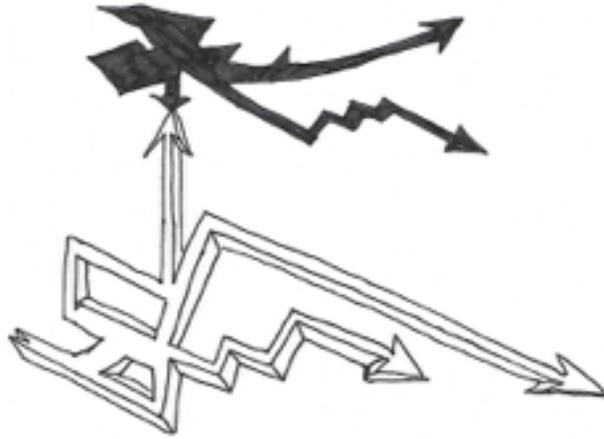


perfect that survives a crack up in the model of the detective novel- an object with enough qualities left as to operate). Inside one there's two. A system that drifts inside a kind of double stream where exclusion and inclusion seem to be *cooperating to defect*: an organism that includes its own mistake like a mysterious dual element which, going as far as paraphrasing Greil Marcus in *Mystery Train*, contaminates (infects) the ego. I know this is too bold, but: the highlight of Greil Marcus' *Mystery Train* is a remarkable chapter about Elvis, called "Elvis Presliad". Regarded by many as the most insightful writing there's about Presley, Marcus's essay is said to reach "a pitch of ecstasy, horror and understanding". Why? Because *Mystery Train* propose that the (individual, collective) liberation embodied by Elvis sprung from two connected barrels: one present as *Elvis* affecting and curling the 'real', the other streaming from a mysterious and chaotic otherness that evoke a seductive, addictive, force. Elvis was the porter of both –he inhabits both- and as a symbolic (and horrific + incredible) attestation, Marcus gives details of Elvis birth. When Elvis Aron Presley was born, Elvis twin brother, Jesse Garon, died. Jesse Garon was stillborn. Elvis was given the middle name of Aron, with only one A, so he would always be a part of his brother Jesse Garon. *Aron/Garon*. Inside one there's two.

Marcus point is clearly more elaborated and informed and serious. Mine is just impulsive and plot-oriented. But still, far off the mark or right in the spot- this anecdote helps by saying: a body, cell, organism is able to congress its own positive and negative, one as a cognizant body, the other as a pre cognitive splendor. In between we could say there's a short circuit, a disorder that occurs unseen, like in the shadow of both players, like in '*the reaction of Fernando Pessoa against his own non-existence*'.

This short circuit can also produce a white shadow.





PART 5A

a) Since I'm running out of gas, I'll try to bring together some points I feel are very, very close but not close enough.

One Film: Yesterday late they broadcast an espionage classic: *Scorpio* (Michael Winner 1973). Today I found an over priced original poster and a quick resume of the movie in the Internet. The resume:

"Gerald Cross (Burt Lancaster) is an aging C.I.A. agent who wants to retire. His boss McLeod is not so happy with this idea and asks Jean Laurier (Alain Delon), alias Scorpio, to eliminate Cross. In order to persuade Scorpio, a friend of Cross, McLeod assures him that Cross is a double agent. Cross leaves the U.S.A. and disappears in the city of Vienna, Austria where he asks his old K.G.B. friend named Zharkov for help. Meanwhile, Scorpio, who's understood, that Cross isn't in the U.S. anymore, is coming everyday nearer. But when Cross's wife is accidentally killed by the C.I.A. during the burglary of her home, a vengeful Cross comes back to Washington and...." doesn't matter. What mattered was the idea of the *double agent*. I made some annotations. I'm afraid it was quite late:

Double splendor. Things that rot and crack- way in. 'Estar' and 'Ser'. Double Agent. Oscillating (rotating) problem. Oscillating (rotating) problem dispatcher. Scorpio. Cross. Burt L.

Today I went through some of the text we had and made some diversions so I could cement my way into Scorpio and Cross-Burt, our *double agent*.

The Yage Letters, City Lights Books, San Francisco: an early epistolary novel by William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg. In 1951, William Burroughs traveled to the Amazon Jungle searching for the telepathic- hallucinogenic-mind-expanding-drug Yage or Ayahuasca. Seven years later Ginsberg in Peru writes Burroughs an account of his own visions and terrors with the same drug.

Fragments from a letter of A.G to W.B: "(...) I remember you saying watch out whose vision you get- but God knows I don't know who to turn to finally when (...) I have to depend on my own serpent-self's memory of Merry Visions of Blake- or depend on nothing and enter anew- but enter

what? Death? - and at the moment- vomiting still feeling like a Great lost Serpent seraph vomiting in consciousness of the Transfiguration to come- with the Radio telepathy sense of a Being whose presence I had not yet fully sensed- too horrible for me, still- to accept the fact of total communication with say everyone an eternal seraph male and female at once.”

And later: “I hardly have the nerve to go back, afraid some real madness, a Changed Universe permanently changed- tho’I guess change it must for me someday (...)- I wish I knew who, if anyone, there is to work with that knows, if anyone knows, who I am or what. I wish I could hear from you. I will be here long enough for a letter to reach me- write”

Burroughs replied 11 days later: “(...) you cannot show to anyone what he has not seen’. Brion Gysin for Hassan Sabbah. Listen now? Take the enclose copy of this letter. Cut along the lines. Rearrange putting section one by section three and section two by section four. Now read aloud and you will hear my voice. Whose voice? Listen.

ACROSS ALL THE SKIES SEE THE SILENT WRITING OF BRION GYSIN HASSAN SABBAH. THE WRITING OF SPACE. THE WRITING OF SILENCE.”



Dreamachine plans, by Brion Gysin, Temple Press Ltd., Brighton

B. Gysin: English painter, collaborator and friend of Burroughs who suggested to him the application of XX century painter’s techniques to written compositions. He himself, Gysin along with his friend Ian Sommerville, crafted a beautiful Dreamachine. He wrote:

“DREAMACHINE visions usually begin by the meteorically rapid transit of infinite series of abstract elements. These may be followed in time by clear perception of faces, figures and the apparent enactment of highly colored serial pseudo- events. The DREAMACHINE is a dream-machine. These dreams can be immediately interrupted and brought to an end simply by opening your eyes. However you look into a DREAMACHINE, in a short time you will have acquired greater self-knowledge, extended the limits of your vision, brightened your perception of a treasure you may not have known you own.”

b) I’ll try to yield one new idea with another one we place earlier: *the double agent as double binder*.

Strong thesis: in finding a way to untie the riddle of the white shadow we need to consider *all* objects as porters of a double event. Like a Moebius construction: *the white shadow as the reflection of its own construction imposed on an object* that otherwise would not exist and now,

now that exists, does not only have to deal with its “created” characteristics but also cannot avoid taking in natural “object” qualities.

In short- a double compulsion or firing where the target is out of the object itself and like wise inside. So as we go back to all the examples and quotes we’ve dropped around the manufacture of the/a white shadow, we could find a common denominator: the need for a surplus or interface that will merge what is present and what is not and, in a second movement, will shape what is absent as *something present*- a black stripe, the light inside your eyes as the Dreamachine turns and turns- and will consider what is ‘present’ as the *shadows of something* which is *not* present, like in ***The Shadow Of The Players***, like the ‘equivalent images that would make them experience analogous sensations’ in the case of Sarraute’s ***Tropism***.

Back to the idea of the double agent; when I saw the movie I had our discussion/article in mind so I immediately reacted to the notion of someone who exist as the interface of ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ information. Cross- Burt Lancaster- is in itself the instigator of a secret traffic from an inside source (CIA) to an outside source (KGB) while keeping his position as a key member of a source (as an *elemental particle* of the espionage world). Hence, he’s like *two concave forms inside someone/thing that make an empty space* for traffic. As you said too: he has to deal with its created characteristics as well as performing his natural qualities, which means: the agent as a *form* cooperates with the 2 sides by defecting his *own form*.

A softer thesis will say: some objects (events) naturally find their nemesis, their inversed simile, their mutual concave form, outside the contours of the object itself. Even if this recognition don’t last more than a fraction of a fraction of a second, it’s strong enough to expand the plateau (arena) where we consider the object originally to be. If the strong thesis suggests that in order to find a solution for the problem of the white shadow we need to find two concave forms inside the object, the object’s *double agent*, what the softer thesis might suggest is that the other concave figure from which ‘extra’ space will be created can happen by finding, outside the object, a symmetric form that will yield- mute- convert momentarily two objects into one. And prolong their matter.



2 examples discussed before:

1) “I had a camera with a normal lens and I found a wide- angle lens in the shop. What happened is that, if you’re familiar with a 4”x 5” cameras, one can have a lens that fits the camera, but does not have the scope to cover all the surface of the negative. The lens I used to make those images belongs, in fact, to a smaller format.

Even though I knew Emmet Gowin’s work, I did not set consciously to imitate him. *I simply found a lens that did the same thing*”.

2) “(...) I have to depend on my own serpent-self’s memory of Merry Visions of Blake- or depend on nothing and enter anew- but enter what? Death? - and at the moment- vomiting still feeling like a Great lost Serpent seraph vomiting in consciousness of the Transfiguration to come”. And the answer: “THE WRITING OF SPACE. THE WRITING OF SILENCE.”

The Transfiguration-to-Come is the awareness of the Shift-to-Come (matter slowly fading and propagating) in this case associated with the Yage ritual, a ritual based on the symbolic dissemination of the self into zillions of simultaneous places. Ginsberg envisages the moment in which he will be taken by an external extension his body + self. Prior to the quote he says: *I remember you saying watch out whose vision you get* which clearly exposes the intricacies of an operation where a body (object) is dismantled (cracked), ignoring if the full re-composition (reclaiming) of the body (object) ‘original fuselage’ would be possible. That’s the place, according to my perspective, where tragedy kicks in (I’ll explain this later).

c) Both theses are different sides of the same coin. What changes is the violence of their pitch and the different things they trail on the ground.

In the case of the first idea, where objects need to be seen as carters of *double agents*, I will gladly place the *fantastic* as an exemplary component: ‘*What is Great Cthulhu?*’- Asked Houllebecq referring to Lovecraft’s monster- ‘*an arrangements of electrons, like us*’. But I’ll also accent (consider) the destructive (tragic) qualities imperative in all objects that carry or project their own reversed image (Borges: terror can be found in symmetry). In Bioy Casares *Morel’s Invention*, the projections are not merely images: Morel has discovered how to project matter itself into space, but the holograms cannot interact with anything that was not already in the recording, for they are not in that sense alive, repeating mechanically the actions, words, and even, it is conjectured, thoughts, that they underwent at the time that they were recorded. But the device, this ultimate holographic projection, has a terrible cost. In recording matter itself, it extracts some fundamental essence of matter, leaving the original that was recorded without material substance. Between eight and fifteen days after having been recorded by the machine, organic bodies begin to decay from the outside in.





Here is imperative of tragedy: *Carrying your own projection is like carrying your own dust.*

Under this motto, an object able to project a reversed shadow is: One object able to yield (enclose) two distant figures of reality and give them equiangular spheres.

Again: "Sarraute is writing about these hardly cognizant movements, for me the most beautiful thing would be the (imagined) experience of the 'normal' object recomposing itself into an object that would cast a white shadow."

Yes, almost like a microbiological description or angle. To zoom into the very moment in which a gene decides to disseminate something contrary to what it is supposed to. As you will read on the other email, maybe that's what I refer with the idea of the double agent; a structural component that can allow things to spin recklessly (a rotating + oscillating engine kind of thing) against and NOT against its own sphere. Simple: the object in a micro level contains its negative. Influence doesn't need to come from the outside- forget the discussions about Black Suns + Back Lights- because the inside is able to contaminate the inside. Here all your interests in biology seem to make sense. Shame I cannot remember them. My closest examples are, as always, kind of useless and includes one image: snowflakes that once they hit the ground look like ashes and a new genre: tales of viajes iniciaticos very much in the line of **Arthur Gordon Pym** the book by Poe.

You'll like this explanation: Various adventures and mis-adventures befall Pym including shipwreck, mutiny and cannibalism (!) The story starts out as a fairly conventional adventure at sea, but it becomes increasingly strange and hard to classify in later chapters, involving religious symbolism and the Hollow Earth. Apparently: "Poe wrote the novel with a deliberate and experimental structure whereby the mood of each chapter was matched by the corresponding chapter at the other end of the book. This results in the narrative starting optimistic, descending into depression and then returning to optimism." (citation missing)
Haven't read Roussel's *Impression*, but it sounds as Pym was his godfather.
Just took a picture of the book in the snow.

In the case of the second, so called softer idea, the whole system is more bodily. More related to the full, outer topology of the single object and its coordination with another single object than to the (oscillating) components and variable spheres that configure the objects 'privacy' (private parts?). Here objects are drifting in a kind of Metonic Cycles, where stuff, from time to time 'let go' into other stuff and let other stuff.... well you know how it is. Returning to the concept of mutualism: there's an interaction between two species involving close physical and biochemical contact. But there are also different leaks of (into) otherness- ectoplasm, hallucinations, levity and the incessant traffic of fleeting matter and their fading reflections. In short, symptoms of disorder and contortion associated with substances in *trance*.

S. Pistols in Bodies: "Throbbing squirm, / gurgling bloody mess / I'm not a discharge & / I'm not a loss in protein & / I'm not a throbbing squirm!"

The repetition of negatives (*I'm not's*) camouflages the latent terror of becoming- turning into- those things. By enumerating them we make them sound as false hints,





fake echoes of the self, but the terror however is in the recognition of them as *possibilities*, as accessible *otherness*- as reflections of our own disorder.

So, for the sake of the argument we could say: *a moving body is a vacant body or an object (entity) needs to be spitted into space in order to be recognized by the other. Or, once they're 'let go' they re-start as identifiable particles.*

Time after time, in succession, there seems to be an essential metonymic quality by which objects could perform more than one operation, breaking their core again and again, infiltrating, squirming, going after themselves like 'visions' that 'usually begin by the meteorically rapid transit of infinite series of abstract elements' which are then 'followed in time by clear perception of faces, figures and the apparent enactment of highly colored serial pseudo- events'; the full steam and power of an infinite dreamachine. Cycles are opened and closed. Sometimes not even closed. One movement is equidistant to the other even if they seem to be coming from (zillions of) different vanishing points. What traps them is the split second where two shapes become inversely concave.

Double binding. Oscillation. Cooperating is strictly dominated by defecting. *In this room, the room I'm in at the moment, there's music and the room has turned into a heavy metal congress of shadows* or as you say in your last email: "precisely that process where the worldness of worlds reveals or manifest itself."

So, back to the case of the white shadow: following this chain of thoughts, the white shadow would be the footprint of two substances mutually disintegrating into each other yet still keeping a sensual (Oiticica- the supra sensorial) recognition of their singular bodies. 2 objects can both *not* entirely usurp the place (of one another) because then they would become 'rivals'. If so, possibilities of reclaiming your self as ONE are endangered: *I remember you saying watch out whose vision you get.* If tragedy was exemplified in the first idea by an image of an object that, on a micro level, carried its own inversed reflection (its negative), here tragedy, as I guessed earlier, could be typified by not being able to return as ONE. Which means, instead of saying: *from his journey to the penumbral worlds of the unutterable, Lovecraft did not return to bring us good news* we would say: *from his journey to the penumbral worlds of the unutterable, Lovecraft did not return.* Full stop. What provides continuity and dimension to the void created by two-inversed-concave-forms or for that matter, almost any dialectical (de) composition, is that duality manifest itself in short circuits or waves. Spasms of contact in which 2 objects mute & tap & reflect over each other and then diverge, untie.

But then again, the white shadow is the footprint. "I always did believe," he reflected "that the footprint business would be the simplest thing in the affair. But there are some things in it that are by no means simple" said Gabriel Gale, the poet of *The Poet And The Lunatics*, a book by G. K. Chesterton. The question is, the white shadow is the footprint of what? Of:

- a state of rupture or exaltation in which somebody (matter) loses consciousness.
- a state in which somebody is dazed or stunned or, in a way, unaware of his contours.
- a (the) state of apparent semi- consciousness that a spiritual medium enters into, allegedly in an attempt to communicate with the dead.

The question is, the footprint of what? The answer: the footprints of a *trance*. The light that bleeds from the object, the object that absorbs the glow of another object: a bond so low that is almost weightless and reciprocal, almost silent; the close up of 2 bodies that shift positions and become unconscious. Information is transferred by light; information acquired by a double



process of association and reflection. The word here is to glean, a way of cropping information, data, facts, figures, numbers via shining objects. *We expulse things in order to recognize them or we write about the absurd idea of a white shadow in order to place it as something, as matter or as a symbol of other something that we cannot see. Or, there are fewer terms of designation than there are things to designate: 2 bodies that shift positions and become unconscious.* What remains is ‘the dense outer layer of the substance that surrounds the nucleus of a cell’ or else, an obverted presence or else, a shared ectoplasm.

PART 5B

Do you remember the moment in which the protagonist of Morel's Invention is locked in the machine-room because he started the projection-machine?

Morel has built in a security system to protect his projection machine: The machine projects the recorded wall of its room over the manually manufactured walls, so it is actually “*the same walls taken by the machine and then projected on themselves*”. Because he made a miscalculation concerning the tides that should keep the machine working continuously, there are certain moments in which it is possible to break the real wall, to enter the room and get to the machines. At the moment the machines start working again, the still whole wall-projection takes its place again.

When trying to *access the unspeakable shadow of things*, as Francesco writes in his epilogue, by simultaneously *understanding* and *saying*, and imagining what “*the things themselves never fervently thought to be*” the thinking and writing became a ground on which to place new concepts of the existence and even the life of objects. By defining conditions and parts of conditions, new structures were built on which a constellation of possible objects came to exist. In this, the white shadow is everywhere to be reasonably imagined and nowhere to be seen.

Now for me objects lose consciousness, they have never been so obscure in what they actually are and yet, I seem to understand them better, they have been animated, as the belonging with which the captives in *Impressions of Africa* put up their show for King Talou VII. It is their double, triple, ... remote conditions I have to think of: Roussel's lonely ecstasy, the obscure existence of the book, the single visitor that came to see the play in the Netherlands and then the vast sea around the island and the captives performing – in their performance deprived from any structure able to provide them with a personality, in the story in service of their inventions, in the novel in service of the plot, the well-oiled machine or this machine broken in pieces.

In the end, it seems to me only natural that the object casting a white shadow derives its consistency from a structural narrative or poetic organization of text/language. The defining feature of the reverse shadow, as is said in the epilogue, might be that no one talks about them, but inversely the arguments we put up have created in, during, with their development specific object-existences and situations that now contain the conditions for the white shadow to dwell in. When I wrote “It might be enough to extend the object so that it possess too the features of a poem” I meant also: *It might be that we need to reconfigure the features and dimensions of a poem (or narrative text) in such a way that they formulate/devise a possible existence that could be articulated as an object.*

I) A Trojan Horse Argument

a) The interior as a setting

"What I wrote was surrounded by radiance, I closed the curtains, for I was afraid that the slightest gap might allow the luminous beams that were radiating from my pen to escape outside, I wanted to tear the screen away suddenly and illuminate the world. If I left these papers lying about, they would have sent rays of light as far as China and a bewildered crowd would have burst into the house." (Raymond Roussel)

"[Raymond Roussel] said that after his first book he expected that the next morning there would be a kind of aura around his person and that everyone in the street would be able to see that he had written a book. This is the obscure desire harbored by everyone who writes. It is true that the first text one writes is neither written for others, nor because one is what one is: *one writes to become other than what one is. One tries to modify one's way of being through the act of writing.*" (Michel Foucault, my italics)

I just read about Margaret Cavendish who wrote *Description of a New World called the Blazing World* (1666) which "made of the interior an articulated world, not merely the assumed emotional sensorium of the subject of experience" (Mary Baine Campbell, *Wonder & Science*). She conceives the 'human' interior as a setting or medium for narratable events.





“If we take it seriously, the feudal figure offered here, of the mirroring servant giving gifts to the beneficent Lord, the King's ominous power over the "Invisible Minds of Men" has its parallel in the scientist's power [intention] to penetrate the visual surfaces of the "least of visible things". And so the Terra Incognita of the Microscopic, that "dominated world" (in Bachelard's phrase for the miniature), is also an Empire. The analogue to Hooke's *microscopic* subjects (The Louse, the Mite, the snowflake) is the *human* subject (...) *Interiors MUST be valuable, since they are the spaces of the King's "Empire".*” (Mary Baine Campbell, *Wonder & Science*, last italics mine).

b) The ‘I’ as agency in the object

Do you remember the moment in which the protagonist of Morel's Invention is locked in the machine-room because he started the projection-machine?

4 Trojan Horses:

1) “Paradoxically, just as we feel from Michaux’s drawings that he came into an intimacy with some principle force of everything, we find him regretting that he was losing in the process what it is to be human (...) He describes the sense of joy, after emerging from his trance, at rediscovering his will.” (Octavio Paz about Henri Michaux’s mescaline drawings)

2) “The “hole” is this dimension. I say dimension because I cannot think what other word to use. I make a hole in the canvas in order to leave behind me the old pictorial formulae, the painting and the traditional view of art, and I escape symbolically, but also materially, from the prison of that flat surface (...) And especially when I used the precise terms ‘spatial concept’. It was an object and really I anticipated objects. They were objects, no longer pictures. These things have now achieved a perfect form, but that form is also decadent” (Lucio Fontana)

3) Robert Smithson Four-sided Vortex (1965) is a box containing mirror-planes in crystalline clusters. As one gazes down in it one finds “a concatenated interior. The interior structure of the room surrounding the work is instantaneously undermined. The surfaces seem thrown back into the wall. ‘Space’ is permuted into a multiplicity of directions.” (Robert Smithson)

4) “Mode Three: Annihilation. I particularly like the following example as a resident in two categories: both a perfect anagram and a pun based on small aural differences between the two parts (...) Etrangler l'étranger (...) - to strangle the stranger. Just move the "l" from the verb and make it the definite article for the noun. The action of the verb will then annihilate the noun. But the two parts of speech remain alike both visually (as a perfect anagram) and aurally (as a good pun).” (The Substantial ghost, *Tout-fait: The Marcel Duchamp Studies Online Journal website*)

So, the Trojan Horses. It started with the idea of “the white shadow as the reflection of its own construction imposed on an object”. In order to compress the white-shadow-object-existence to

its most dense form this short-circuit has to be made part of a fusion or intertwining of object and creator. The creator needs to be transferred to the centre of his/her object-creation, to become the agency IN the object. So that the object gets its final features through and after the insertion of its maker, the Trojan Horse, an *active* nucleus implemented by a structural direction that is set up first, before the object obtains its object-hood, leading to a dead-drop/ eye of the tornado in which it will think, maneuver and 'act', through and via/with the body of the object, outwardly directed.

"[To] use dramatic terminology, we might say that in this object-turned-narrative the attributes of Agency and Act, are as much features of the Scene [the structure of the object] as of the "hero" [The Trojan Horse]." (missing citation) After the maker of the object found his way in, he/she can use the same structural path to lure also the reader-spectator in.

Again Roussel. Twenty-two years after *Impressions of Africa* he wrote *New Impressions of Africa*. The poem could easily be taken as a part of the gala that is put on in Impressions of Africa, as "a theatrical task or test of mechanical ingenuity based on his inherent skills". (Trevor Winkfield) On first impression the poem seems impenetrable. Based on form principles rather than content: Consisting of four cantos, the work mostly consists of parenthetical sections imbedded one within another (and another and another) at times up to five deep (and then there are the footnotes with multiple parentheses).

Throughout, Roussel maintains alexandrines in rhyming couplets, alternating the French masculine and feminine rhymes. And even on second impression the impenetrability resides, if not the reader makes a divide between the strong formal intention of the poem's structure and procedure and the content of its lines, and looks for the entrance in the first.

We do not want to get lost and we need to get lost, so we flip back and forth, trying to follow the poem's logic to its center, while we realize it is necessary to divide our intention – following the double tracks simultaneously. By this action we follow the poet's footsteps into a genius trap, but not to get caught. When finally arriving at the poem's deepest point, it tells us: "*De se taire, parfois, riche est l'occasion*" (Sometimes it is preferable to remain silent). So we drop silent and look around.

Roussel needed to get himself trapped in the poem, in order to make space to actually finish the work he needed to install and stay aware of the subjectivity of the object-existence he was creating. Roussel explained that he had big difficulties keeping the expanding work together. He started from his well-known procedure, but was not able to stick to it and had to use different form principles that are closely aligned, but essentially pragmatic adaptations of his procedure, that he could only make because he managed to infiltrate (the Trojan Horse again) the idea before it became an object.

And then, the poem so much driven by the consistent intention of the writer ends up at the point John Cage describes as: "This brings me to an idea of silence. For me, silence is basically giving up all intentions"



II) The Double Object

Do you remember the moment in which the protagonist of *Morel's Invention* is locked in the machine-room because he started the projection-machine?

- a) You mentioned *Arthur Gordon Pym* by Edgar Allen Poe, I remember I read Pym a long long time ago, 10 years at least, and I was quite taken by it. I like the disintegration countered or paralleled by the symmetry or an alike structural composition - it is this doubling that I seem to get to. And here I find it especially interesting because the disintegration takes place in both 'form and content' (Pym as I remember correctly loses it or is lost (doesn't he see something at the end?) - like the protagonist in *Morel's invention*, like Roman in Vladimir Sorokin's *A Novel* -
- b) an implosion of the center of the narrative) which is expressed in the language on form and content level and then there's the whole construction of the novel. It is like the refugee in Morel's engine room - he is encapsulated not in one but in two prisons that exist overlapping each other and that have to give way to each other somehow but at the moment that this doesn't happen they occupy the same space in parallel existences. Or thinking the other way, paraphrasing Henri Bergson on intuition: the two 'objects' can both not *entirely* usurp the place because then one or the other would immediately be driven out by its rival.

2) “[Vladimir Sorokin] looks at literature as an exclusively aesthetic category, rejecting the spiritual and moral imperatives with which it has been infused during the last two centuries. (...) [T]o Sorokin, literature and life are nonintersecting lines, two independent phenomena. (...) Literature for Sorokin is paper holding a combination of printable characters, falling outside of moral and ethical categories and never reflecting the real way an author thinks, acts and feels as a human being. (...) [T] he act of writing is an authors attempt to come to terms with his own psyche, or to shield it from reality.

(...)

A key feature of Sorokin's texts is the disintegration of syntax into nonsensical letter and word combinations: it is as if the text has had a nervous breakdown. Sorokin's text becomes the mirror of the social and political it is meant to represent. His writing does not preach or teach, in the classical Russian tradition, but instead urges the reader to be an active participant in the construction of meaning or “significance”. Indeed, does literature have any meaning? *A Novel* (1994) is almost 400 pages long, most of it set in an idyllic rural setting right out of the ages of a novel by Turgenev or Bunin. However, after he has been bitten by a wolf during a hunt, the central character, Roman, proceeds to butcher all his neighbors and family, then his newly-acquired wife Tat'iana, before himself dying. As Roman dies, the novel dies.” (David Gillespie and Elena Smirnova, 2003)





“Death of the hero means here death of the author, as the hero has destroyed anyone else he was the last to be described. In Sorokin’s case it is not the author who dies with the hero but his double, an alter ego predestined to be shot down – the honest, authentic author.”(Boris Groys, 1992) Bringing everything together rather recklessly: the white shadow as the reflection of its own construction imposed on an object, the concave space made in the object, the creator-writer as Trojan Horse in his/her own creation, the double existence of the object, I want to return to your idea of the double binder to add the last condition: In the novels of Poe and Sorokin there is a special case of the double existence of the singular object. Especially in Sorokin’s novel (which title is, we should remember: A Novel) there is a double or triple binder in the form of a catastrophic plot. While one object (the story) gives way to decadence (and decadence only because the simultaneous existence of the other object) and disintegrates, the other object (the novel), whose original purpose is to serve as the 'keeper', *is both kept and destroyed*. Now both existing and not-existing - its inherent tragedy - it takes with it in its disaster not only its hero and its creator but also destroys its own entire cosmos: here literature is not merely deconstructed – it is metaphorically ripped apart.

PART 6: The Year Of Magical Thinking

a) What I've done is I have placed the production of white shadows under two different optics of 'tragedy'. One is seeing the object from it inside and saying- what produces the white shadow is a fucked up little thing that sometimes (sometimes not) decides to turn the 'other way'. You know, we talked about that one. Terror (or tragedy) comes in the form of an image that contains its own negative and oscillates between his 'positive' reflection and his 'negative' reflection. Ok.

The other is seeing the object from the outside, and considering the body in relation to other full bodies and saying- we need to spit (expulse) things (bodies, matter, objects) to the void in order to recognize them. Wait, I'll paste the part:

“For the sake of the argument we could say: a moving body is a vacant body or an object (entity) needs to be spitted into space in order to be recognized by the other. Or, once they're 'let go' they re-start as identifiable particles.

Time after time, in succession, there seems to be an essential metonymic quality by which objects could perform more than one operation, breaking their core again and again, infiltrating, squirming, going after themselves like 'visions' that 'usually begin by the meteorically rapid transit of infinite series of abstract elements' which are then 'followed in time by clear perception of faces, figures and the apparent enactment of highly colored serial pseudo- events'; the full steam and power of an infinite dreamachine. Cycles are opened and closed. Sometimes not even closed. One movement is equidistant to the other even if they seem to be coming from (zillions



of) different vanishing points. What traps them is the split second where two shapes become inversely concave.”

Tragedy then comes in the form of not being able to reclaim yourself as ONE (basically, that you're stuck with the other- not stuck, but absorbed) or else, of not being able to preserve (protect) the presence of the other, so you're in a state of 'unwanted solipsism'. When I talk about the object in coordination with other object, what I'm saying is that the substance left by the contact of one against the other is our famous white shadow. Is like a super fragile ectoplasm that is cast: “So, back to the case of the white shadow: following this chain of thoughts, the white shadow would be the footprint of two substances mutually disintegrating into each other yet still keeping a sensual (Oiticica- the supra sensorial) recognition of their singular bodies.” Tragedy then is produced in the moment you cannot recognize the full consequence/form/topology of the shifting because the other element is already gone and you're emptied back (vaciado in Spanish- full of void or something like that).

The link between these 2 forms of tragedy- seeing the object containing his own negative + the object not being able to 'call' back his double-binder is what informs *The Year Of Magical Thinking* and, according to Didion, the mechanics of grief.

b) To include passages of Joan Didion's *The Year Of Magical Thinking* seems, of all choices, the most peculiar. Didion's book examines the way she relates with the permanent presence of the unseen: the objects left by her husband, John Gregory Dunne, after his sudden death. Belts, shoes, credit cards, his voice in the answering machine, stuff which attain the intensity of an invisible force. Recurring objects and extracts that, reconsidered through the optics of grief & mourning & melancholia, become new quarters in her life. Didion come across the prolonged shadow of John Gregory Dunne making its way without the material representation of John Gregory Dunne-without the fuselage. She experiences the lost of her partner through the traffic of ghastly thoughts and memories that tend to reorganize the fabric of her own habitual thoughts and memories. Like coins moving intangibly over a table, Didion's metabolism seems to change through the pages of the book. The weight of grief produces a defect in the internal structure of the writer and, inevitably, of the book and the reader. This is what caught my attention and this is what I responded to; how to relate to the hidden part of a matter, of a body, an object, an engine, an agglomeration that suddenly digress and comes back as other or, in the case of *The Year Of Magical Thinking*, as an absence.

Randomly, I open the book and search for trails. In almost every place something echoes, something comes back in the form of a mirror image that makes sense. Her writing *makes sense* and this is also what I responded to, for Didion's book is the proof that even absence can break the shadow of solipsism.

Fragments of Didion's *Year Of Magical Thinking*:

*“We are repeatedly left, in other words, with no further focus than ourselves, a source from which self-pity naturally flows. Each time this happens (it happens still) I am struck again by the permanent impassibility of the divide. Some people who lost a husband or wife report feeling that person's presence, receiving that person's advice. Some report actual sightings, what Freud described in *Mourning and Melancholia* as a 'clinging to the object through the medium of a hallucinatory wishful psychosis'. Others describe not visible apparition but just a 'very strongly felt presence'. I experienced neither. There have been occasions in which I asked John point blank what to do. I said I need his help. I said I could not do this alone. I*



said this things out loud, actually vocalized the words.

I am a writer. Imagining what someone would say or do comes naturally as breathing.

Yet on each occasion these pleas for his presence served only to reinforce my awareness of the final silence that separate us. Any answer he gave could exist only in my imagination, my edit.”

“Grief is different. Grief has no distance. Grief comes in waves, paroxysms, sudden apprehensions that weaken the knees and blind the eyes and obliterate the dailiness of life. Virtually everyone mentions this phenomenon of ‘waves’ (...) ‘sensations of somatic distress occurring in waves lasting from twenty minutes to an hour at a time, a feeling of tightness in the throat, choking with shortness of breath, need for sighing, and an empty feeling in the abdomen. (...)’

Tightness in the throat.

Choking, need for sighing.

(...) For several weeks that would be the way I woke the day.

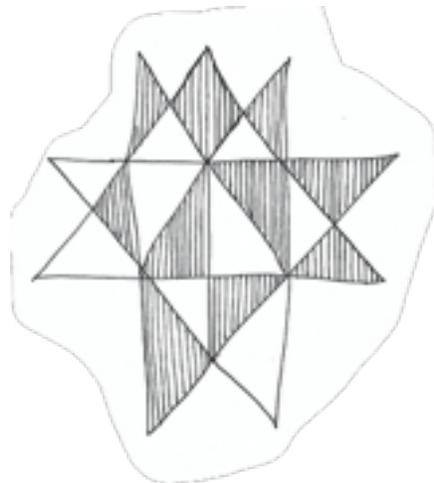
I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day

There was a level on which I believed that what had happened remained reversible. That’s why I needed to be alone.

I needed to be alone so that he could come back.

This was the beginning of my year of magical thinking.”

“In the version of grief we imagine, the model will be ‘healing’. A certain forward movement will prevail. We imagine that the moment to most severely test us will be the funeral, after which the hypothetical healing will take place. When we anticipate the funeral we wonder about failing to ‘get through it’, rise to the occasion, exhibit the ‘strength’ that invariably gets mentioned as the correct response to death. (...) We have no way of knowing that this is not the issue. We have not way of knowing that the funeral itself will be anodyne, a kind of narcotic regression (...). Nor can we know ahead of the fact (and here lies the heart of the difference between grief as we imagine it and grief as what it is) the unending absence that follows, the void, the very opposite of meaning, the relentless succession of moments during which we will confront the experience of meaningless itself.”



“A week or so before the Democratic convention, The New York Times has reposted a story involving Stephen W. Hawking. At a conference in Dublin, according to the Times, Dr. Hawking said that he had been wrong thirty years before when he asserted that information swallowed by a black hole could never be retrieved from it. This change of mind was ‘of great consequence to science’, according to the Times, Dr. Hawking said that he had been wrong thirty years before when he asserted that information swallowed by a black hole could never be retrieved from it. This change of mind was ‘of great consequence to science’, according to the Times, “because if Dr. Hawking had been right, it would have violated a basic tenet of modern physics: that it is always possible to reverse time, run the proverbial film backward and reconstruct what happened in, say, the collision of two cars or the collapsed of a dead star into a black hole”.

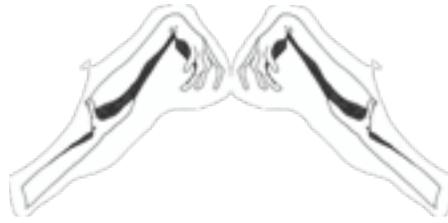
I had clipped this story, and carried with me to Boston. (...) I realized that since the last morning of 2003, the morning he died, I had been trying to reverse time, run the film backwards.

It was now eight months later, August 30, 2004, and I still was.

The difference was that through those eight months I had been trying to substitute an alternate reel. Now I was trying only to reconstruct the collision, the collapsed of a dead star.”

We had agreed that Didion more or less suits both endings. So this is a final annotations regarding G.K. Chesterton, someone who, alive, might have easily been Joan Didion’s antipode. We thought of Chesterton from the beginning so it makes sense to fetch him back: “ The first and fundamental principle is that the aim of a mystery story, as of every other story and every other mystery, is not darkness but light. (...) The misunderstanding is only meant as a dark outline of cloud to bring out the brightness of that instant of intelligibility; (...) it is also necessary to have a secret; and to have a secret worth hiding.” (G.K. Chesterton, How to Write a Detective Story, 1925)





COLOPHON

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The White Shadow

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