

# The Gait of the *City*

*Oedipus and Impressions of Modernity*



Figure 1. "Oedipus et Sphinx",  
Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, 1808.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons.

## **Candidate:**

Andrew Douglas  
Student Reference - 22148465  
Goldsmiths, University of London  
Doctor of Philosophy

## ***Declaration***

I hereby declare that this work is the result of my own independent investigation, except where I have indicated my indebtedness to other sources.

I hereby certify that this work has not already been accepted in substance for any other degree, nor is it being submitted concurrently for any other degree.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Douglas', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew Douglas

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## **Abstract**

This project investigates historical changes in urban phenomena. It questions how cities are made manifest through experience. To this end the research is concerned with styles of appearing that have been shown by way of foot. In questioning how cities, motility and senses of self intersect historically, it develops what is termed an onto-peripatetics that traces the genealogy of self-conscious walking - specifically forms of pedestrianism that have entered into writing. It seeks to identify a deeper temporal substratum to the now routine association of walking and writing in romanticism and nineteenth century urban accounts.

The project tracks via the Cartesian and Kantian *cogitos* a particular disjunction between self and world that has occasioned a synthesising drive exemplified by travel, observation and written reflection. If in this synthesis a particular cognitive bias has prevailed over bodies, the research aims to think into this hiatus itself, seeking to unearth the genealogy and the productivity - politically, socially, philosophically – sustaining it. The presumption pursued in the project has been twofold: firstly that this hiatus belongs to an enduring or rather reduplicating figure – Oedipus; and secondly, that both the hiatus and its namesake are integrally tied with Occidental urban life. What is termed an Oedipal vector – traversing myth, tragedy, aesthetics, psychoanalysis, and what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari termed schizoanalysis – is read against an array of literary and philosophical texts addressing urban space. Ranging from Plato, in whom is found a metaphysical walk, to an idiorrhythmy (Barthes 2013) crafted by Rimbaud in his encounter with Victorian London, the project aims to account for a disjunctive synthesis (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000) unfolded in urban place-accounts historically.

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## ***Chapter Publication List***

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# INTRODUCTION

## *Foothold, or the Onto-Peripatetic*

Would he say that there is nothing in his head that has not first of all been in his feet?

Michel Serres, 1985

### 1. *The Linear Clearing*

This project investigates historical changes in urban phenomena. It questions *what* is it that cities manifest - what they make apparent or cause to appear. Equally it asks *how* cities are made manifest through experience. To this end the research is concerned with styles of appearing that have been shown by way of foot. Why this particular vantage point? Historically, the mobile perspective offered by walking has uniquely contributed to thinking through appearances. I argue that it has also prompted broader questions of “existential foothold”. This term coined by Christian Norberg-Schulz in his phenomenologically-inflected inquiry into the nature of architecture, proposed that the built environment, in particular, ought to provide the basis for a “concrete” hold from which a shared “life world” would unfold (1980, p. 05). Norberg-Schulz had in mind Martin Heidegger’s assertions concerning dwelling, in which “the primordial spatiality of being-in” involves more than simply being sheltered, contained or located. Rather, at stake was a residing that involved putting down roots, making anywhere somewhere, organising place, and rendering it collectively meaningful and capable of being wholly inhabited (Heidegger 1996a, p. 99). However, such a Heideggerian view of being-in can be seen to be precisely what the excessively populous and expanding domain of cities have historically problematised. I will explore the proposition that walkers observing and writing about cities have been intent on making salient such an existential disorientation by variously drawing near to it. In doing so a reductive principle will routinely be seen to be in action: the quest for orientation rests on manifesting what the given obfuscates.

Indicatively, for Norberg-Schulz a *genius loci* - a quality indicative of a place’s subsisting *Stimmung* or character - was too often missing in the built environment (1980, p.8). The

German term *Stimmung* equally refers to mood and atmosphere and suggests a persisting background capable of being more or less attentively tuned in to. I will argue that the walker, long credited with sensitivity to such *Stimmung*, has assumed a prophetic role in reading city experience, finding in it a temporal complexity that exceeds the immediately tangible, indeed what is representable absolutely. Thus, the notion of “gait” referenced in the title of this research finds *Stimmung* a differential quality that is never simply manifested, but rather is compounded in an untimely sense and sought step-by-step. Cities are both compelling and problematic precisely for this reason. They are temporal patchworks holding competing fragments of built time and tracks of lived occupation in suspension, each variously memorialised or neglected. To walk in such a clamorous field is to seek a sensible grasp or foothold amidst the disorientation of time’s touch and moving abandonment. It is to form impressions amidst impressions and to seek impressions within the always-already-impressed. Like the walker’s own footprint - pointedly resisted by the surface impersonality of cities - any vestige signals the imprint and withdrawal of a presence. All orientation entails accounting for such gapes in impression, just as moving forward takes its meaningfulness from getting back and the return journey. Yet walking, as Michel de Certeau has asserted, lacks a proper place precisely because it constantly absents itself from the scene of its contact (1998a, p. 103). As I will similarly argue, it is this lapse of presence and propriety what *orientates* the Occident’s quest for existential placement.

To better think urban contemporaneity and the foothold that is its heritage, this project tracks a range of walking accounts sourced from European modernity.<sup>1</sup> Observing walkers, can be thought to compose a series of “psychosocial types” (Deleuze and Guattari 1991) - both actual and fictional – who are caught up in the work of describing cities (e.g., *flâneurs*, genial promenaders, dandies, drugged wanderers, gentleman commentators, writer-observers, city philanthropists, poet-drifters, bohemians, psychogeographers, *voyants*). Yet, as this research suggests, these types populate a broader historical span that can be considered Oedipal. Oedipus – bridging myth, tragedy, aesthetics, psychoanalysis and what Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (2000) termed schizoanalysis – names a returning figure of pivotal cultural significance for the West, one that repeatedly folds the arcane into the contemporary. Why though draw on Oedipus in relation to walking observers? The hunch explored here centres on Michel Serres’ assertion that all cultures derive their existential specificity from the particular intersection they make of divergent spatial types (1982, p. 45). For instance, “my

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<sup>1</sup> This project assumes a complexity to the origins of modernity in line with Stephen Toulmin (1990). Accepting broadly accepted markers of modernity – a lapses in theologically-centred society, the emergence of nation-states from a divided Christendom, the quest for civic agency over sovereign privilege, and a scientific worldview and lay-cultures arising with mass literacy and print technology - Toulmin questioned the historical commencement of these markers (1990, pp. 17–21). Standard accounts place modernity’s origins in the opening decades of the seventeenth century, but for Toulmin the Renaissance offers a more likely benchmark for these markers (1990, p. 13–16).

body” ought not be thought of as ever “plunged into a single, specified space”; rather, it “works in Euclidean space [...] sees in a projective space [...] touches, caresses, and feels in a topological space [...] suffers in another [...] hears and communicates” in still another, etc. (1982, p. 44). It is the invitation to see in bodies the condensing of multiple spatial varieties, and in this condensing a style indicative of a culture, which is taken up here specifically in relation to walking bodies. In the case of the West, Serres thought, Oedipus exemplified a propensity for that culture to test its existential placedness historically against a backdrop of wandering and journeying, and in doing so, to define itself according to “spatial accidents” – in other words, an “itinerary [that] crosses spatial accidents, bifurcations, catastrophes, and loops” (1982, pp. 46, 48). Journeys are eventful for they are synonymous with the accident, and hence for Roland Barthes, “all events are Oedipal” because they entail ceasing to be a “subject of the nest”, becoming with passage instead a “subject of suspense” (2013, p. 84). Typically, to face an event is to confront double questions: what happened and what will happen next? The “pure event”, as Deleuze has said, evacuates the present revolving it towards the past and the future as an incomprehensible “x” (1990, p. 63). In turn, to bridge this vacancy entails a *disjunctive synthesis* (Deleuze and Guattari, 2000), a problem specifically indexed to moving forward and forgetting – something Oedipus’ name and ambulatory style unequivocally asserts. Renowned for his limp, Oedipus rides a split gait or double footedness that fails to recognise what it portends. What he emblematises is a disjunction between the visible and the sayable. As such, the Oedipal walk is indicative of a flaw that is routinely inflated to a cultural generality hypostasizing a gap between origination and orientation.

The “category of the *between* is fundamental in topology”, according to Serres (1982, p. 45), and offers a useful approach to exploring a disjunctive synthesis of the Oedipal kind. It makes imaginable the conceptualisation of a co-presence of empirical change and figural continuity. If history is routinely associated with sequential change, the recurrence of Oedipus calls for a topological method,<sup>2</sup> investigating how “historical continuities” are conditioned by a reduplicating past (Connor, 2002). Signally, topological methods raise the probability that the distant and the near, and the long past and the recent, harbour greater intimacy than historiography ordinarily acknowledges. For example, Serres suggested that time, rather than always flowing “according to a line”, is paradoxical, flowing instead “in a turbulent and chaotic manner” (Serres & Latour 2013, p. 60). Pertinently, the science of topology, or what its founder Leonhard Euler (1707–1783) called (after Leibniz) “the geometry of position”, began with a walking problem: a leisurely, if unresolved, quest by the eighteenth-century citizens of Königsberg to cross (only once) all seven bridges spanning the Pregel River in a single itinerary (Fig. 2).

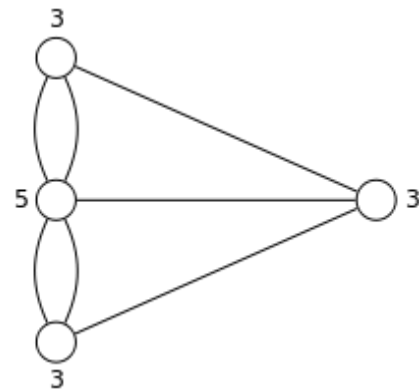
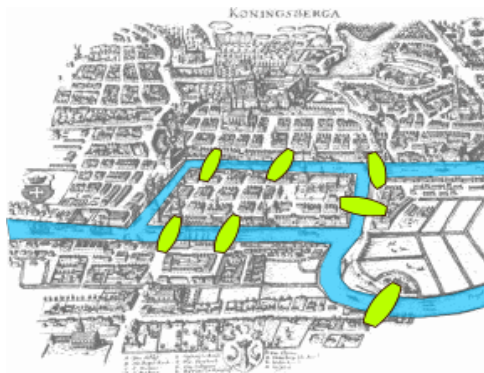
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<sup>2</sup> Steven Connor defined topological methods as “geometry plus time, geometry given body by motion” (2002).



**Figure 2.** Merian-Erben, 1652. Königsberg Map. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Euler determined not only that such a walk was impossible but also that the whole question could be solved without direct engagement with the city, but simply through a diagram that reduced spatial relations to vertices and edges - what became key elements for graph theory (see fig. 3 and fig. 4).



**Figure 3.** (left). Bogdan Giuşcă, 2005. “The Problem of the Seven Bridges of Königsberg”.

**Figure 4.** (right). Totalt, 2012. “Graph for the Seven Bridges of Königsberg”. Source (both): Wikimedia Commons.

What topology aimed to identify were persisting *patterns* in empirically varying situations, and in contrast to Euclidean shape rigidity, was dubbed a “‘rubber sheet’ geometry” (Rosen

2006, p. 4). It is on this basis, as Brian Massumi noted, that “[a]n infinite number of static figures may be extracted from a single topological transformation [yet the...] transformation is a kind of superfigure that is defined not by invariant formal properties but by continuity of transformation” (2002, p. 184). That is, a particular topological structure is “transpositional” or vectorial, manifesting multiple determinations without itself ever being determinant (2002, p. 185).

What I suggest in this project is that ‘Oedipus’, in its variant forms be seen to be the result of a topological vector whose transpositional valence populates the historical field with multiple instantiations that never exhaust it as a figure. This situates Oedipus within a larger discourse, which maintains that historical linearity is itself driven by an untimely ‘vector’ arising specifically with the West. In Euler’s encounter with Königsberg, two ways of understanding passage through the city are possible: where the locations (vertices or nodes) are joined by an even number of edges (bridges), a single path can be traced without duplication - a condition now known as “Eulerian trail” or “walk”; conversely, where the locations (vertices) are joined by an odd number of edges (bridges) – as was the case in Königsberg – no single path can be traced without duplication – a condition referred to as “non-Eulerian” (Lipschutz & Lipson 1997, p. 195). Schematically, cities can be reduced, on one hand, to a linear trajectory simplifying urban complexity while, on the other, complexity itself remains in excess of its linear resolution and pulls such a transiting line back into complication. In a first approximation, then, the Oedipal vector can be understood to function as a lever of sorts, mediating between Eulerian and non-Eulerian series as they manifest in urban places. While the former can be understood to conform with what Certeau had referred to as an interrogative will seeking to “transform the *concept* of a city” via “a synchronic system” that accounts for all urban variation in accordance with a “profit system”, the latter, failing to coalesce in any singular series, suggests a wayward weave of “pedestrian movements” operating “below the thresholds at which visibility begins” (Certeau, 1988a, pp. 92-97). As such Oedipus’ broken gait can be thought to emblematises such a diachronic break between a Eulerian systematism and non-totalisable urban immanence.

## 2. *Peripatetic*

Pinpointing the urban as a founding problem for thought in the West, this research then proposes to pursue what it terms an “onto-peripatetic”,<sup>3</sup> a neologism describing the nexus of concerns centred on a world contracted by foot. If the term ‘onto’ registers the specifically

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<sup>3</sup> Onto - “being [or] that which exists”; peripatetic – “to walk about, to walk up and down while teaching” OED.

philosophical concerns of this study, the term peripatetic<sup>4</sup> windows onto walking traditions in literature.<sup>5</sup> Anne Wallace (1993), in her study of English walking and literature, associated peripatetic with the integrative labour described by the “literary genre called georgics” where walking and cultivating consolidate the ‘natural’ foundations of culture life. “Excursive walking”, as Wallace depicted the traversal of the countryside by leisured, romantic walkers, “stabilizes culture” on the basis that “walking restores the natural proportions of our perceptions, reconnecting us with both the physical world and the moral order in it” (p. 13). Further, the “recollective perspective” ambioned by nostalgically-orientated,<sup>6</sup> observing walkers “enables them to transform even sorrowful alterations [...] recover[ing] and preserv[ing] the good of the past” (p. 13). Walking and writing (in Romantic poetry, in travelogues of observers, and in travel diaries) align perceptual labour with aesthetic/cultural production, in a process imagined to parallel the “material labour [of] farming” (pp. 11–14). Polemically, this ‘restorative’ pedestrianism idealised pre-industrial, communitarian life and attributed to walking a connective potency that made it an “emblem of wholeness” (pp. 5-6, 13). Along these lines, peripatetic was theorised as “a ‘timeless’ authorial activity” that “appears to originate text and yet be free of any origin in text”; remaining outside text yet generative of its narrative progression, peripatetic imparted authenticity and naturalism to discourse. When “the historically specific origins of peripatetic theory disappears from view”, as they did with the lapse of romanticism, “walking becomes ideology [and...] its doctrines self-contained and unexaminable” (p. 173). Against such a forgetting, this research performs a critical excavation of peripatetic, seeking to correct the under-investigated and under-theorised nature of walking discourses themselves by tracking the textual reproduction of walking. Significantly, if peripatetic makes walking an emblem of ‘natural’ wholeness, it is no coincidence that it first found its authorisation in urban place, where it was a pivotal figure in a philosophical quests for human freedom – a freedom, as will be shown, that gave rise to historicity itself.

There is another reason to question appeals to naturalism in peripatetic. While early nineteenth-century romanticism and tours, maps, pamphlets and associations popularised walking, its championed restorative and character-building dividend was in fact a

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<sup>4</sup> The etymology of the word (*peri* – “around” + *patein* – “to walk”) registers an obvious philosophical resonance via the Peripatetic School in Athens (335 BC – c. 269 BC) where teaching occurred on foot in the *peripatos*, or the colonnades of the Lyceum. The labour of thought and dialogue threaded through the rectilinear order of the public gymnasium – previously a military training hall – demonstrates, in the synthesising of motility and reflection, an “impulse after unity of knowledge” (Ropen & Sommer cited in Wallace 1993, p. 58). In this context where action and expression intend representational closure, peripatetic registers its long association with *paideia*, or education, a *paidetic* way or route to knowledge of the extant whole.

<sup>5</sup> An obvious contributor to this tradition is John Thelwall’s *The Peripatetic* (1793/2009).

<sup>6</sup> Nostalgically-oriented in the sense that, following successive waves of rural enclosure and fencing commencing as early as the Tudor period (1500s), the countryside was increasingly beheld as a commonwealth whose communitarian basis had been alienated by private interests and, increasingly, techniques of agricultural industrialisation.

consequence of the transport revolution, which generally accelerated life (Wallace 1993, p. 10). In its appeal to terrain beyond cities, peripatetic follows an essentially Eulerian impulse emanating from, and sustained by, urban centres themselves. The transport revolution's engineering of travel emphasised an overcoming of distance. Thus, accentuating linearity over local connective networks, cities aimed to transform drawn-out topography into topologically expedient transport conduits. The "active negation of topography", which answered, as Didier Gille argued, to "the merchant's ideal of [...] instantaneous transfer", meant routing terrain with transfer "conduits" or "pipework" apposite to a "capitalist solution" (1986, p. 257, pp. 274–275). Walking does not survive this solution without a change in its "socio-economic meaning" (Wallace 1993, p. 18): it was originally negatively associated with "travail", stranger-suspicion, vagrancy, and banditry for those immured in the relatively closed "day's-walk-circle" defining local rural life prior to the transport revolution (p. 19). As travel became routine, walking assumed a positive valence as an exception to mechanised, mundane travel (pp. 18–26). It became increasingly associated with leisure and the abrogation of the perceptual compromise induced by accelerated transport speed. Pedestrian perception came to be (and continues to be) formulaically asserted as "natural, slow, successive yet continuous" and therefore indicative of "superior perception, cognition, narration" (p. 4). Far from simply being oppositional to mechanised travel, pedestrianism in the nineteenth century came to do the georgic work of "mediating between past and future, rural and urban, and civilizing and destructive appropriation" (p. 67).

### 3. *An Unconscious Bearing*

Walking-observers of countryside, riding a rationalisation of territory originating in cities, were party to a counter-veneration of 'nature' itself imaginable as a non-Eulerian reservoir resistive of substantial subjective purview. Such a nature in fact was source for what Sigmund Freud would later call the unconscious. As Paul Bishop (2010) has argued, Freud inherited a *pré-romantisme* built on the *Sturm und Drang* ("Storm and Stress") literary movement. Antithetical to Enlightenment reason, this proto-romanticism emphasised the primacy of individual emotion in its confrontation with a nature to which humanity was both "powerless to leave and powerless to enter [...] deeply" (Goethe/Tobler cited in Bishop 2010, p. 26). Romanticism, in search of a "reason beyond reason" (p. 28), rehearsed what can be understood as an alienation-possession couplet that sought to resolve the tension between what was taken to be a rigidly bound self and dissolved subjective states. Ambitioned in the encounter with nature was a protean experience capable of yielding an elevating renewal, wholism or *Gestalt* (p. 30). Romantic walker-writers, in part bearing a Cartesian legacy of corporeal alienation, and in part too Leibniz's subsequent reformulation of that dichotomy in



which sensibility was understood to dissolve into ever-less conscious perception, had reason to seek a world beyond that of limited human vantage, to long that is for divine, infinite purview (p. 33). As such, the unconscious arose first as a philosophical question regarding the limits and reach of consciousness. Conversely, in Freud's model of the unconscious (itself indebted to, but veering from, German romanticism and post-Kantian idealism) is emphasised a form of "sensory knowledge" arising with corporeality and perturbing of consciousness (p. 38). Paralleling Bishop's proposition, Jacques Rancière (2009a) similarly linked the Freudian unconscious to an "aesthetic unconscious" arising with German aesthetics and idealism. If, as aesthetics was discovering, affect and passion were activated through sensibility (corporeally-centred), and not solely through cognition, it suggested that forms of "non-thought" persisted in "sensible materiality" and could involuntarily course through thought (p. 3). For Rancière, Oedipus was himself "an exemplary hero" in this post-Kantian context, precisely because he evidenced "a certain existential savagery of thought" (p. 22). As the bearer of a "maniacal, relentless determination to know what it would be better not to know", Oedipus expresses a "pathos of knowledge" in which the 'knower' "knows and does not know" and is consequently split between being both "absolutely active and absolutely passive" (pp. 18, 23). On the other hand, in making Oedipus an emblem of psychical resolution and a benchmark against which to measure the navigation of a "complex" of competing desires (the reconciliation of which were key to individual and societal consonance), Freud set out to diffuse aspects of the aesthetic unconsciousness, imposing on the romantic imagination what amounted to a Eulerian will. As Rancière put it, "[o]nly one thing seems to interest Freud: re-establishing the linear causality in the plot" (p. 58).



**Figure 5.** Rama, 2006 (image credit). "Gradiva", (bas-relief detail of Roman copy of 4th century Ancient Greek panel of Aglaurides and The Horae), Vatican Museum Chiaramonti, Rome. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Reading Freud's commentary, "Delusion and Dream in Jensen's *Gradiva*" (1907), in which a fictional archaeologist (Norbert Hanold) becomes captivated by a bas-relief of a walking woman (*Gradiva*), whose gait strikes him as having a "peculiar grace" (Fig. 5), Rancière noted that Jensen's fiction is remarkable for inducing a "desublimation" that released both a cascade of fantasies and the refutation of those fantasies by reality:

By insisting that the fantasy is the product of his fancy and refuting his character's reverie in the name of the reality principle, the novelist grants himself the capacity to circulate freely on both sides of the boundary between reality and fiction. (p. 59).

By contrast, Freud rebuked Jensen for failing to decisively link the fantasy with reality (the coincidence between *Gradiva* and his companion Bertgang) and thereby activate a biographical and clinical valence. The result, as Rancière put it, was that "Freud's first concern is to assert a univocal story against [the...] equivocality" of fiction (p. 59). Where previously Oedipus had been associated with an aesthetic unconscious and the rediscovery in Europe of the *pathos* of tragedy, Freud's aligning of the unconscious with symptoms bearing "mute speech", sought to render non-thought decipherable – in short, making the symptom a thing capable of speaking its own history had the effect of drawing *pathos* up into *logos* (pp. 61, 86). As I will argue, this falling up of the body into truth has a long history, one centred by urban relations, and not coincidentally, walking discourses.

#### **4. Seeing & Sounding**

Oedipus then has come to figure a division between representation and the un-representable – in psychoanalytic terms, normative desiring relations and the primal scene, or in mythical accounts, an excess of visibility (the limp) relative to what can be enunciated, spoken, thought. Henri Lefebvre recognised precisely this disjunction in a short meditation on Oedipus. Referring to old Oedipus wandering blind in the wilderness after the scandalous revelations at Thebes, he imagined the disgraced hero asking:

Could I be the wanderer, the man of the eternal riddle? Errant and erring, could my only truth be to wander. Could I have punished myself for becoming fixed and for attempting to attain being and permanence? (1995, p.55)

The cost of this revelation and deliverance into a wandering destiny: a thrice killing of "nature my mother", losing the sight she had given all the better "that I might see [...] wandering, mine, everyone's" (p. 55). Yet Lefebvre saw behind this epiphanic sight something more. In his retelling of the myth, he has as a divine voice – the "voice of the Unseeable" – intervene: Oedipus has forgotten what is essential, that he is a fallen hero, one about to be risen up again at Colonus, yet his 'prestige' rests on violence ("murder and

incest"). What he forgets in fact is that he is, all at once, "the first and the last of men", the one who alienates politics from fixed territory, and in turn, makes of it a possessive and expansionist enterprise:

The voice [of the Unseeable] is lost in the tumult. A cloud of dust rises from beneath the feet of soldiers marching by. They laugh at the blind old man. They come from the little town [Colonus] towards which Oedipus is groping his stumbling way: Athens. (1995, p. 55)

Against sovereignty arrived at via divine ordination, the democratic *polis* – for which Athens is model, and Oedipus the obscure guarantor authorising the line of leaders commencing with Theseus – is left instead seeking solidarity through a groping quest for consensus that covers over the inherent stasis or civil violence at the heart of an untethered sociality. This is the problem that Oedipus bequeaths – a quest for images of solidarity capable of covering over a disjunction in the social (urban) body, one in fact capable of drowning out the veracity of authenticating speech.

In this research, onto-peripatetic – specifically the positing of walking figures as gauge of urban place – is taken to be one means of suturing a lacuna between sight and voice, and with it, picturing political renovation. On one hand, the walk's tethering to narrative as a vehicle for revealing can be seen to participate in what Rancière considers a longstanding representational regime in art where the visible is subordinated to enunciation. If in such a regime "speech [itself] makes visible, refers, summons the absent, reveals the hidden", ambulatory action likewise dutifully goose-steps the disclosure of discourse (2009c, p. 113). Concomitantly, representation can be understood to effect "an ordered deployment of meaning" consistent with Aristotle's overcoming of the *pathos* of knowledge found in tragic drama via the "logic of *peripeteia*" – a reversal leading to discovery and a belated recovery of knowledge (p. 115). On the other hand, if this representational drive to coordinate *poiesis* (or making/action) and *aesthesis* (or perception) against the inordinate effects of *pathos* has its origins in "the world of Sophocles" and philosophy's response to it, Rancière locates the collapse of representation and an emergence of the aesthetic unconscious, or what he refers to as the "aesthetic regime" in art, with a shift in modernity that is no less Oedipal (pp. 115-116). Oedipus is "the hero of this regime" precisely because he emblematises the key presumptions of this new domain of aesthetics – "act[ing] absolutely and suffer[ing] absolutely" (p. 119). On one hand, anything becomes a subject for art (contrary to the codified norms of the representational regime) affording it an "absolute power" of making and "self-demonstration" (p. 119). On the other, the artwork harbours an absolute passivity or unknowing as exemplified in the (artistic) genius who is licensed to act against every norm, yet is "someone who does not know what he is doing or how he does it" (p. 119). Bearing the polarities of knowledge-ignorance and action-suffering, artistic phenomena condense both an intellectual will to bring forth 'a work' and its other – an interminable battle with an

opaque given that chaotically grounds it (p. 121). In this context no utterance can escape the “inertia of the visible that comes to paralyze action and absorb meaning” (p. 121). Where in the representational regime speech codified the seen, rendering it actionable and therefore comprehensible, in the aesthetic regime speech gives way to an interminable description (the novelistic realism of Flaubert is exemplary for Rancière) that “deprives action of its powers of intelligibility” (p. 121).

If Oedipus figures this changeover, so too is walking decisive; no longer is it a prop for discourse, but becomes a mechanism for plumbing a rupture between what can be said and what is seen. The emergence of peripatetic - or walking made an “aesthetic practice” (Careri 2004) – will be shown to rest on a gestural economy of self-possession and that economy’s lapse. With Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) for instance (himself a key initiator of descriptive literary realism), the walking gait, as he argued in the *‘Theorie de la Marche’*, is a last frontier of legitimate enquiry and has the potential to decisively tell, via a gestural semiotics, the tell-tale character of passing urban persons. As Peter Brooks noted, “the *‘Theorie’* is a demonstration of how to *read* the latent text in and through the manifest text” (2004, p. 9; emphasis in original), but it marks too a *disjunction* between the latent and the manifest, the visible and what can be said of and through it. For Giorgio Agamben, Balzac announces in the *‘Theorie’* that step beyond which “the Western bourgeoisie [loses...] its gestures”, in other words a representable continuum between corporeal appearance and ‘interior’ states, thereby surrendering to a “generalised catastrophe of the sphere of gestures” (2000, pp. 49, 51). While the charting of interior terrain takes the route of psychologies ambiguously tethered to corporeality, knowledge of human motility was sought by a cluster of others including Gilles de la Tourette, Jean-Martin Charcot, Eadweard Muybridge, Étienne-Jules Marey, and Frederick Winslow Taylor, etc. (2000 pp. 50-51). As such the *image* of the walk (along with a cluster of other motile gestures) was decomposed via ever smaller temporal pauses or gaps introduced into the gestural and signifiatory coherence of movement. The walker, that quotidian genius who does without knowing, in fact yields under these scopic technologies a plethora of indecipherable gestures so diverse, as Agamben noted, that it starts to look like “at some point everybody had lost control of their gestures” completely (pp. 52-53). The aesthetic regime then can be thought to toy with a tension between the decisive gesture – an ameliorating gestalt or whole overflying what persists at the limits of representation – and paratactic gestures whose separating rationality court a “grand parataxis” – that place where, as Rancière put it, “the sentence [or any discursive intelligibility] sinks into the scream and meaning into the rhythm of bodily states” (2009c, p. 45). Between “Schizophrenia and consensus”, Oedipal, ‘aesthetic’ modernity plays out across a domain without “common measure” via a politics sounding for signs of binding commonality (p. 45).

As such, it is clear that technical infrastructures and practices are crucial in the aesthetic regime to the maintenance of social measure and that mobile technologies have come to fix bodies on the move into ubiquitous, electromagnetic fields and networked solidarities. On the other hand, what this project undertakes is an enquiry into one particular technology that is prerequisite to the aesthetic regime – what Rancière (2009c) termed the “sentence-image”, or the constellation of ways in which image and word are intersected in the gauging of the soundness of the in-common founding cities. Scopic techniques in this sense are ancestor to a much older visualising analytic, one traceable to a certain paratactic seeing envisaged by Plato that breaks up lived temporality in pursuit of atemporal, metaphysical certainties. Similarly, representational and aesthetic regimes can be paralleled with Aristotle’s demarcation between the *kath’olon*, or a universal totality spoken through poetry, and the *kath’ekaston*, or “little perceptions” of empirical succession drawn out by historians (Rancière 2009c, p. 121). In the latter, incremental steps, blind to any overarching order, and confronting a chaos preceding the orderly distribution of things, acquire orientation and common measure only laboriously. History, both induced by metaphysics and driven by the loss of faith in the existential certainties it promised, pointedly arises with the confrontation of *mythos* and *logos* staged in tragedy – itself the originator of the sentence-image and a form of consciousness capable of being called Oedipal. With it is born the characterising vacillation in onto-peripatetic between immanence and transcendence, between knowledge made up on the hoof and its other – an absolute sounding of all that is.

## 5. Mythical Bearing

Modernity then can be understood as inseparable from a *pathos* in knowledge requiring an induction into what is unknown in knowing itself. Rediscovering Oedipus amounted to a reinstatement of this particular topological knot, no less than it gave rise to topology itself as a science (Serres 1982, p. 53). For Serres, topology voices “the teeming multiplicity of diverse and original spaces”, a “barbarous topology” proper to myth and otherwise concealed by a Euclidean space of work (p. 53). In pursuing an onto-peripatetic, it will thus be necessary to explore in some detail the mythical underpinnings of the ideal of a unitary, Euclidean space – a space, as Serres puts it, “of [all] possible transports [and...] *always* possible transfers” (p. 52). If European culture arising from antiquity is characterised by its scything breaks and ameliorative joints (for which Oedipus is figure), it is not incidental that the mythical Oedipus was “the last descendant of the Spartoï, [themselves figures] of disseminated spaces, of

catastrophic separation, of the continuous that must be recovered" (p. 47).<sup>7</sup> Thebes' founding on the soil warred over by the Spartoi made it an incongruously knitted-together place, one in which barbarous energies had to be forcibly synthesised. Greek cities were themselves generally "dispersed, reciprocally closed insularities [or...] islands" (p. 51). Nevertheless, in myth they were bound into a unitary divine realm where the "gods are encountered as the same – here, everywhere – because in their other space they enjoy a single space" (p. 51). Oedipus, it will be argued, was key amongst a range of figures trespassing on and transgressing this single space, and overturning what Jan Patočka has termed an "*oikoumenē*", or cosmic "household" conjoining the "unequal community" of mortals and immortals (1996, p. 35). The famous confrontation between Oedipus and the Sphinx at the gates of Thebes suggests the breaking of a divine monopoly over homogeneous space. Logistical in nature, the conflict opened the city to an outside cleared of mythological impedance for which the Sphinx or "Triple-goddess" is emblematic (Graves 1992, 105.3).

For Jean-Joseph Goux, the scene at Thebes' gate points to the highly "irregular form" of the Oedipus myth itself: the battle with divine powers is won not on the basis of a physical contest and an initiation into a royal investiture with "magicoreligious" ties, but through intellection alone.<sup>8</sup> In ending the Sphinx's riddling hold over the city by means other than a physical confrontation borrowing preternatural powers, Oedipus portends Greek humanity's crossing into a post-traditional, "anthropocenter[ed]" world, where human "auto-reflection" and "self-consciousness" become the new measure (Goux 1993, pp. 119–120). The opening of the city to rule other than through traditional, initiatory prerogative invoked the spectre of a secular, spatial continuity of a Eulerian type. The myth plays out the terrible consequences of such hubris, reasserting a "magicoreligious" hold and non-Eulerian impedance to anthropocentered flight. Nevertheless, if Protagoras' controversial claim that "man is the measure of all things" parallels Oedipus', and the substitution of intellect and self-government for divine mediation finds expression in a figure "standing erect amidst phenomena", then Oedipus' limping gait is a reminder, long before the story runs its course, that the demythologization implied by self-consciousness does not arise without a returning perturbation (p. 131). The "anthropological decision that brings men out of projective magic", casting them beyond "cryptophoric symbolism" generally, risked opening up a

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<sup>7</sup> The Spartoi or "Sown Men" arose from the ground where Cadmus, the wanderer from the east and the bearer of the Phoenician alphabet, had buried the teeth of a serpent guarding the Spring of Ares (see Graves 1992, 58.5 & 59.a).

<sup>8</sup> In the case of Oedipus, as Goux indicated, even if Laius' desire to pre-empt the threat of the newly born Oedipus by riveting his ankles together and abandoning him to the wilderness to die mirrors the common royal antagonism in myths towards infant rivals, everything else about the Oedipus myth is reversed. Thus, he achieves royal investiture not by way of a physical contest with a monster – a contest typically won on condition of benevolent divine intervention through various initiatory steps – but through intellectual combat in a single, decisive instance that induces the Sphinx to enact her own suicide (1993, p. 11).

disenchanted world where the absence of an externally directed locus for cryptophoric activity delivered an existential void whose address was increasingly confronted inwardly (pp. 130–131).

Oedipus became an emblematic figure of inner torment and wandering, particularly in Sophocles' remaking of the myth as tragic drama. Having inherited Thebes on seemingly heroic terms, he is called upon to solve the cause of the city's consumption by plague. Staged at the city's very heart - in the palace - a mytho-religious transgression is unfolded. Determined to resolve the calamity, Oedipus enters into a dogged investigation and adopts, in contravention of his station, the role of an interpretive priest seeking to uncover a polluting figure – an incautious speculation that culminates in his own exposure as the defiler. At stake in the tragedy is the assumption of a sacrilegious position that headstrongly seeks a *pharmakos*, or scapegoat (a religious mechanism for expunging defilement<sup>9</sup>), but which consequently stumbles into what ought to have remained unknown (Lacoue-Labarthe 1989, pp. 233). Sophocles' tale warns of "the madness of knowledge", its immoderate "desire for appropriation" and its "demented quest for a consciousness", indeed the "madness of self-consciousness" (Hölderlin cited in Lacoue-Labarthe 1989, pp. 233–234). While tragedy arose as a cathartic mechanism for excising disproportionate speculation, the drama nevertheless drew questions of divine providence from a distant and unitary divine realm into the heart of urban life (p. 233). This "drive for knowledge" corresponds with what the Greeks termed *alētheia*, an unveiling or truth-seeking whose origin lay with "magico-religious" practices and oral recitation (Detienne 1996, pp. 42–43). Yet by the fifth century BC, a devaluing of *alētheia* occurred, following an *isonomia* (or democratic equality) giving rise to secular speech, or what Marcel Detienne identified as *apatē* – speech tied to the temporally immediate, contingent events and *doxa* arising with the *agora*. The savage drive to unveil, exemplified by Oedipus, corresponded with *alētheia*'s unmooring from its magico-religious grounding and it being increasingly pegged to the vicissitudes of *apatē*. Underwriting the everyday speech of *apatē*, as Deleuze and Guattari (1991) have suggested, was a deterritorialized societal (friendship) and mercantile (trade) immanence (inaugurated by the Greek *poleis* in contradistinction to the imperial strictures of the Mycenaean warrior aristocracy from which they had arisen and which they subsequently stood against when faced with the Achaemenid Persian Empire).

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<sup>9</sup> As René Girard notes, "the *pharmakon* in classical Greek means both poison and the antidote for poison, both sickness and cure" (1979, p. 95). As "polluted object[s]" (1979, p. 95), first pampered and then elevated and paraded through the *polis*, the *pharmakoi*, were deemed to carry the misfortunes of the populous, and their final expulsion was thought to restore the fortuity and solidarity of the community generally. The high-low intersection implicate in this exiling takes on a particular poignancy in the case of Oedipus and the problem of Athens as a "*polis tyrannos*" in the context of democratic rule.

Concomitantly, if Socrates can be recognised as having made the everyday spaces of the *polis* an arena for intersecting *alētheia* and *apatē*,<sup>10</sup> he provides a critical point of orientation for understanding the tradition of observing-walkers arising in modernity. As the historical bearer of an insistent drive to know, to reflect, and to examine for truth, he spanned the transition from oral to written philosophical culture, as both the “representative of ancient divine world” and instigator of that world’s perpetuation “through new methods” (Patočka 2002, pp. 85–87). These new methods, centred on casual, public encounters seeking to unveil the inner motivations of self and others, established the everyday urban as an interrogative realm where societal scapegoating ceased being individually apportioned and became applicable to every person. Following Socrates’ trial and sentencing to death for the corruption of youth and blasphemy, Plato remade him a benchmark of philosophical inquiry while ambitioning a *polis* properly fit for philosophy (p. 88). In the *Republic*, this rehabilitation gives rise, as Chapter 1 will develop, to a *metaphysical walk*, a means for integrating *pathos* with *logos* via an “upward way” whose ideal is a “head-city” (Sallis 1996, 1999). This walk, spanning mythology and reason, reactively corrected Oedipus and Socrates’ perilous will to unveil and, as will be shown, while purporting to advance an anti-Oedipal orientation, remains intimately tied to Oedipus.

If philosophy originally trespassed on the domain of “clarity” apposite to the gods (“clarity about the whole, which is not ours”), then Oedipus can be thought of as a proto-philosophical figure in whom “the structure of discovering” necessary to philosophy’s breaking with the mythical knowledge of the unequal community of mortals and immortals is first prefigured (Patočka 2002, p. 60). In such a state, wandering, rather than clarity, is the “fundamental trait proper to man as such” (pp. 56–60). The Oedipus of myth was an archetypal figure revealing a propensity for humans to stumble into “knowledge of good and evil” precariously (p. 49). Hence, the “ground upon which he stands [is never...] solid, [and] can at any moment show itself to be the very opposite” (p. 49). Metaphysics will be shown attempting to reconstruct that ground and making a place from where the good could be perennially reached. Insofar as metaphysics sought to measure and moderate the speculative excesses of the limping wanderer, it implanted, late in the history of the Greek *polis*, a political ideal that aligned the care of the soul with a care of the community. The perfectibility of the soul was seen as entirely commensurate with a perfectibility of collective life, thus the city founded on philosophical reflection amounted to a quest for a “city of justice” harmonising divine and human aspirations (p. 89). Western Europe builds out of a

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<sup>10</sup> The *polis* becomes the site for uncovering and hunting out falsehoods, in a shift from political to ethical *parrhēsia* (truth-telling) following a crisis in Athenian democracy, as Michel Foucault has explored. Foucault notes Plato’s depiction of the “bad democratic city” as that “which is all motely, fragmented, and dispersed between different interests, passions, and individuals who do not agree with each other. This bad democratic city practices *parrhēsia*: anyone can say anything” (2011, p. 10).



model of idealised urban life, seeded by a “care of the soul” for which an invention of universals and an overcoming of temporal vicissitude were central (pp. 89, 222). Yet the history of the West is inseparable from a wound that is integral to this ideal, and for which a return to wandering and temporal perturbation are chronic.

As Chapter 2 will show, modernity is marked by a caesura between divine and human wills and arises as a disarticulation of metaphysical and theological ambition subsequent to the recognition of the impossibility (or undesirability) of a Eulerian trail between worldly and transcendent realms. As Antonio Negri (2007) argued, it was René Descartes who founded a “metaphysics of separation”, to temper religious over-assertion and to mediate between sovereign power and the multitude, while forwarding mercantile interests in the form of an incipient bourgeoisie. Yet in the positing of a hyperbolic consciousness, Descartes made Oedipus’ strategy his own and pursued it to “ontological purity” (Goux 1993, p. 159). On the other hand, if Kant sought to truncate a persisting theological legacy in Descartes with his “critique of metaphysics”, he ironically also set the stage for a return to philosophical origins by German idealism - that is, a return to Oedipal *pathos* and the problematizing of consciousness. Consistent with a disjunctive synthesis, Oedipus “appears in order to resolve a crisis”, “like a *pharmakos*” to channel or reroute perturbations (p. 9). Post-Kantian philosophy rejected Kant’s foreclosure on access to absolute knowledge and was left contending, by means other than self-consciousness, with the question of the totality of what is. Hence, if Oedipus was for Nietzsche “the last man” and, by extension, “the last philosopher”, the need to bypass “an exhausted self-consciousness” was at stake (Lacoue-Labarthe 2003, p. 14). On this basis Occidental philosophy has never been other than Oedipal and if it has validated consciousness over corporeality and the psyche, this study emphasises a downward path that channels, by way of uncertain footwork and foothold, the hiatus that Oedipus was brought into being to make imaginable and uncertainly suture.

## 6. City | Time

In cities, walkers not only find a compressed temporal field transported by urban fabric, their very apprehension of that field is defined by temporal syntheses availing perception. Against a rationality and governmental homogeneity applied to such places, the urban as object field fluoresces with the sheer polyvocality of perspectives and phantoms it sustains. Indeed, urban place is only liveable, as Certeau has suggested, on the basis of opaquely ambivalent oddities, “legacy objects” and ghosting memories that open variously fathomable depths in the present (1998b, pp. 134-135). Exhibiting a delinquent historiography (as opposed to an ordered museological temporality), cities stream with dubious and “indecipherable pasts” that

inhabit much as “the gods of antiquity” found an increasingly disturbed pantheon in the emerging life of *poleis* (p. 116). Such ghosting in fact testifies, as this study examines, to a lapse in placement of the projective magic of myth and an external cryptophoric domain. As the last descendant of the Spartoi, and therefore the carrier of a rupture in being, Oedipus emblematised an urban will seeking freedom from autochthony and the mythological grounding of Greek cultural life. He is also the transmitter inwards of terrors, monsters and the world’s mysteries. The “tragic universe” of the Classical Greek city states, as Jean-Pierre Vernant & Pierre Vidal-Naquet have defined, was a transitional place merging the old world of myth with a new urban sociality, that in turn made imaginable perturbed interior states (1990, p. 7). In Oedipus’ case, the duality between city and mythic consciousness, between heroic and contemporary figures, were given corporeal expression with “discourse and abstraction lag[ging] behind the body which [already] knows how to act and practices what the mouth cannot say” (Serres 2008, pp. 258-259). This shift from myth to an uneasy urbanism was depicted in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Tyrannus*,<sup>11</sup> where Athens is portrayed as a *polis tyrannos* routinely over-asserting itself through imperial policy (Knox 1957, p. 61). In a move that is defining for this research, when Oedipus walks onto the stage, it is the city itself that he plays. As Bernard Knox has written:

Oedipus son of Laius, a Theban mythical hero, has been transformed into an Athenian and contemporary figure. Not, however, a specific individual [for the...] resemblance [is] to Athens itself, in all its greatness, its power, its intelligence, and also its serious defects. The audience which watched Oedipus in the theater of Dionysus was watching itself (p. 77).

This insight allows Oedipus to be read, beyond his typical association with wrought subjective states, as a figure integrally merged with urban phenomena. He in fact portends the possibility of a psycho-historical rendering of the urban. This innovation prompts a raft of considerations carrying through to modernity:

- Imperial over-assertion equated to a troubling, centrifugal dynamic for the Greeks. It dangerously parried with “imperial or barbarian transcendence” at odds with a broader drive towards the *immanence* of Greek urban social life (Deleuze and Guattari 1998, p. 136). Favouring democratic *isonomia* or equality and autarkic self-determination, the *polis* nevertheless carried the seeds of its own divagation: the success of fifth century urban expansion increasingly demanded “distant trading” and “a broadly extroverted economy” (Alliez 1996, pp. 5-6). To the extent that the reign of democratic equals was vested in models of political interaction and commutative justice, its aim was to correct “aberrant movements that produce inequity” (p. xvi). Yet the city’s internal economy, modelled on the household or *oikonomia*, and

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<sup>11</sup> Various known as *Oedipus Rex* or *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus Tyrannus* is one of three Theban plays written by Sophocles (c. 497–406BC).

recognised as establishing a ‘natural’ relationship with money – “the number of need” (p. 05) and “an instrument of equalization” (Goux 1996, p. 148) – came unstuck with external trading. It brought into play what Aristotle termed “*chrematistics*”, or the art of producing wealth from circulating money. By “wrench[ing] money from its mediating condition”, as Alliez recognised, it “withdraws exchange from the law of equivalences” (1996, p. 03). Knowing no bounds, the profit motive made of the regularity/circularity of sublunary time and its direct correlation with need, an excessive temporality, one as Alliez emphasized, that “converts time [itself] into the money form”, and in the manner of compounding interest, rendered it infinite (1996, p. xvii). As such, it portends an unmooring of time that by modernity became the precondition for market society and capitalist deterritorialisation.

- The wrenching of time from eternity, itself held to be the harbourer of truth, paralleled a problem in truth-saying pivotal to the democratic *polis*. With an increasing association of political *parrhēsia* with sophistic inflation and persuasion, there was call for a new ethical *parrhēsia* or internal sourcing of truth. As such, Oedipus-Athens can be considered to be the bearer of a runaway temporality distressing the Apollonian edict to “know thyself”. As embodiment of both an erratic temporality and despotism, Oedipus is cast “*apolis*” (Vernant 1990, p. 122). Yet the merging of Oedipus with the city in tragic drama, suggests that the urban (and the social solidarity it potentiates) may be read as an entity imagined to have wandered from itself. Concomitantly, if the West can be thought of as Oedipal (Oedipus is the “name for the West”, Lacoue-Labarthe 2003, p. 8), it is so on the basis of having succumb to an aberrant temporality that makes urbanism itself a persistent problem for knowing.
- Urban perturbation is a motor for history. As Patočka argued, if “history is the domain of acting in freedom”, this acting arises specifically in the context of the Greek *polis* and its break with an existential “compartment” or orientation, defined by an *oikoumenē* where cyclic patterns prevail and where productive effort involves “living just to live” (1996, pp. 140, 144). The *polis* set in play a fundamentally different existential orientation, one that established a community founded in politics, and forced to face up to an “upheaval” or “shaking” of certainties – in short, it meant living “in the mode of questioning” (pp. 141–144). Moreover, the attuning of the *polis* to “radical questioning” was instrumental in founding a European project animated by the “problematic nature of meaning”, and “history in the strict sense emerged first as western history” before “becoming universal and global” (p. 143). Not by necessity, but in a “history of contingencies” as Deleuze and Guattari said,

capitalist immanence and the decoded social body channel “universal Oedipus”, whose internalisation and privatisation of otherwise collectivised flows arrives last (2000, pp. 140-144).

- The temporal problematic arising with Greek immanence unfolds an insistent linear drive to suture a hiatus in existential meaning. In this context, urban globalization, or what Jean-Luc Nancy (2007) has referred to as a becoming-urban of the planet, is symptomatic of a mode of being whose likeness is indicative of Oedipal wandering. As such, “The world has lost its capacity ‘to form a world’ [and..] it seems only to have gained that capacity of proliferating, to the extent of its means, the ‘unworld’” (p. 34). This un-worlding is indicative of a “death drive” that wants to bring the world’s becoming into full and final view and therefore profitable possession (pp. 42-43). If *telos* and *eschaton* (direction and end of time) impart to existence an ethos and a habitus, the principle of freedom defining the West might instead be apprehended in the mode of a world-creation arising immanently and “without-reason” pp. 45-47). Maintained in the mode of fluctuating “enjoyment”, rather than in “either having or being”, it might unfold a world-creation released from a tragic relation to knowledge, itself caught between disavowed passivity and insistent action (p. 45). Walking accounts, it is suggested in what follows, variously attempt such enjoyment, for which Oedipus’ blind sequestering to a desert wilderness (post the tragedy of Thebes and prior to its recuperation at Colonus), makes imaginable a going-beyond tragic consciousness towards a world and peopling given through “growth of/from nothing” (p. 52-53).

## 7. Assaying the Walk

These questions of immanence and its check by transcendence, the lapse of communal and gregarious foundation induced by a historicity arising with urban life, and the emergence of the figure of desire at the heart of urban experience frame this project. In response, the project takes the form of an essay to better capture the chronically shifty, discursive traditions considered here. Taking the Oedipal vector as itself a “shifter” in the sense Réda Bensmaïa has used the term – in other words, as an “‘operator’ power[...] that is not homogeneous with any preconceived rhetorical schema” (1987, p. 99; emphasis in original) – the method of inquiry here roams through urban, literary and philosophical sources consistent with the broadly ambulatory nature of the essay form (p. 90). Roland Barthes has contrasted what he called the essay’s “step-by-step method” - that utilises “slowness and dispersion” along with a “systematic use of digression” - with the dissertation structure that excessively closes and

contains (1974, pp. 12-13). Bensmaïa, extending this approach, saw in the essay form a “general economy” that collapses the “rhetorical coded text” through a commitment to “complication” – via its “open form”, its “informal tone”, its testing (if non-exhaustive approach), and its “taste for *mélanges*” (1987, pp. 95–98). For Barthes and Bensmaïa, Michel de Montaigne was the early modern essayist who best captured the “unclassifiable text”, fixing in one place “poetics, rhetoric, aesthetics, history, [and...] philosophy” (p. 98). Crafting what has been termed the “Book of the Self”, Montaigne’s essays proffer an encountering persona who possesses a “type of memory, both very archaic and very modern”, and who fuses “the events of an individual life” with “the recollection of an entire culture” (p. 98). Oedipus similarly bears the memory of a culture in a self found to roam between inner and outer registers, between “subjectivation and objectification”, or between being known and “othered” as will be argued below by way of Tom Conley’s consideration of early topographic literatures (2011, p. 07). Such a self, at once out of place and condensing “two sites in one” (p. 08), gains substance only through textual description, or what Montaigne called “the flimsy medium of words” (2003, p. 425).

On the other hand, Cartesianism consecrates modernity with a subject tuned to its own immanent experience on the basis of forgetting its piecemeal, temporal assembly. Conversely, across a range of literary and philosophical discourses, walking will be shown to bring forward – even in Descartes - an exorbitant temporality on which this forgetting is floated. What I term the speculative or observational walk, like the essay as a “reflective text”, will be shown to respond, despite a fundamental openness, to what Montaigne termed a “supernumerary emblem” or binding thread bringing together its “ill-fitted patchwork” (Montaigne quoted in Bensmaïa 1987, p. 9-11). Contrary to Eulerian line-work, this emblem operates in a non-Eulerian manner, following a “logic of *complicatio*”, entangling, derailing, and going off-course (p. 13). In explicating this emblem or “sufficient word”, Bensmaïa drew on Deleuze’s notion of the “dark precursor” or “*differenciator*” as a lever or shifter that couples bordering, heterogeneous series (p. 11; also see Deleuze 1994, p. 117). Released by the dark precursor is everything that keeps substantive subjectivities in check:

The system is populated by subjects, both larval subjects and passive selves: passive selves because they are indistinguishable from the contemplation of couplings and resonances; larval subjects because they are the supports or the patients of the dynamisms. In effect, a pure spatio-temporal dynamism, with its necessary participation in the forced movement, can be experienced only at the borders of the liveable [...]. (Deleuze 1994, p. 118)

Spatio-temporal dynamism in this sense points to an absence of all foothold and a fallout in identity. For Bensmaïa, the body is closest to this atopic placement. Building on Montaigne’s supernumerary emblem, Barthes referred to the body as a “mana word”, a word that can never presuppose a definitive form for “we have several bodies” each overlapping, mingling, condensing antitheses and contrary inscriptions (1987, p. 15). Moreover, if “the

body is neither a simple origin nor a substance, but a site of atopia [then it is...] the site where one can change 'postures' and 'perspectives' endlessly without any of them being obliged to submit to a hierarchy or unified subject" (p. 16). The walk will thus be taken as the supernumerary emblem colliding and shifting divergent series: the page and the city, the city and territory, the body and the soul/psyche, the self and its larval subjects, and, most significantly, surfaces and depths. The foot as dark precursor – itself always doubling and dividing placement - will be found to assay not simply descriptive and given ground but also intensive states and phantasms indicative of what Deleuze, following Kant, called the "object = x" (1994, pp. 103, 317), a formula describing the undoing of every Eulerian series.

## 8. *Itinerary*

The project is presented in two parts – Diagramming and Spacing. The first part sketches in abstract an overview of both the classical period and its interconnections with modernity. The second part seeks a more detailed encounter with walkers and territory spanning the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Together they aim to chart the origins of the relatively well-canvassed association of walking and writing in romanticism and nineteenth century urban accounts – 'texts' that in fact anticipate a decisive crossover from representational to aesthetic regimes. While mixing literary sources, empirical details, infrastructural givens, cultural predicates and philosophical speculation, the task undertaken here is primarily to produce a theoretical armature for reevaluating and deepening the grasp on walking discourses that have otherwise too readily bolstered appeals to naturalism, wholeness and non-alienated experience. While drawing on phenomenologically inflected approaches, the project, in line with much poststructuralist thought, less foregrounds an observing consciousness than it finds in footwork and foothold a contributing genesis that events experience as such.

Chapter 1 develops what is termed the Metaphysical Walk by way of Plato's *Republic*. Building on John Sallis' (1996) reading of the narrative structure of the dialogue unfolding in Athens' port town of Piraeus, the chapter charts Plato's indirect, but decisive, encounter with the Oedipus of tragedy and his parrying with a "head city" against which he enacts a thirdness or what I refer to as the levering action of corporeality necessary to the production of an upward way and a transcending good proper to the cosmological soul. This soul, itself construed as a tripartite, entity, only partially human, will be shown to potentiate a synthesised 'whole' but also a series of imbalances giving rise to an array of imperfect societies, of which the tyrannous or Oedipal version comes to predominate in modernity. The chapter traces the shift from a magico-religious world centred on the palace to an urban

one defined by dialogue speech, and with this shift, a contest between sacred and secular modes of knowing typified by *alētheia* and *apatē*. Key in this discussion will be the production of written monologue out of dialogic exchange, for which historical Socrates, as originator of Socratic questioning and a certain division in thought itself, is decisive for Platonism. Divided thought and its recuperation by a teranthropic soul, it is proposed, are key to modernity's 'discovery' of the psyche and the unconscious.

Chapter 2 extends questions of philosophical freedom (*chorismos* or rupture) and its metaphysical management. Where metaphysics sought stabilising orientation in monological speech indexed to transcendence beyond the subject, it is argued, following Lacoue-Labarthe (1989, 2003), that modernity sought foundation in standing figures situated in the here and now, figures whose type-ology were held to veil or circumscribe adequation and truth. In the resulting clamour of types, Oedipus stands as an ur-figure hypostasising the problem of humanization and its upright installation against the erosive forces of desire, mimesis, image-flow and time. In finite figures are invested a general will seeking, beyond Greek concerns over inordinate numbers, overwhelming expanse and truth in phenomenal appearance, knowledge unfettered by a theological ground. Yet grasping towards the infinite to better shut out its exorbitant implications, meant a kind of mirror discovery, one in which an islanding off of the self to better manage a world at large uncovers an inward infinitude capable of undoing all standing – what Lacoue-Labarthe (1989) called the “mimetic lay”, Lyotard (2011) the figural, and Deleuze (1990) the “otherwise-Other” or phantasms. Reading between aspects of modernity and classical sources, the chapter tracks Plato's quest to overcome mimesis via written self-authoring. Following Sallis (2000) in his consideration of the history of the image and imagination, the chapter links walking events with double-seeing - a strategy for stepping outside the present as image-capture in pursuit of managed epiphanic states (as opposed to ecstatic ones). If for Sallis this sets up in Platonism an image trail ever in search of an original, the path to pure intelligibility that the search mandates, in fact portends a crossover into pure simulacra, a world set absolutely afloat on images broken free of signification. As such the world can be imagined to vacillate between two strata historically contracted within the notion of the imagination itself - *imaginato* and *phantasia*. An exploration of this split beholding prepares for the detailed chapters of Part Two.

Chapter 3 maps the complex commencement of modernity poised between the Renaissance and the early seventeenth century. It focuses specifically on what Goux (1993) termed the “Oedipean or Cartesian epoch”, reading Descartes back into the Renaissance by way of Negri (2007) and his recognition of a “metaphysics of separation” at the heart of a “political ontology” founding incipient bourgeois hegemony. Descartes' pitching of an “intellectual memory” over a corporeal one will be shown to define a shift in place-encounter from the Renaissance topographer to the seventeenth century cartographer, one that established a new

relationship with knowledge and therefore truth. What Foucault (2004) called the “Cartesian moment” – the threshold at which knowledge was no longer predicated on transformations in the knower – will be linked with Agamben’s (1993) consideration of a generalised problem with experience in modernity, one centred on relationships with death. In contrast to the metaphysical walk, for which death was no barrier to knowledge, Descartes can be thought to swing the ladder of classical experience-knowledge ninety degrees substituting a brisk and direct stroll amidst the experiences furnished by the finite world for the upward way. Considering Descartes’ letter to Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac in 1631 extolling the virtues of Amsterdam for philosophical and scientific thought, the chapter uncovers in Descartes’ urban depiction a psychical correlate to the political ontology of the emerging bourgeoisie. Oedipus, the maker of ameliorating surfaces, will be shown to open up a phantasmatic relationship with city space, one playing between *Thanatos* and *Eros*, or surveying and fusion.

Chapter 4 considers the question of a country-city division arising in the eighteenth century against a will towards maternal initiation, an inauguration that is into nature. It argues that an overcoming of the division between production and generation can be read through a variant of the metaphysical walk - what can be thought of as modernity’s *promenade métaphysique*, a rambling quest for communality arising when the *agorien* circle, or city-space proper, is broken. Considering a range of temporal factors underpinning philosophical and poetic discourses, particularly by way of Jean-Jacque Rousseau and Emmanuel Kant, the chapter thinks through with what Alliez (1996) has referred to as an internalization of time or subjectivation and, in turn, Deleuze’s (1990, 1994) development of three temporal syntheses underwriting, and in part correcting, Kant’s positing of a split subject. The rediscovery of a tragic sensibility by German Idealism – specifically by way of Hölderlin - is used to read back into romantic accounts of walking and more generally Oedipus itself, a tripartite structure that counter-actualises the Platonic soul. To the extent that this structure accounts for a certain undoing of temporal sequentiality – time put off its hinge in fact – the chapter concludes with an examination of the other of consciousness – ‘the body’ as Klossowski (1997) found it to be. His own schema for a tripartite soul composed of impulse-intensities, phantasms and simulacra-stereotypes will be shown to offer one way in which walking discourses may be seen to congress with non-representational life.

Chapter 5 begins where the natal or the ideal of the national body (otherwise riven by a demarcation between owners of capital/property and those without) comes undone – in the nineteenth century, industrialising cities. As reservoir of working populations mobilised by rural disenfranchisement, such cities were locales of sustained identificatory revision no less than economic deterritorialisation. Exploring the invention of subjectivities, for which the *flâneur* was but one of an array of new urban physiologies, the poetic rendering of Paris by



Charles Baudelaire is followed via a series of commentators including Walter Benjamin (1999, 2002), Michel Butor (1969), Charles Taylor (2006) and Jerrold Seigel (1986). Evident in Baudelaire is an onto-peripatetic pursuit of totalized, whole experience, but one reversing the upward drive of the metaphysical walk and the horizontal drift of an agrarian *promenade métaphysique*. In a paean to an inorganic, crystalline world eschewing all Edenic reference, Baudelaire turns to the crowded streets in pursuit of a kind of split identification channeled by dandyism. Eugene Holland (1993, 2006) in his adaptation of Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalysis, first proffered in *Anti-Oedipus* (2000), offers one way of reading into the densely canvassed scholarship on Baudelairean poetics a specifically psycho-historical account, one that usefully explicates an Oedipal positioning. Mimetic of market decoding, Holland saw in the shift from romantic metaphor to metonymy in Baudelaire's prose poetry evidence of a "schizophrenic desire" perverting the typical course of sublimation or desexualisation. The result was a certain dissolution and re-engenderment extracted from the urban as an initiatory mechanism productive of a narcissistic individuation reactively drawn from others - an orientation that can be thought of as "an-Oedipal".

Chapter 6 finds in Rimbaud's poetic rendering of London an alternative to the an-Oedipal impasse produced by Baudelaire. To the extent that Oedipus is a surface-maker and reconciler of differences, Rimbaudian poetics will be shown, less to counter the mercantile deployment of an horizontal plane of limitless circulation and exchange via a transcendental over-programming, than to flip that surface over seeking a beyond to market decoding in a decentred self - a self run to the limits by motility and travel. London, harbouring a *terra incognita* at the heart of a nineteenth century imperial enterprise allowed Rimbaud a staging post for maximising this surface-self and in turn remaking the urban object itself. Locating Rimbaud and Verlaine in London by way of Félix Régamey's sketch of the poets in 1872, the chapter explicates a series of meditations on walking, observation and the confluence of the law and language as defined by Foucault. In particular it plays up the difference between coded ways of signaling erotic intention in the context of urban promenading. This difference - the homosexual difference as Lee Edelman has developed - is shown to map on to a tropic malfunction at the heart of Rimbaud's eclipsing of lyric by prose poetry. Against modernity's thrust for self-overcoming and futurity, the thinking through of a counter-temporality is explored, one pointing to the reversal of reflective consciousness and its confrontation with an inner unconscious. Foucault's (1987) "thought from the outside" offers one way of thinking beyond the notion that excursion leads to inner truth. In fact it will be shown to recover, against all territoriality, the unconsciousness of the Occident - the ocean itself.

## 9. Diagramming Footsteps

Anticipating what follows then, the walker may be thought to instance the juncture between consciousness and what is continuous with it, but ungraspable. Greater than any scenography or urban portraiture walkers might picture, footfall less grounds a view than it falls, as Serres has imagined, into the infinite, the noise of a “numerous sea” that bears the peripatetic upon a “metaphysics” understood as the antithesis of what is given in and through phenomenology (1995, p. 13). Following a Leibnizian inspiration, this other metaphysics passes through the foot as dark precursor, rather than through an ascending hierarchy for which soul, spirit or consciousness are pinnacle. It rests in fact on an “infinite base” not explained “by lucid and rigorous rationality”, but by the foot as the contact point in an ocean of noise (pp. 21-22):

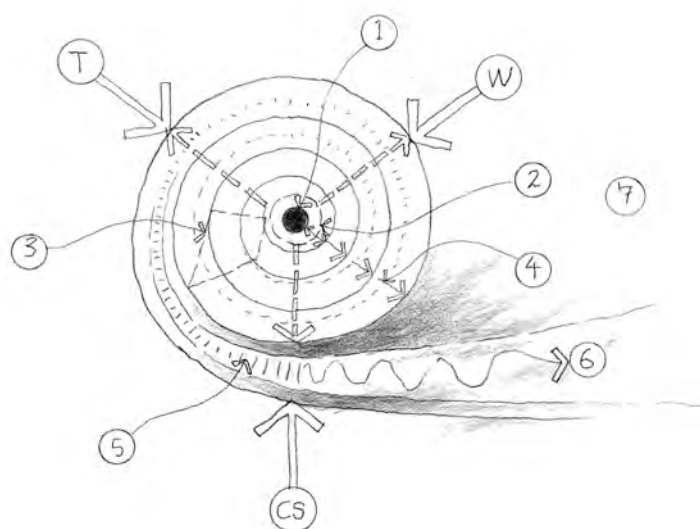
The perfect, optimal, living, existent, quasi-divine form – is a foot. It is at the bottom, the base, the minimum of the vortex. The vision is a sort of tornado with a low point, a noise hole at whose bottom is existence (p. 22).

In this reversal, the bottom explains the top. The immergence of rationality, the form of the given, and its possible manifestations all arise as “fluctuations” on this chaotic ground which harbours “a thousand temporalities” (pp. 24-25). This research then addresses the walker’s proximity to a metaphysics of the foot arising as a “banquet of times” – or, better, a barbarousness of time involuntarily inaugurating the new.

How though to capture this other metaphysics at work in the onto-peripatetic? Much as the walk can be understood to track across place, being both of it and in excess of the relations surfacing there, the diagram – etymologically from *dia* meaning through and *graphein* meaning to write or mark with lines – can be thought to both over-write and abstract from the appearance of things a schema depicting operative or determining forces. As Jakub Zdebik put it, diagrams capture the transformation of static structures and signal “flexible, elastic, incorporeal functions before they settle into definitive form” (2013, p. 1). Concomitantly, it is the working out of an Oedipal vector that is diagrammed in both written and drawn forms here. This has meant pulling from the non-representational domain of diagrammatic force, as Zdebik put it, “some kind of image so that it can be grasped” (p. 22). Yet the image-diagram with its overt spatiality less pictures determinate places or situations than a non-place between what is visible and articulable, a non-place that structures, and in some senses derails, what can be thought and sensed (pp. 21-22). Following Deleuze’s depiction of a diagrammatism in Foucault, Zdebik links the diagram to a topology whose particular folds determine “the inside and outside of thought” (p. 22). The ‘walk’ as emblem and outline gesture, I aim to show, holds particular importance in the Western, one whose footwork explicitly tracks the seam binding the inside and outside of thought.

Pointedly for the Occident this seam determines a temporal relation, for history instances a swerve or departure from perennial time. Thus, in the West, desire parallels the work of delaying equilibrium /entropy by dreaming of and seeking out, as Serres put it, the “exotic” through “exodic” means (2008, p. 262). Born of a departure seen through the eyes of “Israel’s prophets”, history is a “cultural species”, a break with the *oikoumenē* or Edenic series peculiar to the Judeo-Christian tradition, where “imbalance” and “eccentricity” engender both the itinerant line of the journey and its aberrant course (1989, p. 10). If Europe, as the millennia-old seat of such traversal, harboured “tribes of farmers” who did not “always cultivate everything”, and who left “something to be gleaned” from “desolate wilderness, disorder and forests” (p. 10), this project argues that a particular type of urbanism – an Oedipal urbanism – is respondent to a certain alienation from the nutritive earth. A long practiced cultural validation of exodus has been underwritten by the lapse of fertility of the soil divinely imposed on Cain upon slaying Abel, his shepherd brother. Forced into wandering and mere subsistence, Cain eventually founded the first city, Enoch, which assumed the role of sustaining mechanisms at odds with the Edenic and Asiatic ideals of the earth as absorbing loom. Genesis pictures a people split from their God, an existence marked by disequilibrium and the disturbance of the triangular stability (what Serres in another context referred to as a equilateral balance) between the maternal generativity of the earth and the stricture of a celestial father. Yet any triangulation in exodus suggests a *scalene imbalance* analogous to “lameness, like Hephaistos ..., lame like several relatives of Oedipus, with sore feet, like him” (Serres 2008, p. 264).

Oedipus - or the “Greek Cain” as Deleuze and Guattari nominated him, is figure for the people of the foot (1987, p.125). Embodying both despotism and immanence, he can be thought to span, or rather shepherd a transition between two regimes of signs – a signifying or despotic semiotic and a passionate or post-signifying regime. In the former, the sovereign orders and organises all signs that circulate in its name – a circulation that “overcodes” and unifies the entire social field (Fig 6).

**KEY**

- 1 Signifying centre (divine agency channelled through the sovereign)
- 2 Temple/palace as inner realm of signifying centre
- 3 Signs tied to other signs in accordance with a concentric signification
- 4 Spiralling lines of concentric signification propagated by the centre
- 5 Limit zone of signification & a-signifying flight or release – the “expiatory animal”
- 6 *Pharmakos*, scapegoat, victimage release as carrier of “the negative line of flight”
- 7 Bakhtin’s adventure time of myth and the site of epic, perennial tales.

*Augmented with Goux’s three virtues of the Hero Myth*

T Temperance

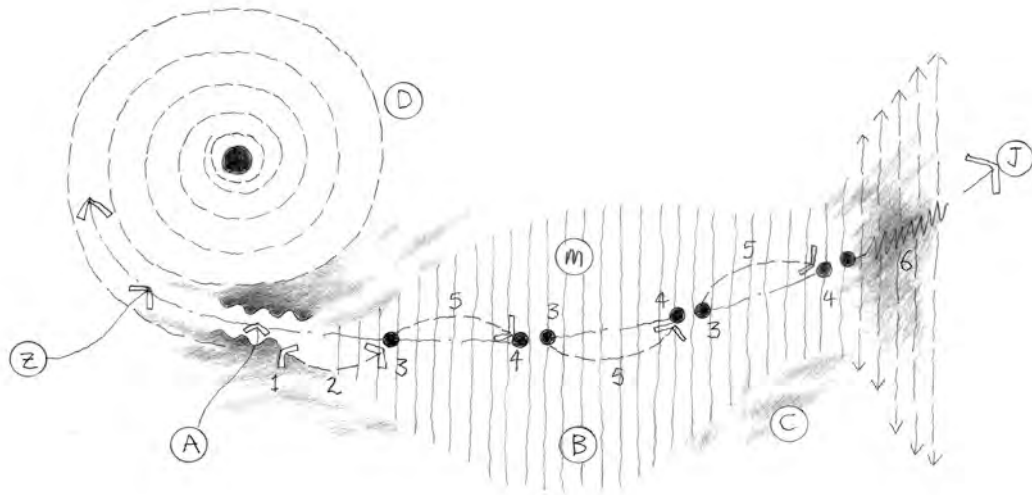
W Wisdom

CS Corporeal strength/physical courage.

**Figure 6.** Author 2013. “Signifying Regime” (modified from Deleuze & Guattari 1987).

In contrast to the “signifying regime”, a post-signifying or passional semiotic finds the social body entirely in exile and flight. Assuming the place of the *pharmakon* (but given a positive valence rather than the negative place assigned it by the signifying regime), Cain’s people can be seen to swerve outward away from the despotic, circular ordering of signs indemnified by a monotheistic God (p. 143). Instead, signs failing to close in on fixed meanings, themselves assume an itinerate course in a quest for a signified adequate to the mutual betrayal by a people and its God. So too is the subject set into precarious drift, for if expulsion in the signifying regime amounted to a passage into certain death or what amounted to an absolute outside, in the post-signifying regime a step by step pursuit of foothold and orientation relativises death, working it into the interstices punctuating a life lived sequentially. Hence, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, “Every consciousness pursues its own death, every love-

passion its own end" (1987, p. 133). In this sense the repetition sequence of the line of flight is both conditioned by death as "absolute deterritorialization" and an incremental recovery from this mortal trajectory of a "segmentarity" as reprieve or postponement of that end in the manner of the exemption awarded 'Cain's people' (p. 134) (see Fig 7.).



**KEY**

- 1 Break through into subjectification (positive line of flight)
- 2 Double turning away or betrayal (God and 'his' people)
- 3 Subject of enunciation (micro despotism)
- 4 Subject of the statement (as deviation in enunciation)
- 5 Segmented flight and reinstatement of priestly/bureaucratic re-appropriation
- 6 Beyond enunciating recuperation, decoding of market society, negative infinity
  
- A Despotic escape, passage through water (Mosses)
- B Corporeal split
- C Real-life chronotope & contemporary (urban) adventurism & zone of fluctuating reality
- D Echoes of the old despotic signification (dotted)
- M Inflated cognitive split
- J Dream of New Jerusalem & break with segmentarity or the big departure
- Z Rearward, despotic longing or the big return

**Figure 7.** Author 2013. "A-signifying Regime" (modified from Deleuze & Guattari 1987).

Read against these propositions then, what can be thought of as the Occident's passional turn amounts to the implantation of a linearity or flight that converts the negative passage of the scapegoat into the mundane duplication of a passional citizenry locked into fantasies of self-legislation and a life space merging reality effects with fluctuating mental ones. As this

project will elaborate, this fluctuating reality finds its ground in modernity in writing which “seems to be internalized, and to internalize everything” with it (1987, pp. 126-127). Yet the doubling of a writer and the world written invokes a subjectification that opens a vacillation between a subject of enunciation and its duplication via statements. It is the implications of this vacillation that this project will explore relative to walkers who write of cities. In these texts will be found the steps leading to an aesthetic regime that founds solidarity and communality, as Rancière held, on sensation and in turn makes the city itself an aesthetic ‘object’ whose sensory fabric portends an always contested “being together” (2011, p. 56). Reading Deleuze and Guattari’s vesting of a “people to come” in something like the artist’s sounding of “the ‘earth’s song’, the song of the inhuman, the song of the forces of chaos” (pp. 56-57), Rancière found that the aesthetic regime characteristically links politics with art via a will to change the given “distribution of the sensible” (p. 56). Deleuze and Guattari’s a-signifying regime in fact diagrams a particular forcing from the given of a pattern of sensory recognition through which the people of the walk hope to *weave together a community* in Rancière’s sense. A-signifying subjectification sets in place precisely the “being together apart” of the aesthetic regime that assigns art practices the solitary role of sounding chaotic, vitalist forces to better bring into sympathetic, affective resonance a reality-effect of being together – or what Rancière termed a “dissensual community” divided between a present awaiting communitarian fulfilment and the promise of a future aesthetic consensus (p. 59). If this “community structured by disconnection” makes its monuments both the “confident of the people” and the representative of that people’s absence (p. 57 & 59), the observer/walker shows up as the mobile will of that same concretisation – a seeking anew of sensations capable of cementing people with place. Between the rupture of Thebes and the call of a consensual ‘hearth’ at Colonus is a tragic consciousness and an Oedipal politics the beyond of which remains to be thought.

## **Part One - *Diagramming***

# CHAPTER 1

## *The Metaphysical Walk – Athens*

To get firm ground under our feet again! Because what this is really about is finding in what shows itself to us the truly fundamental, the fixed, what can carry weight, and so forth

**Jan Patočka**, 1974

### *1. Myth to Imbalance*

In their ordering of a viable life-world, all societies seek to manage the noise of decoded-desire. As Hans Blumenberg asserted in his philosophical anthropology, societies variously confront “the absolutism of reality” - an “unarticulated field of data” prior to all orientation and conceptual grasp (1985, p. 8). Born into dependence on others, and confronted with a reality where survival unaided is not viable, the human animal faces a defection of existential place. Unable to be fully sustained by the physical environments they are born into, humans are distinguished by their need to make worlds of meaning (p. 7). Deviating from organic evolutionary pressures, humanity emerges into a “phantom body” defined by socio-cultural technologies exceeding individuals. The anthropogenesis of this social body, and the world-making defining it, is tied to an ancient environmental shift and a corresponding postural re-orientation significant for this study. Existentially decisive for Blumenberg is the shift in dwelling from the forest to the savannah and a consequent misfit with open terrain induced by bipedal mobility:

Whatever may have been the appearance of the prehuman creature that was induced, by an enforced or an accidental change in the environment it inhabited, to avail itself of the sensory advantage of raising itself upright into a bipedal posture and to stabilize that advantage in spite of all its internal disadvantages in the functioning of organs – that creature had, in any case, left the protection of a more hidden form of life, and an adapted one, in order to expose itself to the risks of the widened horizon of its perception, which were also those of its perceivability [...] It was a situational leap, which made the unoccupied distant horizon into an ongoing expectation of hitherto unknown things [...] What is here called the absolutism of reality is the totality of what



goes with this situational leap, which is inconceivable without super-accomplishment in consequence of a sudden lack of adaptation. (p. 4)

For creatures conditioned to respond to concrete fears by flight, the anxiety induced by the open horizon and the long vista (making imaginable unspecified threats as opposed to specific ones) presented a setting where movement (fleeing) alone was insufficient to survive (p. 5). If fear and flight favoured action responding to immediate threats, the predominance of visual distance and its associated ambiguity induced a heightened “attitude of expectation” for which “feeling one’s way forward [to better survey...] the whole horizon” was one solution (p. 5). Akin to blind wandering, this arduous, piecemeal acquisition of experience and knowledge had an alternative: the construction of a shared world substituting “the familiar for the unfamiliar, [...] explanations for the inexplicable, [...] names for the unnameable” (p. 5). Contrary to the dominant conception that tool use set humans apart, in fact humanity as a *Homo pictor* (a “creature who covers up the lack of reliability of his world by projecting images”) was the decisive factor (p. 8). This condition established a “double-layered relationship” characterised by persistent disjunction between “what one sees and what really happens – between the flat appearances in the foreground and a ‘story’ in the background” (p. 14). Attributable to bipedal motility then (as an upright questioning in an open, unarticulated perceptual field), are socio-cultural technologies pursuant of a cognitive hold on the unknown in excess of what can be reached by foot, or conversely, outran. As such, walking – as a general signatory instance of motility – always unfolds in a double-layered field: the walker does not simply act in the foregrounded immediacy of things, but is orientated by a background horizon woven by stories and orientating pictures.

For Blumenberg, this double-layered relationship defines myth; through it “numinous indefiniteness” is converted into “nominal definiteness” (pp. 15, 25). Myths, coeval with the “mechanism of evolution”, transmitted through oral traditions stories that acquired their “pregnance”, or meaning-validity, not on the basis of archetypal or perennial human relevance, but as the result of having endured through continuous retelling in what Blumenberg understood as a “Darwinism of words” (Wallace 1985, p. xxvi). Contrary to Romanticism’s “aesthetic Idealism” (the valorisation of an individualist imagination in the recreation of the world), this collective Darwinism rested on a “Neptunism of selection” rather than instances of singular, creative “Vulcanism” (Blumenberg 1985, pp. 161–162). Consistent with this immanence of stories, this study treats the Oedipal myth neither as a predefined nor a universal type, but as a ‘vector’ and ongoing deformer of culture’s phantom body emerging with mythological selection. The anomalous functioning of Oedipus on the mythological itself will, in accordance with Goux’s recognition of it as “irregular” at the level of the typical “structure of the heroic myths of royal investiture” (1993, p.10), be attended to in the context of walkers observing city spaces in modernity. As a first step, this chapter considers the transition from a mythological to an essentially urban worldview, enacted in the

name of the philosophical *logos*. It unpacks the notion of a *metaphysical walk* to better understand conventions of observing found in the walker-writers of modernity.

Key in the transition from myth to *logos* is Sophocles' Oedipus who is made an emblem for a *pathos* in knowledge (seeking to know too much) and an amorous malady (wrongly placed and inordinate desire). Despite its mythological context, his travails resonate with those of fifth-century Athenians who were confronted with a democratic crisis, were uneasy with the new scientific spirit, and troubled by the city becoming the tyrannical head of a de facto empire (Knox 1957, p. 77). When *Oedipus Tyrannus* was performed at the conclusion of the City Dionysia (the annual weeklong early spring festival that finished in the Amphitheatre of Dionysus), the audience faced not an archaic figure confined to myth but a contemporary character. As Aristotle reflected in *The Politics*, the Oedipal risk was concomitant with an identification of a single individual or household with the state and perturbed the 'natural' priority of the political body over individual citizens (1992, pp. 60–61). In terms strikingly reminiscent of Oedipus' predicament, he described the impropriety of the part's relation to the whole:

Separate hand or foot from the whole body, and they will no longer be hand or foot except in name, as one might speak of a 'hand' or 'foot' sculptured in stone. That will be the condition of the spoilt hand [or limb], which no longer has the capacity and the function which define it. (p. 60)

Oedipus, whose name speaks of the limb spoilt by his father at birth, but who also solves the Sphinx's riddle where feet provide the clue and the measure of 'man', emblematises the individual incapable of contributing equally to the city. If "man is by nature a political animal", being out of step with the "free and equal" male citizenry amounted to being profoundly unequal – in other words, being "subhuman or superhuman" (pp. 59, 74). Knox saw in this high-low pairing a clue to the recognition of Oedipus as a contemporary of the city. In the preceding Greek archaic period (750–480 BC), the king and the *pharmakos* (or scapegoat) were integrally linked given that in times of crisis or lapsed fertility, the latter was made to carry the pollution of the former (as representative of the *polis*' fall from wellbeing). As Jean-Pierre Vernant noted, in the shift from sovereign rule to democracy in the sixth century, the figure of the *tyrannos* was equated with the anachronistic and suspect place of the king and attracted vilification and ostracism much as the *pharmakos* had (1990, p. 135). Drawing comparison with the mythical heroes who contravened paternal lineage and acceded to "royalty via an indirect route", the tyrant was seen as solely the "son of his own works" and therefore had a propensity to rise above men and the law in contest with the gods (p. 127). Oedipus, as both exceptional king of Thebes and monstrous violator of its royal sanctity, was a figure exemplarily exceeding all common measure.

In the *Poetics*, Aristotle defined tragedy by *peripeteia*, the reversal of fate that reduces the tyrant/king to a *pharmakos*. In post-classical Latin, *peripeteia* means to “turn right around” like a hinge and was derived from the Ancient Greek *peri* – “around or surroundings” and *piptein* – “to fall”. The word’s similarity to *peripatetia* (“walking around”), is significant: *peripeteia* was deployed by Aristotle to characterise in tragic drama the fall beyond all “equal footing” (Vernant 1990, p. 135). This etymology is consistent with the *perikathairein* ritual that required the expelled scapegoat to circumambulate the exterior of the *polis* before being pursued over the horizon – a move that moderated the linear flight of the expelled in accordance with a turning or re-centring gesture that corrected erratic movement (Bremmer 1983, p. 314). Conversely, Oedipus errantly turns according to his double nature as hero and defiler infringing on all proper position. He is (as Vernant cited Diogenes) “both father and brother to his children and husband and son to his wife” (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1990, p. 138). Through his lameness, Oedipus also mixes up “the three successive ages of man that [should be...] only know[n] one after another” – the four legs of the crawling infant, the two legs of the adult, and the three legs of the old man with a stick. In turn, he soiled the proper sequence and order of city space (p. 138). Time, neither chronologically straight within him nor generationally cyclical, was twisted and made to turn back on itself. If the *poleis* had their own “special gates” for expelling the *pharmakos*, then their sacrosanct deployment suggests an acute guarding, not just against erratic movement, but urban porosity (Bremmer 1983, pp. 313–314). Oedipus’ conflation with Athens presented the spectre of cities becoming *apolis* – that is, succumbing to an excessive porosity and mobilisation (the Greek *poros*, meaning hole or passage, has associations such as *aporia* and *aporetic*). At Thebes for instance, Oedipus breaks the Sphinx’ hold by an *aporia* centred on the unfathomable nature of the bipedal creature “man” (Vernant 1990, p. 138).

Where ‘man’ might recognise himself in the feet affording his upright posture and forward gait, Oedipus’ indeterminate gait betrays this forward-facing determination. His limp signals a propensity to depart from the rule and follow a deviating path – whether that path elides his rightful inheritance of Thebes, the death his father anticipated and planned for at his infancy, his humiliation and self-blinding at the conclusion of *Oedipus Tyrannus*, or an improbable rehabilitation following his death in *Oedipus at Colonus* (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet 1990, p. 213). Oedipus’ gait equally marks him as a figure with an exceptional destiny and a capacity to depart from the straight and determinate course of things. In this sense, the Greeks perceived lameness as an ambivalent condition, at once troubled and venerated (p. 210). Tragedy itself suggests a runaway speech stepping beyond the place of its utterance and capable of reaching into and through the given that endures and holds a public around itself (p. 206). As Vernant noted in his review of Levi-Strauss’ deliberations on the issue, the Sphinx’s riddling question, intended to remain within the mytho-religious domain bared to human cognisance, was “a question isolated from its answer”, “formulated in such a way that

it is beyond reach". Yet if Oedipus enters this impossible interlocutory exchange and renders the Sphinx, not just speechless, but without recourse to action other than inducing its own deadly plunge into silence, he claims for himself the interlocutory position as questioner, indeed a Sphinx-like reversal.

## 2. Oikoumenē

In breaking with the mythological world, the fifth century *polis* was locus of an exorbitant questioning, one that exceeded the mytho-religious domain and set in play an historical worldview. For Patočka, the Greek *polis* and political life instigated a "public realm", for the first time oriented by aspirations exceeding the cycles of labour perpetuating life survival (1996, p. 23). Building on Hannah Arendt's recognition of the distinction in the Greek *polis* between a *bios politikos* (a political way of life "freely chosen" and unconstrained by forms of necessity, compulsion, or restraint) and "private" life centred on the household and "kinship" relations (pp. 14, 24), Patočka proposed that entry into historic time coincides with the casting off of an exclusive bond with the world of work and its ties to the "household" as a "proto-cell or model" for collective life (p. 15). The pre-historical mode was not without urban expression - the first empires were "monumental households" with "no sharp boundary between [them and] the world", and while the "city's walls may be the work of human hands, [they belonged...], like everything else made and done by humans, to the one house occupied by the unequal society of gods and humans" (p. 21). This inequality centred on the question of death, and life itself was seen as a burdensome undertaking endured by mortals as precondition of their participation in a theocratic sociality (p. 17). This framing beheld the earth itself as a "dark landscape" against which work was endlessly directed to achieve acceptance from divine and demonic powers and their command of a "nonindividuated night" (pp. 12, 22–23). An anxiety-causing orientation to "natural, unproblematic man" found relief in the notion of perennality and reception into divine perpetuity (p. 14). As Patočka further argued, humanity in this form, while close to "nonhuman animals" in their need to "live in order to live", nevertheless experienced a problematized hold on the world: mortals only had a partial view compared to divine purview (p. 13). Divine and human domains ran together; leaders were mediators and "managers of divine households" charged with ensuring a continuous span between "empire and universe" (p. 34).

In contrast, the "Greek *polis*" was synonymous with independence from nature and an "*oikoumenē*" (p. 35; editor's note 7, p. 168). It pursued a tendency already evident in the *oikoumenē* (through its growing interdependencies), to prepare for a world increasingly

defined by human agency, the memorialising of individual glory, and imagined forms of “human immortality” (p. 37). Breaking with the “*oikos*” though, the *polis* enacted a “reaching forth” that displaced cyclic routines with temporal advance - “a time to” as Patočka said (pp. 38–39). Eschewing the shelter of tradition and myth, the *polis* instead sought “encounter[s] with what there is, on the boundary of all that is” in a quest to account for the whole of existence (p. 39). In the political and philosophical life of cities, for the first time, this whole – seen independently of divine ordinance - could “speak directly to humans”, though in the manner of a contest (pp. 39–41):

The spirit of the *polis* is a spirit of unity in conflict, in battle. One cannot be a citizen – *polites* – except in community of some against others, and the conflict itself gives rise to the tension, the tenor of the life of the *polis*, the shape of the space of freedom that citizens both offer and deny each other [...]. (p. 42)

For Patočka the *polis* literally forged a culture, and citing Heraclitus, he imagined the urban as an incorporeal body flaring into being via a “*polemos*” (battle) that momentarily holds the parties together in an elucidated whole, just as the night-time flash of lightening brings the unseen into a graspable, if transient, whole (pp. 42–43). Moreover, *polemos* not only constituted the *polis*, it named the “primordial insight that makes philosophy possible” setting in place a drive for truth or “unconcealment” (p. 43). History is this “shakeup” and, specific to the West, renders Europe, and ultimately the world, the fleshing out of the “skeleton of [...] unconcealment” (pp. 44–45). In place of indetermination (whether Serres’ sea of noise or Blumenberg’s absolutism of reality), what unconcealment motivated were finite figures or stopgaps (teleological absolutism or its various proxies such as *theoria*, theology, and the subject), sufficient to bridge over a precariousness exposed in reality (see Wallace 1985, p. xxxvii).

### 3. “Head City”

In Plato’s *Timaeus*, the “Demiurge” attempts such a bridging at a cosmic scale. Confronted with the pre-given *chora* (space), a clamorous field of becoming and erratic movement, the Demiurge reshapes the cosmos into a working, coordinated whole by cutting and crisscrossing strips of the pre-existing domain into “a shape like the letter X” and then folding them around to form a spherical structure – the cosmic soul. Further subdivisions and crossings form a complex, orbital order according to which the heavenly bodies rotate. Their very motion testifies to a noetic, or intelligible, design countering the impression of a wandering movement in the celestial bodies no less than it invokes a temporal order (Plato 1977, p. 54). The cosmic soul is said to induce the “birth of time”, itself idealised as an eternity where regular ordination unvaryingly plays out (p. 54). Nevertheless, in John

Sallis' reading of *Timaeus* anything but regular temporality is found: the Demiurge, as original maker, covers over a still earlier making in what amounts to a "palintropic" manoeuvre (from the Greek *palin*, "back", and *tropos*, "turn"). For instance, the priority Plato gave to "heavenly kinds of gods" did not deny the plethora of "other [mythological] gods and their descendants" so much as it reduced them to hearsay and forgetting as a consequence of time – in other words, a time before time! Not inconsistent with Patočka's notion of changeover from an *oikoumenē* to history as unconcealment, the Demiurge displaced the mythological deities "of the household, of family, of descent, of lineage" (Sallis 1999, p. 86). Opposing the order of generation with that of production, the Demiurge was given a fatherly role in *Timaeus*, one in which 'an errant time before' is quarantined to better head off generative "disorder [or...] monstrosity" (pp. 86–87). Further, this contest was given a high-low distribution so that generation (everything apposite to maternal nature) was positioned beneath the agency of production (everything engendering by the Demiurge). As Sallis put it, *Timaeus* subtracts from the earth its fertile (and perturbing) primacy, reducing the earth to a nursemaid set "wind[ing] around the axis that stretches throughout the universe"; the antecedence of the earth (as the god "with greatest seniority"; Plato 1997, *Timaeus* 40b-c) was made to secondarily corroborate with the divine artisan, who was credited with overcoming a waywardness in the *chora* itself (Sallis 1999, p. 85).

Concomitantly, Plato held the earth to be spherical, self-sufficient, and in concert with the cosmic soul, needing neither "hands" nor "feet" for defence, grasping, or support (Plato 1997, *Timaeus* 33d-34). Though in crafting the cosmos, no less than the earth, the Demiurge must have utilised, within the wayward time of the *chora*, and prior to eternity, an intervening labour, or what amounted to a mediating thirdness. For Plato, it was only with three things that any kind of joining could be achieved: "it isn't possible to combine two things well all by themselves [for...] there has to be some bond between the two that unites them" (*Timaeus* 31b-c). In advancing production over generation, it is the leveraging time of making that puts the heavens over and before the earth. Moreover, this third time can be thought to have an ambulatory character particularly in the case of the world soul's joining with the human body. Mediating between the soul's otherwise spherical body and the ground, limbs are necessary to effect, through a levering action, regular motion across the otherwise irregular surface of the earth (*Timaeus* 44d-45b). This laborious action of levelling - in which walking is key – can be seen as a correction of a prior temporality associated with an archaic, mythological ground. In short, a noetic grasp of the cosmos was modelled on a *stepping up* achieved via a corporeal scaffold facilitating intelligibility as such. Yet Sallis suggested, in the case of Plato's comedic depiction of the body in the *Timaeus* and elsewhere, that such an interpretation only partly registers the work of securing a *logos* (1999, p. 24). The cosmic soul brought to ground and rendered comic in its intersection with the body is less a renunciation of corporeality than a necessary condition of its fall into mutable,

material life. Hence in Plato's discourse, a 'realism' persists consistent with a palintropic strategy seeking to integrate soul and material life, and points to an unwillingness to subscribe to the full implications of the world soul's idealism – an idealism, as it will be argued below, that for Plato was implicated in a tyrannous intellectualism for which Oedipus was emblem.

The tension between head and limbs parallels that between eternity and becoming organising the narrative structure of *Timaeus*. Beginning the dialogue by describing a conversation from the previous day in which an ideal *polis* modelled on the cosmic soul was described for four guests, Socrates asks the reconvened guests to transform this imagined city from a "splendid", if "motionless" "animal", into an operational one – that is, set it on a war-footing (*Timaeus*, 19b-d). For Sallis, this opening play on versions of 'head' in the dialogue – Socrates as the head of the household, the city first beheld in the head and then recollected in the heads of others – sets up contrastive cities: the first is "eidetic" – a "lifeless" "head city" or "capital city"; the second is an "archaic city" grounded in historical political affairs (1999, p. 28). The former is pictured as a "technical city" where the populous is divided into specialist occupations for the application of *techne* ("τέχνη") – agriculturalists/farmers, artisans, and soldiers/guardians – and where urban genesis invariably progresses from a compact and self-sufficient "city of artisans" to the swollen and excessively consuming "city of luxury", to a third territorially expansive, militarised city orchestrated by the "guardians" (pp. 15, 20, and 24). Underwriting the final militarised city-form is, the "technical control" of all erotic and procreative necessities on one hand, and an impetus to war and the expansion of territory in a contest with other cities for resources to satisfy the city of luxury on the other (p. 24). Hence, Sallis saw Plato as having pictured a "city [...] poised at the threshold of tragedy" (1999, p. 24) and pushed to the point of the imperial tyranny associated with Oedipus/Athens where two possibilities await: either a despotic operation must occur where all fertile agency is reassigned to the state and where the privacy of "hearth and home" is wrenched open for the common good; or, alternatively, the surrender to a city swollen with (non-essential) need occurs, leading to an unconstrained and warring course (1999, p. 20).

The dilemma of tyranny associated with a "head city" in *Timaeus* resonates with Oedipus, not just in his association with Athens in its slide into imperialism, but more humorously, with the puns incorporated into Oedipus' name itself: *Oedi* references *oidi*, "the swollen" as in oedema, and "*oida*", "to know" inordinately (Knox 1957, p. 84). Imbalanced knowing is lampooned as literally swollen-headed. Furthermore, the conjunction of head/knowing with feet, in the second part of Oedipus' name (invoked via *pous* or foot and implying a swollen footedness) replicates in its ground-ward association a descending trajectory akin to a comic, palintropy. If in the eidetic city this downward shift involved an exposure to desirous, impassioned states by way of dialogue, in the *Republic*, a paradigmatic city is similarly proposed - "'a paradigm laid up in heaven', one that is 'nowhere on earth'" – from which

Socrates also recoils on the basis that it must be technically tested against exteriority, materiality, sacrificity and “the forces of ἔρως [eros]” (Sallis 1999, p. 30). No doubt an Oedipal problematic was being rehearsed in the technical city (see pp. 20, 375). Oedipus most strikingly embodied incest and self-forgetfulness and, in the “scientific spirit” of fifth century Athens, instigated a dispassionate, if actively pursued, investigation into the source of Thebes’ consumption by the plague, only to discover, on the basis of a corporeal clue before him all along (his maimed foot and limp), that he was the defiler.

Socrates’ role in these discursive cities entailed - much like the palintropic absorption of generation by production - an appropriation and diffusing of the parallel between historical Socrates and Oedipus, a parallel that risked casting Plato’s own philosophical project in an Oedipal light. Certainly historical Socrates and Oedipus were linked to inquiry, justice, and judgment. They stood as *pharmakon*, both manifestly for and betrayed by the city they subsequently came to represent. Both were caught up in tasks of clarification by seeing past the circumstantial appearance of things to find deeper faults perturbing the *polis*. Both sought to rectify these faults by turning inward to self-truths intricately tied to the communities that they constituted. Not coincidentally, they were both exercised, problematically, by the edict of Apollo to “know thyself”, and both were accused of sacrilege on the basis of usurping Apollo’s prerogative over knowledge. As exemplarily urban figures, they called for an oblique looking whose resulting *pathos* has profoundly mediated historical, urban understanding. This *pathos* was not only linked with a transition to an a-signifying regime whose mix favoured the passionate over the despotic; rather, the *pathos* coincided with a transition to metaphysics, whose “genesis” (far from certain, given its development in the pre-Socratic period by traveling “protophilosophers”) turned on a “focal problem” and the “uncovering” of “fundamental truth” or “*aletheia*” (Patočka 1989, p. 170). Socrates transmitted this protophilosophical tradition as “the great questioner” and practitioner of “learned ignorance”, who sought freedom from “the bonds of nature, tradition, others’ schemata [including...] his own” (p. 180). In seeking a space of knowing without prior support or ground, Socrates’ task entailed reaching for a totality only accessible through what is finitely given. Hence this whole - the truth of all that is - was accessible only “in the form of a question” and thus imposed a necessity to think the beyond as a higher knowledge – a metaphysics – transcending the immediate “totality of [apparent] things” (p. 181). As Patočka put it, metaphysics (as subsequently developed by Plato and others) sought to offer an “answer to the Socratic (or pre-Socratic) question” through *logos*. Concurrently, Plato’s Socrates can be seen as attempting a takeover of “philosophical protoknowledge”, though ultimately not sufficiently to free himself entirely from its “premetaphysical soil” (p. 180). As will be argued below, the head city registers both the rising above *and* dragging along of such ‘soil’.



#### 4. *Standing | Autochthony*

For Deleuze and Guattari, the persistence of this soil shows up in the notion of the “Autochthon”, the appeal to ancestral soil as medium of place-claims (*autos*, self + *chthon*, earth). However, rather than designating an incontestable belonging, they recognised behind this appeal to originating terrain a “deterritorialising [...] power of the earth” itself, an eruptive force capable of overturning stable territories (1994, p. 86). Hence autochthonic agency assumes contrary forms: one sees the institution of an imperial figure mediating a divine order in accordance with a transcendence favouring vertical powers; the other concerns the arrival of a traveling outsider with no manifest lineage or place-claims. It is this outsider, breaking open the prevailing *oikos*, who creates a free space of questioning, association, and via *polemos* (or unsheltering), a horizontal “milieu of immanence” (pp. 86–87). Nevertheless, transcendence, like immanence, depends on a deterritorialisation of existing territorial relations: transcendence being indicative of a State-form that reorders local places in pursuit of a higher unity; immanence being indicative of a mercantile-form that closes out the immediate connectedness of place in pursuit of far-flung linkages (p. 86). Moreover, autochthonic strangers compose two distinct “psychosocial types” (the despot/ruler and the artesian/traveller/trader), two forms of sociality (imperial and mercantile), and two forms of “reterritorialization” (the “imperial spatium of the State” and the “political extension of the city”) (pp. 86–87). Transcendence and immanence find distinct loci too: the despot/ruler converges on “the palace”, while the artesian/traveller/trader orients towards the “*agora* and commercial networks” (p. 86).

Partnered with mobilized artisans and merchants, wandering philosophers found in the developing immanence of the *polis* a place where philosophy was itself capable of being instituted (p. 87). There the very contingency of urban place drove a metaphysical will that sought “a new vision of the imperishable” (Patočka 1996, pp. 64-65). Faced with a declining democratic *polis*, the call for “definitive certainty” assumed what Patočka saw as two versions of invariance – metaphysics “from above and from below” (p. 65). Pitted against a Platonic “metaphysics of the *logos* and the Idea”, Democritus’ “metaphysics of things” sought a constancy of the phenomenal world via geometrical atomism and materialism (p. 65). While the metaphysics of things found renewal in the scientific spirit of the modern age, the metaphysics of the *logos* set in play a long tradition built on a divided reality or *chorismos*: “a separation, an abyss between the true world, accessible to the precise and rigorous insight of reason, and the approximate, apparent, impressionistic world defying a rigorous grasp which our ordinary experiences treats as the only reality” (p. 65). Claiming

to bridge this *chorismos*, *logos* aimed to pull philosophical speculation away from the wandering proto-philosophers (a group Plato aligned with the Sophists). Yet a paradox lies at the heart of this exclusion:

On the one hand, the philosopher must be introduced into the city in order for it to come-to-be in deed, whereas, on the other hand, the city is precisely such as to exclude the philosopher. The philosopher-king is a paradox. (Sallis 1996, p. 379)

This paradox is mirrored by historical Socrates' fate. Where in the *Republic* Socrates is portrayed as a speculative city-builder, in life, as Foucault had argued, he is historically credited with instigating a challenge to political *parrhēsia* (truth-speaking), characteristic of the *polis'* democratic institutions. In its place, he enacted an "ethical truth-speaking" that eschewed political forums (where "anyone can say anything" without regard for its truth) by taking to the *agora* and everyday spaces instead, inciting and enacting an examination of individual lives in a search for personal *parrhēsia*, where nothing would be concealed (2011 p. 10). The Platonic dialogues were one route by which Socrates – who seemingly wrote nothing, and who reversed the "pharmacos logic" by internalizing the 'other' and the curse-cure dichotomy - was committed to text achieving a belated perennality. As Patočka noted, his enjoining with the page formed part of a project to redress the injustices of the failed democratic order and envision a *polis* "where the *philosopher can live*" – in other words, "a city [...] planned out" (1996, p. 88; emphasis in original). To create a city in outline, to make it the subject of sustained reflection and a thing cared for in parallel with the soul, this was Plato's Socratic legacy (pp. 87-88). Like the soul, the city had to be examined, yet to the extent that it is in the *Republic* that such a city is most acutely delineated, its narrative does not just unfold as a *logos* addressing a head city alone; rather, the *Republic* unfolds as a speculative walk enacted in concrete urban space - the space of Athens.

Commencing the dialogue, Socrates is interrupted in his walk home, having descended to the port of Piraeus to attend the festival of Bendis. Not coincidentally, the chance meeting in the street that leads to an evening-long conversation on the nature of the just city in the nearby house of Polemarchus involved questions of topographical displacement. As Sallis noted, the *Republic* describes both an ascending journey ("The Upward Way") and a subsequent descent ("The Downward Way"). In the ascending phase, three city types are traversed before arriving at the allegory of the cave at the core of the text (Book VII) – a revelatory pinnacle in which ascension into the light coincides topographically with the Acropolis (see Fig. 8).<sup>1</sup> The trajectory from the port (Piraeus) to the overlooking heights (Acropolis) is

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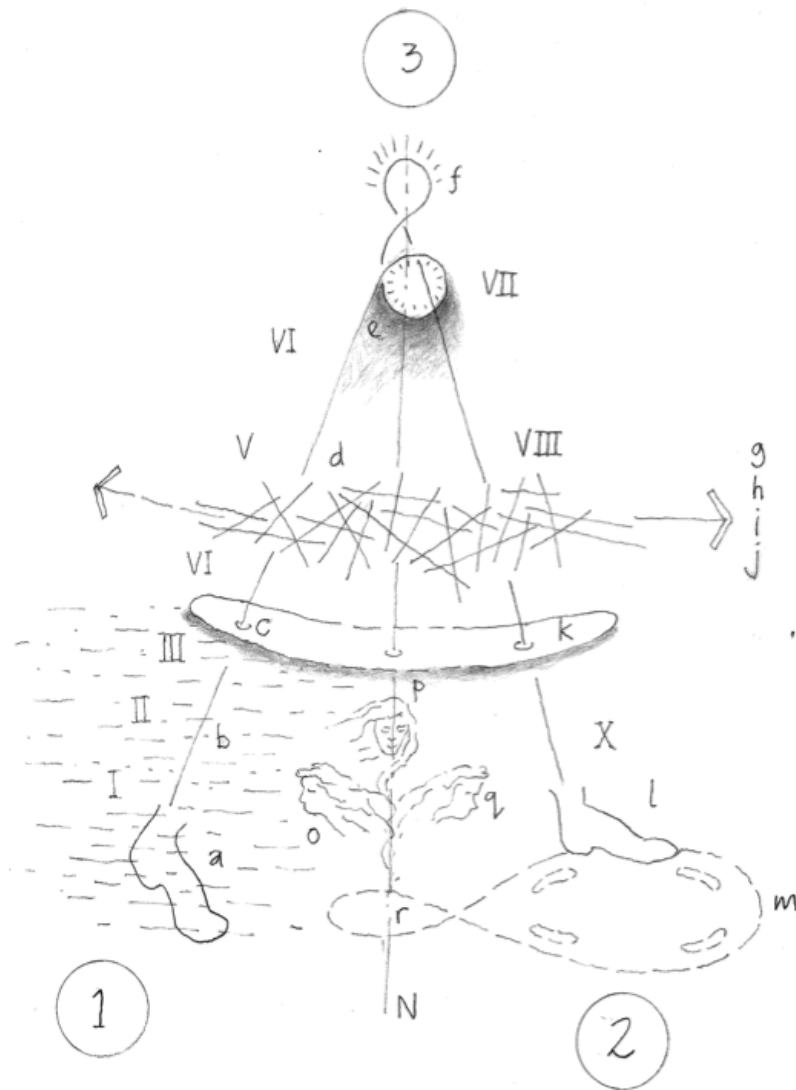
<sup>1</sup> While the allegory of the cave is often considered a metaphor for cities, the context of fifth century BC Athens suggests that Plato's sketch of the *paideutic path* in the allegory is less than allegorical. Athens was a city of "violent visual contrasts", whose key organizing axes where, on one hand, the vertical abruptness of the Acropolis and, on the other, the tangled networks of markets and residential quarters (Mumford 1961, pp. 187 & 190). The latter composed a purposively complex weave, whose "formlessness" aimed to confound invading foreigners,

mirrored by a passage from “*mythos*” (with “Socrates becoming ruler over Hades”) through *logos* (via “the building of cities in *logos*”) to the *ergon* or work of crafting a “philosopher-king” capable of ruling the fourth type of city: “the city of philosophy” (Sallis 1996, p. 401). Concomitantly, topographical displacement is matched by a political one, where the governance of the collective turns toward a transcending self-governance. Setting aside the city’s political management, the allegory of the cave features “a philosophical transcending of the city” (p. 446). Inside the cave is found “a political situation”, a city made up of prisoners; outside, ascension leads to an escaping individual’s epiphanic transformation. In an obvious reference to Socrates, the return of this enlightened person, tasked with elucidating those left in the dark, is met violently by the political collective (p. 447).

In fact the cave and the ascension from it is a miniature of the urban macro-journey narrated by the *Republic* overall. Hence its pedagogical drive cannot be separated from the evening conversation in the port where Socrates, having descended from the city proper, is intent on elucidating those present, particularly Glaucon. If an ideal city is constructed in this discourse, Plato’s narrative nevertheless emphasises that it is still “a city [constructed] within man”; a “city [constructed] within Glaucon” by Socrates, ‘fathered’ on the basis of an erotic midwifery that navigates modes of desire ranging from the ‘platonic’ to the carnal (p. 454). Concocted in the city’s lowest place (the port) therefore, the positing of a city ideal is inseparable from “the negativity of embodiment” and must entertain an account of its return (pp. 411). As such, elucidation can be imagined as a standing balance resting on two supports, props or legs: the “Upward Way” and its double, the “Downward Way”.

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whereas the former was set at the centre of this “disordered” world, as a beacon of clarity for from its summit at “half a thousand feet” the city could not be given other than harmoniously bedded into its surrounding geography (p. 186). At another level, the craggy Acropolis “represents the city in depth”, with its abundant supply of “primeval sources” – “the cave, the graves, the grottoes, the springs, no less than the later shrines, sacred enclosures [and] fountains” (pp. 188-190). As Plato’s allegory obliged the seeker of enlightenment to return to the cave and its quotidian life, the elevated transcendence and “sustained harmonies” offered by the Acropolis could not be held apart from the inevitable return to the lapses of order in the Agora and its surrounds below.



**KEY**

- 1 Piraeus A, or the beginning of the night-long conversation
- 2 Piraeus B, or the end of the conversation constructing a head-city
- 3 The Acropolis or city pinnacle as scene for the "Allegory of the Cave"
- I-X Books divisions within the *Republic*

a = myth in an arcane sense, b = Pontos/Nereus ("Old Man of the Sea") & initiatory immersion, c = Socrates descent to Hades on plane of forgetting, d = the agora & mercantile and political immanence, e = the cave, f = journey into light & return, g = Timarchy, h = Oligarchy, i = Democracy, j = Tyranny, k = entry to the underworld of the soul on the plane of forgetting, l = the Myth of Er, m = the Meadow with four opening to upper and lower realms, n = the spindle of Necessity, o = *Lachesis* who sings of the past, p = *Clotho* who sings of the present, q = *Atropos* who sings of the future, r = Necessity

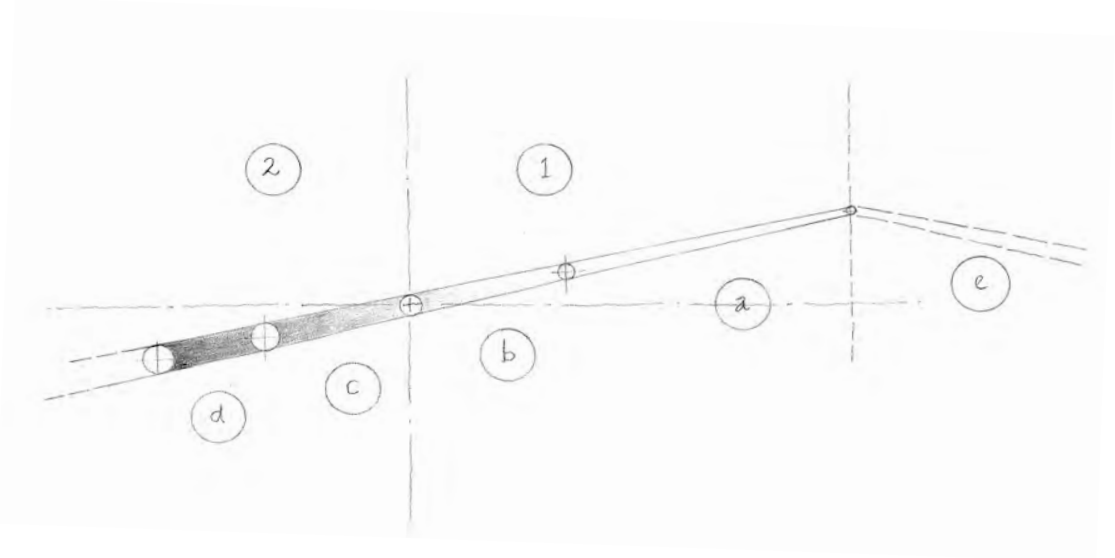
**Figure 8.** Author (2013). "The Metaphysical Stride: an Elaboration on the 'Structure of the *Republic*' by John Sallis". Modified from Sallis (1996).

Extrapolating from Sallis' reading of the *Republic*, the following insights are evident:

- A conjoining of walking and the city marks the instituting of philosophy. In it, indeterminate passage and wandering (allied with early proto-philosophers, including the largely *apolis* Sophists) is transformed into (metaphysically) determinate movement.
- Urban place is divided by thought's movement. As Figure 8 shows, such a stride opens a gap in place-presence (i.e. the before and after of Piraeus, or Piraeus 1 and Piraeus 2).
- A metaphysical walk or stride, in spanning from the depths to the heights, synthesises the diversity of urban space by gathering it into a single trajectory or crossing that renders the *polis* a "choric" space or "abode" for intelligibility (Sallis 1999, p. 41).
- This passagework binds immanence into transcendence, co-opting the troubling mercantile/imperialist dynamic of Athens (for which Piraeus is blatant figure) by forcing an idealised closure centred by thought's vertical ranging.
- With its feet in the sea as a "milieu of immanence" and its head aloft in a metaphysical acme, Plato's narrative walk is strikingly ambiguous in its up/down journeying. It courts both elucidation and peril and in this doubleness are found early seeds of what will become a characterising trope in narratives of "urban exploration" in modernity: the "male fantasy of urban descent" as a vehicle for testing erotic transfers and redeeming self-engenderment (Walkowitz, 1992, pp. 04–11).
- This schema models intelligibility as a resolution of perceptions caught "between two contraries", as Plato stated (2007, 523c). Only in the face of these contraries is the action of thought made conscious, whereas often "perceptions [...] don't call for any further exercise of thought, because sensation can judge them adequately" (2007, 523b). In other words, a shift out of habitual sensing is required to activate *dianoia* or reasoning, and if Plato's example in this instance is the sight of fingers whose apparent visual sameness presents an "indeterminate [...] mixing-up", as Sallis noted, it points to the necessary for reason, typified as upwardly located, to move downward into vision to give the later intelligibility. The finger example, as a case of a "(descensional) *dianoia*" that settles upon the body (Sallis 1996, pp. 431–433), parallels the manner in which walking (as an epitome of habituation) can be a conduit for a doubling back of *dianoia* into the immediacy of the given. To the extent that the distinguishing of fingers – their difference or sameness relative to size – depends on numeration and the distinguishing of dyads or paired differences in

Plato's account, the limping gait of Oedipus (as clue of the proximity of a past with tragic implications) would be one instance where intelligibility fails to reach the body in time. Given that the Sphinx's riddle is solved by Oedipus on the basis of counting feet in a paradoxical numeration that seemingly confounds typical human bipedality, it would similarly suggest how for Platonism vision and counting not fully guided by *dianoia* risk an unbalanced intelligibility. This imbalance is typical, as Sallis described, of the warrior/ruler caught up in "the ordering, measuring, calculating of the visible" that Plato wants to correct with a philosophical *dianoia* "that turns away from the visible" alone (1996, pp. 433–435).

- If the *Republic* inscribes a linear trajectory across the *polis*, it does so in the form of a backward and forwards dialoguing that increasing gives way to long stretches of monologue. This emphasis on linearity mirrors the upward way of the soul in its perfecting course and as depicted by Plato in the allegory of the divided line (Fig. 9). Ranging through *doxa* (opinion), vision, *dianoia* (reasoning) and noesis (cognition or intellection), the training of the philosopher-ruler depends on similarly progressing from one to the other in an upward arc, such that *paideia* (education) is always portrayed as an ascending journey or passage. Moreover, this journey is conceived of in metaphysical terms as a joining of the apparent world with what is occluded from it. It suggests, as the analogy of the cave confirms, that the ascending walk into the light of the true is an achievable, if difficult task. Walking is imagined then to suture via a linear continuity the spacing that metaphysics institutes; indeed this spacing is what orientates and drives the upward passage as if, as Sallis says in a different context, the journey asserts an originating encounter whose prior spacing is 'forgotten' in a palintropic move.

**KEY**

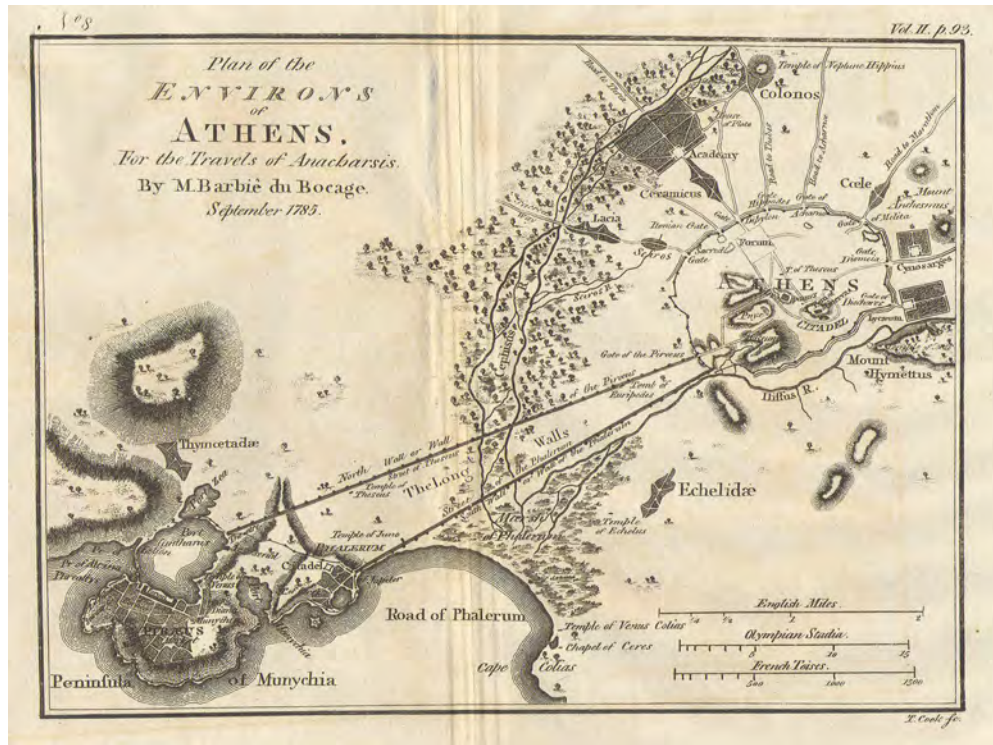
1	Intelligible Realm
2	Visible Realm
a	Domain of Forms or Ideas ( <i>noesis</i> )
b	Domain of Assumptions or Mathematical Reasoning ( <i>dianoia</i> )
c	Domain of Objects or Things
d	Domain of Images and Shadows ( <i>doxa</i> )
e	Domain of disfigured Ideas resulting from infinite deferral of image-original structure and <i>dianoia</i> in decline (refer Figure 16 for detailed elaboration)

Ordinarily drawn vertically, the line of ascent is rendered here transversely in accordance with the proposition that the movement of the soul parallels the walker's pedagogical apprenticeship.

**Figure 9.** Author (2013). "Allegory of the Divided Line". Modified from Plato (1997).

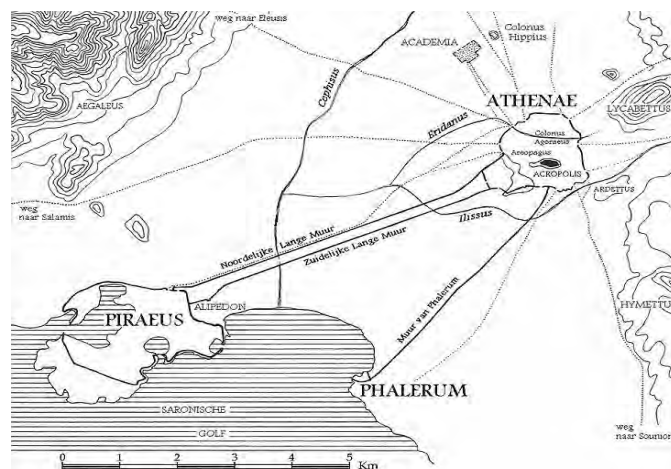
- With Socrates going down to Piraeus for the festival of Bendis (a newly introduced goddess linked to Hades, night, and female fertility (Plato 1997, 372a)), the *Republic* commences with a double link to death, for as Sallis noted, in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus uses a parallel phrase, stating to Penelope of the day when, in his words, 'I went down to Hades'" (1996, p. 316). Concomitantly, "Socrates' [allegorical] descent into Hades" (Fig. 8, c) in Book I commences the upward way from the place of *mythos* (Sallis 1996, p. 317). Conversely, in concluding with the story of Er where a fallen soldier travels the underworld prior to returning to life, the *Republic* similarly ends with modified myth. Given that it is the city in *logos*, or a head city, that is developed in the course of the narrative spanning two places in myth, the *Republic* can rightly be thought to stand on legs whose two feet are stepped and steeped (differently) in mythology: on one side, archaic origins; on the other, *mythos* absorbed and recalibrated according to metaphysics; in both cases, a foothold reaching into death is suggested. Coincidentally, in its tripod-like rendering of Athen's Long Walls (the Wall of Piraeus and the Wall of Phalerum), an eighteenth-century map by Jean-Denis Barble du Bocage (Fig. 10) suggests a bipolar city stretched bipedally across divergent dominions. In du Bocage's

fanciful reconstruction of ancient Athens, the “Street of Theseus” tracking the inside of the Wall of Piraeus<sup>2</sup> may be productively construed as indicating an upward way, a route whose namesake is mythologically associated with both Oedipus and an ascending journeying through obstacles.



**Figure 10.** Jean-Denis Barble du Bocage (1785). “Athens With Piraeus”.  
Source: Wikipedia Commons.

<sup>2</sup> The form of the Long Walls are believed to have been parallel (see Fig. 11) and I have found no record of double streets (the Street of Theseus or the Street of Phalerum).



**Figure 11.** Napoleon Vier, (2007). “Ancient Athens”.  
Source: Wikipedia Commons.



## 5. Walker-Weavers & the Socratic Makeover

Evident in the *Republic's* metaphysical walk is a quest for vantage points, both overhead and underfoot, that run out beyond the actual. The walk proselytises for a falsified 'real' or manifest 'world' doubled with idealism. *Logos*, routinely understood to break with mythological thinking, is found in the *Republic's* metaphysical stride to bluntly borrow from mythology. Indeed it creates an abridging line whose abiding concern is a space of transport that exceeds the broken terrain and patches of non-continuous space typifying the unequal community of the mythological world. Serres saw Plato as the master of the "artful connection", suturing the discontinuities of the *chora* and the incrementally tangled weave made by myth with a "chi" or cross. In place of a "barbarous or feminine" *logos* enacted at the "level of the hands", and mired both in the forces of procreation and fractured spaces, a male "Royal Weaver" (concomitantly imagined as a walker-weaver here) was charged with laying down transport between infinities – that is, between "the rational and the irrational" (1982, p. 49). The metaphysical walk doubles then with the production of a "unitary discourse" that paces out and places "distinctions and partitions" rendering everything (mathematical) "fractions" of a "split whole" (p. 50). However, this whole, indicative of "a single space [or...] set of operators" capable of pulling "spatial varieties" into line is inconceivable without that first mythological gesture of "open[ing of a...] route, way, track, path", even if in the end this route is made a medium way permitting all "possible transports" and all "possible transfers" (Serres 1982, pp. 51–52).

If the first of the grounding points described by the *Republic* rests in arcane myth (Hades, death and an older epic telling), the second footfall, landing in the myth of Er (8, 1), reveals exactly this kind of transfer space, a space in fact that also coordinates and synthesises time (*Republic* 1997, 614c-d). In so far as the myth of Er reveals the mechanics of how the soul circulates in prior and future lives, it is made concomitant with "the whole of time" (*Republic* 1997, 608c & 611a). Moreover, found in the concluding book of the *Republic* (Part XI) is a takeover of divine claims underwriting the unequal community pictured through myth. The soul's immortality (a proposition demanding that the soul be cared for precisely because it endures for all time) called for a complex circulatory nexus mediating varying states in accordance with the "doctrine of transmigration" (editor's note, Plato 2007, p. 361). As Socrates relays the myth to Glaucon, a place called the "meadow" provides an intersecting point for four "chasms" that gather and disperse the souls in their various journeys through

upper and lower realms (respectively purifying and punishing) (8, *m*). Moreover, the Meadow is a forum for exchange and judgment (*Republic* 1997, 615 a-d) from whence a short trip is required to reach the “spindle of Necessity” (Fig. 8, *n*) – described as “a straight column of light that stretched over the whole of heaven and earth” (616b-d). Sat upon “the lap of Necessity” (Fig. 8, *r*), the spindle turns and its musical harmony coordinates the whole cosmos, which is in turn attended to by the “three daughters of Necessity” who constitute a secretariat of temporality, with “*Lachesis*” mediating the past, “*Clotho*” mediating the present, and “*Atropos*” mediating the future (8, *o, p, q*) (617a-d). According to Plato, the souls are here assigned a particular “pattern” or “round of mortal life” by chance and condemned to live their assignments to the best of their ability before returning to the meadow for judgment (618a-b), a prospect - Socrates reminds Glaucon in the concluding sentences of the *Republic* - necessitating “always keep our feet on the upward way” when pursuing justice with wisdom (621c).

Yet this foothold offers a qualified purchase on the whole of being, for, as Plato stated, commencing “another round of mortal life” – as a small portion of the thousand-year cycle – returning souls are required to drink from the “Forgetful River” (Fig. 8 c & k) before being propelled into birth, and those without wisdom to moderate their share are left oblivious to the living lot to which they have been assigned and the particular care of the soul such a destiny entails (621a-b). As such, the metaphysics walk traverses a ground hollowed out by forgetting and phenomenal appearances veil the perennality of Plato’s revised *oikoumenē*. The soul, with its upward and downward capacities, potentiates a passional drift, particularly in the mortal phase of its journey, mediated as it is by bodily life caught ignorantly in the cave of the city. Yet for Plato determinate movement (as opposed to proto-philosophical wandering) is precisely the antidote to a community immobilised and rendered passive before images of the given.

Usurping habit through philosophy coincides with the shift from political to ethical *parrhēsia*, or from truth-telling as it pertains to the collective (democratic) body to that of the individual. This care is inseparable from an active or ‘Socratic’ self-examination that gathers and brings forth a deeper good. Pointedly, the task of “Socratic midwifery” is to also “assist in the birth of the children of the good” by implanting through interlocution an open questioning in others (Sallis 1996, p. 412). Yet as Goux suggested, historical Socrates assumed this “autodidactic orientation”, and the question-form at its heart, from the pre-Socratic, proto-philosophers (1993, pp. 140, 143). Though Socrates was the proponent of an alternative “relation of self to self”, one that eschewed conventional, theological mediation for one consulted internally and idiosyncratically in the form of an internal, “demon” voice (pp. 142–143). Though an exemplar of Athenian wisdom, Socrates amounted to a profound anomaly, a seeker of wisdom who eschewed divine incipience and prudence. Thus Socrates is

routinely associated with Oedipus who similarly short-circuited a sharing of heteronomous knowledge between mortals and immortals in favour of modes of autonomous knowing (p. 143).

To the extent that Plato enters into this “Socratic trajectory”, as Goux wrote, it was against an “Oedipian radicalism”, with its “auto-initiation” and its rejection of “cryptophoric signs” and sacred projection (Goux 1993, pp. 143–144):

The Oedipean risk haunts Plato’s thought like an unvoiced threat – to such an extent that the figure of the philosopher-king that Plato is seeking to define can be read as a methodical attempt to depict the true philosopher as the antithesis of the tyrant Oedipus. (p. 144)

Nevertheless, the transfer from tyrant to philosopher-king didn’t occur without firstly inserting a modified cryptophoric background and secondly reasserting the role of an initiating process and paternal inculcator. In what can be thought of as a middle way (between Oedipal radicalism and mythological tradition) a tripartite resolution consistent with the standard hero myth is evident. Plain enough is the debt of the myth of Er to the Eleusinian mysteries - the cult of agrarian, female generativity (an initiation in fact refused by Socrates against Athenian prescription) – and consistent with Plato’s displacement of generation by production, the myth extends what Robert Graves has referred to as a “male usurpation of the female agricultural mysteries” by the Hellenic gods (1992, 24.3).

The issue of tripartition, characteristic of the standard hero myth, and replicated everywhere in Plato, follows a similar trajectory. It arises in the Eleusinian mysteries with the practice of “thrice-plough[ing of] field[s]” in accordance with the “mysteries of agriculture” administered by women. Plato’s reference to Necessity and the three Fates (Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos) in the Myth of Er effects a celestial (and upward) redirection of the chthonic energies of the mysteries where the Fates as moon phases stand in for the “Maiden-goddess of the spring”, the “Nymph-goddess of the summer”, and the “Crone-goddess of autumn” – all mediators of the earth and the underworld (Graves 1992, 10.1). The alignment of temporal circularity and *axis mundi* (in the form of the Spindle of Necessity) in these cryptophoric machinations at once toys with the heterogeneous typologies and broken topographies of myth while turning them into moving parts of a unifying machinery for the circulation of souls. Not coincidentally, the number of this unity is three. “One, two, three” are the opening words of *Timaeus*; they enunciate an interrupted counting (pointing ostensibly to a missing guest from the day before) whose absence as the fourth “interrupts the continuity otherwise posed between yesterday and today” and therefore stands in as the number of illness and temporal perturbation more generally (Sallis 1999, p. 11). The contrivance of a missing fourth, and therefore a curtailing of the counting at three, resonates throughout *Timaeus* and the *Republic*. It is tempting to see in this numeration an analogy with the walk

constrained and made metaphysical – the upward (1) and downward (2) ways coordinated by the *logos* of the head-city (3) at their pinnacle as a kind of ‘head-count’ synthesising a before and after footing generated by the bifurcated stride of the dialogue effected from the lower reaches of Piraeus. It was a stride put into motion precisely in refutation of an Oedipal gait that famously grappled with all manner of aberrant counting. This tricky, death-filled count whose seeming success in dispatching the Sphinx and opening up the city to traffic led only to the inflation of trouble.

## 6. *Crossing (Out) the “Common Herth”*

Notably, the metaphysical stride bypasses the agora - the middle or “‘common hearth’ of the city” through which the upward and downward ways schematically pass (Detienne, 1996, p. 10). This elision of the democratic heart and nexus of commercial life similarly attempts a bypass of the tensions associated with exchange, counting and equivalence resulting from the lapse in autonomy of the internal economy of the *polis*. For the Greeks, this inflationary counting, or *chrematistics*, confounded the principle of *isonomia* (equality) founding the *agora* as a key urban institution from the eighth century BC (p. 32). Citizenry rights in the *polis* arose as an extension of the earlier “special status” afforded the warrior class in the Mycenaean period, who, subsequent to the Hoplite reform, were organised on the basis of fraternally negotiated relations at odds with royal convening. For Marcel Detienne, the warrior class was associated with a type of speech contrary to the royal command exercised in, and through “magico-religious” utterance – theirs’ was the “speech of dialogue”:

Magico-religious speech was efficacious, atemporal, and indissociable from symbolic behavior and meaning; moreover, it was limited to an exceptional type of person. Dialogue-speech, in contrast, was secular, complimented action, operated within a temporal context, and possessed a unique autonomy that extended to one whole social group [...]. (p. 89)

The egalitarianism of the warrior class had a corresponding social/spatial form: “an assembly of warriors seated in a circle” (p. 91). This form inscribed the relative equality of all participants by leaving open a middle space for setting down “an object of value”, a “prize”, or war spoil whose placement *es meson* (“in the middle”) and in full sight, rendered it collective, ‘public’ property (pp. 92–94). Moreover, the right to speak in a public way depended on “mov[ing] into position at the *meson*” and claiming on behalf of the group an “impersonal sovereignty” contrary to any “‘emanation of royal power’” (pp. 95–96). The *agora* was the inheritor of this circular ground. As a “single spatial model”, it became a dominant institution organising assembly, distribution, and oratory by defining the basis of “publicity and community” (p. 97). Against magico-religious speech, the *agora* linked

dialogue with technological and militaristic innovation, but also facilitated an “intellectual mutation” emphasising rationalism over religious totalisation (pp. 103–104). Liberated from the *telos* and predetermination of “efficacious speech”, the citizenry of *poleis* achieved with the independence of dialogue-speech a political instrument capable of “creat[ing] reality” anew (pp. 105–106).

Prior to their bifurcation in the late Greek Archaic period, both speech-types, as Detienne identified, found a common source in poetic recitation as practiced by the Mycenaean civilisation (p. 43). Rhythmically sung, “laudatory speech” hymned the cosmogonies and theogonies that tied the king to the gods, but also recalled “the glorious deeds of heroes” (p. 44). While recitation asserted the former’s hold on immortality via divine right, the later bestowed on the warrior caste a kind of celebratory immortality via the overcoming of *Lēthē* (forgetfulness) by *Mnēmosynē* (remembrance) (pp. 45–49). For Detienne, if *alētheia* corresponded with the bringing forth of truth into light by “magicoreligious” recitation, hymns to warriors similarly broached “knowledge of ‘all things’” (pp. 42–43). It was this aspect of poetic speech - a claim by the citizenry at large to eternity - that Plato vested in souls. Yet the vesting of truth in remembrance and memorialization risked, in the demarcation of the warrior from the king and the slide from warrior to citizen, the dragging of poetic recitation into the dialogue-speech of the *agora* - a descent, as Detienne noted, into falsehood or erroneous speech termed *apatē*. If it was the Sophists particularly who were credited with the professionalization of “magicoreligious” recitation in pursuit of “positive *apatē*”, as Detienne writes, they no less “discovered the *artificial* nature of poetic speech”, inserting into memorization the capacity for invention and falsehoods (p. 108). Metaphysics, with its attempt to grasp the past, the present, and the future in total, was precisely Plato’s counter to a devaluing of *alētheia*” (p. 109).

Not coincidentally is the myth of Er associated with Piraeus and the lower reaches in the *Republic*. Only the “plain of *Lethe*” (with its “Forgetful River”) divides the souls bound for mortal life from “the throne of Necessity” and a full revealing of the role of wisdom and justice in their timeless enduring (2007, 621.a-c). The assertion of truth-telling or *alētheia* on such a ground is further emphasised by its eschewing of the *agora* as a place for determining the essential nature and potentiality of city life in favour of a site down by the sea. The immersion into this lower domain suggests an association with the sea gods Pontos and Nereus, who were given the appellation the “Old Man of the Sea” (8, b), a personification indicating “prophecy and justice” (Detienne 1996, p. 53). The linking of *alētheia* to “mantic speech (or prophecy)” is underscored by its association with the sea, firstly on the basis that justice and wisdom arise out of fluid and shifting circumstances, and secondly, because access to such wisdom entails an immersive initiation for which the sea and rivers are common sites for “justice by ordeal” in “Mediterranean civilizations” (pp. 56, 58). Moreover

the Old Man of the Sea bestows justice and prophetic wisdom in a benevolent and paternal manner associated with royal sovereignty, where, in accordance with the Mycenaean and near eastern traditions, the “king was the ‘shepherd of men’” who prevented calamity through guidance (pp. 60–61). Plato then, in siting his tutelage of Glaucon by old Socrates adjacent to the harbour calls on an *alētheia* of this type as well as a revival of sovereign initiation and privilege through a renovation of dialogue-speech as a slide towards pedagogical monologue and, as Sallis suggested, the supplanting of orality by writing. In short, an external sourcing of mantic speech is shifted inward in accordance with an authoring-self.

## ***7. A Divided Mind***

This inward orientation of mantic capacities set up the first instancing of a divided mind, a division that is between an autodidactic takeover of sacral knowledge and an unmooring of certainty in knowing. Socrates’ renowned “ecstatic catalepsy” marks precisely this cognitive dissociation when he credits an internal, instinctual voice or demon confirming questions of knowing (Kofman 1998, p.105). Usurping Apollonian claims to total knowledge, as Sarah Kofman furthers Nietzsche’s insight, Socrates’ demon is place-marker for what reason cannot reach - in other words, the demon indicates the presence of an “unconscious Dionysian” impulse operative in thought (p. 234). As the first to advocate individual reason and an absolute for clarity in thought, Socrates is also the bearer of an “excess of wisdom” that radically stresses the Apollonian demeanour (pp. 224 & 227-231). In this he mirrors the other “great figures of Greek tragedy, Prometheus and Oedipus”, in whom knowledge transmits *pathos* because, “whoever seeks to solve the enigmas posed by nature has no fear of violating natural laws” and therefore demonstrates that “monstrosity is at the origin of wisdom” (p. 231–232)

This doubled burden conforms with what Søren Kierkegaard termed a “bifrontality” in tragedy, one that compounds the finite and the infinite, the comic and the tragic (1966, p. 76). Consequently in Socrates, reason is paired with the unreason of an instinctual demon, just as his subtlety of intellect was paralleled by a physical “plebeian” crudity exemplified by barefooted-ness and buffoonery. Yet it is precisely this bifrontality that Plato sought to smooth over by synthesising the comedic body and soul into an upward-striving third-ness whose moralising reason, or “faculty of ends”, robbed instinct of its virulence (Kofman 1998, p. 235). So is the metaphysical walk, in its deployment of the Socratic dialogues, geared to an overcoming of this sort, an overcoming in fact of the Socratic gait. If ‘historical’ Socrates was characterised by a “plastic personality unified by the single principle of interiority” (p. 226), a principle coinciding with his demon - and therefore the antithesis of reason and good

will - the walk in *logos* instead binds the plasticity of personality into a single, improvable soul. Moreover, bifrontality, with its imbalanced bipedality (figured in both Oedipus and Socrates), favours dialogue, as Kierkegaard argued, over dialectics and Platonic synthesis. In Socratic thought is found, as he wrote, “an alternating (*alterno pede*) gait, a hobbling from side to side” that is contrastive with thought unified by good will (1966, p. 73). This *alterno pede* is exemplified by a question-and-answer format rendered ironic by a will that insists on keeping dialogue perpetually open. This questioning, eschewing pre-existing answers - eschewing in fact any answering content capable of bringing interlocution to a halt - circulates about an insistent emptiness (p. 87). Hence what counts in Kierkegaard’s peripatetic analogy is not an intention and its crossing but a gape or break in motion itself. As such the walker is questioner without answer, one whose foothold must be negotiated step by step. Conversely, if thought as *alterno pede* is grounded dialogically, it is overcome by monologue, and for Kierkegaard, the *Republic* demonstrates precisely this overturning of a Socratic ironist’s materialist footwork (evident in the existential and dispersive logic of Book 1) in favour of an immaterial idealism (increasing exercised through the span of the remaining books) (Harrison 1994, p. 89).

Mikhail Bakhtin similarly recognised in historical Socrates an emphasis on the dialogical, seeing in the philosopher who did not write a pointed proximity to “popular spoken language” (2000, p. 25). Taken up in the dialogues, Socrates was made to appear as “a speaking and conversing man” in a “memoir-type” genre (pp. 21, 24). As a literary mode centred on the contemporary present, it accorded with “scientific [Greek] thinking” by breaking with epic temporality vested with “gods, demigods and heroes”. For Bakhtin, a “close to hand”, scientific grasp of things arises within “the field of serio-comical” where a bifrontal orientation collides “comic creativity” with lofty aspirations (pp. 21–23). Concomitantly, “Socratic degradations” and “Socratic laughter” draw from immediate reality “an entire system of metaphors and comparisons [indexual of...] the lower sphere of life - from tradespeople, from everyday life, etc.” (p. 25). Yet against the immediate implications of *doxa* and dialogue-speech, Plato reengineered contemporaneity an epic shackled to a transcendent temporality, one where comic corporeality was secondary to knowledge of the Good. Drawing dialogical plasticity upward into monologue, Plato set in play a long-persisting “chronotope” (or space-time fusing): “the life course of one seeking true knowledge”, or what amounted to “the seeker’s path” (p. 130). If the *agora* was model for what can be thought of as a “real-life chronotope”, as Bakhtin wrote, because “In ancient times, the autobiographical and biographical self-consciousness of an individual and his life was first laid bare and shaped in the public square” (p. 131), then the “Platonic schema” is distinguished by a lingering mythological chronotope rich in “conversion stories”, sequentiality, and metamorphosis (pp. 130–131). Moreover, “Metamorphosis or transformation is a mythological sheath for the idea of development - but one that unfolds

not so much in a straight line as spasmodically, [like] a line with 'knots' in it" (p. 113). In grounding the *Republic* in a mythological before and a pseudo-mythological after (rather than in the *agora* as middle place where the individual forms contingently in the public eye), Plato envisioned a new mode of individuation, one whose internal unity was achieved through epic metamorphoses across time.

Nevertheless, foreign to the ethos of Greek public life was the development of any form of "mute internal life" (Bakhtin & Holquist 2000, p. 134). Socrates, on the other hand, occupying an *aporetic* position in public life as the "'know-it-all'" who "'does not wish to communicate anything, [who...] only questions'" (Nietzsche cited in Kofman 1998, p. 224), rendered imaginable a self split off from what it knows. In his reinvention of the Socratic persona, Plato aimed to suture this split and the dialogic gap between question and answer expressing it with an anamnestic knowledge channelled through an enduring soul. In doing so, he introduced into the mundanity and immanence of the urban scene the possibility of revelatory encounters cued from an extra-mundane dimension. This renovation opened the way for a range of chronotropes that took traversal and *paideia* as their key spatio-temporal action, but which enacted them, not in foreign territory or the "abstract expanse of space" proper to the "adventure-time" of mythological narrative, but in the quotidian, contemporized present (p. 111). On this basis, Plato is among the first to write urban place as a merging of "adventure-time with everyday time". Yet while the dialogues all occur in actualized places, the specificities of these places dissolve into allegory in the service of an epiphanic pedagogy - that is, they dissolve into an abstract non-historical domain or meta-reality of truths. Thus at stake in Platonism is less the immediacy of persons to place than the need to bring both into virtuous completion - an initiatory quest in fact. Concomitantly, in the *Republic*, the three types of occupation in the ideal city - producers, soldiers, and governors - parallel a corresponding pairing of defects and virtues attributable to the soul: lust and temperance relative to the producers; anger and courage for the soldiers; and intelligence and prudence for the governors (see Fig 6; also Goux 1993, pp. 144-145). The virtuous ruler - "the philosopher-king" - and the just city-state arise when virtue prevail over defects in a balanced synthesis. Point of fact, the "philosophical soul" arrives at this equanimity through an arduous "pedagogical path" that mimics the initiatory journey of an earlier royal investiture similarly mobilising a tripartite framing of "endurance" (or the capacity for "toil"), "courage", and "wisdom" (pp. 145-146). As Goux put it, "Plato's philosophy can thus be construed as a way of salvaging a timeless tradition on a new level after the disappearance of the social frameworks that had preserved that tradition" (p. 146). If that tradition was defined by "tests of the heroes' integrity [and...] selfhood", the protagonist was essentially a passive actor compelled to act by extramundane circumstances (pp. 105-106; emphasis in original). As such, ordeals less shaped the hero anew than they confirmed an underlying consistency, propriety, or goodness. For Bakhtin, "The hammer of



events shatters nothing and forges nothing – it merely tries the durability of an already finished product” (p. 107). Renovating this tradition, the philosophical soul was held to similarly bear an underlying consistency, and is born out by Plato’s use of a tripartite schema everywhere blatantly reasserting the “trifunctional mechanism” of mythic testing in adventure time, but resituated within the urban ‘hero’ made a crucible for synthesising harmonising, and maintaining perennial virtues (Goux 1993, pp. 147–148).

## 8. *Urban Maladies*

Against an upstanding balance sought by the metaphysical walk is everything that perturbs tripartition at the level of the count, urban place and the soul. It is on the downward way of the *Republic* (Books VIII, IX & X) that Plato offered a cautionary psychology of the imbalances of the soul and its mirroring in the *polis*. From its ideal state, a fourfold degradation of the soul-city is possible: first, timarchy and the greed and ambition-driven rule of the timarchic character; second, oligarchy and divisive, wealth-based rule as instituted by the oligarchic character; third, democracy and anarchic rule arising with the democratic character; and last, tyranny and the excessive and unrestrained rule of the tyrannical character (Fig. 8: *g, h, l, j*). In depicting these departures from an ideal balance, tyranny is not merely one amongst the four but, as Goux argued, it is the key precipitator of the imperfect societies and is that against which the diagnostic commentary of the downward way is ultimately directed (1993, p. 147). The tyrant is the very antithesis of the philosopher king because in him the defects of lust and anger are given free range over the dictates of wisdom. Pointedly, the tyrannical character is understood via a theory of dreams (p. 148) whereby the sleeper, with waking consciousness (or what Plato called “the rational, gentle, and ruling part”) abated, is free to exercise in an oneiric state “the beastly and savage part” otherwise moderated (*Republic* 1997, 571c). Yet for Goux, if *Oedipus Tyrannus* is the tragic telling of lust incest and anger unleashed, Oedipus appears to conform to tyrannical imperfection with one critical exception; Oedipus’ crimes were crimes of ignorance rather than ones wilfully prosecuted. In fact, his crimes resulted from a blindness arising with “the exaltation of the rational element” and thus from “philosophic excess” (Goux 1993, p. 151). Hence the problem Oedipus represented for Plato was the proximity of this defect to his own valorisation of reason. Oedipus carries, occluded behind the investigative reason and exemplary intellection shown in the face of the Sphinx’s riddling, a forgetting and an unknowingness of self attested to by his physical deformity and walking gait. Against this risky synthesis of wisdom and forgetting, Plato’s discourse is a “compromise reaction” aiming to consolidate the gains of an anthropocentred world “within tradition that it rends and transcends” (p. 150).

Yet the price of this renovation is the transfer inward of an otherwise external, cryptophoric terrain apposite to magico-religious speech.

This transposition is signalled in the concluding section on “Imperfect Societies” in the *Republic*. There in the context of a discussion on just and unjust conduct, Plato offered a schema for human personality in which the “outer covering” of a single, whole man sheaths a composite soul stitched together as a “Chimera” composed of three elements: a “multicolored beast with a ring of many heads that it can grow and change at will”, “a lion”, and finally “a man” (*Republic* 1997, 588b-e). The “polycephalic beast” stands in for “sensual desire”, the lion for courage or ferociousness, while ‘man’ is the carrier of the “wise and rational element of the soul” (Goux 1993, p. 151). In fact this “teranthropic being” internalises the “functional tripartition” of traditional investiture, though not without approximating the Sphinx or “throttling” “Triple-goddess” itself (Graves 1992, 105.3). As Goux noted, “inner man” bears “the image of a monster” despite an apparent outer individuality and coherence, and this equanimity can only be maintained on the basis of a “fierce struggle against the bestial elements” by “fragile reason” (Goux 1993, pp. 151, 153). While a poor synthesis induces a tyrannical soul in which the visceral drives prevail, a successful synthesis – as per the ritual trials and ordeals that confirm a proper claim to royal investiture – incorporates and converts the bestial components into virtues, thereby aligning temperance, courage, and wisdom in a harmonious union (p. 153). Oedipus’ fault in the synthetic task imagined for the Platonic soul is to enact a monopoly, not of the two animal drives, but of the rational element, one that refuses synthesis and forecloses on a human-centred orientation that rigorously expunged the others. Oedipus’ vanquishing of the Sphinx in the adventure-time of myth shows ‘man’ outwitting the representative of the cryptophoric world, and in turn, instituting an internal, esoteric battle with the soul’s monstrosity. In the transposition to the everyday space of the *polis* (ostensively Thebes, but in fact imperialistic Athens) as Sophocles’ tragedy restaged it, Oedipus, pictured as investigative ‘man’ and supreme arbiter of knowledge, is revealed not so much as having failed to convert the raging energies of the cryptic soul into virtues than having misapprehended this possibility entirely in his insistent pursuit of reflective reason.

Plato’s instituting of a chimerical soul in the otherwise acutely visible contours of the citizen opens a psychical terrain equivalent to Bakhtin’s “abstract expanse of space” otherwise assigned other-world adventure-time. The mapping of the resulting psychical topology onto the topography of the city - its upward and downward ways - established a protean psychogeography whose idealist strand subsequently found expression in the tripartite architecture of Freud’s psychical apparatus. Sallis’ recognition of the institution of a head-city in the *Republic*, yet ultimately Plato’s recoil from such a construct as unliveable, aligns with Goux’s proposition that the problem with Oedipus for Plato was an inflated rationality.

Only the reinstatement of a modified functional tripartition could remedy divisiveness in the soul and the city. A soul handed only to reason provides no way of knowing or synthesising its bestial makeup and hence risked the Oedipal fault - the presumption that the fate of the *polis* rests with reflective human consideration alone (Goux 1993, p. 158). In that direction lay a wilful and hubristic humanism where *doxa* and dialogue speech proliferate and where mercantile immanence and an imperialistic impulses multiply unrestrained.

Yet the actual city, mired in shadow play with its populous prisoner to a fictive reality arising from orgiastic and Dionysian foundations, has its chthonic heritage transposed in the *Republic* by the cultivation of a rarefied erotic aimed, not at the city itself, but beyond to a whole that transcends body and image through intellection (Sallis 1996, p. 448). The love of wisdom has as its backdrop Socrates as a problematic seducer - an "eroticist [...] to the fullest extent" as Kierkegaard described him - who is charged with "corrupting the youth", with "inflaming" them against the dictates of the state and the piety of the family (1966, pp. 212–213). Yet his was an "ironic seduction" that "awakened longings which he never satisfied" for he "turned the gaze of his disciples inward" rather than meeting their love, thereby keeping these relationships, as Kierkegaard put it, "abstract [and ...] at the point of zero" – in other words, prior to any possession or consummation in the corporeal sense (pp. 213–214). Nevertheless, this siren questioning "sawed through [their...] substantive consciousness" exposing them to an epiphanic vantage point he neither shared in, nor enjoyed, and with which they were left abandoned (p. 215). At stake for Kierkegaard was "an intellectual delivery [that...] severed the umbilical cord of substantiality" (p. 215). Socrates as he was remade in the Platonic dialogues enacts a more substantively tethered midwifery. Coupling the individual through responsibility to a singularly possessed soul that endures throughout time, he linked immortality to an "internal dialogue" that was required to understand *eros* as standing outside corporeality and a care of the soul inseparable from a "care for [and towards] death" (Patočka 1996, p. 105).

### 9. Turn to Modernity

The metaphysics walk then - ethereal before it is corporeal – redirects a fundamentally ambiguous peripatetic. Socratic perambulation riding the drift of seducing dialogue-speech and an emptied out questioning, set in play a passage-work tuned to the key Greek notion of *chorismos*, or rupture, in the self-evidence of things (Patočka 1989, p. 198). *Chorismos*, transmitting a proto-philosophical drive for freedom as uprootedness or unsheltering, articulates what no thirdness can bridge (p. 198). Where Socrates enacted this freedom as encounter unfolded in the spirit of an "*docta ignorantia*" or learned ignorance, Plato answered the provocation induced by the *chorismos* with a "positive (rationalistic)

metaphysics" claiming to bridge, by way of an "ascending dialectic" and a "descending dialectic", two realms, "one sensible, the other suprasensible" (p. 195). Metaphysics, as a platform for determining the paths of knowledge tracking between these realms, in fact undermines the freedom potentiated in *chorismos* by replacing an unqualified 'whole' given contingently through *polemos* with a 'whole' insistently structured all the way up and down (p. 196)! Substituted was a cognitive schema capable of joining, without break, world, cosmos, and the soul in a decidedly Eulerian circuit. Far from achieving an "anti-Oedipean" position (as Goux portrayed (1993, p. 148), Platonism set in place the framework whereby the depth of the world beheld through and by contest could be remade a surface fully answerable to cognitive toil. Running a long historical path (passing through various metaphysical machinations, including "mystical or theological" reorientation), its modern guise shows up as an "anthropologism" seeking command of the totality of "object being" (p. 205). Yet this "will to power", anticipated by Plato in his anti-Oedipal suppressing of tragedy, remains close to philosophical *logos* (p. 205). As Goux and Kofman emphasised, "Oedipus comes back" with Rene Descartes (Goux 1993, p. 159) because with Descartes "a radical separation between the soul and body, between instincts and reason" is finally posited in full (Kofman 1998, p. 236). With Descartes only the "tyranny of reason can bring all tyranny to an end", but in severing a place for "instincts" in knowledge, tyrannous reason cuts itself off "from its own depths" to pursue a course that is "pure surface, empty of all substance and all strength" (Kofman 1998, p. 236).

Spanning the centuries between the demise of the *polis* and the Cartesian pursuit of a literal head-city arising in the seventeenth century, the state's withdrawal from the world at large with the collapse of Roman *civitas*, and the turning of theological principalities towards a "'true' [other] world" indexed to divine transcendence, served to suspend a practical, living urban-cosmological integration (Patočka 1996, pp. 66–67). The "Christian posture" frames a sense of divided being by both acknowledging an "absolute" absence of "human meaning" in the immediate world and by inserting a positive counterpart - "the word from an otherwise inaccessible 'true' world" beyond (p. 67). In the place of an open freedom seeding reason, the scriptural substitute enacted by Christian doctrinairism imposed an unrestraint that risked skepticism of all truth-claims (as indeed a Socratic *docta ignorantia* potentiated in Platonism from the beginning), invoking in turn a new "daring" (p. 69). Hence the medieval world, while starting out as "spatially finite" after the collapse of the Roman "universal state", increasingly tended towards "spatial infinity", which is to say it renews the European propensity to grasp the whole of what is, though with the backing of a seemingly indubitable, theological reason (p. 69 & 82). So is the renewing, cyclical time of metaphysics given new finite temporal foundation in a linear tripartation defined by the "fall, salvation and judgment" (p. 69).

Integral to this linearity, as suggested above by way of Deleuze and Guattari, is a post-signifying or “passional regime” in which flight, previously associated with victim expulsion and the *pharmakos* ritual, becomes the *modus operandi* of the social body (Fig. 7). The seeds of this linearisation can be clearly seen in Plato’s linking of the fate of the city to the soul, with the later severed from cycles of initiatory, chthonic ties and set journeying immemorially in accordance with its “own [individual] achievement” (p. 105). A care of the soul, spun out from the *oikoumenē* and its imperialistic overcoding of events through annalistics, set in play a historical trajectory that is essentially opposed to all circularity. In its place, a post-signifying or “passional regime” makes imaginable “counterbod[ies]”, or autonomist subjectivities, neither completely engirdled by despotic signification nor submerged in a transient “*pathos* of the everyday” (Deleuze and Guattari 1996, pp. 103–104) with its ecstatic and orgiastic foundations (to borrow Patočka’s characterisation). The Greek solution to Blumenberg’s absolutism of reality failed to settle for an unequal community of mortals and immortals (the first movement of life Patočka called acceptance), nor was it willing to rest on a transcendent imperialism belatedly authorised divinely (the second comportment towards life Patočka called defense). Followed instead was a third way that strays from and betrays divine equanimity (the third orientation towards life Patočka called “unconcealment”). A Promethean defiance of the gods is a well-rehearsed thematic in discourses on modernity, but if Prometheus is held as a transforming figure – with fire making possible, as Blumenberg said, “the workshops of the Attic potters and smiths” – his theft and trespass on divine providence, no less makes him a figure of irreversibility (1985, pp. 300–301). Thus, he shares with Hephaestus, the “smith-god”, maiming as a mark of rebellious encounters with Zeus. In Hephaestus’ case, a limp is the consequence of being thrown from Olympus to earthly ground (Graves, 23.b & 23.2), while for Prometheus it is the dragging of leg chains upon release from the Caucasian Mountains (Blumenberg 1985, p. 301). Such is irreversibility cast as an irregular motility in forward passage.

Aberrant motion is a bearer of irreversibility in a second sense. Oedipus’ limp, no less than Hephaestus and Prometheus’, foregrounds the presence of alternative voices, commands, and anticipations actively present in, if problematically cognised by, the bearer. If a gait amounts to the particular style of engaging motion, the synthetic gathering up of a multitude of contingent variables into a characterising proxy, it is an approximation that less silences this forming constituency than testifies to the working difference they impart to the individuation attributed to style. As Deleuze proposed in a parallel context:

Insinuated throughout the Platonic cosmos, difference resists its yoke. Heraclitus and the Sophists make an infernal racket. It is as though there were a strange double which dogs Socrates’ footsteps and haunts even Plato’s style, inserting itself into the repetitions and variations of that style”. (1994, p. 127)

The racket in question arises with the entanglement of *mythos* and *logos*. Dialogue already heteroglot in Socrates' case (as his demon makes evident), fares no better in Plato, despite his attempting to still the mimetic voices of an ignorant community caught up in *pathos*. A transition from dialogue to monologue and an internalized dialectic parallels the appearance of an individualised soul centred on a self-determining play stretched across eternity. Yet this process recalls an ambiguous vacillation between magico-religious utterance – with its initiatory corporeal correlate – and a head-strong anthropologism voiced by Oedipus. The tempering of the tripartite soul by a synthesizing ruler was no less an overcoming of indirect or heteroglot discourses intersecting its individualization, though one, as Deleuze makes clear, that could not entirely escape this background clamor (Deleuze see 1990, pp. 256, 1994, p. 128). It was an exercise in, no less than an attempted amelioration of, what Bakhtin called the “Double-voiced” nature of all utterance (2000, pp. 324–325), or what Kierkegaard termed the *alterno pede*. Walking and talking in the Socratic sense of attending to demon discourse and occluded statements in passersbys drew “the power of the false” from the scene of dialogue, making it possible to see multiple things and tell multiple stories at once in a dissimilitude close to that of the Sophists and the falsified speech of *apatē* (Deleuze 1994, p. 128). Unlike the gods “with fixed attributes, properties and functions, territories and codes”, demons for the Greeks run aberrant lines of connection and flight, “jump[ing] across intervals, and from one interval to another” (Deleuze 1987, p. 40). Moreover, to the extent that this voice and name rest on the falsifying power constituting indirect discourse, what solidity and endurance they engender are always subject to betrayal and demonic flight. Deleuze made note particularly of the line by the Chorus of *Oedipus Tyrannus* responding to Oedipus' blinding himself: “Which demon has leapt the longest leap?” - meaning what utterance and what voice had sequestered itself in him and driven him to turn his eyes from the world (1987, p. 40). For Oedipus, prophetic enunciation arises into consciousness as a demon-leap, a leap bringing about a radical redistribution of space, or rather the dissolution of properly possessed places. In a betrayal of the “sedentary structures” of the city and its representations, he is fated to play out a “nomad *nomos*” (Deleuze 1994, pp. 36-37), which sets a new urban norm that perturbs any grounding *physis* (nature).

The enactment of an appropriative recompense for alienation can be witnessed across the long transition from antiquity to modernity. At the urban level, an integration of self, *polis*, and cosmos by way of a care of the soul vested in metaphysical surety lapses. Consequently, in summarising these shifts, Patočka emphasised a displacement from a “care to be [to...] the care to have”, the latter manifesting itself specifically in a centrifugal drive to take possession of, and to manage, the entirety of the “external world” (1996, p. 83). The “whole” of what is, no longer mediated by a spiritual relation, instead becomes a gathered-up domain idealised as both unlimited and infinitely deployable. If between Socrates, who

walked and talked, and Plato, who walked and wrote, lay the distinction between a dialogical self and a monological one, then the appeal to direct discourse in the latter did not succeed in entirely quelling a plethora of background ghosts and demons. Nevertheless, such a transition heads in the direction of a consolidated self. As Deleuze and Guattari asserted, "To write is perhaps to bring this assemblage of the unconscious to the light of day, to select the whispering voices, to gather the tribes and secret idioms from which I extract something I call my Self" (1987a, p.84). In Plato is witnessed a writing that moves contrarily, that contracts and internalises the utterances of the initiatory collective body and its magico-religious idioms, exercising them against the dispersive and falsifying movement of urban dialogue-speech. At stake in the imagining of Athens as a thing traversable by *logos* was the quest for a movement *in* thought itself, one that could be mastered, preempted, put first. Yet in accordance with a third time of mediation, a time prior to the beginning, thought is shown arising not only in the head (a head city), but on the page and through the conduct and conducting of bodies in city places. To think the city, per chance to think thought, it is not enough to apprehend it as a motionless animal; an animating action is required. Bipedal movement appears as the lever of *logos*, a *logos* steeped and stepped in myth. The playing out of mythological sheathing as a real-life, urban chronotope, while anti-Oedipal in intent, was nevertheless transportive of an Oedipal vector, one that served to unmoor the city, throwing it out, transcendently, beyond itself. Yet vacillating between upward and downward ways – pursuant of an Eulerian passage in fact - the urban phenomenon was more properly sent on a non-Eulerian course, sent that is into novelization. It is the nature of this novelization in modernity that the following chapter will explore.

## CHAPTER 2

### *The Foot's Rendezvous – Island Places*

...it all began with the feet!

André Leroi-Gourhan (1964)

#### 1. *Orientation | Origination*

The previous chapter prepared the groundwork for considering walker-observers in modernity by outlining a metaphysical walk. Such a walk, contrary to the forgetting of everyday, habitual walking, called on memory to better grasp a continuous whole beyond individual purview. Western history can be thought of as cumulative attempts to grasp a totality posited by, but invariably beyond the grasp of, metaphysics and theology. The term onto-peripatetic aims to situate walking discourses and city-observation in a broader discourse concerned with questions of existential orientation. Following Patočka and, earlier, Serres, it has been suggested that historicity takes a particular form in the West: it emerges as a rupture in the cyclic temporality of the *oikoumenē* or cosmological binding of mortals and immortals in an unequal community. If the Greek *poleis* set in play a city-time that broke with the territorial-cosmological orchestration of epic as journeying through distant, abstract expanse, then the metaphysical walk, with its “mythological sheathing”, tracked the “seeker’s path” – rich in metamorphic and transformative valence – into the city itself where an onto-peripatetic unfolds as a “real-life chronotope” and for which a complicated compounding of actual and speculative ‘walks’ are pivotal. One residue of this onto-peripatetic is that cities have been beheld as places of ‘discovery’ and overcoming, for which urban exploration – vacillating between an “overworld/underworld” grappling – delivers self-creation (Walkowitz 1992, pp. 4–11). This dividend is inseparable from an autodidactic orientation driven by an Oedipal vector. Cities, remade as sites for the playing out the adventure-time of epic, seemingly potentiate the recovery of an enduring quality concomitant with the philosophical soul. Nevertheless, if for Bakhtin the real-life chronotope is critical to the modern novel and an “anticanonical”, “antigeneric” power that it runs through the “literary system” (as an orchestration of canons), and if the roots of the real-life chronotope run deep into archaic time, then Socrates with his “gladfly role”



might qualify “as the first novelist”, or at least be bearer of an impulse to “novelization” (Holquist 2000, pp. xxxi–xxxii). For Michael Holquist the novel does “not permit generic monologue” but instances dialogue across all genres, and hence institutes an immanent newness as its qualifying marker (pp. xxvii & xxxi). If Socratic degradation and laughter (per Bakhtin) and thought as a haltering *alterno pede* (per Kierkegaard) are what metaphysics seeks to bypass by committing dialogue to the page, setting it down, holding it in place, making it monological and perennial in a borrowed, epic sense, then novelisation, with its commitment to “the open-ended present” and an essential incompleteness in things, also arrives with the page and risks setting the whole scriptural enterprise into aberrant motion (Bakhtin & Holquist 2000, pp. 7, 30).

This chapter examines walking and writing in the context of an overarching novelisation and the problems of orientation and origination that ensue in the lapse of metaphysical and theological grounds for measuring an existential whole. It argues that despite the complex temporal and perceptual fields harboured by cities, urban place has been presumed to potentiate a surrogate whole from which a sensible foothold can be drawn. Walking accounts have been one way of grappling with, and labouring to overcome, the disorientation of time’s touch by drawing cities together into a consistent viewpoint or representation. In the absence of access to, as Claire Colebrook put it, “some larger totality, hierarchy or order”, any ordering of the world in modernity “must be generated from man himself” and arises as a world *represented*, one generated from an individuated viewpoint distinct from it (2005, p. 25). A quest for transcendent reason shifts to first-hand experience in modernity where a confrontation with a world *beyond* the subject demands an overcoming turning on questions of approach and vantage point (p. 27). In observer-walkers point of view is exemplarily figured, just as individual agency and autonomous vantage point find rich expression through motility. Nevertheless, in the mobile, observing subject is found echoes of the old upward quest with its appeal to a plane of transcendence overarching troubling, composite ground. As this chapter will explore, in modernity the individual subject itself assumes a transcendental role proffering its own originating ground, datum, or measure. Yet the modern subject that walks, no less than an Oedipus who limps, is constituted precisely through uncertain self-place and self-other relations.

In *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Daniel Defoe offered a scenario that aptly foregrounded these considerations. He staged on a desert island the task of establishing not just a survivable place, but an originating hold – in an existential sense – on a domain at the limits of the representable and the known. As Pierre Macherey suggested, the novel was, in the context of literary modernism, an “advanced popularisation of the concept of origin” and prosletised the potency of self-fathering (2006, p. 269). Admittedly not a city, Crusoe’s island-made-industrious is city-like in its refurbishing of nature as a kingdom under the

command of one. Concomitantly, his narration of labour and naming pointedly relies on pedestrian mobility, where roaming is equated to territorialising, where encounter is portended by footprints, and where point of view is asserted through the foot. Nevertheless, an encounter on the island's far side with footprints that may or may not belong to Robinson himself precipitates an anxious replaying of recalled itineraries in hope of reassuringly claiming the footprints as his own (2003, p. 125). Yet repeated recollection of prior walks fails to completely ease his disquiet, and eventually he is confronted with undeniable evidence of troubling others. Consequent to this lapse of rendezvous with self, the quest for self-representation shifts as one of the interloping others, whom he names "Friday", is drawn into the broader project of island-renovation. In a blazon echo of the Occidental assertion of territorial foothold over colonial others, Defoe stages Crusoe's belated reassertion of self and mastery in the form of the new arrival's submission: "[Friday] lays his head upon the ground, close to my foot, and sets my other foot upon his head" (p. 162–163). In curiously circular logic, the rupture of self occasioned by the uncertain attribution of footprints finds resolution in the transformation of the other as the bearer and transmitter of the European self and its imprint. Here the rescue of "heathen souls" bluntly takes the Platonic form of an upward-way, literally stepping up and over the other as a troubled intermediary ground. Hoisted up is an observing consciousness whose *logos* casts out the unrepresentable, asserting a viewpoint able to survey and think the given as a presence for a (self-defining) subject modelling an island-consciousness.

An instructive contrast to this colonising imprint, one close to Nancy's advocacy of an enjoyment in world creation, is found in Gilles Deleuze's consideration of Michel Tournier's *Friday, or the Limbo of the Pacific* (1969). Here, in an alternative encounter with a deserted island and a companion named Friday, Tournier's Robinson, refusing a rescuing ship and a chance to complete a circuit home, opts instead to remain on an island named Speranza, thereby discovering, beyond the administrative and colonial impulse of Defoe's original, that solitude makes possible an unexpected place-relation – its erotic renovation. With isolation comes a lapse in normative temporal and spatial coordination, as Deleuze noted, in which the absence of human others disorganises subject-object distinctions, and with it, desire. For Deleuze, "Robinson [becomes...] the consciousness of the island, but the consciousness [...] the island has of itself" (1990, p. 311). With a lapse in self-Other desiring relations, an elemental sexuality arises in which the earth no longer retains a docile, "recumbent organisation" across which a "*homo economicus*" reigns, but rather rises from its supplication into a "new uprightness" that erodes Robinson's privilege as the standing being and thereby draws him into a raft of strange tactile relations and erotic exchanges (p. 313; see also Bogue 2009). In this account, the ground consumes the worker-walker rather than docilely supporting and answering to the work of organisation. Moreover agency is reversed and Robinson is transformed, as Tournier described, into

“simple dough, caught in a hand of all-powerful stone” or, in an agricultural sense, is remade a “bean, caught in the massive indestructible flesh of Speranza” (cited in Deleuze 1990, p. 314). For Deleuze, this collapse in subjective agency arising “when Others are missing from the structure of the world”, points to the significance of others in relativizing “the not-known and the non-perceived” – something others bring to “my point of view” in the guise of the “unseen in what I do see” (p. 306). Similarly, others make desire object-directed because only through others does desire find its destination and placement (p. 306). The immediate consequence of an absence of others is a savage mixing in which the:

[...] “known and the unknown, the perceived and the unperceived confront one another absolutely in a battle with nuances [causing a ...] harsh and black world, without potentialities or virtualities [and where...] the category of the possible has collapsed. Instead of relatively harmonious forms surging forth from, and going back to, a background in accordance with an order of space and time, only abstract lines now exist, luminous and harmful – only a groundless abyss, rebellious and devouring. Nothing but Elements. The abyss and the abstract line have replaced the relief and the background. (p. 306)

Without figure-ground stability and the anticipated spatio-temporal patterns collectively anchored by interlocutors (what Deleuze called a “structure-Other” (p. 314)), revealed is something approaching Blumenberg’s “absolutism of reality” – a raw, elemental indetermination prior to cognitive-place structures, indeed place itself. If others give the subject its sense of a “past world” (“I was”) and themselves constitute a possible future, without them normative temporal sequence fails too (pp. 310–311). In Tournier’s account, days particularly lose their cumulative, sequential order:

No longer do they [days] jostle on each other’s heels. Each stand separate, upright, proudly affirming its own worth. And since they are no longer to be distinguished as the stages of a plan in process of execution, they so resemble each other as to be superimposed in my memory, so that I seem to be ceaselessly reliving the same day. (Cited in Deleuze 1990, p. 311)

This *upright* time (each moment standing erect and separate) fails to support a satisfactorily individuated subject and instead causes that subject to slide towards a “superhuman filiation” with the given (p. 315). Yet more than simply falling into “a fundamental disorder of the world”, Deleuze found in Tournier’s tale of an alternate Robinson a raft of desiring relations behind the structure-Other that elude human-centred representation. The “otherwise-Other” is a counter-structure ghosting all concrete actualisations of desired objects and persons, one whose elemental turbulence is more or less kept in check by the structure-Other:

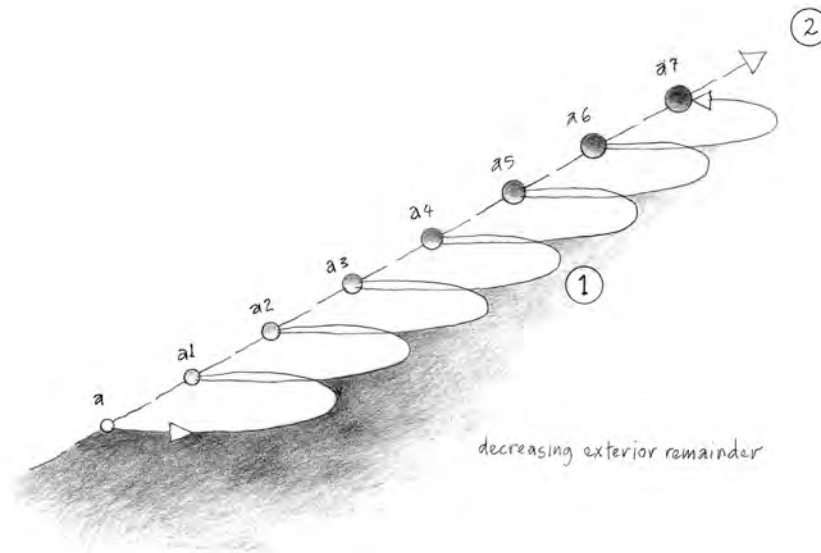
The Other is the grand leveller, and consequently the de-structuration of the Other is not a disorganization of the world, but an upright organization as opposed to the recumbent organization; it is the new uprightness, and the detachment of an image which is vertical at last and without thickness; it is the detachment of a pure element which at last is liberated. (pp. 312–313)

Under the sway of levelling others, the elements are “drawn into the earth, [the] earth into bodies, and bodies into objects”, each in turn concretising a world of actual, possible connections (p. 318). Sexuality expresses this pressing down of desire into ever-more concrete erotic objects and modes of embodiment (p. 317). Yet against this gravity and densification, an alternative upward way, a transcending passage, persists that “separate[s] desire from its *object*” and bypasses the detour of representable sexuality. Robinson experiences this up-ride, though not without becoming elemental himself and joining a plane where depth as spatial distribution, particularly depth as separation, ceases to operate: resultantly he “carries the earth into the sky” (p. 317). Deleuze gave this world of contracted surfaces different names – “the great Health”, the “perverse structure” – and saw emanating from it phantasms, ascending simulacra, and desiring perversions; in short, the world of the Sophists otherwise detected and pressed downward by Platonic *logos* (p. 315). Nevertheless, the great Health depicts a ‘ground’ prior to others and their organisation of the world and prior to the emergence of the perceptual field as a place for the playing out of the possible. In this anti-Platonic reversal, what walks and what is made upright are not persons in pursuit of the Good, but elevated intensities causing ‘persons’ to descend into ecstasis – a passage that passes from objects to bodies, from bodies to earth, and from the earth into the elemental. Rising up and falling down, objects and time swap figural place – so can modernity in its long arc be imagined and rewritten. At stake then in these divergent accounts (Defoe and Tournier’s) are two holds on infinity: an infinite grasp or possession of the world – an autarkic accession arcing away from nature and animality – whose imprint is “humanization” and whose form is the return circle, the circumnavigation, a world rounded and circumscribed (Certeau 1986, pp. 144-144; Barthes & Coste 2013, pp. 27-29); alternatively, an anachoresis that wrenches from the social world a counter passage discovering and un-burying the elemental at the cost of disfiguring any return of and to self.

## 2. *Scriptural Economies*

The metaphysical walk instilled anachoresis as a key city-relation: as Barthes described, “its foundational act is to break away, the abrupt jolt of departure” (2013, p. 25). Further: “The distancing has to be symbolized in some way. Anachoresis = an action, a line, a threshold to be crossed” (p. 25). Observational walking registers this break or distance in and through and amalgamation of traversal and writing particularly – a crossing imagined as Eulerian. For instance, when considering the circumnavigating adventures penned by Defoe and Jules Verne, Macherey recognised “a long reverie or meditation on the theme of the straight line”, the rectitude or formal propriety of which can only be appreciated afterwards having traversed “an immense reserve” of irregularity (2006, pp. 203-205). Building on these

reflections, Certeau saw a broader project of “Occidental capitalization” associated with oceanic exploration whereby the trajectory organising encounter is cumulatively folded back on itself to form “a line of circles” (Fig 12.) that progressively stockpile knowledge to better “eliminate the losses” of observation (1986, pp. 146-147). At stake is a quest to erase any unknown remainder or exteriority arising with the voyage, and progressively through narration and naming, to “semanticize the voids of the universe” (pp. 143, 147).



#### KEY

- 1 Voyaging circuits
- 2 Progressive narrative & knowledge stockpiling
- a-a7 Imperial urban centre accumulating both knowledge & exteriority

**Figure 12.** Author 2013. “Occidental Capitalization” – Narrative & Stockpiling (Modified from Certeau 1986).

For Certeau, underwriting this linear capitalization is the shift from a shared world capable of being *read* or deciphered for its pre-existing, divinely inscribed truths to a “scriptural economy” that must essentially construct and validate its truth values in accordance with *writing practices*. Three salient factors define such an economy: first, the demarcation of a “blank space” for which the “island of the page” models a generic subject capable of effecting its own self-engenderment sheltered from the “ambiguities of the world”; second, into this clearing a text is inserted whose “itinerant, progressive and regulated practice – [like] a ‘walk’ - composes the artefact of another ‘world’ that is not received but rather made”; third, from within this scene of withdrawal where the self practices its relation to itself and to others but also its capacity to envisage the world as a thing remade, a strategic system capable of intervening in the environment beyond is devised (1988a, pp. 134–135). These three facets in fact make learning to write the “fundamental initiatory practice” of capitalism, as Certeau argued, and are exemplarily mythologised by *Robinson Crusoe*,

which pedagogically models “a universe without a father” (p. 136). Underscoring Crusoe’s autarkic relation with the island is the journal in which Crusoe writes the island in synchrony with its outside mastering; hence the journal is a reserve space where the ‘walk’ of the hand/pen silos observing, walking, and acting in an external domain. It is the page that gives the latter an ‘internal’ consistency in accordance with the linearity of the written line and a strictly sequential temporality. Potent because it is replicable everywhere amongst a reading public, this model simultaneously rendered personal agency centrifugally efficacious (p. 136):

The scriptural enterprise transforms or retains within itself what it receives from its outside and creates internally the instruments for an appropriation of the external space. It stocks up what it sifts out and gives itself the means to expand. Combining the power of *accumulating* the past and that of making the alterity of the universe conform to its models, it is capitalist and conquering. (p. 135; emphasis in original)

Accounts of walking are never free of the page in a scriptural economy, not just in the obvious sense that they get written down, but because they model observation as that which can be belatedly appropriated and mastered. Further, the walker that observes is always a literate walker, a scriptural self, or a subject-page who knows itself only on the basis of a reserve or private retraction of action and its redistribution via a self as agent of enunciation.

Yet for Certeau, a blind spot centres the scriptural operation; orality as the “fragile way the body makes itself heard in the language” is what writing both purports to capture and unavoidably writes out of the picture (p. 131). Bodies, rewritten as a correlate of the page, succumb to the “law of the named” channelling corporeal material in accordance with discursive norms and social codes (pp. 148–149). Moreover, the scriptural enterprise assembles a world of believers around writing and who find in the page a reality whose veracity confirms its operations. At the level of belief, the pairing of walkers with pages chronicling itineraries proselytises for the body-like space of the page itself, which is a space capable of enunciating a point of view and charting a Eulerian course through the ambiguities it confronts. Bodies are not just put into the text; they are already inscribed with the effects of literacy and mirror the duplication of scriptural force everywhere. Yet the body born of this instrumentality harbours a plethora of other bodily modes that speak in languages largely unknowable to the page and its representational stricture (raves, cries, rants, and howls are amongst Certeau’s examples) and which constitute an unconscious that spoils and reworks scriptural certainties *ad nauseam* (pp. 147–150). Hence Certeau decentred the Freudian unconscious from the seat of the subject, locating it instead in the plethora of everyday practices whose knowledge is largely unknown but effected anonymously out of view of a reflective consciousness. “Moves, behaviours, ways of talking

or walking, etc.” are amongst these practices that have drawn precise knowledge “wholesale” over to the unconscious (p. 71). Nevertheless, over three centuries the two types of knowing have vied with each other: on one hand, “a referential and unrefined knowledge; on the other, an “explanatory discourse that brings forth into the light an inverted representation of its opaque source” (p. 72).

### 3. “Knowfoot”

Looking to the origins of the scriptural self, Defoe, as populariser of an island mentality, is in Walter Ong’s account of the transition from cultures founded on orality to those centred in literacy, the inheritor of an “internalization of consciousness and introspective habits” made possible by writing and pioneered long before by Sophocles (497–406 BC) and the other Greek tragedians (2002, p. 150). At the threshold of alphabetic culture arising with ancient Greece, the myth of Oedipus made the transition to tragedy as amongst “the first verbal genre controlled entirely by writing” (p. 149). Not coincidentally, Oedipus’ genealogical line in myth runs to the union of Kadmus (Cadmus from “*qadm*” meaning east) and Harmonia; significantly the former was “a prince of the Phoenician city of Tyre” who travelled west to establish Thebes and impart to the Greeks the Phoenician alphabet (Forston 2011, p. 251; & Sacks *et al.* 2009, p. 73). Further, Cadmus is linked to tragic drama via “twice-born” Dionysus who was the result of a union between Zeus and Semele, Cadmus’ daughter (Graves, 14.b-c). Dionysus in turn was patron of the festivities held in early spring in Ancient Athens – known as the city *Dionysia* – that culminated in competitive drama. Yet the link between Dionysus, theatre, and written culture is complex. In the fifth century BC, a proverbial refrain asked of tragedy was, as Vernant has noted, “What has it to do with Dionysus?” (1990, p. 181). Despite the god giving his name to the *Dionysia* – with “dithyrambic competitions, processions of young people, blood sacrifices, and the parading and exhibiting of the god’s idol” – tragic form, in its doubling of “*mythos*” with “*pathos*” (that is, in its intersecting of legendary stories with contemporary circumstances) appears to have had no direct sacral-mythic linkages (pp. 181–182).

In tragedy was initiated a written tradition that mandated characters with psychological ‘depth’, motivational complexity and behavioural unpredictability (Ong 2002, p. 149). In its staging of the agonistic capacities of consciousness, the written text eschewed the “flat” or “heavy” characters of earlier epic and mythical modes of storytelling. In contrast to an oral, “noetic” grasp of the world (typical of predominately speech-directed “verbomotor culture” (p. 66)), writing increasingly favoured figures who were rounded psychologically and rendered complex by evolving time (p. 149). While the “people-interactive” tendency of verbomotor life and a cultural mnemonics dependant on recitation, repetition, and

regularity (which for Ong was evidenced in the predominantly clichéd and stereotypical figures), cultures of literacy are specifically “object-orientated”, emphasising “visual input and the ‘objective’ world of things” (p. 66). Similarly, Greek tragedy specifically tied the *polis* to theatre, rendering the city itself a spectacle to be observed and hence, contrary to an earlier “poetic genre”, tragedy entailed a thing “written to be seen as well as heard” (Vernant 1990, p. 185). The emergence of “tragic consciousness” tended to emphasise the instability of reality, giving questionable qualities to earlier epic heroes that the audience, in turn, recognised as their own (p. 186). Putting on stage other-worldly characters who “took on every appearance of real existence” meant that in tragedy the audience saw with its own eyes believable figures who “were not really there nor could be” (p. 187). Consequently, the present assumed a mask-like quality whose “illusionary simulations” doubled presence with absence, making the quotidian inseparable from the “space of the imaginary” (p. 187). For Vernant, it was this in fact that tied Dionysus to tragedy, for “one of [the god’s...] major characteristics [was] to confuse the boundaries between illusion and reality, to conjure up the beyond in the here and now, to make us lose our sense of self-assurance and identity” (pp. 187–188).

Tragedy then entailed a shift from perennial stories to ones complicated by contingency and contemporaneity. Correspondingly, tragedy invoked a shift from a flat, generalised telling by voice to a visibly augmented telling tasked with synthesising hearing and vision. This heightening of viewpoint by tragic consciousness corresponded with a broader Greek “anthropocentering” whereby individuals came to recognise themselves as “source and agent” of a world increasingly beheld “as object (rather than [solely as] a sign)” (Goux 1993, pp. 119–121). Goux saw in this condition a “deprojection” that eschewed initiatory strictures and traditions linked to divine mediation and for which the price was a generalised lapse in inherent belonging and meaningfulness (p. 121). With deprojection pivotal to the emerging Greek science, viewpoint came to govern all aspects of cultural life and contrasted abruptly with Egypt where a “cryptophoric mode of symbolising prevail[ed]”; in other words, an initiatory incorporation into an explicitly collective system of sacred signs and beliefs governed imperially or despotically (p. 123). Goux nominated the distinction between projection of the latter and Greek deprojection “aspective” and “perspective” respectively. The former privileged figuration based on frontality and flat profiles with little depth of field or expressive figural exploration. The latter favoured a subject-centred viewpoint whose varying observations confirmed both the relativity of outlook and the objectivity of the view (p. 125–126). For example, Goux contrasted hieroglyphic renderings where “feet are arranged in profile along a baseline” with “Greek painters [who] were the first to draw a frontal view [...] of a human foot” (pp. 122, 126). Departing from a fixed, canonical view, the foreshortened foot signalled an outlook indexed



to “angle of vision” and therefore one entirely time and place dependent (p. 122). Shorn of its cryptophoric signification, such a foot was offered as both base and naked: base in the sense that it called up questions of placement and the contingency of ground-contact; naked in the sense of being personalised, indeed privatised in a manner contrary to stereotypical rendering of body types.

For Goux, the “Greek rupture” with aspective was also inseparable from a confrontation with myth, whose cultural narratives were characteristically “‘arrested,’ canonical, ‘remembered’” (p. 128). Sophocles’ remaking of Oedipus can in fact be seen to effect a perspectival confrontation with the ritual and initiatory mechanics of a symbolist outlook, replacing it instead with an inward confrontation turning on self-doubt, uncertainty, limited understanding, and failures in memory, for which psychological resources foreign to, and unimaginable in, aspective culture were necessary. At a corporeal level, Sophocles’ Oedipus bears the mark of this transitional from mythic to tragic form – a pronounced limp. If for the Greeks, the perspectival foot was always situationally foreshortened and circumstantially placed, Oedipus’ misfortune was to drag an aspectively deformed or ‘fixed’ foot, thereby embodying a contest between providential and circumstantial models of time. His name, as noted earlier, denotes a double relation to knowledge signalled specifically through feet. He is forwardly orientated by a will to truth, a cognitive knowing irredeemably forced to revisit an obscure past - in short, he condenses a dichotomy figured as head and hindrance. *Oedipus Tyrannus*, as a “‘Knowfoot’” capable of solving “‘the riddle about feet’”, was also a thinker able to resolve what the usual methods of the seer could not (Sophocles & Gould 1970, p. 397). Nevertheless, Oedipus no less stands as a precarious figure in whom a tragic consciousness demands that he cannot know his standing but must uncover it step-by-step. Moreover, this uncovering is played out according to the internalising and deepening of a subject formed in writing. More generally, in hypostasising questions of situatedness, texts about subjects who walk in cities are more than merely accounts of places. Rather, these place-accounts are “instrument[s] of inquiry” (as Macherey said with Defoe’s island in mind) and sites for testing the autological as limit (2006, p. 269). If the deserted island builds on the precedent of the urban crucible (or *polis*) as an instrument of inquiry, both together occasion the issue of figure and disfiguration in perception itself.

## 5. “Superlinearity”

What the figure-disfiguration field coalescing with Oedipus suggests is the potency of a centrifugal orientation to life (Patočka 1998, p. 36). For Patočka this means living in

horizons other than our own, in fact living beyond ourselves in a “Thou-I structure” where the Thou – as everywhere other to the place from which an ‘I’ centres the world - not only dominates but, as he credited Nietzsche with asserting, is immeasurably “older than the I” (p. 36). Against a “‘human, all-to-human’” orientation making the ‘I’ the sole enduring measure of the field of knowledge, the Thou necessarily casts the human beyond any anthropocentric certainty. Foucault, similarly surveying the limits of an anthropocentric centring of knowledge, anticipated the “disappearance of man” in the concluding lines of *The Order of Things* (1985). In a decidedly Robinson-esque rendering, he forecast, “that man would be erased, like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea” (pp. 386–387). Where for Defoe’s Robinson, at stake was a rendezvous of the self with its footprints necessary to overcome a “smudge” or “lapse” in self-presence (Certeau 1988a, p. 154), Foucault’s beyond of man as eroding facial imprint prompts the question what rendezvous will be, or indeed has ever been, possible between ‘man’ and his walk?

‘Pre’ or ‘post’ any anthropocentric certainty, the walker is carried by an evolutionary legacy indicative of two spatialising factors. For André Leroi-Gourhan, all animal life shares both a mobile search for nourishment and the placement of “the entire organism [...] behind the aperture for ingesting food” (1993, p. 27). If the first characteristic points to the significance of locomotion for all vertebrates, the second highlights how animate life has come to be organised axially according to an “anterior field” or forward-facing horizon of extended concern and response. Further, this longitudinal axis is organised via bilateral symmetry in two areas: that “governed by actions of the head and the other by those of the forelimbs” (p. 31). While animal life has accorded a differing balance, species by species, between the “facial pole” and the “manual pole”, only in the human animal is the hand entirely relieved of locomotive demands (p. 34, 36). Furthermore, free hands relieve the face of any grasping function, thereby allowing an evolution in cranial structure favouring vertical elongation, increased facial expressiveness, and the potential for greater and more nuanced vocalisation. Hence, erect posture and bipedal motion were the anatomical and motor triggers leading first to tool use and language development and second to a cerebral expansion answering to new motor and emotive complexity (p. 26). Hominoid motility is key in an evolving “bipolar technicity” centred on the motor functions of hand and face, that in turn gave rise to a parallel evolution of “technoeconomic structures” (pp. 145, 187). For example, growing agrarian “supersettlements” triggered the “urban mechanism” resulting in a specialised sociality capable of managing and accounting for surpluses, whether in goods, foods or religio-cultural production (p. 178). Leroi-Gourhan makes imaginable a causative line running between bipedal walking and urbanisation, where ultimately the freeing of the hands also potentiated a freeing of time in which the

technician, the metallurgist, and the artesian, amongst other social actors, became possible (p. 169).

Also born with the “furnace crafts”, coinage, stock keeping, and monetary mechanisms is the transformation of graphic notation into writing (p. 178). Prior to the urban threshold in Leroi-Gourhan’s account, early anthropoids showed a divergent, expressive deployment of the hand and the face, where tool use and gestural expression (dance etc.) developed separately from vocal expression and phonation (speech, incantation, song):

The hand has its language, with a sight-related form of expression, and the face has its own, which relates to hearing. Between the two is the halo that confers a special character upon human thought before the invention of writing proper: The gesture interprets the word, and the word comments upon graphic expression. (p. 210)

On one hand, sedentarisation, with its cyclic patterns of seasonal forces, imparted to settlements “a cosmic image” in Leroi-Gourhan’s account where heavenly and earthly spheres were joined according to a radial conception of the universe (with space and time organised around pivotal reference points – “*omphalos*”). On the other, the city’s freeing of time increasingly favoured processes of “rectilinear progression”, serialisation, and linear extension (p. 211). Language, pushing to catch up with the technical innovations, submitted an earlier drawn graphism to a “stricter linearisation of symbols”, and in turn, sought to inscribe and code “spoken language” in phonetic temporal sequences (p. 211). The result was a disruption in the balanced play between aural and visual expressive registers, with the linguistic apparatus becoming the predominant mechanism through which thought was passed and through which it was preserved (p. 210). Consequently writing worked to not only constrict the world of images, but served to overcome “multidimensional symbolic thought” in general (p. 212).

In their reading of these propositions by Leroi-Gourhan, Deleuze and Guattari used the term “superlinearity” to describe this “overcoding” of gestural ‘languages’ by the linearity of language (1987, p. 62). Moreover, the transfer of the majority of expressive traits into language served to reconcile the tension between a radial conception of the universe and urban linearization, with the despotic leader taking up the pivot point between social and cosmic orders and monopolising all circulated enunciation (Fig. 6) (p. 62). In suturing the divide between oral and graphic systems of pre-alphabetic sociality, writing effected a radically different social organisation from what Deleuze and Guattari term the “primitive *socius*”. The later had no territorially expansive mandate, for the earth was held as an indivisible entity maintained in immanent unity, while the former imparted to the earth a transcendent unity – the unity of a State capable of appropriating and dividing territory through decree (2000, p. 146). The independence of graphism (the marker of filiation) and

voice (the bearer of alliance) in oral societies ensures that one can never predominate over the other and that they remain in a state of declension that declines any absolute lineage with the “body of the earth” (2000, p. 146). Conversely, what Deleuze and Guattari called the “despotic barbarian formation”, depends on a sovereign’s “direct filiation with the deity” and the conversion of voice into a language capable of commanding extended territory (pp. 192-193). Hence:

[...] graphism in one and the same movement begins to depend on the voice, and induces a mute voice from on high or from the beyond, a voice that begins to depend on graphism. It is by subordinating itself to the voice that writing supplants it. (p. 202)

Such is the contest between the despot, the State, or head, and the urban body; the former took hold of the linearisation of the latter bending it around into a resonating, concentric order that impregnates territory with an imperial voice (p. 192). Oedipus, “the clubfooted despot”, as Deleuze and Guattari nominated him, stands at the junction between “the despotic machine and the old primitive territorial machine” (p. 182). On the territorial side, he amalgamates the three sides of the “magic triangle” or the socially initiating nexus of “voice-audition, graphism-body, eye-pain”, which is to say the play of alliance, filiation, and socially amalgamative spectacle (2000, p. 204). On the despotic side, he rises up as a non-initiatory paradigm in whom:

[...] the voice no longer sings but dictates, decrees; the graphy no longer dances, it ceases to animate bodies, but is set into writing on tablets, stones, and books; the eye sets itself to reading [but in accordance with...] a kind of blindness, a loss of vision *and* of the ability to appraise [...]. (p. 205)

On the territorial side, the Oedipus of myth represents the play of filiation and alliance that otherwise displaces the incestuous impulse through shifting webs of debt; on the despotic side, he occupies, centre stage, the “symbolically occupied [incestuous] limit” by imposing a direct and permanent alliance with all facets of the social, appropriating and overcoding them as if they were so many organs on a territorial body synonymous with the despot’s own (pp. 210, 267). Societal rather than personal, incest in the despotic regime is inseparable from an “infinite debt” of debt owed the sovereign who enforces an “abstract unity” serviced through the invention of money as medium of tax (pp. 199, 221). The primal Urstaat – “the eternal model of everything the State wants to be and desires” – is an idealised construction in the head/brain, a “cold monster” forming the “common horizon” for every concrete instance of despotic regimes historically (pp. 220–221).

Bipedal walking, as progeny of an anterior field evolving a bipolar technicity centred on the hand and the face, having curtailed its multiplex expressive repertoire in accordance with the superlinearity of written language, reaches its apogee in a head city akin, as argued

earlier, to that of Plato's *Republic*. Yet, to the extent that the *Republic* offers an urban, authoritarian flagship in the West – indeed a philosophical template over which was traced anew the Urstaat – the Oedipal misadventure that was its target, far from being excised, may be recognised in Deleuze and Guattari's account as native to its positing of a “repressing representation” and the dream of appropriating all the productive, reproductive, and consuming forces of a place. Nevertheless, the ‘clubfoot’ in clubfooted-despot means that the ground of despotism's own standing runs interference. If the sovereign vertiginously aspires to a totalised societal body – the despot itself reconstituted as sole authorising ground – then no organ or operational component can fall outside its cold, calculative reach. However, the inscribing in the scriptural enterprise of an “eminent voice” standing outside the text as an “object on high” depended on an expulsion of privation, the unsightly or everything in the body that did not accord with its higher ideals. As Dominique Laporte parodies a despotic averting of its gaze from the lowly: “surely, the State is the Sewer. Not just because it spews divine law from its ravenous mouth, but because it reigns as the law of cleanliness above its sewers” (2000, p. 56). The totalitarian will in this account exhibits a sanctifying ambition synonymous with sanitarianess: civilisation stands against the “barbarous”, and as conqueror, “emblazons his trials with a primordial prohibition: ‘no shitting allowed’” (p. 57). In the *History of Shit* (2000), Laporte recognises in the 1539 edicts by François King of France applied to Paris the conjunction of two seemingly disparate demands: on the one hand, the King insisted that all civil and notarised documents be “written with a clarity that will remove all ambiguities or uncertainties” (p. 3); on the other, that all household, putrid wastes were to be retained inside until the hours of darkness when they could then be disposed in private (pp. 4–5). At stake in this less than accidental intersection is an “individuation of waste” requiring the “removing [of] excrement from sight” (pp. 62, 68) and the “purify[ing] of the commerce of words” (p. 13). Furthermore, “purified, language” and gold, as its correlate, were made synonymous with an elevation above “dirty commerce” and a communing with all that is base (p. 18).

While the State, as bearer of pure language and clean money, was held to command the public domain, ‘privacy’ amounted to everything that was diametrically opposed to its height, and in fact, came to be literally conflated with the *privé* (p. 46). Parodying the psychoanalytic ascendancy of psychical integration in which the phallic stage postdates the anal, the anus provides the psyche with a means of recognising in corporeal expulsion, objects/‘gifts’. Conversely, it can be thought to also model the transcendent voice and its detachment from living bodies. Yet the anus was also the first of the organs to slip from the despotic grasp with its abjection of the earth and its lowly ‘fruits’. Thus the despotic *socius*, upon which a total account of flows was paramount, ascends on the basis of a forgetting of

those flows that sully its image ideal, even as they sustain it. If Victorian modernity instituted a pervasive hygienism across multiple societal and urban scales, its principal goal was unimpeded and unmixed circulation, and though exercised in the name of public health, in fact it sought to reconcile and moderate what in the economy it could both not face and yet ignored only at its peril – runaway commercial interests. To the extent, as Dider Gille argued, that territorial-economic governance all came down to a question of pipework – itself an Eulerian, topological problem – an on going direct alliance with the prince or sovereign, and the servicing of the infinite debt that entailed, was what, in the end, the orchestration of flows could not stomach.

### 5. *Fall into Latency*

Where does the Urstaat fall? It falls into its own everyday built-in machinations – resentment and vengeance. Deleuze and Guattari called these machinations latencies (2000, p. 213). Paranoiac in origin, latencies are ingrained in the expropriating, credit-wroughting operations of the State and gave rise to a deathly, mimetic desire (the death instinct) that permitted no play of desire other than the “desire of the despot’s desire” (p. 213). Yet latencies tend to disturb rather than consolidate the overcoding of the Urstaat, for “they submerge the tyrant, but they also cause him to return in unexpected forms; they democratize him, oligarchize him, segmentalize him, monarchize him, and always internalize and spiritualize him” (pp. 222–223). Assailed by latency, the State is forced to manage an array of decoded flows at, or close to, the limits of its appropriating mechanism – “the privatisation of property”, “formation of great fortunes”, “commodity production”, the “extension of markets”, and the “expropriation and proletarianization” of producers (p. 223). Yet to the extent that capitalism is born of this volatile mix of decoded flows, it arrives slowly and diachronically. By comparison, the State “comes like lightning” as a fully functioning, despotic machine enacted synchronically (p. 223). Nevertheless, something more than contingent decoding is necessary to capitalism’s inception. While the merchants, traders, and producers had always operated in the pores of the despotic fabric (Fig 13) (p. 223), “the State looks elsewhere” and is “disinclined to dirty itself” or face the “rotten reverse of the golden coin” (Laporte 2002, p. 58). Instead, capitalism with no such foibles or elevated desires, garnered its strength erratically, establishing itself as a “strange menagerie” building out of a “schizoid time” other than that synchronised by the State (p. 223). What then launches capitalism proper Deleuze and Guattari ask?: essentially, a supersession of the delimiting territorial body of the despot. Building on historian Fernand Braudel’s reference to Europe as a “narrow Cape of Asia” compelling exploratory and mercantile adventures “outside its own front door”, the West launched itself into a “new massive deterritorialization” for which the State was ultimately reduced to sponsor rather

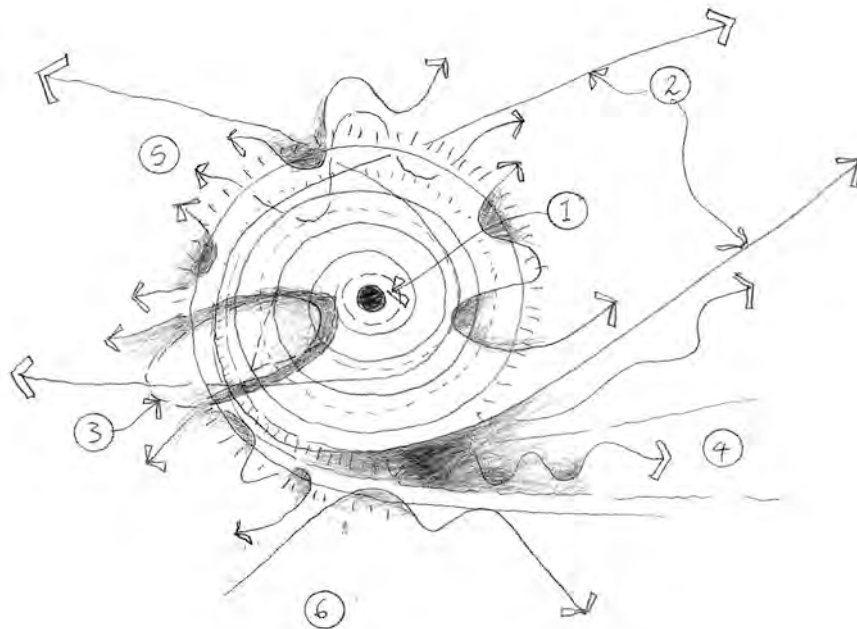
than monopolistic motor (p. 224). Concomitantly, capital, previously yoked in an interminable alliance with the State, became, in the context of a general decoding of flows and circulation, “filiative”, meaning, as Deleuze and Guattari cited Marx, that it is “endowed with a motion of its own” and is governed only by the pursuit of surpluses and the generation of further capital (pp. 224, 227). Critically, when the mobility of capital – its begetting of profits – becomes a sovereign value in its own right, the despotic body ceases to be the “quasi cause [...] appropriat[ing] all the productive forces”, leaving capital itself to “become the [sole] full body” p. 227).

A *socius* of this order given as and through extreme mobility builds on another factor: the particular historical route the Urstaat takes in the West. The synchronic nature of the Urstaat means that wherever it appears, it is made thoroughly immanent to the sociality it appropriates, and like “a cerebral ideality”, it posits itself an origin prior to the beginnings of the social-territorial arrangements it overcodes and orders (p. 219). Yet in the European context this ideality is doubly zeroing, for with the demise of an actual urban substrate over many centuries following the fall of Rome and Constantinople, what emerges “when the Christians took possession” of the imperial remainder was a “spiritual empire” (p. 222). The Urstaat in the West is indexed from the start to anachoresis and a deterritorialising bypass: “a fresh start in the wilderness” in pursuant of “a new alliance” predicated on a passage through an outside/other domain whose sense of uprootedness or unsheltering is invariably carried over into urban settlements (2000, p. 222). Such is the Oedipal becoming of the Urstaat in the West, an upsurge of passional signification torn between identification with the expelled and an overcoming of the bifurcation with divinely authorised sources. This disjunctive relation in which the calculative, cold-headedness of the despot proper is transposed into “the hearts of his subjects” effected both an internalisation of the despotic mandate (a “paranoiac machine” within) and spiritualisation (a “celibate machine” pursuing self-engenderment and authoring) (p. 222). If the Urstaat operates generally to impose a single incestuous overcoding, sexualising social relations everywhere via a direct alliance with divine sources monopolistically channelled through the despot, Oedipus, as the West’s club-footed tyrant, leaves open a remainder, a beginning at odds with the origin the despot claims in ‘his’ assertion of divine franchise (p. 219). The rejection by emerging philosophical thought in Classical Greece of a “‘monarchial’ vocabulary” (Vernant 1982, p. 114) rested, as has been indicated above, on a “palintropic” manoeuvre whose *arche* ambioned an “elementary principle” prior to myth but capable of asserting a metaphysical Urstaat free of the tension between origins and beginnings. If Oedipus drags a mythic, apsective foot, his despotism trucks a residual filiative desiring machine irreducible to the *paideia* of metaphysical passagework. As the visible mark of what went unacknowledged, his limp signals a privation, a privy (as both adjective and noun), bordering on *personal*

contingency (tragic consciousness as deepened individuation) – in fact a mode of subjectification abject to both territorial and despotic representations (Fig. 7). Consequently, under his name, capitalism ushers in “private persons” (rather than overcoded ones) to populate the body of deterritorialised capital:

Oedipus-the-despot will have to be replaced by Oedipuses-as-subjects, Oedipuses-as-subjugated, Oedipuses-as-fathers, and Oedipuses-as-sons. (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, p. 217)

The latencies haunting the despotic *socius* are no less internalised than the infinite debt called up in the name of the sovereign. The public-*privé*/private, seen-unseen, pure-object dichotomies find a new tyrannical arena in the psyche where the (Freudian) unconscious was imagined to entertain, and the social body is taught to anticipate-renounce, incest between actual persons (p. 217).



#### KEY

- 1 Persisting despotic signifying centre
- 2 Mercantile trajectories in communication with alternative signifying centres
- 3 Signs tied to mercantile semiotic create a counter-signifying bureaucracy
- 4 Persisting victimage release or zone of shame independent of mercantile passage
- 5 Breakaway latencies arising with mercantile lines of flights
- 6 Adventure time of mercantile immanence and zone of legal exceptionality.

**Figure 13.** Author 2013. “Signifying Regime with Mercantile & Private Latencies” (modified from Henri Pirenne 1974 & Deleuze & Guattari 1987).



Concomitantly, internalisation makes a carapace of individuation, much as the superlinearity of writing recalls an authorising and “eminent voice” in the chain of signifiers that hovers clear of the chain of exchange itself. As a mute voice or presence making every statement an ordering enunciation and enunciated order (from on high), private persons under capitalism constitute an adjunct, a prepared place reserved within its flows. Yet, as places go, the private persona is less substantive than attenuated: subjects in modernity arise as “images of images”, as simulacra (p. 264).

Certeau’s recognition of a scriptural economy in which learning to write is a “fundamental initiatory practice” for capitalism is striking precisely for its proliferation of images of self and for modelling a framework that stabilises the play of such images. But here a shift in the role of the old despotic Scriptural enterprise is revealed; the world given as The Word, as a text transcribed by, or on behalf of, a transcendent Other – to borrow Jean-Francois Lyotard’s characterisation – was what written language and the self that came to pass through it could not testify to (2011, p.4). For Jacques Ranciere too, if “in the beginning was the Word”, the general thrust of an interpretative vocation tracking an “infinite number of signs” in their becoming incarnate, becoming flesh, tends to problematise any closure of world back to The Word, or amounts to the same thing, a beginning rounded back into the end (2004, p. 1). The outward excursion of words into the world in pursuit of an adequate enclosing volume gets interrupted and spaced-out by an overabundance of worldly truths whose mimicry and seductive incarnation “overwhelm the fragile truth of the book” (pp. 2–4). Certainly capitalism has no truck with The Word and its vicissitudes, or rather, to the extent that writing persists and labours within its flows, it “typically plays the role of an archaism” (Deleuze & Guattari 2000, p. 240). Contrary to the despotism of linguistic signifying chains, capitalism makes apparent a different semiotic operating in the shadow of the play of signifiers, one that turns on the contingent formation of figures engendered by the intersection of “flow-breaks or schizzes” (p. 241). Citing Lyotard, Deleuze and Guattari noted the way “the signifier is overtaken towards the outside by figurative images”, or what Lyotard referred to as the object “of which [discourse...] speaks” (Lyotard 2011, p. 7) – but also on the inside “by the pure figures [letters and words] that compose it” (p. 243). Broken from the inside, letters potentiate a field of a-signifying ruptures – or “shattered partial objects” (p. 243). “The figural” operates as portals for admitting into the significatory rigor of discourse a libidinal overflow whose expressive domain is always in excess of content and always elusive of identity (Lyotard 2000, pp. 242–243). Moreover, as Lyotard argued, the figure (a term he ascribed to the visible or the seen in the phenomenological sense of a world experienced in and as depth by way of corporeal movement that reveals the fullness of objects by unfolding their concealed roundness through sensorial engagement) constantly

induces in language a tearing apart of its systematicity. Discourse “does not merely signify, but expresses”, meaning that its “double exteriority” expels the object of designation *per se* while unravels its “inexhaustible thickness” (Lyotard 2011, pp. 8–9). Thus, the signified rests behind the signifiers as a thing both concealed (in its fullness) and contingently brought forth through a figural engagement heterogeneous to signification proper. In the context of the capitalist *socius*’ amplification of desiring forces that favour the “rule of immanent commutativity” and value equivalence (p. 24), the work of effecting figures capable of standing upright amidst the plasticity of decoded flows assumes particular importance. As the following section will examine, Oedipus as figure provides the bridge between the metaphysical walk and an alternate gait in modernity in which the alternation of antistrophe and strophe by the tragic chorus is mirrored in the vacillating forces of “production and antiproduction”, social and private persons, and work and desire (Deleuze & Guattari 2000, p. 265). At stake in this play of desire is a tension between the literate subject as a self-authoring figure and one seduced by the figural and its imitative dissipation, a tension in fact traceable to the metaphysical walk proffered by the *Republic*.

## 6. *Desire – Working Mimesis*

For Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, across two millennia the West has recognised itself in two seemingly contrasting figures or types – the figures of work and the figure of desire. The figure of the work, an older type, emblematises humanity on the basis that mobilising technology and orientating stories (as a *Homo pictor*) is key in making a life world. Conversely, the subject of desire has negotiated the difficult terrain of excess in its various forms, with Oedipus in particular, signalling both desire’s malfunction in myth and its redeployment by psychoanalysis as spectre and antidote to triangulated familial passions (Lacoue-Labarthe 2003, p. 7). Ostensibly these figures move in a direction antithetical to Lyotard’s characterisation of the figural; they stand for *something* as opposed to dissipating all standing. For Lacoue-Labarthe a “Gestalt, figure or type” distinguishes itself from a ground (or background) and the term *gestalt* is cognate to a range of German words that share the root *stell* – to place, put, or stand. The eliciting of standing figures, as Lacoue-Labarthe noted, is inseparable from an ontological labour he called an “onto-typo-logy”, whereby metaphysics finds continuance in modernity via the positing of representative types (1989, p. 52).<sup>1</sup> In contrast to transcendence (a climbing or springing into a beyond as its etymology suggests), *gestalt* figures perpetuate metaphysics through “rescendence” – the eschewing of a meta-domain in favour of a grounded ascendance in which finite, essential

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<sup>1</sup> Such figures include Nietzsche’s wandering Zarathustra, Ernst Jünger’s (1895–1998) Worker, Rainer Maria Rilke’s (1875–1926) Angel, Freud’s Oedipus, and Karl Marx’s Proletarian (Lacoue-Labarthe 1989, p. 52 & Note 8).

types stand in for the infinite. Tracking Heidegger's objection to an "eidetic ontology" grounding the Platonic *idea* where essence and appearance are condensed (where something can only appear if doubled with a non-appearance as essential truth), Lacoue-Labarthe recognised how recendence (without recourse to a world of essences structuring the visible) nevertheless belatedly borrows an optic of essences through figural or finite form (pp. 54–55). A transcendental vacancy does not prevent a facsimile of truth arising with the installation of "the *stele*" (placement, standing, "erection", etc.), and this installation of standing truths presupposes a metaphysics centred, not on the soul, but subjectivity and representation (p. 81).

Pivotal to this onto-typo-logy in modernity is "the figure of man" as an exemplary *tupos* for existential meaning – indeed a 'statuesque' one (Sparks 2005, pp. xx–xxi). In turn, the walker (orthopedically erect and autonomously ranging in its bipedality) stands out as an agent of meaning-bestowal. For Lacoue-Labarthe, Oedipus can be understood, not just as figure of desire, but a figure in whom work converges too, precisely because, as a key locus of (Greek) science and philosophy, he obliged an orthopaedic correcting of the tragic taint in knowing (its *pathos*) by initiating a laborious unveiling or *alētheia*. Moreover, this revealing is inseparable from a quest for figures of thought that eschew the figural *in* thought *tout court* (or what amounts to image work and the imagination), despite "figuration" having long inflected philosophical discourse and having programmed it "from the most distant sources of metaphysics" (Lacoue-Labarthe 1989, pp. 52–53). The ideal of a pure thinking uncompromised by mediation is a fiction no less because metaphysics is fundamentally a philosophy of mimesis installing "static determination[s] of Being" (pp. 69, 79). This mimetic continuity makes it possible to recognise that from Parmenides to Nietzsche metaphysics amounts to a single project or "one *same* history" seeking to unveil a "radical heterogeneity of Being", one in fact consistent with the pre-Socratic world where *alētheia* was essentially a negative term corresponding to an always contingent unconcealing or unhiding of *phusis* or natural being. Rather than speaking its truth, this version of *alētheia* was what disfigured all truth claims much as proto-philosophy found its motive freedom in the perpetuated imbalance of *chorismos*. What the "curious limp" of Oedipus suggests is that the "Western gait" is never free of a de-figuration or a de-installation in metaphysical certitude – which is to say, a fall into sophistic mimesis and fictioning (Lacoue-Labarthe 2003, p. 17).

Certainly Oedipus is the one in whom (self) witnessing leads to ruin. Constitutionally – *congenitally* – mimetic, Oedipus is defined by a limp transmitted through gods, titans and forefathers, an imitative son, lover, father, a priest, a *pharmakos*, a god, a criminal, and a concrete solver of problems and riddles who also "interprets too infinitely" as Friedrich

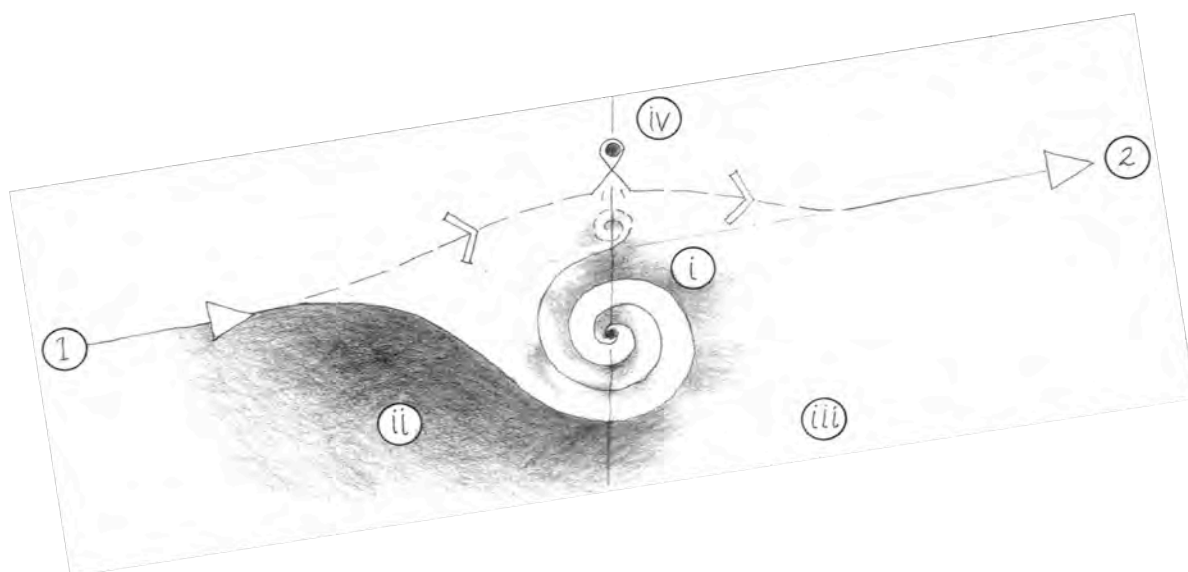
Hölderlin suggested (cited in Lacoue-Labarthe 1989, p. 233). Against the *stèle* or standing forth of installed truth, his was an *alētheia* proper to the *mimos*. For the *pharmakos*, like the mimic, always “offer[s] themselves as (something they are not)” (p. 116; emphasis in original). His limp signals not the standing (forth) of the *Idea* but the ever-present potential for the proper to trip into impiety. Reading between Heidegger and Plato in the *Republic*, Lacoue-Labarthe emphasised how mimesis (as mode of making or *poiesis*) is presumed to “deinstall[...] the ideal”, reducing it to recumbency: “Mimesis is the decline of *aletheia*, the ‘lying down’ or ‘stretching out’ of the *stèle*: Mimesis is the ‘easy lay’” (p. 86). At stake is a larger politic, the distinction between “‘good’ and ‘bad’ *poiesis*, between *demiurgy* and mimesis [as its other]” (p. 86), which is to say (given the *Republic* as context), at stake is the place of desire relative to the soul and the State. Given that Oedipus foregrounds the problem of mimetic desire – desiring what another desires (with all the questions of societal foundation and dissolution that Girard diagnosed) – the tragic temperament according to Platonic psychology leads to tyranny on the basis of not knowing oneself, of not bringing the circumference of soul/self full-circle, of keeping its constituent energies in-check, and of balancing its internal economy. For the *polis*, specifically as the *Republic* pictures it, the problem for the corporeal city (as opposed to the city in *logos*) is precisely a problem of mimesis. If the task of revising the *polis* can be imagined as a “political orthopaedics” designed to put the polity back on its feet having fallen into the “catastrophic economy” spun by the mimetic lay, such an orthopaedics per Plato’s definition is pedagogical in nature and specifically concerns the education of the guardians (pp. 124–125). Moreover, if this pedagogical task centred on a certain care of the soul, then the subject’s relation to language is pivotal (pp. 124–125).

Specifically in the *Republic*, the care of the soul commences with a raising up of the “*in-fans*” out of mimetic passivity (p. 127). The mother tongue, as an inevitable, initial succumbing to the feminine voice, moulds the infant’s soul as if a blank awaiting impression (pp. 126–127). The infant’s consciousness was made an imitative ground susceptible to children’s tales or fables mistakenly taken as the whole truth – a mimesis Platonic pedagogy intends to subsequently correct (p. 126). Concomitantly, the drive for an independent stance free of imitative engenderment, as Lacoue-Labarthe suggested, invoked an anti-mimetic resentment spanning the Western speculative cannon.<sup>2</sup> This perennial anxiety over knowing what voices speak in and through consciousness prompted a philosophical quest for “absolute (in)sight by a subject theorizing its own conception and engendering itself in seeing itself do so” (p. 127). “Typo-graphy” is inseparable from “*paideia* (of forming or of *Bildung* [self-education])”, which as a pedagogical “second birth”,

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<sup>2</sup> From Plato to Lacan, mimesis brings on “a kind of virile stiffening and anxious clenching as well as a resentment against the original maternal domination and original feminine education” (1989, p. 127).

aims to overcome the fictive, false, and impress-able first-start via a “metrical identity” of informing figures whose terminal ambition is always a subject free of mimetic trace (pp. 127–129). For Lacoue-Labarthe, “Parricide and castration” centres this Western, anti-mimetic bias (p. 130). In a different context, Goux spoke of the prolongation of feminisation (in a mythic sense) that Oedipus presents as a consequence of the failure to traverse the tripartite initiatory tests (or rather the short-circuiting of that passage by intellect). However, in accordance with Lacoue-Labarthe’s gloss on Platonic pedagogy, the tragic failure is shown to centre on a failure of will exercised over the mimetic lie and the equivocality of language in general. Conversely, tragedy remains problematically on the side of dramatisation where uncertain voices and motivations act through characters. Like mythopoetic speech, it projects an appearance of truth without a corresponding speaker to verify or authorise it. Plain speaking – what Plato called “*haple diegesis*” or clear narrative – is the remedy the *Republic* purports to exercise over dramatisation (p. 133). The *Republic*’s metaphysical walk stages a pedagogical traversal in which speaking subjects stand forth from, and prior to, textual production (Plato 1997, *Republic* 378e–379). The rule of *haple diegesis* means that the text enunciated must be the philosopher’s exclusively. But the Platonic dialogues are anything but a *haple diegesis*, as Lacoue-Labarthe noted, for the *Republic* and the other dialogues, mobilises Socrates as Plato’s mouthpiece (p. 135). Not coincidentally is Socrates chosen as ‘speaker’ in Plato’s quest to deliver the *polis* from tragedy, for Socrates was a “voluntary *pharmakos*” as opposed to one selected by rite and hence assumes a mimetic mantle only in a quest to cast out the old ways. Plato’s choice of Socrates as a (dead) speaking figure served to presence an enunciative will *behind* the textual scene, thereby “miming mimesis” to better fix “its disconcerting mobility” (p. 135). The philosopher, in making himself a figure on the page, crafted a fiction for reading-through to a pure or undivided speaker behind. Hence, as Lacoue-Labarthe asserted, a “thaumatic” or miraculating machine is at work in the *Republic* that, while renouncing imitative practices (“controlling rigorously the procedure of enunciation”), sets up internal to the text itself a reflective mechanism trying to capture and capitalise on the mimetic machinery while standing clear of it (Fig. 14) (p. 134).

**KEY**

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 1   | Passage through Visible Realm   |
| 2   | Path to Intelligible Realm  |
| i   | <i>Mise-en-abyme</i> entangling <i>phantastic</i> & <i>Eikastic</i> imitation |
| ii  | <i>Phantastic</i> imitation or semblances                                     |
| iii | <i>Eikastic</i> imitation or epiphantic vision                                |
| iv  | Double-Seeing as bypass – the Divided Line given synthetic continuity         |

**Figure 14.** Author 2013. “The Divided Line & *Mise-en-abyme*”.

Read against the polemic against imitation in the *Republic* (Book III that aims to purge speech of mimetic content and Book X where mimetic speech is compared with the production of likenesses by painters), at stake in writing was a trapping of mimesis to better sight its operation. Moreover, writing at least potentiates the expression of a substantive person conceived to be genuinely ‘outside’ or behind the text and in that sense can be conceived of as a master of similitude and imitation (Martis 2005, p.32). Against “tragic consciousness” and its transmission of a Dionysian masking in which the present was inseparable from a duplication in imagination, the confounding of boundaries between illusion and the true was what the thaumaturgic operation set in play to better overcome it. Platonic thaumatism, drawing on pre-scientific mechanisms (modified myth), borrows the victimage mechanism to leverage or propel a soul/subject clear of the *mise-en-abyme* untouched. In its reach for a metaphysical original, and therefore an end to the play of images, the soul/subject given in the *thaumatic* operation is both quasi-Oedipal (in the sense of an intellection that eschews corporeality) and anti-tragic (in that it aspires to ascend beyond passive knowing into active wisdom). In contrast to Oedipus, a figure thoroughly written over, and in turn, telegraphing Apollo’s prophecy no less than the lapses of his forefathers, the dialogues labour to install a temporally constant author anterior to the act of inscription. Like a *mise-en-abyme*, which reflects to infinity what it captures in its visual

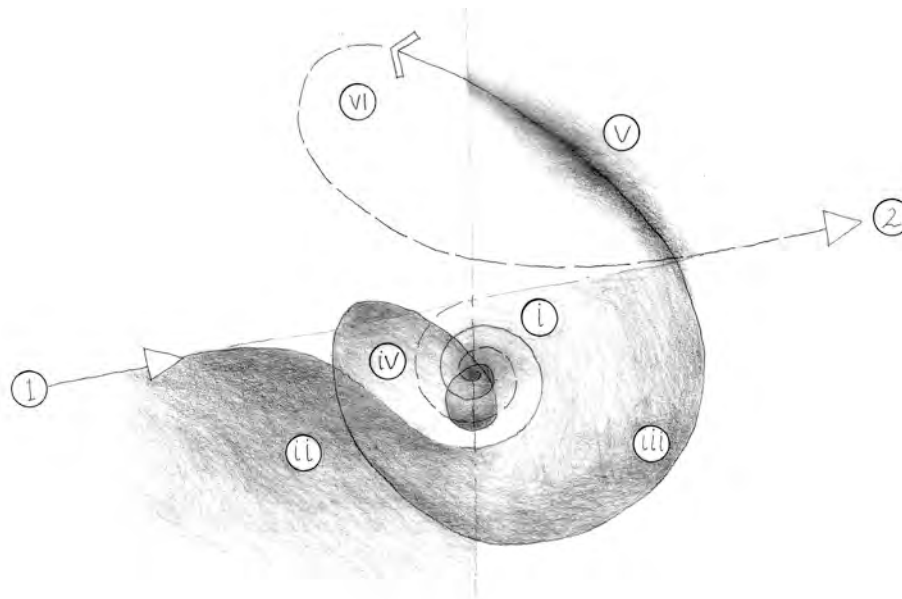
field, the *Republic* displays a progressive displacement of image-figures, each claiming to better approximate the Ideas while never actually arriving at the original itself. As Sallis noted of the upward way of the *Republic*, “except for the terminal point, everything on the way up the line and out of the cave thus takes on the character of an image”, themselves pursuing originals, that in turn are found to be images (Sallis 2000, p. 80). Ultimately, no original is finally offered, save for the image of the sun in Book VII – a fathering that nevertheless remains incontestably an image (p.81)!

## 7. Exorbitant Imagining

How does this perpetual fathering of images emerge in modernity? Tracking Plato’s critique of imitation to Book X of the *Republic* is suggestive. There in the context of the downward way and a return to corporeality, the question of imitation turns on a problem to do with measure and proportion. Images fall into two types: on one hand appearances, with their sensuous capacity, amount to phantoms or semblances that appeal to “the soul’s foolish part” on the basis that they induce pleasure; on the other, likenesses reveal something truer, they are capable of representing paradigms - particularly through their proportioning and ratios (Sallis 2000, pp. 47, 52). Notwithstanding this distinction, semblances and true copies together are generally disparaged in the *Republic*. However, Sallis found that this two-fold capacity of images was specifically teased apart at the ascending centre of the *Republic* with the staging of the allegory of the cave. There the word *εἰκασία* is used to signify a revelatory capacity in images specifically (p. 48). This epiphanic dimension is achieved in the ascent from the cave into light and corresponds in Plato’s allegory of the divided line (Fig. 9) with a crossing from the visible into the intelligible realm. As Sallis described this transition, “the movement is one of liberation in which the soul, initially in bondage to images, ascends toward the free vision of the original” (p. 48). Yet in the context of the servitude of the cave, and prior to this revelatory crossing, a break is necessary for the given to be recognised as itself an erroneous reality – in other words, it is necessary for images to be seen “precisely as images” (pp. 48–49, emphasis in original). The liberation of vision from within vision itself is what Socrates called *εἰκασία*, and Sallis called a “double seeing” that inaugurates ascension, and in turn, a synthesising traversal by the soul (p. 49). Significantly, the corporeal gesture corresponding with double-seeing is a sideways stepping that breaks the front-back visual captivation defining imprisoned image-life (see Plato 1997, 515c) – that is a stepping sideways to view the visual field askance (in both senses of the word), much like the *mise-en-abyme* Lacoue-Labarthe described. Concomitantly, double-seeing implies a break in the temporal continuity of the (illusionary) passing present; it implies something like a time-out-of-time reserved for and as reflection. Additionally, as a subject position defined by delay, double-seeing establishes by necessity an imperative to

recoup or gather into new synthesis a consequently fractured and divided experiential domain (Fig. 14, iv).

An ascent towards the intelligible commences when an absencing from what passes is converted into a present beheld self-consciously. Yet this conversion implies a spacing or individuation that deepens experience much as tragic drama set in play a reflective complexity associated with an individuated point of view. While Sophocles' Oedipus exemplarily exploited such a perspectival richness and a newly synthesised world, he equally pictured an abyssal potentiality beyond all recuperation (see Figure 15).



#### KEY

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 1   | Passage through Visible Realm   |
| 2   | Path to Intelligible Realm  |
| i   | <i>Mise-en-abyme</i> entangling <i>phantastic</i> & <i>eikastic</i> imitation |
| ii  | <i>Phantastic</i> imitation or semblances                                     |
| iii | <i>Eikastic</i> imitation or epiphantic vision                                |
| iv  | Aristotelian <i>peripeteia</i> or reversal through realisation                |
| v   | Blind wandering   |
| vi  | Oedipus at Colonus/tragic catharsis & pseudo-synthesis with the intelligible  |

**Figure 15.** Author 2013. "Oedipus as Posthumously Anticipated Interruption of the Divided Line".

Double-seeing, like a broken gait, mirrors a general split in Platonic vision where absence and presence compound in accordance with "the *eikastic* and the *phantastic*" - or epiphany and semblance (Sallis 2000, p. 53). In tracking the mutation of double-seeing historically, Sallis found an evolving weave of revelatory and corrupting powers attributed to appearances that eventually coalesced around the contemporary notion of the imagination



(pp. 55–71). In the general shift across this history towards a focus on the inward determination of appearance as impression, the variously validated *imaginato* and *phantasia* reach modernity, particularly Romanticism, still with Platonic echoes of ascendance (as in an alpine-inspired Coleridge for whom it is “Imagination that stimulates to the attainment of *real* excellence”) and descent (with *phantasia* linked to fancy and frivolous sensory pleasures and distractions) (cited in Sallis 2000, p. 57; emphasis in original). Transmitted with imagination is the old prompt to movement (the soul/subject as an entity capable of being ‘moved’) towards completion of an epiphanic promise registered with seeing. Yet epiphany offers no closure for images are involved all the way up in the Platonic cosmos, with likenesses chasing originals in a repetitious “image-original structure” that is unable to bring off “the pure original” (pp. 80–81). Plato’s Socratic dialogues, remarkable for their greedy solicitation of interrogative images, suggest that “the [inadvertent] effect of philosophy on the city” is to render it a place precisely for the “inflation of *image*” and, in a sense, a site inevitably destined to overturn the Platonic quest for the original. Moreover, the Platonic image-original structure in fact programmes precisely this infinite deferral and the final reversal or descent of Platonism into simulacra (Fig 9., e) (p. 84).

Urban modernity, as inheritor of “this dis-figuring inflation” of the image unanchored from origination, nevertheless remains motivated by an impetus to unveil or defuse the potency of images (p. 80). Channelled all the more extensively via a *technologos* and its tele-graphic support:

[...] everything [now...] depend[s] on the appropriate engagement with images, on forming, cultivating, and maintaining the proper image [to the extent that...] an effacement of the difference one would have posited between oneself and the flow of images [expires]. (p. 81)

The observer-walker finds itself a figure mandated to enter into the image repertoire of cities seeking to unveil or subtract an observational fidelity from them. Or rather, the observer-walker seeks the city’s nature in the absence of a manifest nature or truth lost with metaphysics (itself claiming to speak on behalf of the nature of all things lying beyond the natural) (p. 149).

If, as Sallis noted (citing Schelling), “the whole of modern European philosophy since its beginning (with Descartes) has this common defect, that nature does not exist for it and that it lacks a living ground”, Oedipus, as a figure exiled from the *polis* but also as a figure of the urban itself exiled from place-proper, is the progenitor of a general “alienating of the nature of nature” – a fate in fact figured by Cain (p. 150). On one hand, the Greek philosopher is an agent capable of thinking freely beyond any “pregiven content”: as Sallis referenced Hegel, Oedipus is the epitome of the solitary voyager of knowledge who insists

on withdrawing from that version of nature given as sacred through myth (p. 148). Correspondingly, Oedipus' self-blinding and subsequent wandering *apolis*, paradoxically prefigures more than just a solitary voyager in the manner of an older Odyssean philosopher coursing the oceans freely (p. 148); rather, his was a precautionary tale foregrounding the abyssal state arising with a denatured nature, which philosophy subsequently sought to correct via an eidetic climb and a re-envisioned nature tethered to Ideas (pp. 148–149). The tragic violation of a sacral orientation (for which Oedipus' blinding is a recoil unable as he was to stand the disparity between appearances and truth) anticipates another constituent element in modernity – a coming to terms with the horizontal spacing inherent in phenomena – the sense that things themselves, as opposed to the appearances by which they are apprehended, depend on lines of approach and viewpoint. Following Sallis' proposition that “sensible monstration” (i.e. that things have the power to hold in “reserve, unseen, in [their...] display” an infinity of views (pp. 110 & 123)) is the double of the monstrous grafting implicated in tragedy (given its trade in semblances), the exploration of the former in modernity (particularly in phenomenology (p. 139)) inadvertently circles back to the originary (Oedipal) rupture underwriting philosophical freedom. Yet this return, like nature displaced and refigured via the eidetic quest, re-enacts a similar reactive abridgement: imagination, having been glimpsed as constitutive of the soul itself, is likewise appropriated internally by the subject. This internalisation is one consequence of Oedipus' blind wandering: the willing of a world given without horizontal seeing or sensible monstration; in other words, a world freed from a treacherous and eventful time propagating misleading semblances or prophetic interference. This existence, mediated only by immediate, tactile measures, entails a truncated life-world predominantly constructed via an imagination closed off from the monstration of sight – in other words, imagined as if an essentially self-engendered construct reached internally through third sightedness. Against what Blumenberg referred to as an absolutism of reality that the work of myth labours to fill, blindness stands for a break mandating the displacement of horizons inward and hence a zeroing in which metaphysics attempts to manage all temporal occurrences.

### ***8. From Extension to Time-Intensity***

The continuance of metaphysics into modernity then is undertaken on the basis of managing time's exorbitancy. Challenging was the discovery of temporal processes and spatial expansion in excess of human purview or imaginable reference everywhere – the infinite mutability of time (geologically, geographically, evolutionary, historically, culturally, and economically) and an aweing centrifugation of horizons (seen in astrology, mapping techniques, travel technologies, and perspective techniques). In the face of an infinitely distributed, yet indefinitely located sources of, divine providence, the prerogative of

knowledge passed to the human domain. Yet Deleuze argued that initially this prerogative was understood as a subset or sub-cognition of an infinite knowing, and “Classical modern philosophy” (Descartes, Leibnitz, and an array of post-Cartesian positions) proceed from “an innocent way of thinking starting from infinity” (1980b). As such, human cognition, despite claiming autonomous access to truths via methodological discovery, conceived that access to be in accord with “a pre-established [divinely authorised] harmony” (Hughes 2012, p. 29). In the case of Descartes, whose philosophy in the first person (the ‘I think’) opened the way for the invention of modern subjectivity (itself an intensification of Oedipal anthropocentering), the *cogito*, despite aspiring to loosen the theological tethers, ultimately leans on the good will of God in its divining of knowledge free of doubt (Deleuze, 1980b). Pivotal to Cartesianism, as Deleuze claimed, is an ethos of truth-creation, one paralleling the creation of new territories along with a subject and a political class to traverse them. Nevertheless, modernity’s prolonged engagement with the question of the infinite caused it to re-centre on “the problem of founding or of foundation” (Deleuze 1980b). The philosopher instead became a “founding hero [...] the one who founds within an existing world, not the one who creates the world” (1980b). This founding, turning its back on metaphysics in any extended sense, instead underwent a kind of standing journey, one that sought what is “bottomless”, indeed the “center of the earth”, where for Deleuze, the earth itself became a figure for the maximally undetermined (1980b).

Contrastive with the metaphysical walk and its upward quest, modernity in pursuit of more proximate certainties increasingly looked both inward and downward. Broadly, an intensive search was substituted for an extensive one in a dubitative passage seeking foundations for the disparity between consciousness and the horizons of beholding. Replacing the outward concern of the Platonic philosophy of image, the Cartesian viewpoint built on the Stoic notion of the image as “imprint or impression”, an outward imposition requiring internal mediation and modification (Sallis 2000, p. 85). An impression-forming model of sensation neatly mapped with the new printing and pressing technologies pivotal to a scriptural economy – but also an emerging physics understood as force impression. Against an illusionary sensory potential in outward things (and outwardly imposed opinion), Descartes insisted instead on a verifying inner vision capable of mediating and managing the imprint of sensation (p. 85). As Sallis found, early modern philosophy ranging up to Locke and Berkeley was marked by this increasing disenfranchisement of the image of things from things themselves and a vesting of knowledge about things in the ideas of things beheld internally (2000, pp. 85–88). Lyotard, borrowing from Merleau-Ponty, similarly recognised in Descartes particularly a “vividness granted the motif of sight”, but on the basis that sight be ‘abstracted’ as something like the “thought of seeing” rather than its sensorial experience (2011, p. 178). Nevertheless,

Descartes' methodological pursuit of a non-illusionary sight insistently sought, as Lyotard argued, an *a priori* heterogeneity or duplicity in the visual field against which to exercise its geometrism: "'Accurate' sight is never unmediated, but reclaimed from blurred vision. The mind's inquiry has a childhood, which is the murky and the phantasmagorical" (2001, pp. 178–179).

The extraction of optically corrected figures drives inquiry, even if the Cartesian methodological polemic appears only to favour the corrected figure itself. Pointedly, in metaphors of city reform optical figures and the erosive figural find mutual intersection with the quest for a viewpoint capable of capturing "the whole city [in...] a sight free of prejudice", though one that cannot avoid grappling with "the anamorphosis of what is not located at the point of proper sight" (2011, p. 179). This is the human difference differentiating a human gauging from a divine one. What the latter maintains perennially, the former can acquire only in an infinitely delayed, step-by-step acquisition of knowledge gained through temporal labour (p. 177). Geometricism and mathematism are presumed to speak the same discourse as god and provide pedagogical correction of the sensory, itself taken as child's speech (p. 181). Hence with Descartes representation must undergo a "principle of derivation" establishing "an autonomous order of the signifier" in place of lapsed access to divine signification (pp. 181–182).

In this Lyotard saw Descartes philosophically extending a "critique of representation" that sought to divorce text from figure – something already well underway since the Renaissance (p. 182). From a medieval situation in which figures and script together signified according to monopolistic scriptural codes binding the "thickness or difference" of the figural into textual relations, the Renaissance reflected the freeing of discursive form from "sacred discourse" and at "the plastic level" – the production of an autonomous visible domain released from the demand of symbolising theological narrative (p. 175 & note to Figure 3, p. 482). Ceasing to signify as such, imagery was permitted to move towards freer designation leaving the world of words, not to be read, but to be observed – an orientation invoking division and a straining for abridgement. As such:

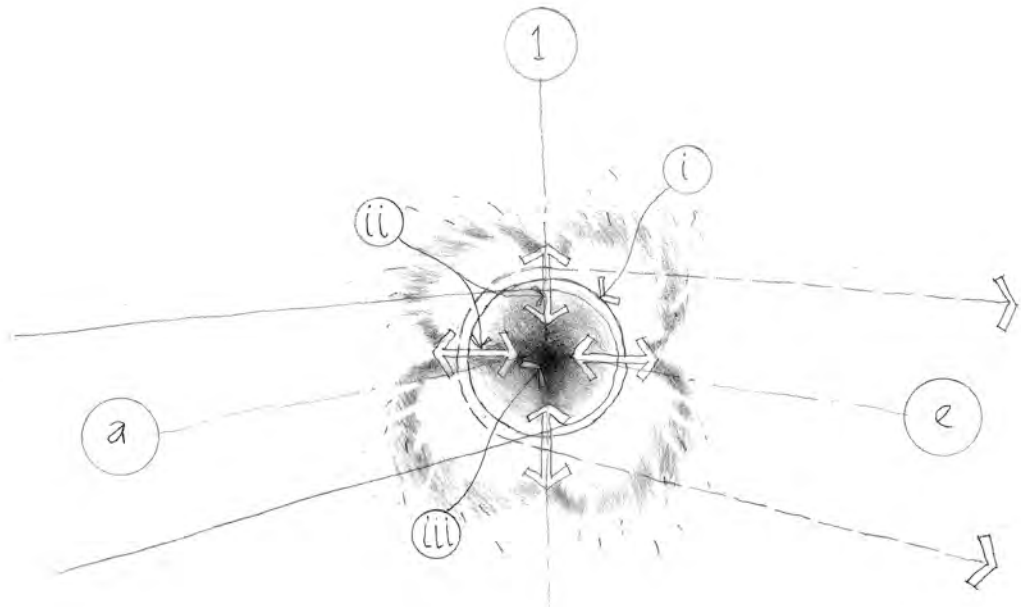
The position of the image changes completely: no longer discourse's lining, it becomes a theatre or mirror, carving out behind its glass pane a deep stage where the phantasmatic becomes hallucinatory. (p. 192)

Hence, the double problematic of modernity: a centrifugal will to confront difference – what Certeau (1986) called the heterology of the Other; and, a centripetal relation where the figural, perturbing the structure-Other, prompts exposure to the otherwise-Other or what Lyotard referred to as the wilderness of the unsignified (p. 193 & Note to Figure 3, p. 482).

With philosophical idealism and Emmanuel Kant's establishing of a noumenal-phenomenal split, it was less an image-object rapprochement that was sought but a theatrics of the island in which the perceptual domain "is essentially a *within*, an interiority" predicated on an outside it can never reach (Sallis 2000, pp. 89–90). For Michèle Le Doeuff too, the "emblem of the island" is central to Kant's critical project, which imagines an island foothold for a humanly cogent metaphysics (see 1998, B295, A236)<sup>3</sup> and implores learning to stay put rather than pursue a tempestuous and uncertain knowing resting on older metaphysical oceans (Le Doeuff 2002, p. 8). Contrasting with Defoe's tropical island, Kant's island of certain foundation transported a castrative valence in its valuing of verifiable place (the "island of understanding") over an "uninhabitable world" beyond – or as she parodies Kant: "One avoids the discomfort of the icy fogs but at the cost of renouncing the dream of discovery, the call of new lands, and hope" (p. 12). What this island-*image* aimed to counter was the tractive and exorbitant capacity of the imagination to draw the self beyond the self and in this "abandonment of the right to dream", the "island of the Analytic" provides a compensatory knowledge and hold on the world, though not without testing within the subject itself the pathways of thought bringing the world into beholding (Le Doeuff 2002, pp. 15–17). Moreover, if for Le Doeuff, perceptual knowledge framed this way rests on a vague fantasy of bodily integrity, Sallis saw in Kant too "a vague analogy with a bodily schema of inner and outer", one wrought with difficulties, not least in the arena of touch where the whole corporeal event would preclude any clear alignment of perceptual spacing and inner space (2000, p. 91). This misalignment, which will be explored in subsequent chapters, finds progressive erasure and overcoming in the discourse of walkers where the figural, cast out of discourse, makes its return in a quest for a beyond to the island of human certitude. Tournier conjured this beyond out of Defoe's Robinsonesque, and Sallis himself credits an elemental force in imagination born out, not as a temporality defining inner sense or consciousness otherwise withdrawn from the "sensible manifold" beyond, but as a "polytopical time" (2000, pp. 186, 192) that draws the multiple horizons of things and elements in and through the subject itself (Fig. 16).

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<sup>3</sup> For Kant's depiction of the northern isle, see *Critique of Pure Reason* (1998, B295, A236).

**KEY**

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 1   | Limit of the epiphanic promise imagined by Plato  |
| a   | Displacement of Forms or Ideas ( <i>noesis</i> ) by standing figures                    |
| e   | Domain of disfigured Ideas resulting from infinite deferral of image-original structure |
| i   | capsular impulse or island consciousness  |
| ii  | lines of tractive force of imagination drawing consciousness beyond itself              |
| iii | Unconscious core variously plumbed for content or evacuated of meaning                  |

**Figure 16.** Author 2013. "Island/Figure as modern terminus of the Divided Line".

This recourse to islands – and as Le Doeuff has explored, philosophy's eschewing of imagery from the mechanics of thought (despite drawing on figures insistently) - is axiomatic with a reversal of the Christian curtailment of the figural in scripture, no less than Plato's double-seeing. The positing of pictorial depth rotates the figure out of text, much as the distanced object of discourse does in scientific thought. The "pane of representation" suturing the viewer/perceiver from the world beyond is construed as a sealed surface. Consequently, the world is given as lost, and as Lyotard put it, "the West must now represent: represent what is absent to it (reality), but was once present to it, and what is not signifiable in discourse" (2011, p. 194). The appeal to antiquity in the Renaissance finds what the Christian deviation had repressed. Not incidentally, classical "sculpture in the round" amounted to nothing less than "the total unmooring of the plastic signifier", for its transposition from legend and emplacement in sacred compounds and sites figures a lapse in "the temple's speech" and the resulting message at the dawn of European modernity: "Now we can *move* around the god" (p. 193; emphasis added). Moreover, the "statue's

complete three dimensionality will be measure of how far the god has retreated”, an absence marked not by “a document, a testament” but by what eludes all speech, an “autonomous object” availing itself to sight only (p. 193). Thrown into circulation without orientation about such vacated figures, humanity itself could not be other than observers moved to observe themselves. For Lyotard, the problematic “representation of the divine in statuary” cannot but be implicated in “the development of the city”, hence:

When the political sphere opens up, the dimension of the sacred shifts: the political and philosophical word is uttered by human beings and no longer received by them as emanating from an Other; and both the linguistic and plastic signifier desert the temple and move to “the middle,” ἐξ μέσον. The opacity now belongs to the naked man, standing on his pedestal in the middle of the *Agora*. (2011, p. 193)

Contrary to the metaphysical walk and its detour of the *agora* in pursuit of an upward way, an onto-peripatetic in modernity finds its foothold exactly in the mercantile-ground that orients the middle place of the *polis*. If in the *agora* the Greeks balanced the tension between the commercial expansion of cities and the resulting hubristic wealth with a communal consciousness centred on *isonomia* or lawful societal equality (see Vernant 1982, p. 74), then modernity ushers in precisely its antithesis, a *dysnomia* (or lawlessness) in which the *agora*, no longer circumscribed by the circle of equals, is made an every-place without circumference – or as Deleuze and Guattari had it, a deterritorialising *socius*. In the face of an exorbitant urban centrifugation, the middle place of agreement falls to the human figure itself as marker of the finitely equal, though not without setting in play a quest to rid it of vacancy, calling out the figural and opaque in it (Lyotard 1991, p. 4). Hence, for Lyotard “the name of the human” is inseparable from a pedagogical arc in which the child swings from “native indetermination” into “adult community”. This arc sets up a fundamental vacillation in placement of “the inhuman” (Lyotard 1988, p. 4). As such, modernity is a problem of where to situate the inhuman and to what effect, for is the native indetermination of the infant what defines the human essence or some other differentiation determined by and understood as (adult) development” (p. 6)? If the metaphysical walk provided a mediating course (between *myth* and *logos*), it nevertheless culminates in eidetic finality (such as the Good or the Idea). Conversely, in modernity, a “metaphysics of development” reigns instead and “no finality [...] no end” could ever satisfy its machinations (p. 7). If there is a double-seeing apposite to this metaphysics, it entails a side-lined witnessing of the inhuman complication of plasticity and development where the limits of the former and the end point of the latter offer no more concrete an end than the “explosion of this star” (p. 7). In this context, the meaning of Oedipus changes; Oedipus is no longer the high-low, king-pharmakos, dichotomy against which the human medium of an urban populous is measured – or the *sophrosyne* citizenry of a proto-bourgeois Greece (guided by “moderation, proportion, fair limits, the golden mean” (Vernant 1982, p. 84)). Instead, the inhuman in modernity is tracked inwardly. Hence, Oedipus is that which is

completed and resolved by the every-person, as the medium or mediation whose achievement is to gloss over the *dysnomia* of psychological and societal bodies alike. It is this spacing opened up by *dysnomia* within the median, the *sophrosyne*, that the following chapters explore.



## **Part Two - *Spacing***

## CHAPTER 3

### *A Pathos in Modernity – Amsterdam*

Modern Western history essentially begins with differentiation between the present and the past.

Michel de Certeau, 1975

#### 1. *Pathos*

In Part One I sought to locate walking-observers in an onto-peripatetic whose serial unfolding in the West is inseparable from urban relations conditioned by a rupture with cyclic temporality indexed, firstly to an *oikoumenē*, and secondly, a despotic order purporting to channel theological certainty. What Bakhtin called the “real-life chronotope” depicting everyday urban spaces – mirroring epic journeys through abstract (mythological) space but in the immediacy of the now – has long twinned place accounts with the “seeker’s path”, a quest aiming to plumb a manifestly opaque contemporaneity. Cities appear as a temporal conundrum broadly indexed to questions of existential orientation. If the task of metaphysics was to conceive a *topos* free of disequilibrium and therefore fit for philosophy, the philosophical soul nevertheless reached modernity profoundly altered: in Patočka’s sense a care of the soul as a “care to be” was remade as a “care to have” that strove to take hold of the world not in spiritual relation but proprietorially. Writing is an initiatory practice pivotal to such *having*, given its calling into standing of an *en fan* otherwise fated to speak only in mimetic terms. Capitalising on experience by putting things onto the island of the page no less effected a capsulized self, which, having writ the world in small, renders it surveyable and graspable. Nevertheless, the page presupposes an askance distance; following Sallis and Lacoue-Labarthe, it can be recognised as a site for double-seeing, a place of bypass and temporal audit (pursuing a single synthesis of time) but also a place of ir-reality. Conversely the image-original structure inherited from Platonism leaves open at the level of sense impression a split vacillating between *imaginato* and *phantasia*, for which imagination is made a coverall retracted inwardly and proprietorially by the subject.

Similarly, the rupture initiated by metaphysics with nature is deepened in this retraction; the West's passional regime, itself founded on expulsion and exile consequent to a divinely mandated poverty in nature (the curse of Cain), reaches modernity exhausted of doctrinal certainty. If the Oedipus of tragedy was always double – a defiling figure at Thebes and a sacred, redeemed one at Colonus, one knocked from its feet and subsequently raised again by the Gods – at stake was a toying with, if not a complete overstepping of, sacred prerogative (Goux 1993, pp. 183-186, 188). At Colonus Oedipus is given a burial and with “death he finds a site [...] a center”, as Goux said, though this receiving ground is pointedly in a foreign place (other than his Theban homeland) and is one that is destined to be kept secret. The result is an irregular resolve with the Gods, meaning he is denied the most sacrosanct altar, the hearth or centre apportioned to goddess Hestia/Vesta that always visibly centres home and *polis* as Goux noted (p. 191-192). In fact this deviated burial enacts the “founding moment” specific to Western urbanity: Oedipus’ heir as Sophocles tells it is Theseus, the founder king of Athens, and the city receives the Oedipal gift of perpetual safety and peace on condition that Oedipus’ dying secret be passed to every succeeding heir only at the death of their predecessor. While Sophocles leaves that secret undisclosed in the tragedy, Goux offers an interpretation: the Oedipal *aftereffect* passed to the urban lineage that takes the democratic *polis* as its source is a newly minted, “third figure of subjectivity” (p. 195). If Oedipus reaches Colonus having shaken off both the aspective posture of mytho-religious thought and an excessive “perspectivist self-consciousness”, glimpsed anew is a “transpective” posture – an orientation that “presupposes the successful constitution of the egocentered subject” but also registers “the dimension of aspective, which has been internalised and situated as the ‘unconscious’” (p. 195). That this transposition entailed a displacement of fearful exterior sources (the Sphinx specifically but projective magic and cryptophoric symbolism more generally) inward, commenced in parallel is “the rationalist era of anguish” where doubt and uncertainty track interior contours shorn of relieving, collective projection (pp. 194-195). Moreover, the transpective resolution portends a bypassing of any *explicate* appeal to *pathos* - with “its extreme devices (madness, perversion, and all the derivations of tragedy)” - in sacred communion (p. 197). Replacing theological transcendence is “that other modern form of transcendency: the internal and internalized rift that is the unconscious” (p. 197). Hence in modernity, “Anguish is the *pathos* of a culture without *pathos*”, precisely because it renders suffering centripetal (p. 195). Oedipus’ synthesis of both autological reason and revelatory insight at his death, amounts to a shifting inward of divine sources and it is there that the caesura in knowing associated with the externalised, unequal community gets renegotiated. The unconsciousness then is the inevitable outcome of an Oedipean trajectory of individuation, which led not, as Freud thought he had discovered, to desire figured Oedipally, but to the instancing of a subject erected across a vacancy in knowing *tout court* (p. 199). If Platonism

more generally instituted a “care for [and towards] death” in the service of a travelling soul that endures, Oedipus at Colonus, proffers death, not as an occurrence *harmonised* with divine forces, but contracted about its own finality. The urban transpective legacy builds on a precarious continuity without a commonly shared, perennial knowing and effected via an individualist, revelatory initiation. Collectively centred nowhere (in other words, without sacral hearth), but cast into serial transmission, the urban floats an everyday commonality across a certain unknowing. As this chapter will explore, modernity as a post-traditional communality, finds its solidarity in a heterological knowing that accumulates disjunctively, a disjunction that cuts through the ontic and into the ontological. If Hestia centred all sacred placement, Oedipus’ transpective posture, consistent with an a-signifying semiotic, is that centre’s loss and a longing for it directed towards ameliorating abridgement.

This chapter starts by exploring the complex commencement of modernity as it pertains to what Goux termed the “Oedipean or Cartesian epoch” – that period orientated by autodidactic knowing and preparatory of a third positioning of subjectivity (p. 196). In particular it attends to what can be understood as a bi-origination in modernity, one decisively orientating the experiencing subject relative to knowledge and death. The subject emerging with modernity bears both a residual, humanist optimism and marks of division and radical upheaval. As Certeau has written, in a scriptural economy the blank page similarly intensifies a “labor of division” exercised against the world and lived time; like double seeing, it entails the production of a position askance to temporal continuity (1988b, p. 14). Standing outside such continuity is commensurate with standing differently, for the page invariably condenses “the decision to become different or no longer to be such as one had been up to that time (p. 4). Instead, interpretation is made to fill an interrupted present, assigning to it a power of oversight and renewal over the past, though not, as Certeau asserted, without selecting against what does not fit its model of intelligibility, and not without being plagued, to varying degrees, by the return of what selection cuts out (p. 4). Moreover, historiography is uniquely conditioning by one return in particular: in so far as the West establishes its collectives, no less than individuals, via an exclusionary logic (marking itself off from the other that it measures), it is death that is both its aversive motor and its *modus operandi*:

Death obsesses the West. In this respect, the discourse of the human sciences is pathological: a discourse of *pathos* – misfortune and passionate action – in a confrontation with this death that our society can no longer conceive of as a way of living one’s life.” (p. 5; emphasis in original)

Built into a writing/reading subject is both an awareness of personal finitude and that finitude’s extension via the page. Yet one writes by withdrawing from the world in a “labor of death and a labor against death” (p. 5). Organising “both absence and production”

simultaneously, historiography crosses over into modernity by mobilising writing itself as “a conquering will” (pp. 6-7). Like the newly emboldened sixteenth century princes released from an earlier “providential time” and free to “make history” in their own name, the wielders of written discourse – the bureaucratic bourgeoisie as a growing army of literates – were not without their own political ambition (1988, pp. 5–10).

## 2. *Knowing Death*

As suggested previously, it was in images and the figural more generally that European modernity invested a certain errant knowing freed from providential time and a medieval binding of script and image. If the page was one way of writing the self as self-agency, a parallel concern with the when and where of existence in the early modern period (sixteenth century) is indicative, as Tom Conley has identified, with a burgeoning production of cartographic literatures. Defining this literature was an unprecedented “theatricalization of the self” that intersected personal autonomy and locality-awareness via “both textual and gridded representations of reality” – i.e. in maps, topographical views, and printed discourses (1996, p. 2). In this context, measuring and representing territory (whether graphically or through language) was inseparable from self-engenderment because encounters with uncharted place presupposed subjects capable of ordering a world through individual purview: as Conley put it, the “self is visible only when it achieves the effect of totality of having engineered a world through it’s own labours” (pp. 5–6). Accordingly, the self effects a “signature” of agency for which it is paradoxically both “cause and effect” (p. 6). The aligning of geography and discourse at the rise of print culture in early modernity was indicative for Conley of incipient, national subjects in whom history and “psychogenesis” (or subject formation) was imbricated around a “narcissistic illusion” aligning the making of worlds with self-development (pp. 6–7).

Typical in these literatures was a “topographer” – someone who, in attending to locality and the contingent facets composing it, was able to draw from them what can be understood as a broader cognitive orientation (Conley 2007, pp. 8–9). Hence, a topographer is someone “who tries to link the contradictions found in a particular place [...] to a greater ‘geography’ or a world map”, indeed the cartographer asks how, as an individual witness, “local items of the present and the here-and-now can be made to express and to designate the absent, unrepresentable totality” (2007, pp. 19 & 218, note 33). This “dyad of a local-and-global consciousness”, as Conley termed it, continues a cartographic tradition, which, at its wellspring, aimed to “tie humans at a local level to a cosmographic picture” (p. 218, note 33). As such, charted in early modernity were a series of “unlinked islands” composing a veritable archipelago of “image-facts” floating more or less amicably amidst an expanse of

uncertainty. What were called “*isolario*” or “island-book[s]” in the sixteenth century coincided “with a moment when, in the development of oceanic travel, the expansion of the borders of the world led cartographers to compose atlases in which new information could ‘float’ aside inherited knowledge” (pp. 8–9, note 12, p. 216). Similarly, in early cartographic practices, the realm beyond knowledge was textually nominated as a “*terrae incognitae*”, and in the very act of naming, as Conley asserted, the menacing unknown finds a *de facto* orientation.

These cognitive practices testify to a still essentially centred world. For Conley this type of relation with the unknown is inseparable from a more or less certain tie to origination, for which the human navel is a corporeally localised marker (1996, p. 9). Hence the navel is a kind of covered “blind alley”, “a one-eyed hole”, and an “anti-abyss”, as well as a mound-hollow pinpointing maternal loss, and, allegorically, a site showing where roots were lifted and from where “mother earth” has slipped away (p. 9). Conley similarly noted the navel’s decisive role in providing subjects with “a sense of time and place”, precisely because the navel organises the unknown by pinpointing origination and a time-before-knowing (p. 10). As a mark decisively determining temporal whereabouts – all that is before and after – the navel induces a cardinalization for the subject that holds open, at least at the level of fantasy, a return to, or recovery of, the womb. Like the “reassuring rectitude of the map”, as Conley said, the navel portends mastery and a “revery of totalization” [...] idealization and conquest” (p. 10). Such reverie aligns a cartographic impulse with the engenderment of the subject for whom the unknown furnished a site for appropriating, in the labour of topographic orientation, a generative maternal prerogative: hence, “the subject desires to give birth to himself or herself without the intermediary of the parents [...]” (pp. 10–11). This celibate action takes the unknown as a fertile, engendering field that “defies fixed meaning”, and like the unconscious, can be diagrammed as a “great circle” as Conley proposed, the celibate action of the topographer, in turn, can be imagined as “a smaller circle” within that operates as an interceding agent seeking, through its mobility and cunning, to manage the larger circumference (p. 11). Still short of complete deprojection typifying a transpective orientation, in the sixteenth century the ‘unknown’ was a fusion of monsters, cryptophoric occurrences, indeterminate territory, no less than fear and anxiety, and as Conley emphasised, *terrae incognitae* is a category readily fusing fluidity of meaning with mental perturbation, particularly in the context of cartography. At the limits of certainty, maps routinely relied on a richly illustrated field of “cannibalism, vivisection, and death”, and if death particularly was a key motif in Renaissance narratives, character-building retained an initiatory vestige that entailed self-completion by means of a passage “into the realm of death and back again” (p. 11). As a venue for testing, and rebirth, death

in Renaissance iconography was “averred to be an erotic or a mystical event”, one that potentiated the merging of knowledge and experience (p. 11).

Giorgio Agamben’s consideration of what he called the “destruction of experience” in modernity offers a useful explication of this complex entanglement of knowledge, experience, and death. In contradistinction to a *pathos* in modernity where knowledge and experience were thought capable of converging this side of death, in the Renaissance such continuity was deemed possible only via a *paideutic* passage that crossed into, and was therefore entailed being marked by, a transcendence beyond. As Agamben argued, since antiquity “the subject of experience” (the experienter of everyday life) had been the bearer of a routinely shared “common sense”, while “the subject of science” (the person in whom a higher knowledge avails itself) drew on an intelligence or *nōus* otherwise veiled from routine experience (1993, p. 18). Consistent with traditional initiatory stricture, the human path to knowledge was characterised as a “*páthei máthos*”, something acquired or “learned only through and after suffering”, and which precluded the foresight or certainty of predictive knowledge (p. 19). For example, at the threshold with modernity, Renaissance writer Michel de Montaigne in “On Practice”, could still recommend “breaking ourselves in for death [by...] making an assay of it” (2003, p. 417) precisely because “to philosophize is to learn to die” (and cited in Conley 2011, p. 6). Writing as a technique for miming death’s approach in fact has origin in late classical traditions where philosophers ranging from Pliny to the Stoic Epictetus routinely sought out knowledge at the very limits of mortality: Epictetus, for example, longed for “death [to] take [him] while [...] thinking, writing and reading” (cited in Foucault 2005, p. 359). Standing at the juncture between science of antiquity and its remaking in modernity, Agamben recognised in Montaigne a will to run experience all the way up to death in pursuit of a vantage point on definitive knowledge; as such, wisdom arrives by traversing the path of ageing and through the cost of a certain suffering and humility (1993, pp. 18-19).

On the other hand, the new sciences tolerated no such deferment of knowledge, seeking a direct correlation between experience and knowing by funnelling experience into experimental method and validating it as the sole pathway to, and measure of, knowledge (p. 19). For both Francis Bacon and Descartes experience joins with knowledge on the basis of a serial accumulation as indicated by the inordinate use of metaphors centred on paths and journeying. Yet these appeals to passage are of a restricted type, for as Agamben paraphrased Bacon, “mere experience” – associated with chance and wandering (whether “groping” or being lost in the “forest” or the “maze”) – must be corrected by the “right road”,

the direct line, the expedient, and true course.<sup>1</sup> In short, experience is valued only to the extent that it could be subjected to “scientific verification” with its “sensory impressions” converted to “qualitative determinations” and rendered amenable to methods of prediction and consistency (p. 17). Experience, as the locus of inquiry, finds itself cast both “as far as possible outside the individual” and into the domain of “instruments and numbers” (pp. 17–19). If passage and pathways are nevertheless invoked in these early discourses on scientific method, any appeal to experience, rich in contact effects and local proximities is eschewed. The route to truth is idealised as a direct journey whose complexity could be reduced to a “step by step” achievement of modest certainty that progressively builds “a continuous and uninterrupted movement of thought” (Descartes, 2007a, pp. 15–20). Replacing the humanist quest for an encounter with truth at the threshold of life, knowledge is summonsed back from behind the veil of death to become something tangibly possessed and purged of mystical associations. At stake in this shift is a political differentiation from a societal order that constructed truth as a measure of the cosmos, to one seeking an instrumental knowledge apposite to a world shorn of theological certainty and readied for mercantile hegemony.

#### 4. “Classical Self” | “Modern Subject”

Foucault named this shift in knowing the “Cartesian moment”:

[...] the history of truth begins when knowledge itself and knowledge alone gives access to the truth. That is to say, it is when the philosopher (or the scientist, or simply someone who seeks the truth) can recognise the truth and have access to it in himself and solely through his activity of knowing, without anything being demanded of him and without him having to change or alter his being as subject. (2005, p. 17)

Defined by an ego-centred perspectival, such a subject differs from its pre-modern counterpart by virtue of its release from an initiatory precondition to truth. Eschewing the old Christian pastoral practices of self-renunciation, asceticism, and the care of souls guided by ecclesiastical institutions, the Cartesian subject seemingly claiming complete autonomy, in fact mirrored a pioneering independence tested by breakaway religious groups in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance. By asserting the right of individuals to chart their own path to salvation, Foucault recognised in such groups a reassertion of classical self-relations, particularly a Stoic self-relation (1997, pp. 277–279). The result was a new type of figure arising with Renaissance statecraft, one whose concern with an “aesthetics of existence” produced, as Foucault described, a “hero [who is...] his own work of art” (p. 278). Consistent with what the Greek’s called *epimeleia heautou* – a concern and care of the self –

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<sup>1</sup> Descartes offered an extension of Bacon’s analogy with darkened paths, way-finding, and rules for deducing knowledge. See 2007a, p. 16.



the new aesthetics of existent meant “making one’s life into an object for a sort of knowledge”, not in the Christian sense of a betterment in preparation for an afterlife, but as culminating fulfilment in this one (pp. 269–271). If for Foucault this attendance to the self reappears in the Renaissance, it in fact anticipates the dandyism practiced in nineteenth century urban locales (p. 271). No less, walking also demonstrates divergences between classical and Christian-pastoral enactments of the self. For instance, he compared the walking exercises of Stoic philosopher Epictetus (55–135 AD) with a seventeenth century Christian seminarist: in Epictetus’ case observing and questioning sights in the street occasion opportunities to master responses and practice sovereignty over everything that might come the walker’s way; alternatively for the seminarist, the walk reveals a diminution in the face of all things and an overarching “dependence vis-à-vis God” (pp. 276–277). On one side a self-governance presumes self-malleability, and on the other, an uncertainty about the nature of one’s inner constituency, fear of ungodliness and an emphasis on self-purity and corporeal integrity prevail (p. 270 & 274). For the classical self “practices of knowledge” accord with the edict, “no access to truth without asceticism” (pp. 278–279). Conversely, the modern subject arises through “subjectivation” that calls for ceaseless self-knowledge, precisely because an indeterminate core defines its constitution. For Descartes, “any subject” can “accede to truth” on an obvious, evidential basis (p. 279). The resulting “nonascetic subject of knowledge”, divested of ethical strictures and the requirement to navigate and overcome worldly experience to arrive at ‘truth’, undertakes a radical reduction of the world in a quest for a resilient, constant subjective core resistant to ascetic becoming precisely because the knowing self can never completely extricate itself from uncertainty or doubt (p. 279). For instance, in *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Descartes described undertaking, at the levels of cognition and experience, a “demoli[tion of] everything completely and start[ing] again right from the foundations”, advising those willing to follow him, “to withdraw their minds from the senses as well as from all prejudices” (1991, p. 12 & 8). Nevertheless, Foucault recognised in this conscious retraction a meditative legacy consistent with those of earlier techniques of the self. However, in Descartes case, a disengagement with shared social and perceptual worlds demanded a plumbing of the veracity of the self’s cognitive core.<sup>2</sup> At stake in the diminution of any sensory contribution to knowledge was a reduction solely to the “intellectual foundations of certainty” (Foucault, 1998, p. 394).

Agamben recognised a similar reduction - the “quasi-mystical reduction of all psychic content except the pure act of thought” (1993, p. 22). For him, the *cogito*, or “thinking substance” was a reaction to the remaking in the Renaissance of earlier spiritual beliefs

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<sup>2</sup> “So today I have expressly rid my mind of all worries and arranged for myself a clear stretch of free time. I am here quite alone, and at last, I will devote myself sincerely and without reservation to the general demolition of my opinions” (Descartes 2007b, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 18).

arising with Neoplatonic Hermeticism and mysticism of late antiquity. The Renaissance's own scientific renovation had sought an overcoming of the classical antipathy between experience and knowledge by adapting earlier mystic traditions for which astrology and alchemy (each able to unite heavenly and earthly, divine and individual agency) were key (p. 20). If in classical thought the intersection of *poiema* (act), *páthēma* (suffering), and *máthēma* (knowledge) delivered pure intelligence only beyond death, in the Neoplatonic mysticism of late Antiquity, the transmutation of substances and communication between divided realms delivered an "emanationist system in which a continuous hierarchy of intelligences, angels, demons and souls [...] communicated in a 'Great Chain' which begins and ends with the One" (p. 20). This conception made imaginable a graded crossover in knowledge overriding the Aristotelian division between *noūs* [pure cosmic intellect] and *psychē* [of distinct living entities], just as it suggested a way of reconciling the Platonic distinction between the One and the many (p. 20). To the extent that this emanationist system called on spirits as a universal mediating agent, an agent lying somewhere between the corporeal and the incorporeal as Agamben noted, the new sciences saw in the notion of 'rarefied thought' a version of absolute knowledge available to human purview (p. 21). Yet to overcome the "rationalism/irrationalism opposition" inherent in mysticism and with it a fusing of experience and knowledge as an unutterable or inexpressible ecstasy, *máthēma* had to be released from *páthēma* and rendered unexceptionally expressible (p. 22). Knowledge was presumed to subsist everywhere but as prescient to the thought that would come to grasp it (p. 22). In this grasping did the otherwise ethereal thinking subject reveal itself as a substance, a "new metaphysical subject" drawn from "the soul of Christian psychology" and "the *noūs* of Greek metaphysics", as Agamben described (p. 23).

What counts as experience then for the rarified, substance-self? For Agamben, what experience gives the classical self is an anticipation of death as that totality that rounds off a life in its passage to wisdom (p. 23). Foucault offered a similar summation: "old age means wisdom [...] acquired experience", and as Seneca showed, striving towards old age makes a "dynamic unity" of life, in which death, as its culminating moment, ought to be realized as a "perfect satiety of ourselves" (2005, pp. 108–111). Unlike the Christian remaking of "salvation" as an "event" "effectuat[ing] a crossing over [from...] mortality to immortality", the classical understanding retains salvation on the side of life as the complete realization and perfecting of the self (pp. 181–185). In Stoic philosophy particularly, the practice of self-memorialization gives a "cross-section view" revealing the belated truth of the life lived (p. 480). Moreover, for both Seneca and Epictetus "life must be recognized, thought, lived, and practiced as a constant test" (p. 437). Even adversity and suffering can be reconceived as a good with alchemical potential. Moreover this "test attitude" runs the full span of classical culture from the "great [...] myths" (where Prometheus was pivotal) to tragedy with

Foucault referencing “Oedipus the King and Oedipus at Colonus” as examples (p. 444). Both tragedies by Sophocles together can be thought to play out the idea of a summative memorialisation, or rethinking of the whole, capable of seeing past, or giving perspective to, life as a cumulative domain of suffering. Taken on its own, *Oedipus Tyrannus* is, as Deleuze (1978) noted, an atypical tragedy in which the fallen hero is not awarded death, but is rather cast out, wandering and forsaken, into an existence without alleviation and without end. Conversely, *Oedipus at Colonus* provides exactly this missing punctuation and a summation to the ordeals of life as Foucault similarly noted (2004, p. 444). This co-optation sets in play an ethical, as opposed to a political, *parrhēsia* that also seeds a potential disenfranchisement of the self from the *polis*. In the classical period, this rupture is ameliorated in a care of the self inseparable from a cultivation of the *polis*, which is recalibrated in late antiquity as a self-care indexed to personal salvation and a relation towards death rather than the city *per se* – something anticipated and programmed by the metaphysical walk. On the other hand, modernity sees a return to the city and the experience it might potentiate, a return motivated by the will to close experience with knowledge. Yet contrary to wisdom arrived at in death, the subject of modernity knows no maturity and no conclusion in knowing as Agamben said (1993, p. 23). Instead, experience as knowing is undergone in the absence of any culminating closure (aged wisdom) with the result that knowledge, rendered infinite, can only be possessed in the form of a perpetual and infantile seeking (p.23). A possessive will to know swamps the self-city-world. The cutting off of death as a perquisite to the completion of knowledge corresponds with what Certeau recognized as a labour against death, just as a closing off of the classical self was a labour of death enacted in the name of a post-traditional epistemology. The transposition from self-care to a subjectivation in which the self embarks on an interminable quest for self-knowledge opens towards the *pathos* of aspective. For Goux it is the Oedipus of Thebes (and not the Oedipus of Colonus enacted in antiquity and to some extent revived in the Renaissance) that finds its first full revival historically in Descartes (1993, p. 159).

## 5. *Adventures in Knowing*

Nevertheless, this pursuit is not short of compensatory uses for the new scientific knowledge:

Through this philosophy we could [...] make ourselves, as it were, the lords and masters of nature. This is desirable not only for the invention of innumerable devices which would facilitate our enjoyment of the fruits of the earth and all goods we find there, but also, and most importantly, for the maintenance of health, which is undoubtedly the chief good and the foundation of all the other goods in this life” (Descartes 2007a, *Discourse on the Method*, 62).

Portended here is a shift from an ethical to a managerial mentality attuned to the longevity and productivity of populations. An increasingly instrumental use of knowledge signals a changeover from forms of sovereign rule decreeing life's end to a regulative form of governance mandating life in accordance with a "gradual disqualification of death" as a site answerable to power (Foucault, 2003, p. 247). Increasingly "hidden away", death becomes "the most private thing", the point at which the "individual escapes all power" and is marker of the transition from sovereign power to bourgeois mediation (p. 248). If Descartes is critical to this transition, it is because, as Antonio Negri has argued, he is the bearer of a philosophy apposite to a broader seventeenth century political transformation, one resting on a "class self-identification" that was broadly mercantile and entrepreneurial and which borrowed from the "cosmopolitan humanism" arising with the Italian city states (2007, p. 95). As Negri argued, despite Descartes' outright rejection of a *conceptual framework* inherited from Renaissance humanism, his texts overtly rely on *humanist metaphors*, centred on the long rehearsed themes of "'path', 'house' and 'machine'" (p.33), but also themes covertly borrowed from Renaissance utopian reworking of urban space.<sup>3</sup> For Negri, this is in fact the reason for the persistence of humanist metaphors in Descartes; they signal the presence of a proto-bourgeois imagination (aligned politically if not epistemologically with humanism) which saw itself capable, on one hand, of mediating between the rising Absolutist monarchical power consequent to the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), and in the other, a resulting disenfranchised and dispossessed multitude left to circulate outside the older vertical feudal ties of caste and land. In this context of a societal crisis, with the new entrepreneurial class 'threatened' top and bottom, Descartes' positing of scientific Reason aligns historically with a quest to establish a "reasonable political order", one capable of compromising both with State power while recruiting to its ranks, an artisan and labouring multitude.

Two factors identified by Negri are particularly significant: one centring on the role of memory, the other on the significance of solitariness. To the extent that humanism still sought a model for reason capable of being harmonised with the cosmic order, by the seventeenth century no such optimism prevailed, and as Negri wrote, in a seemingly shattered world, "Universal discontinuity" reigned and truth, rather than being cosmologically verifiable, had become a matter of power, "divine power" (p. 107). Faced with the need to ground knowledge otherwise alienated between defunct ideals and the vicissitudes of political power, Descartes framed the problem as a correction of "a great imbalance between memory and spirit" (cited in Negri 2007, p. 104). On one hand,

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<sup>3</sup> As Descartes wrote: "Again ancient cities which have gradually grown from mere villages into large towns are usually ill-proportioned, compared with those orderly towns which planners lay out as they fancy on level ground [and in the case of the former...] you would say it is chance, rather than the will of men using reason, that placed them so" (2007a, *Discourse on the Method*, 11-13).

memory of the Renaissance is associated with, as Negri said, “the habit of a lived experience, the bodily sign of participation in the humanist adventure”, something Descartes called a “corporeal memory”; on the other, an “intellectual memory”, dependent only on the soul and free of any attachment to “local memory” makes “separation” its defining gesture:

In separating itself, the *bona mens* [the good mind] demands a global elucidation of its own separation. Wisdom can no longer be founded on a secure possession of the world, on an immediate relation to the world. Only the demand to *abducere mentem a sensibus* (‘withdraw their minds from their senses’) makes possible the new philosophical proposal of a path towards wisdom. (p. 105)

This “critique of memory”, consistent with the positing of spirit or pure thought, viewed the world through what Negri called a “metaphysics of separation” and in renouncing the world’s continuity through a collectively grounded memory, an ameliorating synthesis was sought via the cognitive labours of a solitary consciousness called on to laboriously re-join it piece by piece (p. 106). Against tradition, the Cartesian metaphysics of separation truncates any possible experience of a living continuity with the past precisely because, as Certeau characterised modernity’s *pathos*, “it has become impossible to believe in this presence of the dead” (1988b, p. 5). The modern subject, invested only in what can be rendered legibly certain, nevertheless cohabitates with what cannot be assimilated, but can be managed, partitioned, and displaced. Hence “two ‘heterologies’ (discourses on the other)” are instrumental in a metaphysics of separation – “the body of knowledge that utters a discourse and the mute body that nourishes it” (p. 3).

Moreover, the heterological relation finds a particular poignancy in the demarcation Agamben makes between “the quest” and “the adventure”. As he wrote, in the medieval Christian world, the quest is a journey or undertaking to extract from the experience of fallen existence and its travails an abstract knowledge of the good. Knowable only “*per scientiam*” – that is, by way of an external authoritative promise (such as scripture) – the quest “expresses the impossibility of uniting science and experience in a single subject” (Agamben 1993, p. 28). As such the life journey always amounts to a journey without certain route or achievable end. In other words, the life journey is “an *aporia*, literally [...] the absence of a road (a-poria)” (p. 29). On the other hand, given that “scientific experiment is [...] the construction of a sure road (of a *methodos*, a path) to knowledge” that deputises exclusively for determinate ends and efficacious routes, a scientific outlook manifestly renounces the logic of the quest (pp. 28–29). That the subject of science, the *cogito*, undergoes experience of knowledge neither by ultimately possessing it in finality nor by being transformed by it, means that the quest - as a journey predicated precisely on a continual self-testing according to the vicissitudes of life’s twists and turns - loses its relevancy in modernity. Where the quest might promise to ultimately suture an essential rupture in human knowing, a knowing

that would at its end be “exotic and extraordinary” in itself, in the context of modernity’s penchant for direct passage, “the adventure”, as Agamben said, comes to take its place, providing the “final refuge of experience”, but one whose “road goes [immediately] by way of the extraordinary and the exotic” in the here and now (p. 29). Reading between Agamben and Certeau then, the adventure, by brushing up against the extraordinary and the exotic, in fact precisely embodies the heterological mechanism. Concomitantly, the Cartesian sure road mirrors such an adventure where a “*methodos*” in discourse draws its certainty from the mute, astonishing body of the Other – “the Indian, the past, the people, the mad, the child, the Third World”, as well as the body, the woman, and the city, as Certeau said (1988b, p. 3). Undoubtedly, this other provides a residual domain for assigning, transmitting, and excising what in the realm of experience the *cogito* cannot assimilate or circumscribe for fear of compromising its psychological unity and its claim of an immediately intellectual foundation in certainty.

## 6. Looking Down on Pavements

Observing walkers in modernity then can be thought to partake of an ‘adventure’ in knowledge caught in a heterological bind that summons experiences from which a fullness of contact and maturation (in Agamben’s sense) is denied. In the subject of experience emerging with Cartesianism – a position equating to an undergoing without having – can be found a caesura of significance for modernity, one that drives a bipolar affective landscape balanced between melancholic loss and an exclusionary violence. A prodigious history is at stake. This history seeks to manage a bipolarity whose underlying drive is a recovery of unitary ‘experience’ – albeit in different guises and to different ends. In this context, walking offers an ameliorating measure to the vicissitudes of the climb found on any ladder to knowledge. As Foucault noted, “the view of the world from above” – the overview – preoccupies “spiritual experience [as it is] found in Western culture” (2005, p. 283). For to behold the totality of what is at “the summit of the world” (a view commensurate with “the soul on the threshold with life”) is to achieve a “*consortium dei*”, the partnering of a self with absolute knowledge (pp. 283–284). Conversely, if in Descartes the subject’s transcendental relationship with knowledge entailed a pre-emptive capitalisation on an experiential wisdom otherwise consummated with death, the universal applicability of method did what the point view of the summit might otherwise achieve; it imparted to the deceptive and testing mobility of sensate experience a perennial orientation but one applicable in the context of the motile body in its here and now adventuring. Hence Descartes can be thought to swing the ladder of classical experience-knowledge ninety degrees; contrary to the metaphysical walk, wisdom was to be found spread out in extension. In its metaphoric depiction at least, a brisk and direct stroll amidst the

experiences furnished by the world was enough to occasion the conditions necessary for its revelation.

Nevertheless, the Cartesian *cogito* was not without its own appeal to elevation from which to survey the progress or the passage of things from a remove somewhat above the contact fray, as Hubert Damisch has shown. Examining Descartes' deployment of the "stove-heated room" as an arena for contemplation in *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641), Damisch recognised precisely this type of urban proximity predicated on a modestly elevated remove. As private 'refuges' for philosophically rehearsing a "methodical doubt" necessary to the new science – a method seeking certainty and regularity from the world's sensory multiplex – they were also imagined as simple, cellular rooms whose confines condensed the thinking-self as *singularly* removed from the confounding effects of collective, political life and accumulated thought; in short they prophesized for a time apart. In these solitary locales for thought, Damisch saw Descartes renovating an earlier humanist concern with a human vantage point (perspectively centred in urban public place – on the street or in the squares) in favour of the Enlightenment predilection for the bird's-eye view. Certainly, the sparsely appointed environ Descartes deemed necessary to thought in its untutored state was in fact strikingly *centrifugal*, offering a seemingly essential vantage point for deliberating over and planning a remaking of the world in what Negri saw as an early modern "Prometheanism" inherited from a preceding humanism. If for the humanists it was enough to 'encounter' and thereby reframe the world in human terms, for the Modern Age knowledge ambioned a means, a fulcrum, for "possessing" it in total (Negri, 2007, p. 37).

Certainly in staging the famous wax argument Descartes makes an elevated room a pivot point between introspection and doubt; in the play of wax handled in proximity to the stove's heat, he is compelled to imagine walking to a window and seeing *below* what he might presume to be "men crossing the square" but which he conjectured, might really be nothing more than "hats and coats [that...] conceal automatons" (2007b, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, 32). A parallel between the shifting sensory states of the wax and the deceptive appearance of street-walkers underscores a capacity to see through the conventional assumptions and sensory habituations imbedded in visual appearance. At stake in such scrutiny is a distancing mastery that was given exemplary configuration in "a plunging perspective view of something like a 'street'" (Damisch, 2001, p. 5). This "downward view from above" (otherwise enacted corporeally as a "backward and upward" move into an interior) reframes the street – itself "synonymous with the city" and metonymic of a multitudinous populous – as a domain capable of cognitive remaking (p. 5–12). In what can be thought of as a proto-bourgeois interior, a pivot capable of both dividing the world *and* joining it anew was imagined – the private individual *fronting* the multitude,

cognitive agency *probing* mechanical corporeal repetition, the domicile *overseeing* the city, thinking things (*res cogitans*) *pressed into* extended ones (*res extensa*). Indeed as a mediating machine ‘the interior’ in fact mitigates between two types of mind, no less than “two types of cities” as Damisch reiterated – the crooked and the reasonable (p. 7). The enclosed, elevated view, with its plunging perspective, didn’t merely orientate an outlook and a distanced domain of scrutiny, it made imaginable a substantive, private self capable of raising above a cognitive wandering indicative of the multitude. Much as Lyotard argued, its heterological outlook finds in urban others (in fact the urban *tout court* as the embodiment of the figural) an uncertainty that can never quite be dispelled but whose contact gives rise to renewed cognitive agency.

Following Deleuze and Guattari, Damisch recognized in Descartes’ city-sighting and self-scrutiny, a territorial-situational foundation for philosophy. Yet as Deleuze and Guattari further argued, philosophical concepts are not just defined by a territoriality giving rise to them. Rather, concepts answer to “conceptual personae” populating these territories. Pointedly, Descartes’ *cogito* is shadowed by an antecedent figure Deleuze and Guattari term “the idiot”, an obscure, “private thinker” who thinks “with innate forces that everyone possesses on their own account by right” (1994, p. 62). If the ‘idiot’ is antithetical to the “public teacher” (the purveyor of conventional concepts and the insider of public knowledge), the proto-bourgeois interior was a site conceived precisely as a conditioning milieu that tapped into and transformed according to the deductive strictures of reason, what seemed ‘native’ and innate to the ‘street’. In short it models a place, because ‘private’, of privileged idiocy, an idiocy domesticated, and tempered according to a broader politic of bourgeois mediation partitioned from the multitude below and absolute, aristocratic power above. Nevertheless, the bourgeois project ultimately does not settle its accounts in the domicile alone; rather, it feeds back into and renovates the world. Likely interior solitude is a ruse in the Cartesian enterprise for the isolation it extols was but a preparatory step for a broader, centrifugal, political possession of urban, national, and global space. Hence twinned with this depiction of the transitory interiors in *Discourse on the Method* and *Meditations on First Philosophy* is the advice to “not wander”, to “walk as straight as” possible “in one direction”, to not turn from “the right path”, to “arrive somewhere at the end”, to not languish “in the middle”, to not “roam hither and thither”, and to seek “good ground” on which to travel. In other words, the text advises its reader “to cast aside the loose earth and sand so as to come upon rock or clay” – in short, to consider propositions and overcome problems by “suppos[ing] them to hold between lines”, simple lines of geometric traversal whose “unravelling” adeptly lead to truth in, and of, this world (2007a, *Discourse on the Method*, 20–30).



## 7. Monday 5 May, 1631



**Figure 17.** Joan Blaeu (1649). “Map of Amsterdam”. Source: Atlas van Loon, Wikipedia Commons.

Descartes, a wanderer par excellent, was not short of provisional abodes from which to anticipate a bourgeois world-making. In a letter dated 5 May 1631, he wrote to Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac (1597-1654) from Amsterdam extolling the virtues of the then *quasi*-independent city-state within the Dutch Republic:

*In this large town where I live [...] everyone but myself is engaged in trade, and hence is so attentive to his own profit that I could live here all my life without ever being noticed by a soul. I take a walk each day amid the bustle of the crowd with as much freedom and repose as you could obtain in your leafy grooves, and I pay no more attention to the people I meet than I would to the trees in your woods or the animals that browse there. The bustle of the city no more disturbs my daydreams than would the rippling of a stream. Whenever I reflect upon the doings of passersby I get the same sort of pleasure as you get when you watch the peasants tilling your fields, for I can see that all their work serves to enhance the beauty of the place I live in, and to supply all my needs. (2007c, 203-204)*

The irony of imagining a solitary, bucolic reverie in a rapidly growing city precariously sustained by the dyking, damming and piling of marshy land is matched here by invoking

aristocratic niceties<sup>4</sup> in what was amongst the most intense seventeenth century capitals of commercial and informational exchange (Smith 1984, pp. 985, 1004). While Descartes credited to this exemplary Baroque-capitalist city his “becoming so philosophical”, the linking of anonymous walking with daydreaming would seem to elide the real material and societal conditions sustained in such a place. Nevertheless, the invocation of solitude here no less proselytized for an anachronistic ‘retreat’ from seventeenth century urban life than did the stove-heated room; rather, as Negri argued, Descartes can be thought to intricately gauge his social world, crafting in response a metaphysics apposite to the situation he found himself in: “every metaphysics is in some way a political ontology” (2007, p. 317). Yet what might a political ontology of the daydreaming walker amount to? Certainly the mercantile Dutch Republic offered Descartes a very particular type of liberty: it was both a locale for channelling “nostalgia for the world of freedom and revolution of the Renaissance”, but also for renouncing that humanist world-view (p. 100). Significantly, as Negri cited Descartes, the Low Countries gave opportunity for a “solitary existence, ‘*dans le desert*’”, (p. 103). The letter to Balzac rehearses in fact the play of an intellectual memory over a corporeality bound to the immediacy of place. The free time it envisages is an expelling of time in the form of situated memory. Occasioning an indifference to urban others, its city-ness is affirmed on condition that its communality is renounced. Similarly, if Descartes imagines he is “*dans le desert*” (a term redolent with Oedipal implication) while city-bound, in fact the city is rendering a wilderness, an urban place apart from itself. In short, the walk casts the dreamer into solitariness while bestowing on him the power to occupy multiple placing.

In fact the asserting of a dream-state (“my daydreams”) in the letter anticipates (by approximately seven years) the dream state that Descartes utilised to test the limits of methodological doubt in the “First Meditation” of *Meditations on First Philosophy*. If, as Foucault had written, the deliberation on dreams verses waking perception modelled an *askesis* - a rehearsal of thoughts designed to displace the relation of the subject to itself, eliciting detached order out of wayward passions (1998 p. 406) - the daydream invoked in the letter to Balzac clearly suggests, in advance of a solitary space devoted to free time, a comparable meditative scenario. In this earlier version though the walk itself crafts free time (“everyone but myself is engaged in trade”). Edward McGushin, in his reading of Foucault’s consideration of the “First Meditation” has noted that the choice of dreaming as a test for doubt (as opposed to madness) was made on the basis that it exemplified a ready and convincing instance of the deceptive capacity of perception, one that enabled a freeing

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<sup>4</sup> If Descartes’ reverie can be considered aristocratic, it is so in the sense of the landed gentry whose estates emphasised a town-provincial axis closer to the Renaissance urban-world continuum than a Medieval/feudal world of division. This classical vision ultimately draws on models from ancient Greece and Rome, where, as Fernand Braudel noted, “the town was open to its countryside and on terms of equality with it” (1974, p. 402).

from, and discrediting of, actuality: “The doubt must allow the subject to disclose itself in a new way, as something whose very mode of self-disclosure is distinct from the “system” of its “actual” being-in-the-world” (2007, p. 189). The daydream that Descartes floats across the “bustle of the city” is precisely of this order; it pictures a way of being-in, but at the same time, uninitiated into, or touched by, the actual. Moreover, its distancing makes possible an objectifying grasp denied those natively habituated to the city’s rhythms. The true irony concerning the dream in the “First Meditation” was, as Foucault noted, that its deployment of a meditative schema - a schema long associated with transformations of the self by knowledge - served to bring into being “a non-ascetic subject of knowledge”, a subject divided from, and capable of mastering through this division, the object of knowledge (Foucault cited in McGushin, 2007, p. 192). In the letter to Balzac, a Cartesian relation between walking ‘subject’ and the urban ‘object’ is similarly rehearsed. Yet even walking must be freed of its corporeal memory, as Descartes makes clear in an elaboration of his famous “*Cogito ergo sum*” - “I am thinking, therefore I exist” – in the *Principles of Philosophy* (1644):

Hence, *thinking* is to be identified here not merely with understanding, willing, and imaging, but also with sensory awareness. For if I say ‘I am seeing, or I am walking, therefore I exist’, and take this as applying to vision or walking as bodily activities, then the conclusion is not absolutely certain. This is because, as often happens during sleep, it is possible for me to think I am seeing or walking, though my eyes are closed and I am not moving about; such thoughts might even be possible if I had no body at all. But if I take ‘seeing’ or ‘walking’ to apply to the actual sense or awareness of seeing or walking, then the conclusion is quite certain, since it relates to the mind, which alone has the sensation or thought that it is seeing and walking. (2007a, 7, p. 195)

A ‘moment in time’, an arrest in the temporal flow, a meditation on the structure of actuality and its impressing of a particular mode of being-in-the-world - these are the components of the doubting *cogito* in its quest for certainty. Striking in Descartes’ recommendation on the suitability of Amsterdam’s indifferent urbanity to thought is that it puts a moving meditation (walking) before a static one (a stove-heated room). If in the interior, this meditative moment can be recognised, as Renaud Barbaras has said, as “the first attempt at phenomenological reduction”, a reduction involving “an undoing of our immediate link with what appears [indeed...] a conversion negating the existence of the world”, ‘the walk’ as free repose and ‘retreat’ *within* the “bustle of the city” in fact underscores the extent to which movement nevertheless subtends thought. As Gilles Deleuze has said:

From Plato to the post-Kantians, philosophy has defined the movement of thought as a certain kind of passage from the hypothetical to the apodictic. Even the Cartesian movement from doubt to certainty is a variant of the passage. (1994, p. 196)

Where Descartes would have this apodicticity signal that only intellection is capable, as Barbaras said in response to Descartes’ wax argument, of “grasp[ing] the power of infinite

variation that is a body", he cloaked perception in an idealist garb that presumes its objects proffer "a reality that transcends its mode of appearing" (2006, p. 06). As Barbaras argued, in countering a purely empiricist apprehension that takes object/bodies to arise out of an excessive motion constituted by a "pure sensory multiplicity", Descartes surrenders or gives up "incarnation" in preference for the "positing of a pure object", one reliant on an "excess of unity" (2006, p. 06). Deleuze drew attention to a similar process at the level of *cogito* itself. The "*Cogito ergo sum*" - I think therefore I am - implies "two logical values", a determined existence (I think) and an undetermined one (I am) (1994, p. 85). At stake is the reduction of the multiplex variables of lived experience to the pure object of the thinking self. As Deleuze argued, "Descartes could draw his conclusion only by expelling time, by reducing the *Cogito* to an instant and entrusting time to the operation of continuous creation carried out by God" (1994, p. 86). The *cogito*, as an excess of unity, "has no other guarantee than the unity of God himself", and for Deleuze this meant that "the point of view of the 'I'" is less radical than ordinarily supposed, precisely because "God survives as long as the I enjoys a subsistence, a simplicity and an identity which express the entirety of its resemblance to the divine" (1994, p. 86).

Around this question of temporality then, the 'phenomenological reduction' that Descartes exercises over the proto-bourgeois city can be read this way: the wayward movements of the city (everyone following their own self-interest) is visualised aristocratically as a unity of purpose ("the pleasure [...] of peasants tilling"); similarly, the expanse of the city, an extended body that exceeds individual purview, is made graspable through the observance parts indicative of an estate or landed totality held proprietorially. In this sense, the choice of Amsterdam was particularly apt, for it was a city - more so than any up to that time - that imposed a planned, unitary image onto an otherwise cumulative coming into being. Founded, as Lewis Mumford noted, on a mechanistic order, both technically (in terms of its ability to sustain itself against the sea) and geometrically (in terms of the clarity of its layout - a layout, consistent with a Baroque ordering that sought to freeze, in key ways, experiential variety), Amsterdam was, by seventeenth century standards, a city seemingly designed from the foundations up (1984, p. 505), precisely as Descartes called for in the *Discourse on the Method*. Nor can it be coincidence that it was in the mercantile Dutch Republic, that he sought refuge both from monarchical and ecclesiastical censorship, but also the historical turmoil of his age. In summary then:

1. The colliding of early bourgeois urban life with Renaissance reverie concretises the problem of experience in early modernity pulling knowledge back from the (classical) brink of death and allowing it to float as an angel intelligence across the surface of the given. Yet a metaphysics of separation necessary to sustaining this

ethereal grasp in fact ghosts, as Negri found, an early bourgeois, humanist revolution, both “individualist and rationalist”, but corporeally tied to a cosmopolitanism modelled by the “Italian city states” (2007, pp. 94, 207).

Humanist Prometheanism, displaced into the heart of subsequent Baroque tensions, is left to extract idealised images of city space but delivered over to a newly unified social class – the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, the price of this reversal of hegemony was an ‘I’ recognized ontologically and politically only according to separation (p. 208).

2. The solitariness and atomisation Descartes attributes to Amsterdam (in fact implied by Cartesianism) is compensated for by an omnipotent spanning of distance and time. An “I-world relation” validated via an “I-God relation” (as the guarantor of thought’s self-certainty) meant, as Negri put it, that “God is therefore in me and not in the world” (2007, p. 221, 222). Replacing a prior horizon of faith in which a union of experience and truth would prevail outwardly, the metaphysics of separation establishes a new “vertical” orientation – “starting from the I it reaches God” as Negri said (p. 222). Divinity, as the new “horizon of man [and] not of the world” makes the latter “a terrain on which to prove the truth of the I”, precisely because truth is not a thing out there, but is what is tested and risked through the perspective of the experiencer (p. 223). Given the tension between humanity as the “possessor of the truth of the I” and the absence of the truth in the world, truth-testing becomes a profitable adventure seeking to possess a world otherwise abdicated by God (p. 223).
  
3. As Blumenberg noted, against the old Platonic notion that truth naturally and benevolently reveals itself, “Method”, as a means of getting at knowledge, suggests the antithesis; truth must be coerced into view via an application of cognitive light: “Phenomena no longer stand in the light; rather, they are subjected to the lights of an examination from a particular perspective”, for seeing is made conditional on perspective – specifically “the angle from which light falls on the object and the angle from which it is seen” (1993, p. 53). Countering the Jansenists belief that God has abdicated the world as a consequence of humanity’s fall into pride and hubris and in turn left only a darkened, “vertiginous void” anticipating the end of time, Descartes, himself having “climbed up to God”, as Negri put it, makes of this abeyance, not the world’s crossing out, but a criss-crossing of the void by a continuous labour of connection pursuant of “a new world – a separate world, as new as one wishes” (Negri, 2007, p. 263 & 266). For Blumenberg this criss-crossing

rests on a kind of “light-supplying therapy” in which “technological figures” make “world-realization” visibly imaginable (1993, p. 53).

4. Explicate in Descartes’ urban depiction is the foregrounding of bodies, one that accents their non-synchronous ‘reality’. Cartesianism in its preparation for such a reality exercises, as Patočka says, “a dominating knowledge”, one aimed as rendering “reality [itself a...] construct” [...] responsive to “mathematical or generally formal schemata” (1989, p. 286). Contra the Renaissance, it favours formalism and conceptualization over the variability of content, universal postulates over local or immediate contexts, and timeless implications over timely intervention – factors that overvalue intellectualism (see Toulmin 1990, pp. 30-36). Hence the world is beheld autodidactically, rather than through the transmission of prior knowledge and posits a knowing subject “with no master but himself”, a “thinker without master as master thinker” (Goux 1993, p. 160). What does this thinker encounter? Bodies, everywhere a proliferation of bodies extended on the basis of a *partes extra partes* – a state where every position in space is exterior to every other and a thing can only wholly exist in one place at a time. It idealizes orderly and masterable placement. Maurice Merleau-Ponty recognized in this “Operational” or “‘technicized’ thought” a loss of experiential depth and embodied understanding - what he called “thought in contact”. Space reduced to its geometrical qualities and populated only with distinct objects (each “outside one another”) serves to suppress an inherent latency and opacity proper to space in favour of an “absolute positivity of Being” (2007, pp. 363, 366).
  
5. For Nancy, “*partes extra partes*” founds Cartesianism, replacing a world integral with the cosmos – “a world of distributed places given by, and to, the gods” (2008, p. 109). The result is a world beheld without inherent latency. Yet counter-intuitively, such a world answers to a logic of touch.<sup>5</sup> For Descartes thought is a contact event where sense is synonymous with sensing (p. 131). On this basis, as Nancy provoked, *res cogitans* in fact must be bodily - something he credits Descartes with suspecting and increasingly seeking to reconcile by understanding the soul’s union with the body (p. 131). Hence in Descartes an echo of the topographer’s will to encounter is evident, but one that achieves syntheses through cuts and discontinuities. As Nancy wrote of the forced interfacing of divided *cogito*

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<sup>5</sup> Descartes’ *The World* (posthumously published in 1664/1677), offers explicate refutation of an existential void or discontinuity in matter on the basis of a world-plenum, a world of continuous contact achieved by a multitude of discrete bodies maximally compacted, even when in motion (2007a, 19, p. 86). Touch, being “the least deceptive and most certain”, according to Descartes, makes imaginable a world-totally where all motion is indicative of an infinite circulation for which no “prime mover” (in Aristotle’s sense) is necessary (p. 82 & 85).

and body: “I ob-ject my body against myself, as something foreign, something strange, the exteriority to my enunciation (“ego”) from this enunciation it-self” (p. 29; emphasis in original). Hence in the *partes extra partes* what is key is less the “part” *per se* but the “extra” as a relation inducing exteriority (p. 29). Renunciation of a humanist, corporeal memory leaves only a relation of otherness between bodies. Moreover, Cartesian dualism is not merely what makes up the subject, “it is the ‘Subject’”, the ‘I’ being that which bridges and touches (p. 131: emphasis in original). Hence, as he says, the psyche, though extended, “doesn’t know itself as extended” but experiences this “nonknowledge of the self” by the mind being moved (2008, p. 144). The self can’t be other than an amalgam of the motility that engages and engenders it: “if I walk it is a walking soul; if I sleep, a sleeping soul [...] And if I die, the soul becomes death itself” (p. 144). Yet in Descartes’ depiction of walking in Amsterdam it is a soul capable of sensing the body in multiple places that is appealed to. Having slipped beyond the propriety of the *partes extra partes*, the soul rests in pure *extra*, positioned outside placement in the strict sense. Isolation in the mercantile/bourgeois city permits something inadmissible – a humanist world-in-union otherwise rejected in the new science. A metaphorical deployment of “walking”, “wandering”, “passage” and “the right path”, etc. provides a figurative door for propagating thought as equanimous or smoothing contact.

6. Nevertheless, for Merleau-Ponty the “Cartesian equilibrium” means sustaining the self-as-thought against both a mixing with the body implied by vision *and* the need to plumb the *terra incognita* implied by God’s being. While not eliminating the “enigma of vision” (with its here-there discrepancies and latencies in depth), Descartes seconded it in pursuit of a metaphysics that truncates metaphysics itself. The risk otherwise is an image of thought that has no proper place or premises and hence is not capable of finite delimitation; in other words, thinking would be driven by “a mystery of passivity” at its centre (p. 365). Discredited in the Cartesian philosophical and political project for pure understanding was a Renaissance mixture of soul and body. Spared the abyss of transcendent reasons, the bourgeois ordering of space as secular and reasonable, occasioned in the “*Cogito ergo sum*” a determined existence (I think) contrary to a passive, undetermined one (I am). Yet as Deleuze argues, “the death of God does not leave the identity of the [pure] I intact, but installs and interiorises within it an essential dissimilarity” between it and the undetermined ‘I am’. The result is the persistence of an *inconsistent*, “passive self” solely determined by time at the heart of the *cogito* (1994, pp. 86-87). It is this



doubling within the *cogito* that Descartes uncovers, it is precisely this that his equilibrium aims to moderate or cover over.

## 8. *Oedipus or Machines*

Evidenced in Cartesianism then is a bi-origination in modernity, one in which a humanist step is countered (if not eclipsed) by a baroque one that in turns trips into a metaphysics of separation. Leonard Lawler captured this doubling inherent in modernity when he depicted the “upright human body” as always both a thing studied (as body) and an embodied entity that dissolves with contact experience. Hence the walker resides in “the between of survey and fusion, the *mi-lieu*, the *mi-chemin* between essence and fact” (2006, p. 86). While Occidental capitalization (see Fig. 12) stockpiles narratively and epistemologically, seemingly immune to the effects of heterological contact, as Certeau insisted, the colonial-imperial project is in no sense free of transference and fusion:

From there and nowhere else comes the native, that other introduced into the fellowship of the explorers. Through the native, the reality of the elsewhere causes the voyage to drift, it diverts it, anchoring it in a dreamland. (1986, p. 148)

Stalled, capitalization brushes up against what Conley characterised as a mystical “dedifferentiation of the world and the body”, a dissolve that concomitantly brings the supernatural and knowledge dividend into reach (1996, p. 12). Closed off from a learned dividend in death, modernity directs its quest for wisdom and knowledge towards others in the here and now. Contrastive with the mystic union of the sixteenth century that shows up, not as experience exactly, but rather as an “itinerary through space and literature” maintaining a “half-named sense of the unknown”, modernity foregrounds the adventure of experience as constitutive of “a clearly articulated relation with the unknown” resolved in an exchangeable form transmissible within a burgeoning print capitalism (p. 3). Where mythical congress delivers a marked or initiatory testament – “usually a scar left on the body of the figure narrating the event” - modernity less marks bodies than it testifies to the strictures of circulating with, and as, commodities (p. 12). Modernity restructures the alchemical transformation of the unknown into knowledge according to a double logic: it drives towards “dedifferentiated from the other” to better grasp what fascinates because incomprehensible; yet it also discredits such dedifferentiation by casting it as text geared towards gain (p. 12). At stake in this double logic is, as Conley saw, a substitution of the topographer by the geographer, for in the sixteenth century the eye “wanders about and literally touches a world of unforeseen expanse” in an “errant” looking consistent with a “precolonial moment of the gaze” – a gaze that still marvels at, and is enmeshed with, the unknown (2011, p. 2). Borrowing Francesco Colonna’s image of the snail as exemplifying a



type of groping engagement without recourse to any anticipatory overview, Conley credits to the topographer a “haptic eye” tracing the edges and outline of things. Contrastingly the geographer of early modernity marshals a plethora of names, boundaries and destinations in a manner prejudicial to an incomplete wandering or surrender to wonder. Nevertheless, to the extent that modernity builds cumulatively on these two types or moments in the quest for a bourgeois civil domain and basis for hegemony in knowledge, mystic dedifferentiation of world and body can be thought to not only precede, but be a prerequisite for, an observing consciousness or substantive ‘I’.

In thinking this genesis of the self, Conley reviewed Montaigne’s depiction of a recovery from unconsciousness resulting from a fall from a horse – a recovery likened to a re-birth or return from death – in the essay “On Practice”. The essay is notable for its consideration of a kind of anatomy of the soul returning to itself having roamed close to death (Conley 2011, p. 6-8; Montaigne 2003, p. 424). Typical of a topographer’s descriptive agenda, the account vacillates between “subjectivation and objectification”, between a self that is known and othered (Conley 2011, p. 07). Necessarily “*sortir en place*” (out of place), the result is a portrait condensing “two sites in one” precisely because it calls on interior states and the capturing of those states in words garnered for public reception (p. 8). In Montaigne’s depiction unconsciousness (as a facsimile of death) unveils what normative consciousness obscures, a body dissembled from its soul and issuing “passive movements” and responses “without [cognisant...] leave” (2003, p. 422). Indeed, Montaigne writes the return to consciousness as a detaching of the ego from its dissolve in habitual actions and grammatical consistencies belonging to a “multilocal” self broken up within temporality itself (Conley 2011, p. 8). Conversely, Descartes has no need of an event miming death to assert the partition of a thinking substance from a corporeal one. Cartesian self-observation accentuates, if not death, then a truncation of time, a rarefaction and sparsity apposite to angle intelligences. Yet an echo of the topographer’s cunning lingers in the Cartesian enterprise, particularly in Descartes himself who, as Patočka asserted, is less Cartesian than he is routinely credited with being (1989, p. 36). The step-by-step method typifying mechanist philosophy borrows the anatomist’s commitment to an incremental reconstruction aiming to capture a lived whole.

For Dennis Des Chene, Descartes undertakes an exemplary unpacking of pre-existent, divine machinery by an array of explanatory mechanisms given through diagrams and texts (2001, p. 72). Deductive in nature, this task entailed the production of workings explanations capable of seducing readers. Hence, Descartes can be recognised as belonging in part to a tradition of travelling “purveyor[s] of marvels” who exhibited their inventions to sceptical audiences, cajoling them into belief through amazement and wonder

via a seeming simplicity (p. 73). Like the supplanting of crooked and wandering routes with straight ones giving direct destination, the task was to render explanatory mechanisms self-evident animations of inevitable truth (p. 75). The reinstating of an operational continuity carrying the eye within and across diagrammatic delineations aimed to bind the separation of extended and thinking things. The problematic nature of the body/soul union is decisive in this regard. Contrary to an Aristotelian view that makes the conjoining of matter and form, or body and soul, the precondition for “complete substances”, in Descartes, as Des Chene put it, “no mode of thought is a mode of extension”. Hence, the automatism of extended things has no reliance on the soul for its engenderment, animation or cessation (2001, p. 140). The body bears life’s vital functions as so many incremental machine parts operating outside of any “hierarchy of being” and leaves the corporeal machinery functioning on its own non-consciously (Deleule 1992, p. 212). Bestowed a living machinery, the unruly, desirous capacities of bodies were overruled in favour of a model recognising only efficacious function and productive yield: in other words, the body was made “an imaginary object” capable of being opened up and capitalised on as known (p. 204). Nevertheless, the joining of bodies and souls in Descartes’ world appeared as a divine caprice otherwise “opaque to human understanding” (Des Chene 2001, p. 141). Death truncates even this provisionality, setting the *res extensa* apart from the *res cogitans*. Given the plethora of organic parts making up bodies and, more problematically, the continual change evident in bodies over time, only when bodies are joined with a soul is a harmonious union induced. In other words, the soul engineers a miraculous “transubstantiation”, not of the *res extensa per se*, but of the relational union bringing “bits of bodies” into a concert that counters the “Hydra” or monstrous accumulation of parts otherwise potentiated in organic life (pp. 144–145 & p. 151). If the latter potentiates a dysfunction ultimately leading to death, as Des Chene said, “God imitates, it would seem, a normal healthy human body, not a monster or a body wracked by disease” (p. 157). This presumption of a ‘healthy’ norm as a reasonable operational precondition holding together what otherwise moves and changes without any inevitable commitment to union, nevertheless sets the intellect against the body and casts it into the role of mediator, manager, and symptomatologist of the irregular domain of bodies and their disease field. In the wake of Cartesianism, cities no less than bodies answer to the stricture of the harmonious norm operating metonymically as an image standing in for a complex whole beyond purview (Deleule 1992, p. 208). The ‘urban organism’, as the nineteenth-century hygienists thought the city, holds close to Descartes’ proselytising of an overarching and single consciousness capable of straitening out the crooked streets and speeding up the purposeful passages they facilitate - an Eulerian reform indeed.

## 9. Death | Surface

A *pathos* in modernity, as that which puts death at a distance only to invoke it at every term, opens up questions of *depth* – in other words, spatial and temporal indeterminacy given in and by bodies conceivable as flesh and not as machines. If for Merleau-Ponty the *partes extra partes* equates to a field “without hiding place” (2007, p. 363), the human point of view suggests the contrary, for it ‘stands before’, vertically and frontally, facing up to a lapse in the capacity to survey totally (Lawlor 2006, p. 86). In this sense the human body, caught between survey and fusion, is a “figure standing out from the ground of the visible” and is therefore capable of being itself surveyed. Hence the upright body is also a seeing thing that “resembles the ground of the visible” by calling its field into being and being of that field too (p. 86). Consequently, to the extent that vision, body and thought are never other than found in states of mixture, they testify, not to a consolidated union, but to a blind field lived according to a here-there structure that splits and divides the experiencer as seen and seeing, as felt and feeling. Similarly, if this between survey and fusion defines an inherent doubling in ‘man’ (“*l’homme et ses doubles*” as Lawlor cited Merleau-Ponty, 2006, p. 86), it is a doubling that mirrors the psychical division between fusion and truncation or what Freud, seeking the drives associated with life and death, called *Eros* and *Thanatos*.<sup>6</sup>

A homology runs between the social and the psychical. For Deleuze, Oedipus is bourgeois precisely because the complex bearing his name models an ameliorating sexuality, that covers over preceding destructive, libidinal drives instituting a mending, desexualised phallus. Far from being an aggressor as Freud characterised Oedipal motivations, he is the “pacifying hero”, the familial “peace-maker” (1990, p. 201 & 205). Paralleling Descartes’ proto-bourgeois project, is a psycho-genesis, as Deleuze modified Freud, one aiming to quell “the infernal powers of the depths and the celestial powers of heights”, substituting for this volatile terrain “a third empire”, the domain dedicated entirely to surfaces (p. 201). For an infant traversing the “Oedipal phallic stage”, the surface-effect amounts to a self-image gathering up the erogenous zones and the prior part-objects into a synthetic whole (1990, p. 208). Referencing Melanie Klein’s recognition of a volatile, pre-Oedipal sexuality that battles for influence and satisfactions prior to a reconciled genital organisation, Deleuze recognised in the Oedipal stage a replacement of destructive drives with pacifying ones (p. 200). The mother, as the locus of incursive desires and suffocating affect is constituted anew as a surface capable of being managed and worked amicably:

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<sup>6</sup> Normam O. Brown gives this characterisation: “Eros is the instinct that makes for union, or unification, and Thanatos, the death instinct, is the instinct that makes for separation, or division” (1985, p. 80).

The phallus should not penetrate, but rather, like a plowshare applied to the thin fertile layer of the earth, it should trace a *line at the surface*. This line, emanating from the genital zone, is the line which ties together all the erogenous zones [...] bringing all the partial surfaces together into one and the same surface on the body of the child [while...] re-establish[ing] a surface on the body of the mother herself and bring[ing] about the return of the withdrawn father. (p. 201)

Cartesian Reason, similarly warding off “the monsters of the depth” – sacerdotal, initiatory knowledge but also the mystical underpinning to scientific thought itself – institutes a realm of reasonableness no less reconciled with the “powers on high”, both sovereign and divine (p. 205). The world remade by modernity is “Herculean” in much the same way Deleuze aligned Hercules and Oedipus who both moderated a capricious maternal figure and a withdrawn father - Juno and Zeus in Hercules’ case (p. 205). No less with Oedipus it is a matter of forming “a kingdom of surfaces and [an...] earth to fit his size” (p. 205) through communicational inscription, infrastructural incision, and a cartographical flattening. On the other hand, it is insufficient to say that modernity culminates solely in surface sublimation and desexualisation of an Oedipal type. If the price of renouncing psychical depth-relations is, as Freud postulated, a neurotic deflection of sexual instincts (1999, p. 1957), for Deleuze making the neurotic the singular standard-bearer of a civilising compromise with libidinal impulses via an ego over-identified with the superego, misrepresents the Oedipal adventure (an adventure in fact that carries all the significance Agamben set against the quest). Gravitating toward neither the neurotic pole nor the psychotic one, Deleuze envisaged a way out of the stark familial polarities and the reality-irreality division emphasised in Freud’s diagnostic. The pervert, a trickster amphibiously occupying the reality principle and the excesses of the *id*, opens in the smoothed, restorative Oedipal surface a break or rupture. As Faulkner described Deleuze’s cracked or splintered ego:

[...] half of the pervert’s ego generates an ideal plane of thought, which *disavows* castration; simultaneously, the other half *recognises* the reality of castration; the disavowed half generates a metaphysical surface of thought, and the other half constitutes the actions and passions of the body. (2006, pp. 52-53; emphasis in original)

For Deleuze the ‘pervert’ indicates the interplay of two planes: a “physical surface” of willed actions and a “metaphysical surface” where action appears to be “produced and not willed” as if from a time inconsistent with chronological succession (1990, pp. 207-208). The metaphysical plane or screen, sitting otherwise to reality and its castrating demands, establishes counter-realities, realities indicative of the “mother-image” and “a narcissistic ideal of omnipotence” otherwise commanding “an internal world [composed] from the *id*’s archetypes” (Faulkner 2006, p. 53). Thus framed, the superego ceases to bar the desiring action of the infantile *id*, facilitating instead an opening up of the ego-surface to release what Deleuze referred to as a plethora of phantasms or “impersonal, and pre-individual

singularities" (1990, p. 213). In short, the Oedipal position, mediating between maternal fusion and the surveying/surveillance of the superego, does not achieve its equanimity without also potentiating a certain phantasmatic orientation.

## 10. A Phantasmatic Walk

Descartes offers a glimpse of this phantasmatic bearing in his depiction of walking in Amsterdam, where corporeal and the incorporeal (or imaginary) planes are doubled. The 'I think' as a unifying agent relayed via the page is tasked with eliding their division. Yet the Amsterdam walk proffers less a unified writer than one in whom divergent viewpoints are pointedly cultivated: the walker of busy urban streets and the walker of bucolic, rural estates; the fractured or refused attendance of citizens in the former inducing the sensory murmur of bubbling brooks and the hum of contented, estate-working peasants of the later. Indifferent streets incongruously yield to a communitarian beatitude and narcissistic unity or ideality. No less doubled in this city is *Thanatos* (an exclusionary and temporally agitated drive linked to deep, infernal powers) and *Eros* (a celestial, timeless fusing of place and pleasure indicative of contemplative heights). What *cogito* could span such extremes? On one hand, Descartes proffers an Oedipal type, an ameliorating surface builder and purveyor of a cartographic conscious binding heterologies into a matrix of managed experience. On the other hand he anticipates a phantasmic *cogito*, a dreamer (an "I-dreamer"), not of the nocturnal type, but of reverie where oneiric activity, as Gaston Bachelard has said, permits a slide towards an ir-reality beyond the "reality function", a place where the "non-I" and the self fuse as "my non-I" (1969, p. 13). As such he pulls off the pervert's trick of holding to and eliding reality, of being both corporeally and incorporeally apparent. Approaching what Deleuze called the "dissolving ego", the walker is depicted as the carrier of impossible, monadic worlds. If every monad constitutes a compossible world, they equally presuppose "impossible" ones as so many "variants of the same story", for which Oedipus and the metaphysical walk are source in this case (Deleuze 1990, p. 114). Hence modernity's *homo clausus*, as bearer of a determined world, is ghosted by a plethora of indefinite ones. As Deleuze exemplified, Adam as the prototype of human wandering, and the "first man [...] to live in a garden, to give birth to a woman from himself") equally carries an "objectively indeterminate Adam": "There is thus a 'vague Adam' that is, a vagabond, a nomad, an Adam = x" that bridges divergent worlds, living each differently (p. 114). Hence, the formula the "object = x" stands in for object/persons as classes or types who carry divergent viewpoints (p. 115).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Deleuze adopts and adapts the "object = x" from Kant for whom an "object of representation" is but one sensory manifestation of an object "outside the power of representation" (1998, A103-106). In other words, every experienced object takes its recognisable properties from a transcendental aspect

Descartes for his part intersects the impossible worlds of the urban and the Arcadian. They share a common walker, but in the form of the walker = x, a shifter who spans between divergent space-times, in this case literally aligning the hum of productive enterprise with the murmur of an industrious nature. What emerges is something neither true to the walker's actual perception, nor proper to his actual past, but a "non-existent [...] phantasm" (Faulkner 2006, p. 82). This phantasm amounts to a quasi-urban emanation of an urbanism-outside-itself. It portends what Nancy, referring to a proliferation that gave rise to globalisation, a "bad infinity" disguising deprivation under the guise of a planetary civility. It is as if, as Nancy put it, "the world affected and permeated itself with a death drive that soon would have nothing else to destroy than the world itself" (2007, p. 34). No longer "in front of me" as a "unity of the objective or external order", the world gives itself up to globalisation on the basis of falling "outside representation", which is to say, it becomes a "world without an outside" (2007, pp. 43-44). Descartes' Amsterdam, a global entity in advance of globalisation, is pictured as an anomalous city, a city, in its perfunctory, self-centred commercial drive, outside all the others. Not coincidentally did Descartes pen *The World* from this 'capital' of a quasi-state or republic founded on the monopolisation of world commercial circulation and circumnavigation by the Dutch East India Company. Perverse is the parallel of this amphibian 'place', buoyed by a worldwide, water-born commercial imperative yet achieved by the most tenuous floatation by way of dykes and canals, and the bubbling brooks of the country estate and the *landed* gentry. A bourgeois marriage of convenience between the mercantile and the aristocratic effected by way of reverie, calls up in advance of the fact, the spectre of a world city in a world unable to orientate itself as a world (Nancy 2007, p. 34). What prevails is a within-ness (for there is nowhere else to be) that interminably turns in on itself as something like a "*glomus*", or ball of interminably wound thread (p. 34). Where the urban uncoils as so many Eulerian ways, at the level of the globe, agglomeration imparts a decidedly non-Eulerian setting.

How does the Oedipal walker meet this becoming-unworldly? Descartes' walking self, in soliciting divergent viewpoints in a single consciousness effects a fractured orientation (the object = x) that calls for a harmonious synthesis. The aim is a convergence of heterogeneous series in a resonance whose reassertion of a compossible whole consolidates and consoles the *cogito* (I think). In sympathy with the metaphysical walk, but without recourse to an enduring soul or a cyclic temporality anchoring its self-sameness return, a

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that exceeds the sensory given. As a "formula of recognition", it describes the capacity of object and understanding to synthesise recognition into a consistent reality (Faulkner 2006, p. 19). Deleuze was concerned to shift this transcendental operation from consciousness to pre-conscious syntheses associated with habit and memory as divergent series producing, not recognition and unity, but errant and problematic couplings out of which thought is engendered (1994, p. 103), as the next chapter will develop.

divergent foothold given in a metaphysics of separation ambitions a surface resolution apposite to *Eros* in its here and now converging. But the object = x risks a contrary trajectory: rather than resonance, convergence and the instituting of a compossible world, its composing series may diverge into impossible worlds. Where a metaphysics of separation finds its highest ambition in the pleasure of binding parts, the conjoining of ever-larger units prompted by an urban-commercial proliferation increasingly substitutes dissonance for resonance. The walker = x, troublingly caught between a deviating reality and phantasies of unification, is increasingly lead to confront, contrary to the syntheses of *Eros*, a thanatic, urban body resistive of any unification. Which is to say, the walker less encompasses a world that they centre or enjoin around them, than they embody a divided gait, a walk giving body to an irreconcilable division between corporeal depths and incorporeal surfaces. As Faulker summarises:

Two movements emerge: *Eros* (love) idealizes and unifies by organizing convergent series and by determining the object = x; the death instinct (anger) actualizes and divides; it counter-actualizes the object = x and places the order of events into question. (2006, p. 83)

Thrown out of order, habit and memory no longer induce a substantive consciousness but a broken or dissipating one. Perspective in turn gives way to aspective – a surface fault giving vantage onto a phantasmatic, psychical flipside. Deleuze offered a three part characterisation to this psychical break: the psychotic, in so far as he/she is a “thinker of the [bodily] depths”, pursues a bachelor’s mandate – a solitary return to, or invocation of, intensities at the border of sense; the neurotic or “depressive thinker dreams of lost betrothals”, of the restoration of loves, of longed for returns; while the pervert, as the purveyor of phantasies and the “thinker of surfaces”, is caught up in the “ ‘problem’ of the couple” or a “sort of coupling of thought” (1990, p. 219). If the former two entail something like a return to ‘origins’ in an amelioration of wounds (the first as a reassertion of the *id* over phallic organisation, and the second in pursuit of a maintenance of phallic surface integrity in the form of the ego), the ‘conjugation’ of the later is indexed to the future as a rehashing of all the series of memory and habit in forms irreducible to either. For Deleuze this conjugation is the very basis of thought and in a perversion of the Cartesian ‘I think’, this counter-*cogito* arises in a forced movement responding to the repetitions of a runaway time that neither consolidates or grounds the ego but that evidences everywhere a “dissolved self [and...] a fractured I” (1994, p. 145).

Long before, Socrates no less invoked the walker = x - a single identity walking in innumerable universes of sense. Like Descartes’ own refiguring of the walker = x, he offered an illusionary consistency that masked, in Deleuze’s words, an “interiorised [...] dissimilitude” whose “divergence of points of view [show...] several things or tell several

stories at once" (p. 128). In Descartes' case, he no more successfully asserted an outside of, or an elevated purview over, the city (even if the landed-estate offers a modest rise over its marshy double). Only on the page does the walk achieve a double step binding two places. Testified to in such duplication is what Deleuze calls the "powers of the false", that version of anti-Platonism even Plato didn't fail to recognise. The walkers of modernity, where they rise above forgotten habitual tracks, do so by entering into symbolisation – that is, by entering onto the page – where they no doubt sought to reconcile through descriptive tracts, a trafficking of simulacra of city and self, to better 'think' the disconcerting coupling of *Eros* and *Thanatos*. Walking metamorphosed as textual tract can be thought to rise over the general experiential forgetting of urban place, just as it elevates corporeal passage to an incorporeal event – the thought of walking. Facing repetitions of ever perplexing sort, it gave rise to a clinician's practice forced to read in the *pathos* in modernity a beyond of the pleasure principle, as the following chapter will elaborate.



## CHAPTER 4

### *Impressions of Free Time – Rambling*

Out of this tragic union of the infinite-new and the finite old, there develops then a new individual in that the infinite-new individualises itself in its own appearance by acquiring the appearance of the finite-old.

**Hölderlin**, 1794-1800

It's the time of Oedipus.

**Gilles Deleuze**, 1978

#### 1. *Initiation*

In the previous chapter was tracked the fortunes of a subject of experience arising with the page and facing – one way or another - death. The unitary mechanism of the page, it was said, stood both for and against the city, removed from, but integral to, an observing, ameliorating persona who found place on the basis of a wounding separation and its reparation, albeit a problematized one. It was suggested that such a restoration of agency could be thought of as phantasmatic, which is to say it counter-actualised trauma by mingling the real with a more or less cognizant ideal. Between acts of walking and their inscription on pages the walk – habitually unconsidered – avails itself to phantasies that counter-actualise the 'real'. The positing by Descartes of a divided walker in Amsterdam was said to fit the formula 'the walker = x' - an adaptation of the object = x formulated by Deleuze. Contravening the *partes extra partes*, and echoing the metaphysical walk, such a walker straddled divergent worlds. Masking urban lack (immediate societal contact and recognition), an alternate world of images was drawn down in a phantasmatic coupling. The *real moment* of the walk, to the extent that it can be situated at all amidst written relays, is truly "*atopon* [or] without place", as Deleuze says of Plato's depiction of the "instant" (1990, p. 166). Unlike Plato however, it is not a matter of expunging phantasms or sophisms from the urban scene; for Descartes it was a matter of embracing doubles and compounding variations of the same.

With Goux it was suggested that Descartes' cognitive overflying of corporeal memory returns Oedipus decisively (the "Cartesian turn" as return to the tragic dramatics of hubristic knowledge without corporeal cost). If Freud saw in Oedipus' patricide and subsequent incestuous marriage a universal desire, one that is necessarily overcome and corrected by the threat of castration, he repeats, as Goux said, the anthropocentrising mistake of Oedipus himself by putting a human face to the castration threat, much as Plato wrapped up a chimerical soul in human form (1993, p. 36). Avoided in both cases in fact is "face-to-face confrontation with [what Lacan called] the Thing"; in other words an encounter with, and a transformation by, what is "prehuman, superhuman, inhuman" (p. 36). The Oedipal myth, as irregular variant of the heroic monomyth, is the consecrator of the division between the human and the non-human, though equally that between artifice and nature, the city and the country, the subject and the object, the body and the soul. Moreover, at a culture level – since long before Oedipus was a psychical mechanism it was a narrative depicting royal investiture and social cohesion – the myth idealises nuptial union and the future generative prosperity of a community based on a sacrificial overcoming of a misplaced maternal attachment, itself "deadly" as Goux said, to a procreative, "nonmaternal feminine" (p. 27). If in the monomyth it takes symbolic matricide to achieve romantic union, under Oedipus the spectre of patricide runs desiring relations towards incest (p. 27). Yet in the Freudian rendering of the Oedipal causal sequence what restrains the tragedy is a sublimating of desire achieved by an identification with paternal authority at the level of the superego. For Goux this amounts to a misrecognition of the primary obstacle to the fulfilment of desire. What looked like a universal template for the channelling of desire in fact was a historically contingent formation, one that distorted "masculine desire" relative to mythic peoples. Further, if the avoidance of castration equates to a shunning of initiation, beneath this impulse there is, in Goux's words:

[...] a still more fundamental desire to be initiated, to accept the task imposed, to confront severance (death, the trial of the cutting blade that kills the monster-mother but also, painfully, frees the hero from her) in order to be reborn. (p. 28)

The complex ways in which this impulse is renounced points to a troubled maternal relation, an "involved and atrophied sensitivity to the feminine" as Goux put it, that persistently sets a "monocentred self-consciousness" against phantasmatic versions of the monster-mother (pp. 38-39). A *pathos* in modernity can be thought of as the call of an initiatory impulse derailed. What walker-observers enact in the wake of Cartesianism, it will be argued in this chapter, is the press of a monocentred consciousness against an authoritative, obfuscating real, behind which there are deeper initiatory desires raised by the seductively compound body that is the city. If in Descartes' urban retreat – pursuant of a reasonable civility spared interfering street (mob) contact and (French) monarchical stricture – was paired with idyllic 'nature' as a maternal ideal, the metaphysics of separation in Cartesianism radically amplified the long registered bifurcation between generation and production in the founding of urban place. With

the nature of such places lost both to 'nature' (as remaindered by an eidetic climb aiming to speak on behalf of existential nature *tout court*), and metaphysical/theological certainties, the quest to suture that division saw walkers implicated in a project to recoup or reinvent nature from out of a seemingly abyssal societal state. For this it was necessary to mobilise a liberal citizen/subject, one in whom an initiatory communal joining was both promised and ultimately problematized. Nature itself was valorized as a mediating surface or plane of universal contact.

This can be given a psychical correlate. Deleuze in his reworking of the Freudian Oedipal misadventure notes how the castration threat translates into surface affects. The Oedipal solution to conflicting desires entails a negotiated resolution that papers over the paternal contest. Nevertheless this ameliorating graft - what can be thought of more broadly as a surface politic - is a stopgap measure that doesn't finalise troublous libidinal terrain. What Deleuze referred to as the "metaphysical surface of thought" is the result of the persistence of separation and imparts to things generally a questioning atmosphere for which surveying (in all its senses) is response (1990, p. 222). If sublimation accords with the first phase of the Oedipal resolution and amounts to desexualisation that sets libidinal energy off in other directions, a second phase looks for a compensatory coupling or resexualisation that overcomes a lost erotic fusing. For Deleuze, there is no normative conclusion to Oedipus; it is a mechanism that launches a plethora of phantasms haunting the actualisations of life, setting in play actions, events and ideals as contingent suturing of surface wounds (Williams 2008, p. 191-192). In an amelioration of the surface, it is the management of time that proves to be decisive, as this chapter will show.

## *2. une promenade métaphysique*

Walking strikingly emblematises the paradigmatic tension embodied by the liberal subject, a tension that saw liberty defined, in one direction, as a freedom from external impediment and constraint – what Colebrook calls the "free exchange of self-determining individuals" - and in another, the demand for subjects to demonstrate their own autonomous legislation or "self-representation", a representation inherently troubled by democracy's open or ill-defined societal definition (2005, p. 5). The most obvious consequence of this hiatus between, as Celeste Langan put it, "freedom as sheer mobilization", and an individual entity required to represent its own autonomy, is that the subject is rendered both "abstract" and "without [inherent] properties" (1995, pp. 7, 13). Analogous with the outcast, the cast away, and as Celeste Langan argued, the "vagabond", the person who moves unimpeded by attachment to, or ties emanating from property, was instead compelled to be 'his' own property (1995, p. 33).

Freed from the “feudal form of covenant”, a “new ‘contract’” takes its place, one whose “covenant” is with the self itself (1995, p. 36).

With unimpeded mobility a precondition for the consolidation of the bourgeoisie, as Paul Virilio highlighted, at stake was a public order vested in the total management of all mercantile and social motion:

No more revolts, no more seizures, no more tumults” [...] “Public order will reign if we are careful to distribute our human time and space between the city and the country by a severe regulation of transit; if we are attentive to schedules as well as to alignments and signal systems; if by environmental standardisation the entire city is made transparent, that is, familiar to the policeman’s eye. (1986, p. 18)

Under such conditions, walking, and all else besides, fell within a politics of acutely managed motion: to impede or not satisfactorily submit to this circulatory edict was to render oneself suspect. As Virilio noted, if for Montaigne the dream of liberty amounted to a “freedom to come and go”, what the *bourgeois revolution* delivered in fact was an “obligation to mobility” (p. 30). Similarly for Virilio the nature of the urban shifts across the span of modernity from being “the ‘great immobile machine’” centred on the sovereign, to becoming “integral to, and integrated with”, a territorial State apparatus that redistributed country-wide the siege strategies of old while implementing a new “logistical management of all motion”; in short, “the once-so-coveted city is already no longer *in* the city” (p. 24; emphasis added). At stake was a “fortress motor” variously redefining the urban matrix consistent with an administrative continuum running between “the *polis*, the police [and...] highway surveillance” (pp. 14-15). The “society of the course”, as the inventor of the straight line vector”, readies territory as a surface capable of capitalising on all motion (Virilio 2005, pp. 42 & 44).

If modernity is synonymous with motion, it is also a ‘return’ to democracy. What makes its return modern, as Nancy asserted, is that it is “without any effective principle in civic religion”, and therefore without a grounding “transcendent principle” (2012, pp. 66 & 72). Breaking with all earlier closing limits (“kinship and totemic figures or myths”), democratic sociality contends with an insistent centrifugation:

To cross from the rural community into the *polis* or into the modern megacity is already a step from interiority to exteriority. Exteriority was the problem, or problematic [...] that democracy was called upon to resolve. (p. 67)

Without inherent ground its political operation vacillates between two poles: vested on one hand in governance, security, and the management of social risk; and on the other, it sought validity in a transcending reason – “divine right or reason of State, national or international myth” etc. (p. 62). Yet the idealism of the later – barely able to cover over the “absence of foundations – increasingly faced the “insurrectional moment” with its ambition for a

“revolutionary State” (pp. 63-64). At stake is “liberty of the whole human being within the equality of all human beings”, a principle defining not just a free and unimpeded citizenry, but as Nancy puts it, the very ontological conditionality of “the human being” itself. Exemplifying Rousseau’s social contract, Nancy emphasised that it was not simply a matter of new forms of “body politic”; at stake was a defining of the very community of the human itself, “the humanity of mankind” (p. 60).

Politics in this democratic managing of exteriority is no less “self-surpassing” than the “logocracy” of the *polis* (pp. 60-61). If there is a “*métaphysique*” implicate in democratic modernity Nancy claimed, it lies with the “whole anthropology silently conjured up the moment one mentions ‘society’ or sociality, or sociability, or association” (p. 68). Yet the communality permitted in the absence of substantive partisan bonds admits no interiority of association, but rather something as minimally substantive as a “mutuality of feeling [...] tensed [and...] set in tension, amongst us” (pp. 68-72). This *métaphysique*, finds its meaning in the sense of an “in-common”, or rather the promise of a communality as end or goal, though not without realising the very intangibility of the common: “*Communality* is the regime of the *world*, of the circulation of meaning” and permits no ultimate unity or finality, promising instead an infinite realisation, a “numberless [array of...] unfinalizable forms” (p. 72). This *métaphysique* shares with its predecessor of old a quest for the measure of existence, a total accounting seeking the “form of all forms” (p. 72), and yet this measure runs, not to the consolidated and relatively circumscribed footprint of the *polis*, but to *poleis* themselves set *apolis*. Unlike the metaphysical walk – Plato’s anti-Oedipal sociality that sought to restoratively bind (through image-text) the divided ground on which the *polis* arose – what might be termed modernity’s *promenade métaphysique* (to extend Nancy’s “Gallic” inflection (p. 68 & 72)) characterises the blind testing for forms of the in-common when the *agorien* circle is broken - when the gathering into a visual circumference (as the etymology of the *agora* suggests) is plagued with the unseen, the unforeseen, the beyond-seeing, and the invisible - in short an *apatē* let loose from any restraining *logocracy*. Carried over in the political will to power of democracy, as Nancy said, is affirmation of its ancient exteriority but its distortion too towards alternative ends:

Our drive for unity or synthesis knows itself, when it knows itself aright, as a drive for expansion and unfurling, not contraction into an end point. The gravitational pull of the end point and the unique meaning distorts the understanding of politics. (p. 73)

The figure of ‘man’, less able to centre the communality of the *agora*, sought an alternative standpoint – an initiation in and by nature.

### 3. Upright Contra Motion

Rousseau, renouncing a sociality of cities, sought instead a countering “civil religion” beyond “the mere rationality of governance”, one vested in the higher ideal of an originary, if forgotten, human being subsisting prior to corrupting social dependence and connection (1984, p. 4). Reaching “backwards in time”, as he wrote in *A Discourse on Inequality* (1755), ‘man’s’ essence was best imagined in the state nature bestowed on ‘him’ prior to a fall into historicity and the discontent of his age. In a purportedly self-evident fiction that located human origins benignly “under the Oak”, the languid body of the “savage” was said to be without need of movement, constructed reach or social connection on the basis that natural benevolence made everything immediately ready to hand.<sup>1</sup> In such a state, neither alone nor integrally tied to others, a profoundly “unsocial sociability” reigns (Nancy 2012, p.67). Yet despite this self-sufficiency, the no less innate human “faculty of self-improvement” initiated a general longing and desire, in turn activating a time-consciousness that dragged humanity, bit by bit, out of a “primitive state” and into an overdeveloped “outward extent” (1984, p. 88 & 139). As Bernard Stiegler noted, at stake is an account of human origins pictured as a deviation or journey out of equilibrium, a departure from harmony with nature and animals into civilisation as historical illness (1998, pp. 116-117). Yet this is no simple itinerary: “There is the origin, then the fall, forgetting, and loss”, but then it is difficult, as Stiegler said, to know “what is at the origin of the fall” (p. 101). Worse, the scene Rousseau envisaged may be nothing but a fiction, “a state which no longer exists, which perhaps never existed” as Rousseau himself put it (1984, p. 68). Rather, two origins are at work simultaneously: firstly, man’s freedom from dependence while in nature; and secondly, a difference within man – what Rousseau called “his capacity as a free agent” to deviate from the rules of “brute nature” itself (Rousseau 1984, p. 87; see also Stiegler 1998, p. 119).

Like Plato’s palintropic manoeuvre in the *Timaeus*, an origin is posited that stands in for prior beginnings pointedly lost (Stiegler 1998, p. 119). Conversely:

The more natural it is, the deeper it is hidden in the “appallingly ancient”: in order to remember, to recover the evidence prior to the fall, reason must be forgotten. Earlier than I think, I am because I feel, I suffer [...] The nature of man is neither

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<sup>1</sup> As Rousseau wrote: “I see him satisfying his hunger under an Oak, quenching his thirst at the first stream, finding his bed under the same tree which provides his meal; and, behold, his needs are furnished” (1984, p. 81). Bernard Stiegler, in his own commentary on this scene, noted the “practically immobile” nature of originary man and a contradiction inherent in Rousseau’s claim that such a man “always walked on two legs [and] made use of his hands as we do” (Rousseau 1984, p. 81 & Stiegler 1998, pp. 112-113). If not being “moved excessively” is the marker of this primitive being, walking and the use of the hands, as Stiegler argued, are physiological indicators of the very opposite: motility and reach, a reach extended into and through things (p. 113).

reason nor sociability. Originary man is neither a reasonable or speaking animal, nor a political or social one. (p. 110)

Echoing Plato's anti-Oedipal motivation, Rousseau configured his return to primordality as a reversal of the progressive ethos indexed to intellectual and social perfectibility; contra reason, an overt emphasis on physicality sought to balance the passions according to need and not excess (Rousseau 1984, p. 88). Time amounted to the wrecking of natural equilibrium and a collective deterioration into intemperance and wars, while the individual, fallen out of perenniality and into time, became a "tyrant over himself and nature" (pp. 88, 147-151).

In hypothesising the possibility that forgotten origins could be argued through imagination (if not essentially returned to), Rousseau was, as Stiegler noted, "the father of the question, what is man?" - a question that both launched and renounced "ethnocentrism", for the study of man required seeing past or through the fact of human difference - such differences being markers of division and fall (Stiegler 1998, pp. 104, 108, 110). At stake was the isolating of a "human invariant" that would serve as anchor against the flux of difference and time (p. 105). As such, Rousseau's fiction of origin rides "a mythical turn", for like the metaphysical stride, modernity's *promenade métaphysique* found footfall in two places: originary man in a static stance, and that man's fall into step and the agitation of historical humanity. Correspondingly in *A Discourse on Equality*, standing to "walk on two feet ['natural man'...] cast[s] his gaze over the whole of nature and measure[es] with his eyes the vast expanse of the horizon" (1984, p. 81). Conversely, the "step towards inequality" as a fall into movement (requiring reach and therefore desire or longing) in the *Discourse* was refigured in *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (1782) as a perambulation offering a reverse-track to the horizon of nature from out of the dissolute spaces of cities.<sup>2</sup> Standing still and apart, the *mythos* of natural man was carried over into the "Sixth Walk" of the *Reveries of the Solitary Walker* as a demand to be socially invisible and unimpeded (2004, p. 101). Further, as Rousseau proposed, pedestrianism extended into writing "doubles the space of my existence", firstly by transporting the walker from an extraneous and agitated present into a solitarily, autonomous state apposite to self-examination and mastery belonging to perennial nature (pp. 34-35), and secondly by collating, at the level of feelings, elucidation and thought, what the infinite reverie opened up by rambling causes to be forgotten (pp. 32 & 107). Nevertheless, 'the walk', despite its capacity for speculative drift, was taken by Rousseau as a figure of immediacy - "what was within [his...] reach" - one that occasioned an interval of self-reasoning resolute in its eschewing of the "subtle sophistries of metaphysics" (2004, p. 59).

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<sup>2</sup> See for instance the "Eight Walk" depicted as an excursion away from city-space (Paris) and the interference of "a thousand things" that "evil-doers" impose upon him. Conversely, as he stated, "as soon as I am under the trees and surrounded by greenery, I feel as if I were in the earthly paradise and experience an inward pleasure as intense as if I were the happiest of men" (2004, p. 133).

Irrespective, recognisable in Rousseau's coupling of walking with writing is what Renauld Barbaras called a "metaphysical attitude" (2000, p. 78). By Rousseau's account, achieved in the walker-writer is what the walk alone prompts but fails to secure: namely the retention and consolidation of itinerant flights of consciousness. It mirrors in fact the double-seeing Sallis identified in the broken temporality of the Allegory of the Cave. If walking in its solitary guise facilitated for Rousseau attendance on the "daily fluctuations of the soul", the writing self provided agency over those vacillations (2004, p.32). This is what the *pathic* descent of consciousness into the body (or what Stiegler referred to as an "'I feel'" prior to the "'I think'") pursued - a foothold transcending the fluctuation of time, a point-before capable of anchoring and rectifying perceptual appearances. For Barbaras what drives the metaphysical attitude is the sense that "Becoming [is...] inferior to Being" precisely because it cannot master an abyssal absence (2000, p. 79). Fearing that the world's genesis is inadequately trusted to duration alone, metaphysics reactively posits instead "the plenitude, the positivity of essence, to surmount the threat of nothingness" (p. 79). As such, metaphysics can be characterised by three gestures: firstly, the coupling of consciousness with an otherworldly, "transcendental life"; secondly, the defining of Being through enduring essences; and, thirdly, "'withdrawal to the bottom of nothingness'" in a quest to better expunge it (Merleau-Ponty cited in Barbaras 2000, p. 80). Like the downward way in Plato, Rousseau's summoning of ordinary man in nature sought to counter nothingness by finding grounding limits in a fiction – precisely an immediate existential plenitude free of the deleterious effects of temporality. Natural man - if a profoundly regressive entity – nevertheless recalibrated everything according to a single *silhouette of Being against nothingness* – to adjust a phrase by Barbaras (2000, p. 87). This silhouette - somewhere between repose and standing, but always short of prolonged and reaching action – marked the merging of metaphysics with "philosophical anthropology" (Stiegler 1998, p. 101).

At stake on this anthropology was a figure of finitude capable of countering both the infinite variation composing the hominid and an earlier philosophical appeal in Rationalism to belated divine harmonisation (Hughes 2012, p. 29). If it was Descartes who put into play a philosophy of the first person (the 'I think'), and with it a revival of Oedipal anthropocentrism, the speculative ambition of metaphysics by the late eighteenth century was made to run a narrower passage still: all existential ambition was required to pass through the human subject *tout court*. In a renovation of Augustine's inward moral source, Rousseau posited what Robert Solomon termed a "transcendental pretence", a "spectacularly self-centred image of the moral world", one in which transcending certitude was made to pass from divine to human will (1988, p. 20-21). By putting such a source potentially not just within reach, but *within* as a sensate or felt rightness, he instituted a radical shift in self-relation whereby goodness amounted to a universal orientation for humanity at large. Counter to a manifest human visual



variation, intuition as a non-visual, sensory referent can be thought to have mirrored Augustine's "*lux interior*" with its mediating of the eye and ear and its conditioning of outlook by an inner and backwardly sourced authoritative grace, but given in its revised guise as a precondition of the moral self. Further, for Solomon, Rousseau's transcendental pretense gave home to Kant's noumenal self (1988, p. 40) – one of at least three constituent parts (including the empirical and transcendental selves) necessary to a "unity of consciousness" in the subject (Kant cited in Seigel 2005, pp. 306-309). As Solomon put it, this subject/self not only creates "the world", it knows itself no less than it "knows all selves, and the structure of any and every possible self" because "everyone, everywhere, is the same" (1988, p. 6).

Yet this self-sameness was not a substance as it was for Descartes, but a finite form that gives the given as such. Expanding on Kant's project in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781 & 1787), Deleuze put it this way: "The finite ego founds the world and knowledge of the world because the finite ego is itself the constitutive founding of what appears. In other words, it is finitude that is the founding of the world" (1980b). As Kant himself asserted, the task of metaphysics was not to conform knowledge to objects but to recognise how "objects must conform to our cognition", for "experience itself is a kind of cognition requiring the understanding, whose rule I have to presuppose in myself before any object is given to me, hence *a priori*" (2000 Bxvi-vii. See also Hughes 2012, p. 29). For Deleuze this shift in legislative understanding by the finite ego (or what amounted to the "I think") meant that the self was no longer held to be a limited quantum of infinity as it had been for Descartes; the finite in the form of the arbitrating ego opened not onto the *infinite* as pre-given by an ordained source, but the *indefinite* as a world orchestrated from a perceptual centre capable of synthesising, step-by-step the given (1980a). For Kant the coherency of this perceptual grasp was dependent on an active orchestration of cognitive faculties (Intuition, Imagination and Understanding) into a unity of consciousness characterised by temporal continuity. Yet this unity amounts in Kant's account to a self-consciousness or reflective unity, in other words a representation of the self as thought and not intuited. In other words a world synthesising recognition via the object = x. Between the thought self and the inner sensing of self a gulf opens, one Deleuze referred to as the "fractured I" (1994, p.87). Hence there is in the finite ego an indefiniteness that causes it "to surpass and go beyond itself" in a "self-overcoming" or "infinite becoming" that ultimately subordinates the finite itself (Deleuze 1980b). Distinctive then in *une promenade métaphysique* is a double standing spanning the finite and the infinite – in fact a ramble between what is originary and what is derived in temporality. To better grasp this, a further historical excursion is necessary.

#### 4. *The Accident of Time*

Kant courts what in time classical philosophy (both Ancient and early modern) eschewed – temporal rupture. In the Greek context, to be *apolis* was to be *atopis* (placeless) and *atopos* (improper). Set adrift not just from the ‘natural’ place of the city (its propriety, like all “places” for Aristotle, being dependant on “a vessel that cannot be moved around”; 1996, 212a14-212a15), meant being cast into an indeterminate time beyond enduring placement (Casey 1998, p. 5). Striking for Casey is Aristotle’s “dispos[ing] of infinity” in Book 4 of *Physics*, a task aiming to exercise erratic movement and its contesting of the containment by place (p. 67). Used to mediate between the determinacy of place and the relative indeterminacy of time, Aristotle invoked the notion of the void. As Casey observed: “Void, then, exists between place and time: as if to say that to get out of place is to get into the void and to get into time is to get out of the void” (p. 67). As a measureless place, the void cannot adequately explain motion, change or the medium within which movement takes place, for it implies a domain that “admits no difference” - whether up or down, in motion or stillness, or whether departing or arriving (Aristotle 1996, 214a26-214b34).

Time too appears as something like an infinite void, given that in one direction there stretches what no longer exists (the interminable past), and in another, what is yet to exist (the perpetually arriving future). For Aristotle, the only substantive place where time could be grasped was the present moment (218a11-218a21). Yet troubling in the present is the inability to know whether each ‘now’ itself differed, or whether it remained one and the same (219b13-219b34). Recognising that time and movement were bound together, Aristotle equated the ‘now’ with a person in motion, who while traversing innumerable instances of before and after, endures (219b13-219b34). The present, as that which carries along, can be valued as a substantive thing, while movement as change cannot. For Dorothea Olkowski, Aristotle in fact rejects any aspect of time that moves thereby rendering the before and the after a “nontime” (1998, p. 21). The differentiation evident in the succession of ‘nows’ “is no more than differences within identity”, and in turn, the contingencies time brings forward are “only accidental (they are not-being)” and do not qualify as “difference in itself” (pp. 18 & 22). For Alliez, Aristotle less discovers the essential substratum of time in the ‘now’ than he envisages a portal continually inviting in the accidental that is “foreign to the essence of the thing” (1996, p. 23). To say the now is like a moving body is to risk the Sophist’s proposition that identity varies with place (as Aristotle exemplified: “Coriscus’ being in the Lyceum is different Coriscus’ being in the market-place”; 1996, 219b13-219b34).

Nevertheless, mastering time via the present meant, as Alliez wrote, reconstituting a “‘field of presence,’ a *place* of temporality through which time is in a sense onto-logical *within* the ‘now’

of a presence" (1996, p. 24; emphasis in original). Such is the chronic quest in the West for the place of immediacy to be tied with eternity. "Cosmodicy" or cyclic cosmic motion was one way human life could be tied to eternity and ordered motion (p. 24). The soul, as that which endures in identity, historically becomes "but an avatar of the question of the 'now'" (p. 23). For Plato then, time was synonymous with the motion of the soul in its travels across varying states of life. Yet as Alliez credits Plotinus with recognising, the equating of time with a travelling soul meant tying it to extensive movement. Instead Plotinus shifted time into the interior of the soul itself where, as Alliez put it, "a new form of movement, which is intensive and no longer extensive, ordinal and no longer cardinal" was established (p. 28). This movement made "each of us [...] an intelligible world" as Plotinus put it, one that "reflect[s] the entire diversity of ontological totality" - if imperfectly (cited in Alliez 1996, p. 34). In an urban metaphor, Plotinus likened the world soul, or "all-soul", to a single city that nevertheless containing a multitude of diverse souls each akin to the other much as species are related to a single genus (p. 45-46). Yet this is a city whose ideal state is pure intelligibility, and if it resembles Plato's head city, it is so on the basis that individual souls are no longer moving parts of a working cosmos; the cosmos is internally and intensively circumscribed by the all-soul. Conversely this "One Soul" decomposes downward losing intelligible potential as it folds into matter. Descending into extension, "geometrical figures tend to predominate over figures of light", and "intrinsic differences turn into extrinsic distinctions" instituting "real divisions, local separations, and subjective oppositions" (p. 47). From universal being to individual beings, subjective distinction (or "extensive subjectivization") amplifies divergent passions, further calling the souls from contemplation into actual movement and serial temporality (p. 47). Breaking with the world soul, human souls depart an urban/cosmic "circle of the same", unrolling time itself and decanting the ego along a "straight-line labyrinth of time" (p. 49). Hence the "phenomenal subject" hollows out an interiority inherently torn between worldly engagement and an inert "eternal model" (p. 49). This "will to heteronomy" anticipates, in one direction, Saint Augustine who will make the soul a synthesising entity bridging between "originary and derived time" - for which a resumption of the city of God on earth is figure - and Kant, who as Alliez wrote, asserts a secular, urban time freed entirely from any notion of an "intensive motion of the soul" (pp. 34-35). Along the way, psychological time sets up in the soul displacing an earlier "cosmic image", while modernity, contrary to cosmology, discovers the possibility of plumbing the interiorizing implications of a "time image" free of, or prior to, the measure of movement (p. 51).

### 5. Time Moves – or Subjectivation

Against Plato's double-seeing and its quest for a temporal aside aiming to re-join the proper order and movement of the Intelligible (its Apollonian orientation), Plotinus effects a decidedly Dionysian turn in which the soul is imagined as a thing capable of being beheld and therefore possessed rather than merely cared for. For Alliez, in making a psychical space imaginable, Plotinus configures a non-corporeal descent that falls into narcissism – not the “material narcissism” imagined by Ovid in the myth of Narcissus (where fixation on (self) image is destined for dissolution and death) – but into a specular, scattered play of images confounding self-observation (1996, p. 53). If individual souls cannot but be simulacra or diminished copies of the world-soul, any pursuit of an integral picture of self must pursue an “upward path” that counters descent as Plotinus said; (2013, 1.6.7) – in other words, it must break through a spectral, scattered play of images confounding self-observation (Alliez 1996, p. 53). Upwardness is thus possessive, claiming the “dignity of Being” on the basis of “the alienated soul's fascination with owning” (1996, p. 55). An incorporeal narcissism becomes the “new insanity” geared to subjectivism and self-validation relayed according to an “*inner infinity*” – an infinity imagined to be capable of both being beheld and held contemplatively (pp. 51-53, 58). (pp. 51-53).

For Alliez, this amounted to a transition to a world given form through the engendering action of inner ‘vision’ for which the face (rather than the body) was the mobilising portal (1996, pp. 56-59). Intelligibility is thus cast outward according to an inner lighting that fuses the viewer with the viewed (p. 56). So while the metaphysical walk in Plato is conceived of as walking in the light of truth - an “action image” of sorts – the psychologised soul effects a “contemplation image” seeking to transform the seen through a kind of sublime beholding (p. 56). Lost is any depth of field where objects and subjects are distinguishable through extrinsic lighting; the seen instead must get sorted out within the soul's intensive folds. This shift, as Alliez noted, shows up in Byzantine art which radically altered the anthropocentric perspective and Hellenistic notions of plastic beauty, reasserting instead the flat plane and iconic representation once tied to aspective, but retooled for an inner psychical landscape. The result was a “negative perspective” and “optical reversal” in which pictorial distance and decisive viewing position were overturned in favour of confronting proximity where impressions were asserted in the place they are encountered (p. 62). Thus, “Absorbed in an ungraspable *Stimmung*, the viewer forgets his or her own situation”, or distance from “the contemplated object, because “there is no single point where one can determine one's own limits so as to be able to say: up to this point, that's me” (p. 62). Thus subject and seeing fuse in a convoluted synthesis.

Alliez sees in this contemplation image what Deleuze, termed a “passive synthesis” – a ‘background’ operation preceding individual egos. Single souls are thus split between their own temporal grasp of the world and a prior spiritual World Ego. Contemplation, tintured by a desire for universality, thus bestows a narcissistic countenance taken over from the divinity. At the individual soul’s centre is seeded a “first purity”, a thought of the whole, that ultimately means the “I will be another” (p. 67). The distinction between action and contemplation images effected a mechanism capable of “tip[ping] Platonism toward subjectivity” and set the West on a passionate, rambling line countermanding its despotic orbit. The result: “all life is thought” and “all things are like a life that stretches forth as a straight line” (p. 67). The synthesising of passive and active egos corresponds with what Deleuze and Guattari nominated as the post-signifying or passion regime of signs (see Figure 7) and it is clearly this that Alliez had in mind when characterising “Neoplatonic subjectivation”. Yet ridding a split in time – *chronos*, or the sequential-intentional domain of the present as action image, and *aion*, the future-past of the contemplation image - this self, increasingly unable to synthesise these divergent series, gave rise to what Deleuze and Guattari, in a differing context, called a subject of enunciation and a subject of the statement (1987, p. 129).

In Rousseau enunciation and statement similarly align with contemplation and action images, the first according with originary, natural man relieved of all temporal passing, and the second with that man’s fall into action and chronology. Yet across the centuries a division occurs, one that cuts off the Neoplatonic, narcissistic circle of self-divination and natural synthesis to the extent that originary time can only be construed as a fiction that no future image of action can suture. Instead, a confessional impulse derived from Saint Augustine prevails.<sup>3</sup> Like Augustine’s instigation of a Christian philosophy in which creator and creation remain at a distance, for Rousseau the world of man no longer cohabits authentically with nature and following the fall into self-improvement it can envisage such a union only as a thing gathered with any certainty by the mind (hence the fiction of origin in Rousseau). A line then running from Augustine through Descartes, Rousseau and Kant grapples with this existential impasse. For Alliez, this is the “West’s dominate dynamic” – a “Christian logic of alterity” pitched against Neoplatonism’s subject-in-disjunctive-union (1996, pp. 82-83). In turn, Oedipus is signal to this Christian philosophy: cast out by an “inaccessible God”, a religion of “mediation and reconciliation” results (pp. 92-93); in turn an autological orientation takes consciousness as its principal object and hubristically interprets divine will; a scission between divine and human economies gives rise to double cities – the city of God and its other, with the former “dwell[ing] as if abroad” - while an urban impulse to betterment must sojourn in the heads of believers “till the time of its reign arrives” (1996 pp. 84, 266 – note 27; Augustine 1999, p.

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, Augustine’s *Confessions* (397-398) finds mirror in Rousseau’s *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (1782).

479/XV, 1). For Alliez the “Augustinian *cogito*” anticipates a Cartesian version on the basis that both share the notion of “non-objective eternity” (or relation to infinity) while in turn maintaining consciousness as objecthood. The “certitude of thought” is what validates God’s being evident, but on condition of a disjunctive relation: hence at stake “is an ‘abstract God who *forbids religion* in the etymological sense of a living link with God” (p. 93).

For Deleuze and Guattari the Cartesian *cogito* is post-signifying precisely because, turning from extended things and a God otherwise conceived of as distanced, it breaks with an absolute coding of the *socius*. Put to work synthesising, this *cogito* sets in play three movements: firstly “doubt – which is typically a type of paranoid machine; [secondly] the non-deceiving God [as...] a miraculating machine, and [thirdly] the ‘I think’ [as...] a celibate machine” (Deleuze 2001, p. 95). Spanning from doubt to self-certainty, despotic signification is replaced by a “legislator-subject” who belatedly borrows - while ostensibly shunning - a divine (miraculating) mechanism (1987, p. 130). Duplicated at the level of the subject is a “subject of enunciation” on one hand (the *I think* as determination) and a “subject of the statement” (an *I am* as undetermined or variously determined) on the other (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 128 & Deleuze 2001, p. 93). As Deleuze and Guattari asserted, “When Descartes says, I can infer ‘I think therefore I am’ but not ‘I walk therefore I am,’ he is initiating the distinction between the two subjects” (1987, p. 128), meaning a subject of enunciation standing outside or independently of any “union of the soul and the body, or feeling” typical of the subject of the statement. The distinction between enunciation and statement centres on the division between a purely thinking entity and one that acts - describing, depicting, speaking its situated being. Yet an “echolalia” is at work in which thought seemingly prevails over situations but situations constitutive of subjects necessarily providing the material for thought, that in turn is assumed to prevail over situations (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 129). As they say, “this recoiling [...] is also that of mental reality into the dominant reality”; in other words, reality requires no external referent, no despotic visage, or even paranoid-interpretive mechanism to anchor it. The *cogito* instead engenders (as a celibate or bachelor producer) a reality it alone thinks and adjudicates over in accordance with a seemingly sovereign ‘reason’ and reasonableness (1987, p. 130).

In providing an ontology apposite to an emerging bourgeoisie, it is the time of the merchant, the mercantile (and mercenary) traveller, that Cartesianism founds. Time distinguished this way attains its meaning from the Augustinian *cogito*. For Alliez, the Cartesian *cogito* completes what for Augustine would be unthinkable: the compacting of the transcendental dynamic singularly into a “psychological ego”, one where time is naturally and unproblematically present (1996, p. 121). In the stove-heated room for instance, thought acting across time overcomes the apparent sensory divergence of wax in different states, compacting them into a single, enduring substance. Similarly, the very exercise of thought is predicated on an

excavating out of the temporal quotidian a time of contemplation - time that is in fact made space, for a subject brought into the fullness of presence via thought. If a phenomenological reduction is achieved in such a setting, as Barbaras argued, it was in Augustine that Alliez recognised a pre-emptor to the West's "phenomenological enterprise" (p. 121). While for Augustine time absolutely belonged to God its creator, the fall from grace represented by "the twin sins of Adam and Cain" instigated a worldly time deviating "from immutable and universal good" (pp. 99-100). Wilfully bending *aion* to its own ends, humanity embarked on a "temporalization" or particularisation of time, a process Augustine called *distentio* - distortion (pp. 100 & 107). What renders this model of temporality phenomenological is the proposition that an eternity integral to time is recoverable from the *distentio* natural to the fall via a process of *intentio* or intentional seeking out of a higher orientation (*extensio ad superior*) (1996, p. 107, 121). With *distentio* there is only serialisation and unequal exchange - in other words, a time apposite to the merchant and *Chrematistics*: "With the fall, time became that *distentio* of the soul dispersed into the multiple and into the cares of the *saeculum* [age] dominated by money" (p. 106). The soul's quest for an inner, spiritual refuge from mercantile hegemony is precisely what consecrates the split ego and a drive for "an authentic time below the ontic time of the concrete ego" (p. 121). For Augustine time as a series of present moments advancing from the past towards the future is displaced by a temporal continuum streaming from the future backwards, and only contingently experienced as a "field of presence" (1996, p. 123). If the "past and the future also exist" it is because they harbour the limits of what in ordinary time can be experienced and made cognizable by the soul/subject: "the present comes to be out of the future [where...] it proceeds from something hidden, and into something hidden it returns" (Augustine 11.17.22).

Kant, exploring the foundations of perception, was unwilling to invest the field of presence solely with the Cartesian psychological ego. As Deleuze read the difference between the Cartesian and the Kantian *cogito*, in the former, the "thinking substance" can only assert its hegemony on the basis of an "expelling [of] time" and substituting "the point of view of the I for the point of view of God", whereas Kant refigured the *cogito* according to the operation of a differential time always short of divine purview (1994, p. 86). As he explained, to the determinable element - the "I think" - an undetermined component - the "I am" - must exist without knowing its determination ahead of the action of time (p. 86). In this temporally fractured *cogito*, what Deleuze defines as the passivity of the undetermined, Kant describes as a capacity for receptivity, a capacity controlled by the rule of synthesis that ensures that the empirical constituents are bound into a consistent identity (p. 87). Playing, as James Williams has noted, on Kant's transcendental philosophy as a "Copernican revolution", Deleuze sought an even more radical de-centring of subjectivity, dispensing with all vestiges of identity as a stabilising axis (Deleuze 1994, p. 86; Williams 2011, p. 82). Drawing the question of time

beyond the machinations of the human soul and the purview of consciousness, Deleuze aimed to excavate the foundations of a transpective orientation – the domain of unconsciousness syntheses that precede subject-positions. If in the traditions considered above, the issue has been how to represent the action of time, transpective opens a domain inaccessible to the ‘I think’ and problematizes agency over an inner, temporally-defined terrain understood to ground learning, reason and illumination. In the step towards an aesthetic unconscious, for which the peripatetic observer was key, Oedipus shows up as decisively erosive of the thinking subject. Similarly, if the metaphysical walk sought to stabilise and cognize time according to a “moving image of eternity”, *une promenade métaphysique* tracks a demented motion in time itself, a time ceasing a circular, celestial modality and uncoiling instead as an urban, wandering line (Plato 1997, Timaeus 37d; Voss 2013, p. 195).

## 6. Divergent Syntheses

At stake in Deleuze’s decentring of Kant’s theory of synthesis is recognition of a passive synthesis or time consciousness prior to human experience or cognizance. Indeed the event of human consciousness rests on three temporal syntheses at work across a pre-subjective domain. Firstly time can be understood to accumulate in accordance with a gathering of diverse sensory matter forming a passive self defined through habit - what Deleuze called the domain of “Habitus” and Eros (or the faculty of imagination). Life, any kind of living actualisation, is inseparable, as he says, from *Eros*, or the operation of a pleasure principle that mobilises a “certain quantity of libido (Eros-energy)” in a repetitious binding or joining (1991, p. 116). Secondly, contemplative attendance on past accumulations of the first synthesis tie sensation into what Deleuze called a “past in general”, or what he called *Mnemosyne* (or the faculty of memory) (1994, pp. 79-80). Thirdly, between habitus and a past in general, an active synthesis becomes possible, one that thinks what remains incomprehensible in the earlier two (p. 80). For Joe Hughes, Deleuze in fact merges notions from both Merleau-Ponty and Bergson with the third synthesis: with the former asserting that the “sensible datum [...] sets a kind of muddled problem for my body to solve” (habitus), while the later rendered perception inseparable from a choice in motor response for which memory was critical (2008, pp. 112-113). As James Williams applied the tripartite syntheses to Deleuze’s commentary on the non-endogeny of an infantile drive to motility, “Any walk is habitual”, but it also circumscribes the “living present” within a broader synthesis of “past events and future possibilities” for which an active determination embroils the gestural capacities and limitations of the body in problems of orientation, sense and recognition that builds on memory and the contracted material of earlier syntheses (2011, p. 105). Hence, each synthesis presents a cavalcade of problems: the persistent divergence of the passive or larval selves of the first synthesis - given its contingent, narcissistic consolidation of pleasures, tensions and discharges



- produces an overwhelmingly indeterminate world without orientation or sustaining direction (Deleuze 1994, p. 85); the second synthesis attempts to overcome this volatility in favour of a better consolidated self/ego, but as the domain of the past in general, it presents its own problems as a ground for stabilising an enduring self, not least because it composes a too impersonal a resource, one shot through with a plethora of incomprehensible traces and repetitions (forgetting, failed representations, erroneous recollections and “involuntary memory”; p. 74); in turn, the third synthesis intervenes in the irresolvable contest of the earlier two, with the faculty of thought (the “I think”) as a reflection or self-contemplation (1994, p. 110; Hughes 2009, pp. 120-121). Yet this final synthesis is not achieved without the former syntheses themselves appearing as other to the self *per se*, precisely because the faculties of imagination and memory are each embroiled in their own “involuntary adventures”, their own co-opting and utilisation of repetitions and the differences that arise there (1994, p. 145).

The price of these temporal operations, as Deleuze made clear, is the implantation at the core of the self of a constitutive fracturing that is never completely overcome. Hence:

[...] it is by interiorising the difference between the two lines [Eros & Mnemosyne] and by experiencing itself as perpetually displaced in the one, perpetually disguised in the other, that the libido returns or flows back into the ego and the passive ego becomes entirely narcissistic. The narcissistic ego is inseparable not only from a constitutive wound [the disjuncture between syntheses] but from the disguises and displacements which are woven from one side to the other, and constitute its modification. The ego [or “I”] is a mask for other masks, a disguise under other disguises. Indistinguishable from its own clowns, it walks with a limp on one green and one red leg. (p. 110)

In this striking analogy the ego is figured as a stitched together entity, with one leg sourced from the faculty of imagination and the other from that of memory (Hughes 2009, p. 121). Yet these contributions are not balanced as Deleuze’s appeal to the limp suggests, but in continual dissonance and while he doesn’t expand on their particular colouring, it can be surmised that the green one corresponds with the unceasing, runaway displacements of the first passive synthesis (imagination/present), while the red one accords with the recuperative and arresting tendencies of the second synthesis (memory/past). The result is a narcissistic ego fronting an array of incipient selves - themselves composed of so many disguises and masks – and in turn, a wounding distance that must be bridged or overcome. Yet the resulting limp references an irremediably fractured subject in whom a caesura between the past and the present testifies to a temporality that is “no longer ‘rhymed’”, a time that does not accumulate in a before and after continuity (Deleuze 1994, p. 89).

## 7. Oedipus & the Linear Labyrinth

In Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843) Deleuze found a commentary that developed the unrealised consequences of the introduction of a new, pure form of time into thought by Kant – a continuance linked with “the death of God and the fractured I”, but also Oedipus specifically:

Hölderlin saw in this form of time both the essence of tragedy and the adventure of Oedipus, as though these were complimentary figures of the same death instinct. Is it possible that Kantian philosophy should thus be the heir of Oedipus? (p. 87)

As Hölderlin recognised in “Remarks on Oedipus”, it was Sophocles who anticipated in tragic drama a dilemma pivotal to modernity: time, retaining the internal impetus established by Augustine, nevertheless wanders from its divine referent and in turn isolates and hollows out the subject.

For Deleuze, Hölderlin identifies the specifically irregular form of Oedipal tragedy. In Greek drama generally - for which the plays of Aeschylus were indicative - a tripartite structure is evident: a defining state of limitation (or what Deleuze calls a “just order”); a transgression of limitations; and, a reconciliation or atonement of that transgression which restores the earlier state of justice and order. In this context ‘man’ transgresses the limits defined by a cosmological order and in the course of things is returned to ‘his’ place. With Sophocles’ Oedipus it is no longer the case of transgressing limitations, suffering the consequences, or making an ameliorating return to course; with Oedipus it is the limit itself that has become elusive and indiscernible, for he is the man who is guilty without knowing his crime and who transgresses despite inordinate efforts to avoid the breaching of providential propriety (Deleuze 1978). The limit, when it appears in the Oedipal tragedy, takes the form of a sudden rupture or caesura whose breach commits the transgressor to a transformative itinerary without return or redemption. Cast into a solitary orbit without centering reference, humanity, as represented by Oedipus, is left to chart its own course:

In Oedipus time has become a straight line which will be the line on which Oedipus wanders. The long wandering of Oedipus. There will no longer be any atonement, even if only in the form of a brutal death. Oedipus is in perpetual suspension, he will travel his straight line of time. In other words, he is traversed by a straight line which drags him along. Towards what? Nothing. (Deleuze 1978)

In *Oedipus Tyrannus* there is no retribution or even death; his fate is a death delayed, a death transposed into the long hiatus of a walk, guided not by sight or the unfolding stricture of divinity and fate, but one surrendered to the intensities of uncertain extension. Even death at Colonus fails to turn the emptied line of time towards closure with the aftereffect of burial being an urban subjectivity orientated by transpective.

Like Sophocles' courting of a departure of the gods of Antiquity in the Oedipus drama, modernity similarly shares a sense of divine abdication, or more accurately, as Hölderlin identified, a double turning from each other of God *and* the faithful. As he wrote of the moment of realization at the tragedy's pivotal point of realisation:

Inside it [the caesura], man forgets himself because he exists entirely for the moment, the god [forgets himself] because he is nothing but time; and either one is unfaithful, time because it is reversed categorically at such a moment, no longer fitting beginning and end; man, because at this moment of categorical reversal he has to follow and thus can no longer resemble the beginning in what follows. (Hölderlin 1988, p. 108)

Corresponding with what Blumenberg saw as a theological contest between Gnosticism and Augustinianism arising in the Middle Ages, this double turning away finds historical ground in the evolving doctrine of "divine absolutism" – the belief in a God with absolute freedom to determine the course of the universe irrespective of human need (1999, pp. 135-137). For Blumenberg modernity in turn was ushered in, not on the basis of religious renunciation leading to secularisation, but as the consequence of an understanding of self and world pushed off-centre by an abdication of providence within religiosity, a de-centring that called for a new "self-assertion" and reconstruction of the world according to principles of human reason in the absence of reliable divine providence (p. 138).

From within this double infidelity - that of God towards 'his' people and humanity toward its God – arose an interregnum or vacancy intuited in the very meaning of space and time. In effect, as Deleuze said, a kind of "degree zero" or datum of absolute detachment prevails (1978). It is this zeroing consequence that Hölderlin's caesura grasps – the trace of an absconding God leaving 'free time' in his wake. As a result, Sophocles' Oedipus, like the subject of modernity, is rendered "atheos" – "separated from God", as Deleuze says – rather than atheistic (1978). At the level of human motility, and walking particularly, a striking divide arises between Kant and Hölderlin, one centered on Oedipus and his transport of a tragic sensibility. For Kant what the Enlightenment promised was "free movement" liberated from the "walking cart" of ignorance and dogma (2013, p. 3). Yet "walking confidently [...] towards majority", as Kant recommended for the public use of reason, could hardly be further from the image of blinded Oedipus, "the gods' most hated man" set *apolis* and wandering with the aid of minors (daughters Antigone and Ismene). Yet Deleuze credits Hölderlin's subtraction of God with going further than Kant by radicalizing the question, and the call to self-assertion that reason was called on to answer. Where Enlightenment philosophy ambitioned the foundations of science - sciences belatedly dependent on nature whose divinely instituted reality is broadly indifferent to humanity – self-assertion (Kant's walking confidently unaided) is shunned in favour of a fall into aesthetic phenomena (Blumenberg 1999, pp. 141-142).

## 8. Conjoining Oedipus & Hamlet

Deleuze further developed his commentary on Hölderlin and Oedipus in reference to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, particularly around Hamlet's statement to Horatio in Act 1, Scene V - "The time is out of joint; O cursed spite! That ever I was born to set it right!" (189-190; emphasis added), and subsequently to Laertes in Act 5, Scene 1 - "For though I am not splenitive and rash, / Yet have I in me something dangerous" (271-272). In the former lines Deleuze found a "First Formula" for summarising Kantian philosophy, while the later ones suggested a second formula he attributed to Arthur Rimbaud who had famously written to Paul Demeny in 1871 - "*Car Je est un autre*" (I am an other, or as Deleuze's version is translated, "I is another"; p. viii) (Rimbaud 2005, p. 375). This other, as passive or receptive self, is what constantly arises within the consistency of the 'I' and imparts, as Deleuze said, a "giddiness, an oscillation" by virtue of time which "splits us in two" (1994, p. ix). This diversion, as Hamlet recognised, presents a particular problem for thought for it raises the question of who the "spontaneity of thinking" can be attributed to, or rather, that there is "in thought something impossible to think" (Deleuze, 1978). For Deleuze this estrangement precisely signals the Kantian subject's relation to knowledge, where like the tragic hero who "repeats precisely because he is separated from an essential, infinite knowledge", there is something in excess of phenomenal experience and which "acts like something hidden, like a blocked representation" (1994, p. 15).

In key ways, tragic repetition falls back on generalities and habitual responses to cover this blockage, thereby missing the metamorphosing impetus in tragedy. As Deleuze noted, referencing Marx, there is a historical tendency for tragedy to fall back into farce - for tragic repetitions in fact to yield to a kind of comedy (pp. 91-92). In *Oedipus Tyrannus* the comic-tragic cycle is exemplified in the hero's limp, which confronts without giving up its secret. At stake is a meaning "too big" for Oedipus to grasp prior to the caesura that forces him to confront his guilt. In fact the tragedy can be thought to offer a "three-stage structure of repetition": the comic limp before, the tragic caesura itself, and wayward wandering after" (p. 92). As Ronald Bogue summarised: "The tragic moment is a caesura in the rhyme of man's life, a break that makes past and future incommensurable from that instant on. Continuity is broken; beginning and end no longer rhyme; the beginning cannot equal what follows" (2001, p. 18). The result is the emergence of a version of the self that exceeds its circumstantial constituents or its passive assemblage via Eros and Mnemosyne. Hence the caesura or circumstantial crisis firstly relates to a situation in which the "past or the before" brings to light some unknown aspect of the self that overwhelms the present. Secondly, the resulting break calls for a response capable of measuring up to the event - a "becoming-equal" to the disjuncture in normative time - and for which a "metamorphosis" is instigated doubling the

lesser self of the caesura with an overcoming ideal. Thirdly, in the confrontation caused by the caesura between a passive self and an active “I” or ideal, a quantum of difference is produced that causes the future to deviate. Spanning the beginning, the caesura, and the afterwards an image of the totality of time is asserted, a time that is not circular but which in its interruption, affirms a returning difference (Deleuze 1994, p. 89). Oedipus in this account occasions a shift from an autological subject to one that is auto-affecting. The caesura constitutive of the third synthesis, when pushed to its full metamorphosing potential, overcomes comic-tragic repetition and affirms a becoming that excises all fixed identity. Hence:

[...] what the self has become equal to is the unequal in itself. In this manner, the I which is fractured according to the temporal series correspond and find a common descendant in the man without a name, without family, without qualities, without self or I, the ‘plebeian’ guardian of a secret [a...] secret coherence which establishes itself only by excluding my own coherence, my own identity, the identity of the self, the world and God. (1994, p. 90)

Implicate to this other within identity then is a tripartite assemblage countermanding the Platonic soul and the mythic hero’s royal investiture: “repetition-binding, [...] repetition-stain, [and...] repetition-eraser” as Deleuze described (1994, p.114); what Hughes called the “three unequal faculties” - imagination, memory and thought (2009, p. 124); or in Bogue’s description, the “condition, actor and actor-obliterating action” (2010, p. 43). Hence, from the urban footwork of Socratic *parrhesia* runs a strain of thought splitting the soul/subject in accordance with “the tragic transport” turning man into “nothing but time”, a time “fitting [neither] beginning [nor...] end” (Voss 2013, p. 211; see also Hölderlin 1998, p. 100).

## 9. The Aesthetic Walk

The caesura, in dividing the subject, also imports into the time of production (schedules, projects and tasks) a vacancy or excess. Beyond the total servitude demanded by the despotic *socius*, the production of ‘private’ persons ostensibly puts time into individual hands. Yet a demand arises with this other temporality:

The ‘excessive time’ is not fully free, and therefore it poses an imperative, a *drive* to exceed. The opening of time, which is excessive, empty, or infinite [...] drives the subject to probe his or her infinity and to exceed him or herself, to leave oneself behind. (Magun 2004, p. 1155)

Tragic consciousness, as Artemy Magun reads Hölderlin, sets up an “infinite internal struggle” for which ‘free time’ is pivotal, not least because of the West’s long exercised “reification of individual self-control” in which, as Elias put it, a sustained “severance” is maintained between “individual affective impulses” and the “motor apparatus” (2000, p. 481). The complexification of social relations runs in parallel with a monopolisation of violence by the

state and a regularisation, stabilisation and redirection of impulse and drives, with the “lengthening of the chains of social action and interdependence” invoking an “extension of mental spaces beyond the moment into the past and future” where thinking habituates itself to “chains of cause and effect” and self-distancing (Elias 1991, pp. 97-101 & 2000, p. 370). Hölderlin’s delineation of a tragic caesura no doubt reflects on and amplifies these contesting components defining a division between the self and its world. With the prolongation of thought ever deeper into temporal dimensions constituting the past and the future - with its surveying habits based on distancing, including self-observation and self-distancing, and with the positing of an even more complex and unfathomed “inner landscape” - psychical development is made to appear remote or alienated from societal forms. The caesura, at once the result of this seemingly foundational partition between psycho-genesis and socio-genesis, no less stands as a longed for abdication and escape into free time, into a space-time that short-circuits ever denser obligations by the ‘civilising’ webs of association and chains of causality. Bodies themselves, everywhere managed into docility and/or competitive competency fall, in one sense, into a kind of silence, while in another, they are made to repetitiously mime economies of generality.

Walking observers are integral to this economy, even as they claim a space outside it. Ostensively they mirror the bifurcation in modernity between the Euclidean space of work and the time of leisure. In contrast, as Magum says, to “the momentous capture of capital” and its insistent productive mandate, leisure seems to bestow a disposable time, notable for its “‘inachievement’ and ‘inertia’” (2004, p. 1162). Not that leisure was, or remains, outside the economy of production – cessation of labour being necessary to the restoration of productivity while “surplus labour” offers an exploitative capacity in Marx’s sense – but it nevertheless potentiates a troubling excess, a domain of free time from which spontaneous and overturning action might erupt (Magus 2004, pp. 1153-1154). Modernity takes motion as its motif precisely because *pathos* is its negative motor (p. 1152). In Rousseau recuperation and/or mourning (relative to originary man) motivates accounts and encounters; in Kant a “labour of development” (in Enlightenment man) drives a progressive impetus (p. 1152). Yet for Hölderlin, the caesura suggests a motive agency in time itself that delivers no extensive movement. So does leisure ride inactivity and parallels what Deleuze attributed to time out of joint: even when “*nothing* moves” there is something that continues to act, something in excess of the movement of temporal succession. Emphasised in Hölderlin’s radicalization of Kant was the prospect that the slackening of temporal obligation was not only the basis for progressing human freedom, but that leisure as a void within work was also a void in the continuity of time, one whose immanent motion was capable of undoing all projects, including the projection of identity. It is in this context that an aesthetic unconscious emerges, just as it is within the domain of leisure that aesthetics is principally pursued, and it is also there that

peripatetic literatures arise (2004, p. 1156).

Rancière has similarly charted questions of temporality in literary sources exploring what he called “another kind of leisure – that of aesthetes who enjoy the forms, the lights, and shades of nature, of philosophers who spend their time exchanging metaphysical hypotheses in the a country inn, and of apostles who set out to communicate their faith to the chance companions they meet along the road” (2007, p. 279). Staged in rustic beatitude, the fusing of strolling with spectatorship and contemplation defined romantic sensibility (p. 279). Marked by a certain passive individualism, such roaming stood in contradistinction to toiling, obligated bodies, and yet it was the confluence of aesthetes and displacement that made, as Rancière put it, “Republican politics” a politics of walkers (2004a, p. 17). Paralleling an obligation to mobility in the society of the course, the post-revolutionary ideal to come and go freely meant, as Rancière said, stepping beyond the old arbitrations over “good or evil”, or the search for scattered signs of some greater, occluded truth. More simply, it was “a matter of walking and looking” in a natural community merging politics and sensibility in a synthesising vision piloted by the poets (p. 17). Contrastive with the “asocial subject” envisaged by Rousseau, romanticism is remarkable, as Langan has said, for “restor[ing] that subject to a social setting” (1995, p. 15). With William Wordsworth specifically, a “lyric subjectivity” was shaped around the possibility of a “natural association” of people and things. Walking, as a vector capable of traversing “the *topos* of the community” and eliciting a completely symmetrical, indeed reversible bond between words and things, and between the imaginary and the real, was pivotal (pp. 18 & 21). Yet this aligning of poetic and political utopias, as Rancière wrote, quickly came apart in the souring post-revolutionary atmosphere for the word ‘liberty’, like the deed itself, failed to live up to the bucolic modesty “of the wandering walker” (p. 21). The fateful aligning of genial strollers with dispossessed masses on the move – set in motion by Enclosure and a general economic disenfranchisement of people from place - provided a decisive misrecognition of mutuality, from which a bifurcation sprung, one in which the poet, no longer able to direct an ameliorating, pastoral sensibility towards the future, was forced to backtrack, consolidating on earlier, seemingly better-tested trajectories. Reverting to the ephemeral and the distant over place and political immediacy:

Poetry asserts itself as the ability of a sensory community to grasp anyone and anything in poetic *wandering*, by going back over the route of the inaugural walk, by dissociating the rhythm of its walk from that of the citizen armies, the clouds of a summer sky from political storms. (p. 20; emphasis in original)

In Wordsworth, as Rancière found, the solitary observer was reified as a figure closer to the original course of liberty (p. 22). If from its inception lyric sensibility, in aligning with ‘the people’, had aimed for a new social homogeneity and communitarian consistency, misrecognition of its aims in the politicised mass induced its own caesura - “a crack in lyric

simplicity" itself (p. 22). Like a recuperative strategy in tragedy aiming to equal the time of crisis, a quest for absolute value in old ideals was sought, one resulting, as Rancière put it, in a "simulacra of the epic journey" (p. 22). Staged as a geographic and temporal quest to recover protean liberty in its old origin - Ancient Greece - the "lyric 'I'", otherwise centred by immediate places (in Wordsworth's case, "the England of the lakes"), sought freedom in the originary "ocean of the poem" - in short "the ancient Mediterranean" where words at their origin could still be imagined to harbour an unsullied identity with things (pp. 22-24). The identification of the self with the page - an identification that found simple ratification in the correlation between the movement of the pen/mind and the movement of a corresponding responsive body in traversed space - called on far-flung bodies and memories, gestures and affects through a kind of trickery calling echoes and snatches of borrowed experience into text (p. 23). Rancière depicts the caesura of place/self this way:

The "new epic" that returns to the primal land of the truth of words also reopens the distance between the subject/poet and the subject of the poem. The journey toward the native land must be entrusted to a fictitious character, but also a false character. (p. 25)

Recalibrating and renewing the correspondence between words and things denied to the present meant calling up a defect in the subject's presence. As Rancière said, this retrospective operation came to "dominate modern thinking about poetics" with the notion of the return journey as archetypically figured in the travels of Odysseus (Ulysses) becoming the "very metaphor" for all "poetic transfer of meaning", given the underlying presumption of a straying or wandering of words from "original roots" (p. 22). The return journey was one way of stilling time and grasping at what endures. The alternative was the crushing surge of the new and the news that killed off the daily present incessantly, sully and cheapening the saying power of words (p. 25). Yet gone from these writers was the easy marriage of divergent places in a single consciousness, as Descartes had penned from Amsterdam. If the Cartesian walker =  $x$  could, ironically, garner sufficient humanist residual to imagine a joined up world via the topographer's sensibility of a continuous, tactile plenum (even if rendered disjunctively as a *partes extra partes* rather than fused), the new "lyric-epic speaker" (Rancière is thinking of Byron and Shelley particularly), abdicating a lyric self tied to the gestural immediacy of simple walks in the country, called up temporarily complex excursions set on recovering, resurrecting and reviving.

Pointedly, the tying of modern lyricism to excursion in pursuit of an undivided poet-writer, was one way of bypassing the divided self of tragedy and its divisive, 'ignorant' community of spectators. Travel sought to cover over political turbulence by calling up an ideal 'we' and an "unambiguous 'I'" via an "un-signifying poetry" (or one minimally mimetic) that in its simple observations and correspondences between people and things bypassed an actual, troubled



collective commensurate with the (disquieting) “tone of the city” (p. 11). The return to Greek epic and an idealised nature in part truncated an attendance on what Bakhtin referred to as real-life chronotope, favouring, much as Plato had before, mythological sheathing and its transformative valance. Yet contrary to the metaphysical walk, modernity’s *promenade métaphysique* sought foundation in the “displacement of a body onto a landscape” where territorialisation and sense impression would be married integrally with the page (p. 13). Overall, the task was to impart to the wanderer (or the subject of the statement) the “subjectivity of the traveller”, the one who travels, reckoning and recording and returning back, with echoes and utterances synthesised sufficiently to fuse with the ‘I’ of departure (or the subject of enunciation) (p. 12). Yet the introduction of an epic modality no doubt troubled, much as Plato’s double-seeing, by stepping out of the passing present and entered into an ambiguous temporality. In both instances, “words” could not maintain a mimetic immunity, and transportive of what Lacoue-Labarthe termed a *mise-en-abyme*, ultimately are shown up to be “only words”, a medium apposite to the seducer’s lies for which *Don Juan* offers an exemplary figure of travel and untruth. Hence, with the rise of the duped chronicle, appears “Ulysses the liar”, the tragic antihero (p. 25). The defective aspect Rancière saw in the “lyric-epic” character mirrors the Oedipal bifurcation between cognitive and corporeal knowing, and with it, the caesura’s radicalising of thought. Firstly, Romanticism’s “simple walk” can be thought to correspond with the first or passive synthesis of immediate succession (Eros - as the simple concatenation of steps and a floating gaze<sup>4</sup>). Secondly, the imagined walks of the epic and the longed-for return of a lost unity can be thought to correspond with the second synthesis as the domain of a past in general (Mnemosyne – as a backward loop recovering time<sup>5</sup>). Thirdly, the caesura induced by the amalgamation of these two types of ‘walk’ potentiates a subject-rupture and the world thought anew (metamorphosis – as the fusing with the self’s non-self). With this third synthesis is found a raft of anti-heroes, heroes who recover the wandering-form - much as Oedipus’ limp invites a perpetual tracking from the straight or direct path – but in an epiphanic guise.

## 10. Lying Consciousness & Other Semiotics

Conversely, the Oedipus of psychoanalysis misconstrues the third temporal synthesis, and names a particular stalled relation in which a corporeal-cognitive schema is made to repeatedly paper over the caesura and the difference at its heart. As such, there is no surpassing but only various modes of falling apart or falling short (in Deleuze and Guattari’s

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<sup>4</sup> See Wordsworth’s, *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud*: “They stretched in never-ending line [...] I gazed--and—gazed, but little thought” (Wordsworth W.1888/1999).

<sup>5</sup> See Shelley’s *Hellas: The Last Chorus*: “The world’s great age beings anew, | The golden years return, |The earth doth like a snake renew” (in Wordsworth 2005, p. 406).

words, the “‘pre-oedipal’, ‘para-oedipal’, ‘quasi-oedipal’” (2000, p. 55). Oedipus in this configuration is the standard-bearer of a universal subjectivity, one dependant on the accomplishment of a pre-given psychical configuration, and the key player in an unconscious remade a “classical theatre” (p. 55). Mirroring the Romantic backward quest for an “idealist turning point”, the traces of Greek soil Freud thought he found in analysis in fact were traces of his own “Goethian classical culture” (p. 55). If the Freudian, Oedipal triangulation (“mommy, daddy, me”) can be shorthanded to a “3+1” formula for Deleuze and Guattari - that is, a tripartite assembly of the one (mimetic of the tripartite, Platonic soul) - in fact beyond the representational shackling of the psyche to an underlying *logos*, the unconscious answers to a *pathos* whose formulation better reads as “3+n” (pp. 52, 96, 178):

There is no Oedipal triangle: Oedipus is always open in an open social field. Oedipus opens to the four winds, to the four corners of the social field [it is a...] poorly closed triangle, a porous or seeping triangle, an exploded triangle from which the flows of desire escape in the directions of other territories. (p. 96)

Blowing apart the stereotypical flag bearer of psychoanalysis, this other Oedipus ghosting universal subjectivity is instead a relaying point spanning the societal machinery and the intensive landscape subsisting with bodies. Pointedly, bodies make representational appearance through exceptionality. Would Oedipus’ body be remarkable at all without a limp? In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze pits affectations and intensities against the general and commonly representative. Ironic and comic repetitions are said to perturb moral and natural law, with irony working to “overturn the law” by ascending in a kind of parody of principles, while the comic, in contrast, operates according to the “art of consequences and descents, of suspensions and falls” (1994, p. 5). The notion of the fall makes a corporeal appeal indicative of a downward course for which in *Anti-Oedipus* the disjunctive synthesis is key with its variously organised “bodies” or “recording surfaces” (2000, pp. 11-12). Further, in *Cinema 2: The Time Image*, Deleuze’s invokes the body as a power capable of a “philosophical reversal”, one that frames the corporeal not as an “obstacle that separates thought from itself”, but which thought must instead be “plunged into [...] in order to reach the unthought, that is life” (1989, p. 189). As he says, it is not the body that thinks, “but, obstinate and stubborn, it forces us to think” (p. 189). Prior to thought, bodily life arises fundamentally with what Deleuze defined as the first and second syntheses - that is with habitus and memory - and it becomes a problem that thought is subsequently called on to grapple with (1989, p. 189).

Habitus and memory - forces in excess of the *Cogito* - are what the thinking self finds, much as Oedipus’ limp carries with it the past as a distant and forgotten ground that adheres with each step and whose eventual arrival into conscious awareness instigates the caesura. As Deleuze put it: “Oedipus receives a sign once from too far away, once from too close, and between the

two a terrible repetition of the crime is woven" (1989, p. 23). Speaking through codes alien to speech and thought itself, the body runs both ahead and lags behind; it speaks in fact for what is incommunicable to consciousness. If the repetitious comic-tragic cycle is indicative of an impasse in which metamorphosis fails, it is also the impasse of philosophy in the modern period in its contest with bodies that otherwise outstrip and elude it. As Nietzsche claimed in *The Gay Science* (1882/1887), "For the longest time, conscious thought was considered thought itself. Only now does the truth dawn on us that by far the greatest part of our spirit's activity remains unconscious and unfelt" (1972, p. 262). Instead, as he says, thinking exhausts itself on a "battlefield" beneath which, not a conciliatory, but a pathic knowing reigns. Pierre Klossowski in turn noted how "consciousness is the result of an operation of generalisation, [and...] falsification" (1997, pp. 98-99). Beyond what can be thought through language, what is essential is inexpressible because it "lies in our *pathos*" (p. 100). Nietzsche in turn sought an individuality that was neither the average or the general, but lay with what Klossowski called a "corporealizing thought", far below the head-high falsities of consciousness (p. 30):

The body wants to make itself understood through the intermediary of a language of signs that is fallaciously deciphered by consciousness. Consciousness itself constitutes this code of signs that inverts, falsifies and filters what is expressed through the body [hence,...] everything leads to the 'head' (the upright position), the message is deciphered in a way that will maintain this 'vertical' position; *there would be no message as such* if this position were not habitual and specific. Meaning is formed in the upright position, and in accordance with its own criteria: *high, low, before, after.* (p. 26; emphasis in original)

Underpinning this schema is a multitude of "vague impulses" (p.33). In the attempt to stabilise these intensities and excitations consciousness imposes a fallacious organisation, one made all the more possible, as Klossowski extends Nietzsche's argument, by the opacity and muteness of corporeal impulses themselves. If "cerebral activity" for Nietzsche arises, in evolutionary terms, with the most recently developed corporeal organ – the brain - it is also the body's most fragile activity, and one, ascribed to the summit of the corporeal posture, that makes the greatest defensive demands of 'the body' generally. In fact 'the body' as rightful and upright property of the self and as the seat of thought only adverts as such on the basis that the vast majority of corporeal impulses are forgotten (p. 27). By these terms, any diminishment in cerebral activity sees the cloak of personage recede to expose what Nietzsche, and Klossowski with him, take to be the body (im)proper in all its dissociating potency, a body irreducible to "the codes of everyday signs" or "institutional language" (pp. 30 & 37).

What Deleuze called the "Cogito of a dissolved self" (1994, p. xxi), Klossowski termed a "consciousness without an agent" (1997, p.32). In the context of Nietzsche's physiognomic thinking, if the agent endures only as the belated effect of a prolongation of selected impulses and excitation, in the context of the broader economy of signs of the body it cannot be otherwise than a falsification. In this Nietzsche might be thought to pre-empt the Freudian

unconscious, and while both draw on an aesthetic unconsciousness, in Nietzsche it was the path of *pathos*, not *logos*, that was followed. In contrast to a *cognitive* unconscious seemingly accessible to “the code of everyday signs” eventually, the body as other to conscious resists even this ruse. Against Apollonian consciousness as the seat of wellbeing, for Nietzsche health lay with a Dionysian unconscious capable of overcoming an overly vigilant, insomniac consciousness. At stake is “the erroneous perspective of a *parte ad totum* – which is why all philosophers are instinctively trying to imagine a total consciousness, a consciousness involved in all life and will. In all that occurs, a ‘spirit,’ ‘God’” (1968, p. 376). The chaos of drives underwrites life, not the “pictorialness” of consciousness and is as such unexchangeable (Klossowski 1997, p. 125).

To the extent, as Nietzsche held, that all movement at the level of impulse and drive constitutes a “gesture [and therefore] a kind of language” (cited in Klossowski 1997, p. 43) there can only be interpretation and a perspectivism spanning all the way “from the lowest level up to its extreme spiritualisation” (Klossowski 1997, p. 47). The reversal of thought that Nietzsche sought - its corporealisation - involves, in Klossowski’s phrasing, “retranslating the ‘conscious’ *semiotic* into the *semiotic of the impulses*”, and in this way overturning an automatism remaining “ignorant of the perpetual combat of forces” on which semiosis rests (p. 125; emphasis in original).

In fact the ego is but the tip of what Klossowski defined as a multi-faceted psychical apparatus akin to the soul of the medieval mystics, for whom an unplumbable depth supplants any certain grasp of God’s transcendence (p. 9). At this soul’s lowest levels are a plethora of unnameable impulses and excitations out of which are assembled phantasms or what Klossowski called “obsessional images (cited in Smith 2005, p. 13). Consequently, any sense of self rests on a “phantasm”, a fragile “*suppôt*” or substrate/substance that, as Smith says, stills “the moving chaos of the impulses” by “bestow[ing] a psychic and organic unity” upon them (p. 12). Unlike Freud, for whom fantasies operate according to a substitutive logic centred on symptomatological equivalence, Klossowski’s phantasms are contingent loci within the “invisible agitation of the soul” that far from determining the self’s truth, are agents for what Deleuze called the “powers of the false” (Deleuze 1989; Smith 1997, p. xi). The phantasm’s essential unintelligibility is what drives an impetus to explicate content from them. From this repetitious locus of unknowing arise a further element of the Klossowskian soul - the invention of “simulacra” or willed representational figures that translate what is “incommunicable and nonrepresentable” into a language rendered through stereotypes and the normative conventions of everyday signs (Smith 2005, p. 16). Hence via a rarefying of impulses, arise first phantasms, followed by simulacra and then stereotypes in a trajectory that turns intensity into intention. Deleuze offers a characterisation of “the cliché” that mirrors the Klossowskian

stereotype. As he said, “A cliché is a sensory-motor image of the thing” - in other words it is what is immediately passed over, or by, on the basis that it is already too well known to perception (1989, p. 20). Citing Bergson, he refers to the cliché as that which we “perceive less of” on the basis of the minimal conscious engagement it demands. On the other hand, as Deleuze added, “if our sensory-motor schemata jam or break, then a different type of image can appear”, an image he goes on to describe, in the context of modern cinema, as the “time image” (p. 20). The phantasm is that mechanism which injects back into the cognitive immobility of the stereotype an aberrant mobility calling on thought. It is what perturbingly doubles with gregarious signs dissimulating their claim to equivalence or sameness (Smith 2005, p. 17).

Reading the Oedipal scenario into Klossowski’s counter-tripartite soul (composed of impulses-intensities, phantasms, and simulacra-stereotypes) the limping protagonist carries at his core a phantasm repetition that both defines and beguiles identity. He starts off “on the right foot” as Deleuze said, “gay and innocent”, believing “that he had warded off the monsters of the depth and allied himself with the powers from on high” (1990, p. 205). He is a “peace-maker”, placating contesting forces, wishing in the process to better “form a kingdom of surfaces and of the earth to fit his size” (p. 205). Yet the supposed right path carries within it a depth-intensity incommensurate with the surface of things. The resulting tragic caesura calls for a commensurate simulacra – a blinding that reproduces, in the endless wandering that follows, a walker perpetually thrown off-course as measure of a limp that potentiates in every course passage tangential to intentionality. In this too the simulacra releases what in the proper name of Oedipus had been silenced, initiating a reverse passage from a semiotic of consciousness (swollen headed) to a “semiotic of the impulses” (swollen footed) and with it an unfolding of the solecism binding bodily sense to language. In another sense the *apolis* wanderer anticipates the Antique placement of an iconoclastic regime that cast the gods beyond the city limits. Christian monotheism, with its mistrust of imitations and icons, exhibited a fear of the return of a polytheism and yet, with the turning of this monotheistic God away from humanity, it is a polytheism of sorts that returns, a polytheism of affects, “a kind of polytheistic inversion of Augustine’s monotheistic *City of God*” (Smith 2005, p. 11). Yet the search for new affects conditional on alternative gods was pursued outside according to a city impulse itself given over to the perpetual transport of roads. Seeking such impulse/gods beyond the grinding “heterorhythmy” of industrialising cities - perceived as resolutely godless - walkers sought what Barthes called *idiorrhymy* – “a medium, utopian, Edenic, idyllic form” (2013, p. 9). If what lyric-romantic *idiorrhymy* sought was a rural, reconciled communality, what modernity’s *promenade métaphysique* crafted was a world-spanning (as opposed to the cosmos-spanning metaphysical walk), surface affair not without its pit falls in time.

## 11. *Death-Drive*

In the following chapter it is with a return to city place proper that lyric will be found to exhaust itself. There, walkers placed the experience of alienation and shock at the centre of their perambulations. Yet what would experience itself entail, having become inseparable from “the surging emergence of the concept of the unconscious”, and therefore a thing beheld by neither a thinking self (the Cartesian *cogito*) nor an autonomously synthesising transcendental agent (the Kantian *cogito*) (Agamben 1993, pp. 40-41)? For Agamben, between Montaigne and Rousseau the meaning of experience fundamentally changes: while for Montaigne, regaining consciousness subsequent to a fall while out riding was an extreme experience akin to death, for the Rousseau, a comparable limit is courted, when while on a country walk, he was struck down by a runaway Great Dane dog, the recovery from which was characterised as a kind of new birth (pp. 38-41). From death and infancy as models of defining limits in experience, the subject itself will appear as an entity compounded with an anonymising self in the “third person”, one complexly stretched between death and pleasure principles (p. 41). Against a pastoral probing of cities (Wordsworth’s sonnet “Composed Upon Westminster Bridge” (1802) say), it was a *de facto* return to a repetitious, vertical sounding of urban terrain in the form of depth-intensity that characterised accounts of experience.

If psychoanalysis strikingly invested its energies in charting infantile terrain, Freud himself did not resist delving into the beyond of the self, indeed the beyond of life itself. Yet contrary to the speculative, Freudian death drive and its quest for a return to inanimate matter, in Deleuze’s account, *Thanatos* turns the question of immobility towards temporal stasis. To the extent that *Eros* repetitiously binds the libido to better facilitate a discharge in pleasure, repetition equally “holds together the instant”, and with it, a repetition of “what was before the instant” (1991, p. 114; emphasis in original). Hence, the passing of time causes everything immemorially persisting or to come (*Aion*) to double with *Chronos*. So on one hand, *Eros* binds excitation into momentary pleasure; on the other, temporality arises as that which repeatedly unbinds the present, siphoning of pleasure, excitation, and pulling experience back into the depths or what amounts to the pure, empty form of time (p. 114).

Green footed *Eros* and red footed *Mnemosyne* (itself the ultimate bearer of *Thanatos*, as testified to by the body without organs) risk swapping place. For Nancy, if globalisation, with its proliferating agglomeration, is indicative of a “death drive”, the criss-crossed orb or *glomus* is indicative of a repetition-binding to excess. This repetition though is of a technological order, an epic, circumlocutory overcoming of distance, but it is also a decent into an “excess – beyond representation” (Nancy 2007, p. 47). This excess can be said to vitiate the course of *Eros* with its economy of pleasure and discharge of tension. As Deleuze recognised, an

alternate rhythm may emerge where “Pleasure [becomes...] a form of behaviour related [solely] to repetition” itself (1991, p. 120). In this sense pleasure and repetition “exchange[...] roles”, and in doing so, invoke a kind of “perverse mysticism” whereby “pleasure ceases to motivate the will and is adjured, disavowed, ‘renounced,’ the better to be recovered as a reward or consequence, and as a law” (p. 120). He had in mind the particular desiring structures of masochism and sadism, whereby the surface resolutions of Oedipus fall back on various hyperbolised facets indexed to the before and after of the castration threat and that manifest, not as a pursuit of pleasure exactly, but as pleasure derived from the very act of backward, stalled repetitions. Reversed this way “Eros is desexualised and humiliated for the sake of a resexualised Thanatos”, giving rise, as Deleuze put it, to the characterising atmospheres of “coldness and comfort (the coldness of desexualisation, on one hand, and the comfort of resexualisation, on the other)” (p. 120). The coldness/comfort dichotomy associated with the masochist modality (as female authoritative ideal wrestled off a paternal administration of the socio-symbolic) will be shown in the following chapter to be of considerable significance for walker-observers – specifically Baudelaire and the *flâneur* – who made the troubled intersection of the maternal and the non-maternal, the desexualised and the resexualised, key initiatory levers for ‘knowing’ the city.

## CHAPTER 5

### *“An-Oedipal” Walking – Paris*

By man of the world', I mean a man of the whole world, a man who understands the world and the mysterious and legitimate reasons behind all its customs [...].

**Charles Baudelaire**

#### 1. *The Natal*

What arises when a liberal citizenry, having surrendered a poeticised correspondence between national terrain and communal freedoms, confronts the repetition to excess of nineteenth century urban industrial life? To the extent that national political economies in Europe pitted liberal democracy against monarchical absolutism, as suggested previously, the beneficiary was the bourgeoisie, who found in such economies, an institutional form apposite to its mercantile goals (Sassen 2006). To “the raw power of capital” was added the mandate to confer rights and privileges to the owners of capital (p. 100). Yet, to the extent that the resulting political economy depended on a new national identification or consciousness, it was enacted in accordance with the production of rights-bearing subjects themselves profoundly split between propertied classes and disenfranchised others, or what Sassen termed “distinct economic subjects/actors” (p. 105 & 110). While the route taken by each European State varied, as Sassen argued, bourgeois hegemony rested on a caesura in the national body, one that showed up in cities particularly. Masking the institutionalising of disadvantage, the citizen/subject was otherwise held up as its own self-sufficient property bearing the very “*dignity of individual man*” as Langan put it (1995, p. 14). Yet ironically, such self-possession could not escape the propensity in modernity for the “transformation of [all] property into circulating capital”, a mobility that not only reduced fixed distinctions increasingly to “unit[s] of account” but no less cast persons into circulation in accordance with a generalised “obligation to mobility” (p. 38 & 101). Grounding what Deleuze and Guattari termed a “global Subjectivity” – or “naked and free labor” disenfranchised from land – is the nation-state (“the ‘natal’”), itself an abstract means of instituting an identificatory consistency (1987, p. 456) - or “imagined community” as Benedict Anderson



(1991) had it - amidst the productive forces otherwise decoding prior local values, communities and place-based solidarities.

Contrastive with the despotic state that *enslaves* its populace as component parts of an empiric “megamachine”, the nation-State *subjects* citizens to a social apparatus reproducing itself in “passional [...] living forms” – meaning contingent identificatory fields or totalities built on a “certain deterritorialization of territories (community land, imperial provinces, seigneurial domains etc.)” and an invented ‘people’ brought about by “a decoding of the population” (pp. 456). In systems of national “social subjection”, as Deleuze and Guattari argued, all subjects are workers of some sort labouring on the social body of capital itself:

In effect, capital acts as the point of subjectification that constitutes all human beings as subjects; but some, the “capitalists,” are subjects of enunciation that form the private subjectivity of capital, while the others, the “proletarians,” are subjects of the statement, subjected to the technical machines [industrial apparatuses] in which constant capital is effectuated”. (p. 457)

Hence post-signifying subject positions, vacillating between enunciation and statement, between a national self and minoritarian (or “nationalitarian”) vestiges, constitute so many axioms or instances of consolidation otherwise coursed by capitalism’s circulatory matrix (p. 457). Deleuze and Guattari call these points of consolidation “axiomatization” (p. 461), a process of “forced reterritorialization” conditioning, diverting and reconfiguring the prevailing deterritorialization (Holland 1998, p. 67). To the extent that axiomatization installs “antiproduction within production itself”, it does so on the basis of reconfiguring prevailing modes of production to induce ever further productivity. The whole enterprise works, as Eugene Holland has suggested, by “free[ing] people from determinate conditions of existence and codes of meaning [...] only to force them by necessity to accept new and increasingly exploitative conditions” (1998, p. 67). This doubling is not without a degree of deadening cynicism, as Deleuze and Guattari point out, and the positing of ever-new ‘living’ scenarios on the basis of an interminable process geared to “extort surplus value” carried with it a sense of fluctuating reality driven by mundane passional attachments at once attracting and yet far from believable (2000, p. 238). Such was, and remains, the comforts and coldness of the full body of capital.

This chapter charts encounters with the nineteenth century, urban capitalist *socius* and the shock effects characterising it. Stripped of the ‘natural’ idealism vested in the natal, market decoding shows its raw, fanged countenance, and with it, a problem for experience. Previously Agamben was shown emphasising a general malfunction in the experiencing subject, one arising with the Cartesian and Kantian *cogitos*. At stake was a rising awareness of the unconscious and the role of unknowing in acts of knowing. Consistent with a changeover that saw death displaced by infancy as the locale where the limit experience of

knowledge was tested, the urban itself was taken to be a sick body, the convalescence from which would rise up, in terms the hygienist movement anticipated, a reinvigorated, reborn organism. Charles Baudelaire, building on Edgar Allan Poe's gauging of the incomprehensible mysteries of urban life via a convalescing wanderer (in "The Man of the Crowd", 1840), vests exemplary urban comprehension in a child's-eye view – something equally credited to adults returning to health from convalescence (2010, pp. 10-11). This observing acuity Baudelaire credited to a new persona – the "man of the world" – who, as a kind of specialist artist "tied to his palette like a serf to the soil", wants to know and understand all that "the surface of the spheroid" has to offer (2010, p. 9).<sup>1</sup> Yet, as Agamben noted, this chronicling of modern life in total was required to pass through the shock effects of the urban. Place-estrangement was the royal road to a "*lieu commun*" or "common place" given by epiphanous knowing (1993, pp. 41-42). The cost, as this chapter aims to show, is a psychical splitting and that division's management.

## 2. Vagrancy & Bohemia

Baudelaire's "man of the world" is one response to capitalist decoding when a definitive image or enduring unity of the social body is stalled. Unlike the "transcendental unity" maintained by the despotic *socius*, axiomatization, as the nation-State's mode of contingent unification, is compelled to play catch up with the "superior deterritorialization of capital" (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, pp. 455-458). Axiomatization induces, no less than it seeks to manage, incessant shifts in subjective repertoire. Certainly the nineteenth century European capitals facilitated an adventurism of subject-types that stressed the limits and tolerance of bourgeois sensibility. Paris, caught in successive waves of revolution and Empire, was one such locale where, as Jerrold Seigel described, "Bourgeois progress", in its project to overturn old vestiges of a sovereign/despotic power (*Ancien Régime*), increasingly sought - in pursuit of what Hegel had diagnosed as a troubling "free subjectivity" - "the dissolution of traditional restrictions on personal development" (1986, p. 10). Yet for Seigel, the Bohemianism of the 1830s and 40s was not alien to the bourgeois project; in fact it represented something like the shock troops of a progressive quest for bourgeois hegemony and self-development (p. 05 & 11). Moreover Bohemianism was particularly identified with "artistism" whose inventive theatrics challenged prevailing identities and presumed destinies while purporting to challenge the commercialism of the age (pp. 11 & 17). Yet consistent with Seigel's intuition of a continuity in the bourgeois-Bohemian identificatory field, the anti-commercial polemic of Bohemianism no doubt unwittingly paralleled a market drive to dissolve determinant conditions and fixed points of subjectification, while

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<sup>1</sup> This "painter of modern life" was the artist Constantin Guys (1802-1892) (2010, p. 7).

'inventing' new passional points on which to capitalise. As Félix Pyat, who coined the term *artism*, worried: "One is an artist the way one used to be a property owner, it's the distinguishing mark of those people who don't have any" (cited in Seigel 1986, p. 17). Certainly the descriptor Bohemian - itself drawing on the French word for gypsy (*bohémien*) as Seigel noted - signalled a positive revaluing of 'flight' and postsignifying deterritorialization, particularly in its emphasis on an older "romantic fascination with the exotic, the uncivilised, and the unclassifiable" ascribed to vagabondage and the wandering of travelling peoples, themselves thought to transport a noble legacy contesting narrow Enlightenment rationality (p. 24). On the other hand, imperialism, colonial trade and the circulation of foreign nationals in nineteenth century urban settings exposed even the most insulated of lives to an alien newness. As Seigel credited an anonymous writer of the time, "the gypsies of the old civilisation will have become the messengers of the new", thereby casting "fantasy" into "society's center" - having otherwise been "squeeze[ed...] into the corners and margins of existence" (p. 25). Indeed the vagabond in these contexts was more than *simply* the messenger of the new; as Langan has argued, vagabondage was that state mostly closely approaching "the abstracted unit of citizenship" arising with a post-revolutionary confluence of romanticism and liberalism and remains the "hallucinatory double of capital" whose "sole logic is expansion" (1995, pp. 12 & 224). In its destination-free lassitude, vagrancy is capable of being misread (on the basis of a means-ends substitution) as the very indicator of an economic freedom from productive labour (p. 14), and in its urbanised guise (as the stroll or promenade), as the indicator of a certain skewing of leisure practices originating with aristocratic and cosmopolitan elites, but widely adopted by the middle classes (Amato 2004). Bohemianism, as catchall for a raft of identificatory positions, and as recipient of residual threads of romanticism, no doubt conflated freedom of mobility with economic freedom, though not without substituting the visceral, and often poverty-stricken, bodies for its cultivated, genial double.

Attendances like this on states of bodily comportment and social types were indicative, as Seigel noted, of a will to visualise and raise to the level of public consciousness - via a burgeoning print medium particularly - the proliferating subjectivities spawned by urban-industrial life (1986, p. 28). Specifically, "popular pamphlets called *physiologies*" - which "described Parisian social types" including the *flâneur* - were widely circulated in the 1840s and 50s (pp. 28-29). Sought were recognisable characters amidst the crowd - figures in whom a certain inherency lay - yet the *flâneur*, as one such type in fact offered a master figure for roving detection. As Walter Benjamin put it: "Performed in the figure of the *flâneur* is that of the detective", a performance that while covered over by indolence, "in reality, hides the riveted attention of an observer who will not let the unsuspecting malefactor out of his sight" (2002, p. 442). How distant is the Cartesian man of the crowd

from this “spectator prince” cultivating his own anonymity while capitalising on the exposure of others (p. 443). As Benjamin cited Baudelaire:

“For the perfect *flâneur*,... it is an immense joy to set up home in the heart of the multitude, amid the ebb and flow... To be away from home, yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the center of the world, yet to remain hidden from the world [...]”. (p. 443)

Moreover, if the *flâneur* is the observer-spy of the marketplace as Benjamin asserted, he is no less the bearer of an idleness that strains against “the division of labour” (p. 427). In *flâneurie* particularly is found, as Seigel put it, “the tension between work and indulgence, *travail* and *jouissance*” (p. 125). Against the specialisation and the sedentariness of work, public service and the professions, *jouissance*, or immoderate enjoyment, was the antidote to work stricture and its forced inertia. Baudelaire’s own transgressing of the bourgeois work ethic found an ideal in the “dandy” – an arcane “champion[...] of human pride”, fastidious in appearance and yet the conduit for a “spirituality and stoicism” exercised with monastic despotism (2010, pp. 38-39). Moreover, this version of the stoical transported an aristocratism linked, as Charles Taylor has shown, to heroism, bravery and corporeal risk – in other words, an ethos apposite to the “warrior-aristocrat” (1989, p. 436; Baudelaire 2010, p. 36). Underwriting Baudelaire’s writings, as Taylor saw it, was an epiphanic project whose heroism sought to draw from a degraded market urbanism a spiritual dividend, a yield no longer convincingly attributable to the natural idealism of Romanticism. Yet key for Baudelaire was a remaking of dandyism and its blasé indifference. As he compared the dandy to Constantin Guys (“M.G.”):

[...] the dandy aspires to cold detachment, and it is in this way that M.G., who is dominated, if ever anyone was, by an insatiable passion, that of seeing and feeling, parts company trenchantly with dandyism. *Amabam amare*, said St Augustine. ‘I love passion, passionately,’ M.G. might willingly echo. (2010, p. 12)

This reformed dandyism nevertheless entailed a descent into crowding movement to find in its “ebb and flow, the bustle, the fleeting and the infinite” (p. 13). Drunkenly given over to the mass in person, an alchemistic remaking of the urban everyday was sought (1989, pp. 436-437).

### 3. Market Descent

For Taylor, Baudelaire’s paeon to drunkenness (“Time to get drunk” - whether on wine, poetry or virtue) entailed a derangement aiming to slip free from work time’s “horrible burden” (Baudelaire 1970, p. 74 & Taylor 1989, p. 437). Actively sought in this counter-temporality was what Taylor called an awareness of existential “wholeness”, a recovery

afforded to aesthetic practices, particularly poetry and literature. If art in the nineteenth century came to replace 'nature' as an inherent source of existential meaning, for Taylor it was because while the latter increasingly came to be thought "too inert, disordered, opaque, [and] banal", art itself offered instead the possibility of "build[ing] a realm entirely apart" – solely responsive that is to human action and reform (p. 439). City space offered a source of revising poetic richness, and signalled a broader shift away from lapsed Edenic values towards the urban inorganic as itself a domain of perfectibility. For Taylor, this appeal to an active, crystalline exactness over passive organic chaos matched a shift from an Erasmian Christian orientation to a Jansenist one that insisted on tying human motivations to original sin, and a quest for the soul's purity by way of a passage through depravity and fallen life (1989, pp. 249, 356, 439). These two Christian orientations complexly double for Taylor with Aristotelian and Platonic traditions where, through a complex series of crossovers, an Aristotelian overcoming of inner division associated with the organic gave way to a darkening Platonism (1989, pp. 439-440). Hence a quest for wholeness, once upwardly directed in the metaphysical walk, is made to pass through the debased motivations of market society.

For Holland, Baudelaire's evolving poetic output complexly inhabits what Taylor termed the "post-romantic" visionary posture. Baudelaire was not only an exemplary poet of "shock-defence" who called for a "high-anxiety hyperconsciousness", but he also ushered in a "psychic splitting" – or what amounts to a breakdown of subjective consistency and foundation (1993, p. 04).<sup>2</sup> Hence, if in Baudelaire's transition from romanticism to modernism there is a parallel shift from lyric to prose (or "anti-lyric") poetry, as Holland argued, equally at stake is a transition from a defensively maintained psychical whole, to a split psychical condition giving rise, on one hand, to a plethora of shifting identifications, and on the other, to an aggressive drive to totalise or close off a 'self' resistant to its perturbing setting (p. 03 & 07). Moreover, this poetic "psychodynamics" was integrally tied to the intensified societal decoding defining the market economy. The "'cash nexus' of the market" exclusively privileged exchange-value over use-value in a reification that alienated and commoditised phenomena, severing them from concrete attachments (p. 12). What interested Holland though was a parallel between this rationalisation/reification and decoding/recoding, where, as proposed by Deleuze and Guattari, decoding works by demystifying, devaluing and subordinating qualities, while recoding involves bestowing

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<sup>2</sup> Holland drew the notion of psychical splitting from Melanie Klein who had documented the "near-total disorganization of the psyche at the earliest, pre-Oedipal stages" (1993, p. 24), or what Klein herself called "paranoid and schizoid anxieties and mechanisms" that "drive the ego to develop specific defence-mechanism" (1975, p. 02). Splitting for Klein centred on a "dispersal of the destructive impulse which is felt as the source of danger", one that attaches itself to varying 'external objects' via "projection" (1975, 04-05). From this arise a complex series of splitting and absorptions of good and bad objects that variously lead to the consolidation of the ego and/or schizoid psychical positions.

new qualities replacing those stripped from original experience, albeit one amenable to further decoding and calculative valuation (p. 13). While recognising capitalism's essentially "a-semiotic" characteristic, Holland was interested in the tendency for axiomatization to be "imbricated on both sides [decoding and recording] with sign-systems", and as a consequence, to be "detectable in the psyche and in literary texts as well as in social institutions" (p. 15). Importantly, modernity as that liberalisation apposite to the capitalist *socius* and its overturning of a despotic or imperial signifying regime, in fact was what emerging art practices of modernism – as a relatively autonomous domain staked out in contradistinction to the bourgeois market society – aimed to repudiate through accelerated experiments in decoding (p. 15). Nineteenth century urban bohemia was one such incubator for radicalising art and subject types, no less than societal coherence. Key in Baudelaire's ushering in of modernist practices was a revision of romanticism's deployment of metaphor in favour of metonymy (Holland 1993, p. 11). For Holland, this meant an unmooring of tropic equivalence, and identity in favour of associational fluidity and ambiguous signification. Reworking what Lacan called a "metonymy of desire", Holland described how "infinite semiosis" (1993, 5) is released when the symbolic structure, ordinarily guaranteed by an anchoring significatory centre is lost:

In cases where the law of signification fails, particularly when the "*nom/non-du-père*" is denied (or "foresclosed"), the result according to Lacan is "schizophrenia," a purely metonymic form of desire not governed by the metaphoric grammar, syntax, and lexicon of the symbolic order, linguistically conceived. (2006 p. 18)

For Holland though, it is not the name of the father *per se* that defines the Symbolic order, but rather a "certain figure-of-the-despot" which is used to maintain "coherent rule over social relations, behaviour and cognition" (p. 19). "Schizophrenic desire" and an excessive semiosis accompanying it, far from being a pathologic exception, is the operational norm induced by capitalist market relations. Eschewing "infantile determinism" and familial extrapolation as the foundation of psychic life, Holland asserted with Deleuze and Guattari that it is this "socio-historical context [that...] ultimately determines psychic life" (p. 19).

In previous chapters Oedipus was recognised as fulfilling an ameliorating role, binding contraries into surface continuities, the traversal of which required a unified speaking subject. In the standard psychoanalytic depiction, the possibility of "speaking as [an] 'I'" depends on "'whole' social beings modelled on one of its parents", themselves situated within a differential system sanctioned by paternal privilege (p. 197). Such a resolution is understood to entail the refiguring of maternal attachment according to a socio-symbolic apprenticeship that internalises paternal authority in the form of the super-ego (p. 187). For Holland this meant the abandonment of an "Ideal ego" – as omnipotent fusing prior to maternal separation (or what Freud called "primary narcissism") – in favour of an "Ego-ideal

that condenses cultural norms by way of social role modelling (p 193). Conversely, a *pathos* in modernity paralleling the intensification of market relations necessarily renders socio-symbolic apprenticeship unstable precisely because its repetition mechanisms (decoding/recoding cycles) trouble the maintenance of ego-ideals and the sublimation or desexualisation of *Eros*. As suggested previously, disenfranchised *Eros* opens the way to *Thanatos* and sheer repetition as a mechanism maintaining pleasure in its own right. For Holland the shock-effects of modern urban life charted by Baudelaire are both indicative of the latter and prompted exploration of a mode of desexualisation centred on self-dissolution and re-engenderment – in short, a deployment of the urban as an initiatory mechanism productive of individuation. Consciousness thrown into constant, defensive vigilance, in fact models a Christian ethos of suffering and self-attendance, something already key in romanticism. Consistent with the lapse of revolutionary promise, as canvassed previously, romanticism had long validated “personal suffering” as a mode of resistance to, and compensation for, the resulting vacillation between decoding and excessive recoding (p. 186). If in that context suffering served to secondarily bind social solidarity, Baudelaire presided over a transformation of this tradition, seeking instead a psychic intensity resulting from identification with transgressive societal stricture (p. 187). Flaunting the demands of the socio-symbolic in pursuit of “guilt-ridden” intensity amounted to an “existential masochism” answering to a sadistically perceived socio-symbolic despotism (pp.187-188).

Hence the aristocratic dandy, in whom is found both a warrior’s sacrifice and suffering asceticism, plied a strange course between social elevation and descending immersion into a depraved urban substratum. Concomitantly, Baudelaire’s *post-Romantic* sensibility, with its increasing reliance on prose poetry over lyric (specifically the “*Tableaux parisiens*” and *Petits Poèmes en prose*), tended towards more “‘realistic’ poems” shorn of the “exotic fantasy”, as Leo Bersani noted (1977, p. 106). These depictions of external spectacle were coincident with an appeal to urban others as a source of appropriation:

That is, the bits and pieces of observed life in a big city provide the poet with an opportunity to put bits and pieces together, to reconstitute a coherent life from an isolated image. And he reconstitutes those lives *for himself*: it is as if the poet could become whole only by fabricating a wholeness outside himself. (1977, p. 108; emphasis in original)

For this a mobile observance was necessary and it is in this context that walking is made a key mode of encounter. For instance in “*Les Sept Vieillards*” (“The Seven Old Men”) of the “*Tableaux parisiens*” section, a strolling narrator is accosted by mysteries and living ghosts travelling Paris’ “giant colossus’ conduits” (1998, p. 177). Specifically confronting is the appearance of an “evil” eyed “old man” whose posture defied bipedal propriety:

You would not call him bent, but cut in two -

His spine made a right angle with his legs  
 So neatly that his cane, the final touch,  
 Gave him the figure and the clumsy step (1998, p. 179)

Yet once sighted, such men multiply: not one, not two, but “seven times”, sinister, ancient men “indifferent to life”, are depicted tramping off “towards their unknown goal” (p. 179).

Rushing home, the observer is left to reassemble a semblance of self from his “soul [sent] danc[ing] in circles like a hull Dismantled, on a monstrous shoreless sea” (p. 181).

Balanced between shattered integrity and narcissistic recovery, the urban multiplying of one type, whole and self-sufficient - if monstrously so – sets in play a vicious condemnation of urban place as hell-like and a datum from which an integrated self must be risen from - for which the high-low, sky-street, right-angled body offer repeated tropes. Bersani said of this poem, it is as if, despite seeming not to recognise himself in these others, they nevertheless theatricalize a “separation of the self from itself” (1977, p. 122) and if, in Baudelaire’s words, they are indicative of a familial perturbation or “Trick Phoenix” giving rise to the son [as...] father of himself” (1998, p. 181), in fact the narrator performs precisely this tricky self-engenderment by repeatedly recalling and reordering the spectacle. For Holland too “*Les Sept Vieillards*” demonstrates a drive to arrest urban shock but through “extreme metaphor”, where poetic correspondences aim at an “infinite repetition of the absolutely identical same” and therefore a cessation in the serial motion of metonymic desire (2006, p. 162). Against “These monsters [that] smacked of all eternity” (Baudelaire 1998, p. 179), the Phoenix trick of the living walker turns on a sheer mobility capable of encounter *and* surviving withdrawal.

#### 4. *Love-Hate Amidst the Crowds*

Pointedly, this encounter with inscrutable old man is redolent of Poe’s “The Man of the Crowd”, where encounter and fevered pursuit of an elderly character through London city streets similarly leads to a recoiling realisation that incomprehensible desires and monstrous motivations are revealed when singular entities of the moving urban mass are drawn into observed scrutiny. Like the roamer in “*Les Sept Vieillards*”, Poe’s narrator, having pursued this incompressible other night and day, has no option but to retreat, to re-narrate, and assert his own peripatetic logic in opposition to that which he has observed. However, Poe’s importance for Baudelaire goes beyond particular instances of poetic mimesis; for Holland what Poe provided, given his own political and economic circumstances, was an “ego-ideal” showing how “martyrdom to market society” and the suffering it engenders might also potentiate poetic greatness (2006, p. 209). Building on a claim by Michel Butor, Holland similarly recognised Poe as one of three “poetic Others” or “intercessors” corresponding with phases in Baudelaire’s poetic trajectory: in his romantic phase - “long-



time mistress Jeanne Duval"; in the revolutionary phase - "the people of Paris in 1848"; and subsequent to the installation of Napoleon III in the 1851 coup - Poe himself (2006, p. 23). In the latter the "modern aristocrat" or tragic 'breed' emerged, much as Poe had, as a figure both antithetical to market society yet tethered inextricably with it. This trajectory defines: firstly, Baudelaire's turning from romanticism and the harmonious ideal towards city space as libertarian counter-model to the militarism of Napoleon (1769-1821); secondly, a rising sense of compromise, particularly given the installation of the Bourgeois Monarchy of Louis-Philippe in 1830 and a restoration of commercially-driven market relations seen to prostitute societal and artistic values; and thirdly, despair and cynicism at the collapse of democratic idealism with the arrival of the Second Empire (pp. 14-15). Baudelairean poetics then, born of this cynicism, sought to bridge and re-programme a crisis in artistic, creative values indicative across the entirety of the social body (p. 6).

In line with a psychical-historical convergence Deleuze and Guattari called schizoanalysis and Holland deployed in his consideration of Baudelaire, both psyche and socio-historical entities can be understood, at different levels, to synthesis "a global sense of duration", one that holds together the divergent temporalities of prior psychical part identifications and objects, no less than competing societal aspirations and interests were given global coordination in a bourgeois hegemony (Faulkner 2006, p. 36). The socio-symbolic itself can be considered phallic to the extent that a 'global' engirdling and subordinating of rival instincts and interests linked to Eros and Mnemosyne are accomplished (p. 37; Deleuze 1994, pp. 102-103). What Lacan called the phallus, Deleuze interrogates as a symbolic organ covering over the "virtual or partial objects" it borrows and builds on. Such a genealogy taints the phallus with absence making it a thing "displaced in relation to itself", a thing "found only as lost", and "possessed of an always fragmentary identity which loses its identity in the double" (1994, p. 103). In psychoanalytic terms, the phallic orientation spells the end of the "auto-erotic drives" (anal, oral & urethral stages), supplanting them with concretely real, desired objects, but not without positing these prior stages as both lost and paradisiacal – in other words, contributive of a retrospective illusion of unity otherwise set in a pure past preceding phallic division (Faulkner 2006, p. 38). Deleuze offered an explicitly philosophical characterisation of lost psychical loves: pre-Socratic philosophy, in its splintered allegiances and contested assertions of existential certainty, was pointedly schizophrenic in orientation; Platonism, in its attempt to reconcile and iron out such multifarious claims, was essentially depressive – depressive in the sense that its revised love of wisdom entailed a distribution of love and hate based on the whole of truth at once asserted and withdrawn (1990, p. 191). In Platonism as Deleuze said:

[...] the Good is reached only as the object of a reminiscence, uncovered as essentially veiled; the One gives only what it does not have, since it is superior to

what it gives, withdrawn into its height; and as Plato said of the Idea, "it flees or it perishes". (pp. 191-192)

Concomitantly, the metaphysical walk, no less than modernity's *promenade métaphysique*, undertake a depressive quest for a good that is prior and always perishing. Further, an Occidental onto-peripatetic, to the extent that it mirrors an Oedipal vector, is phallic in orientation precisely because it strains to bind symbolically "always displaced fragment[s]" themselves "standing for a past which was never present" (Deleuze 1994, p. 103).

Seemingly reconciled in a "narcissistic illusion", the maternal "ideal ego" (given through *Eros*) and the paternal "ego-ideal" (given through *Thanatos*) are what the phallus gathers and attempts to reconcile, though not without enduring the spectre of a split or castrative division (p. 39). Sublimation is the Freudian answer to this disjuncture where, in a narcissistic illusion (Oedipus as peace-maker and surface-builder), the wounded ideal ego and the departed ego-ideal (heterogeneous series associated with maternal and paternal figures, but also corporeal depths and a transcendent voice on high) are drawn together inwardly consolidating as the Id and the super-ego (p. 48). In what Deleuze saw as a particular configuration of the disjunctive synthesis, sublimation aims to draw together through recognition and identification, the hybrid underpinnings of the psyche, thereby channelling prohibition towards social utility and cohesiveness (pp. 48- 50).

Desexualisation (or the reassigning of libidinal energy towards non-erotic ends) is the price of this reconciliation, but also promises a healing of the split that brings the ego into being – though not without the expending of considerable energy to overcome pre-phallic psychological patterns. Much as Goux found in the Oedipal vector a hyper-validation of the intellect and self-mastery, Freud too associates sublimation with an intellectual world committed to bypassing instinctual frustrations and to constructing a reality in which phantasies are remade "into truths of a new kind" (Freud cited in Faulkner 2006, p. 49). This elevating drive, indicative of a Platonic upward quest, is rich with instabilities as Keith Faulkner has explored, for "the superego's structure issues from, and prolongs, the perversions of the pre-genital series", and more, it is "a foundation of vice" that seeds a culture's virtues. Perverse impulses differ from sublimation, as Faulkner said, only by virtue of "the social usefulness of the outcome" (pp. 50-51). If the upward path out of the pre-phallic libido offers one route for desexualisation, Deleuze recognises another, one, as suggested previously, that bypasses sublimation in favour of a perverse resolution embracing both the irreality potentiated by the id and the strictures of the reality principle (1991, p. 117). It is this course, a downward journey in fact, that Baudelaire found necessary in his traversal of urban space.

A phallic orientation, in its quest for unified wholes, equates to a psychical "object = x" (Deleuze 1994, p. 103). In contrast to a psychotic orientation, the Oedipal problem of restoring failed loves is a neurotic project effected by a "depressive thinker dream[ing] of

lost betrothals”, as Deleuze said, but one carried out instead as a problem of forced couplings of divided states (1990, p. 219). In the case of the walker = x (the walker who seeks that which is transcendent to the perceptual given), it was a matter of condensing the “bad infinity” (Nancy) of a mercantile proliferation made global, with the bad infinitive of pleasure anchored singularly in repetition for its own sake (a *pathos* in modernity). In Baudelaire the walker = x is made to span dual infinities – hell and heaven – that themselves double the before and after, the past (lost, corrupted) with the future (forsaken – “Each day we’re one step further into Hell” as he advises the reader at the commencement of *Les Fleurs du Mal* (1998, p. 05)). Each infinity confronts the incomprehensibility of the present or “now-time” in Baudelaire, as Françoise Meltzer has said (2011, p. 243). “Spleen and the Ideal”, as the opening section is titled, pits the melancholy and inordinate demotivation (“Nothing is longer than the limping days” Baudelaire 1970, p. 147) against the paragons of love and art, gauging the yawning gap between the real and its elevation as ideal.

The real, defined by a bourgeois advancing of linear time apposite to the progressive advancing of mercantilism, is no less the bearer of excess sensory stimuli that challenges the very constitution of the experiencer. Benjamin for his part charted in Baudelaire a transformation of the “structure of [...] experience” in which individual existence ceases to find a correlate in “the collective past” with its rituals, ceremonies, and festivals (1999, p. 153). It is this lapse of correlation that exposes experience to the corrosive action of clock time, or, as Baudelaire put it in *L’Horloge* (“The Clock”), subjection to “The Clock! [as] a sinister, impassive god” that “eats”, minute by minute, a ‘man’s’ “earthly season” (1998, p. 161). Abyssal, featureless time, bereft of substantive shared markers, precludes the integration of experience with memory and recollection and institutes in the nineteenth century the hyper-awareness of temporality Baudelaire called spleen time (p. 163; see also Holland 2006, p. 112). Consciousness, as Benjamin made clear with reference to Freud, is the psychological mechanism that manages stimuli without recourse to memory traces, but in an environment like the nineteenth century city where “shock experience has become the norm”, a “constantly [engaged] consciousness” no longer has the mediating capacity of the past to mitigate the influx of impressions (1999, pp. 157-158). Deprived of a synthesising continuum, incidents are sustained as recollections, Benjamin thinks in the case of Baudelaire, only on the basis of their exceptionality within the uniform calendar of market existence (p. 159). A kind of halting patchwork makes up a simulacra of experience itself always in a duelling contest with the shock-medium that is the city and which wrenches from Baudelaire himself a “jerky gait” as he searches out “rhyme-booty” (p. 160). As “precise point in time”, complete in themselves and cut off from spleen time, the congealed islands of consciousness stand apart as ideals countering the sense of life as something past experiencing (p. 180), and provide the only means available, as Holland put it, “to salvage

some form of experience from the ravages of modernity" (2006, p. 114). Benjamin finds in the poem "*Correspondances*" what he calls a "crisis-proof form" mobilised by Baudelaire against the mundanity of spleen time, whereby a concurrence between things can be found by tracking backward in time in a quest for an original datum or "unity" in "nature" (1999, p. 178 & Baudelaire 1998, p. 19). "Man walks within these groves of symbols" Baudelaire said, "which regard him as a kindred thing" (1998, p. 19), and in this sense deterritorialises in the name of beauty what was once initiated into the realm of ritual. Statuesque – in fact phallic – such symbols invoke a kind of unified "prehistory" and experienced in another time or by other lives (Benjamin 1999, p. 178). Here symbols, unmoored from their signifying context, assume an a-signifying capacity standing as so many proximate things both bared and apart – together and apart that is, as the mass of the crowd maintains itself.

### 5. From Impression-Gathering to Programming

A quest for a correspondence between mundane and ideal time was already palpable in Descartes' Amsterdam walks, but demonstrates there the relatively easy correlation, despite a developing metaphysics of separation. In Baudelaire, as Benjamin identified, the arrested *idéal* cannot but battle uncertainly with *spleen* time which "musters the multitude of the seconds against it" (p. 180). Yet as Holland argued, *spleen* time, in its brutal repetition, effected a "death-threat" that ultimately undoes any appeal to prolonged or recovered instances of perception (2006, p. 137 & 161). The "poetics of correspondence", or what Holland takes to be a metaphoric project enacted against a metonymy of desire, reveals itself to be far from crisis-proof (p. 162). Consequently, between the "*Spleen et idéal*" and the "*Tableaux Parisiens*" sections of *Les Fleurs du Mal*, Holland recognised a transition. Contrastive with the linear march of *spleen* time, the "*Tableaux Parisiens*" section - starting with "*Paysage*" ("Landscape") and "*Le Soleil*" ("The Sun") – turned to cyclical modes of temporality (p. 137). As such, there is an emphasis on "first person future indicatives" over "history and the nature"<sup>3</sup> and a pointed exercising of the "Poetic will" over the dissolution of self in spleen time (p. 138). Further, a shift is evident in the "*Tableaux Parisiens*" towards "contextual reference" or place description and with it, an emphasising of space over time (p. 128). This attendance on "real reference" centres less on the recovery of memory traces than on the production of novelty through observational encounter - in other words a supplanting of memory by imagination.

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<sup>3</sup> For instance, "*Paysage*" proclaims itself an "eclogue", though not without overturning its pastoral association with a parodic, urban one (see note 167, Baudelaire 1998 p. 369), and rendering the waging of riots an incidental, outside concern to be shut out like the winter (1998, p. 167).

Significantly, it is with the urban-*flâneur* that Baudelaire's late art criticism is worked out in conjunction with the validation of a poetic will and place-reference in his later poetry (pp. 140-141). Indeed the whole impression-observation-depiction assemblage is dependent on a "built-in observer- *flâneur*" fixated on "city life" as Holland said (p. 147). Pointedly, the transition from memory to imagination was understood to launch a modernist aesthetic Baudelaire called "mnemonic art", and which appealed to practices capable of capturing amidst the impressions of sense experience "the culminating features or highlights of an object" in what amounted to an outlining (literally a delineation) of the 'big picture' and the contributing "effect as a whole" (Baudelaire 2010, p. 21). Yet this mnemonic art, as Holland puts it, "is in a sense undecidable: neither a simple reproduction of the object-world, nor a pure product of artistic will or style, but something in between" (2006, p. 147). At once passive and active, the artist is both the involuntary receiver of impressions and the shaper of novel visions. At stake in other words is an implantation of the warrior-like and shock-resistant dandy-*flâneur* with the excessively "sensitive artist" caught up in a perceptual infantilism induced by an "involuntarily" reception to inchoate impressions. On this basis does Baudelaire's "man-child" take up the "whole world" as its domain of interest and measure (2010, p. 09 & 12):

[...] the lover of universal life moves into the crowd as though into an enormous reservoir of electricity. He, the lover of life, may also be compared to a *mirror* as vast as this crowd; to a kaleidoscope endowed with consciousness, which with every one of its movements presents a pattern of life, in all its multiplicity, and the flowing grace of all the elements that go to compose life. It is an ego athirst for the non-ego, and refreshing it at every moment in energies more vivid than life itself, always inconstant and fleeting. (2010, p. 13; emphasis added)

To read this depiction through Lacan's subsequent notion of the mirror stage is to recognise a megalomaniacal distortion of the "I function". What "*imago*" or body gestalt might be drawn from this crowd given its insistent otherness and distance from any ideal? If the mirror draws the infant "or little man" - as Lacan called 'him' - towards an "ideal-I" capable of rising above the turbulence of a "motor style" or motility yet to be mastered (what Freud called a "*trotte-bebe*" or "a sort of walker", as Lacan noted), the securing of stature and the unified 'I' as enduring "statue", even if a phantasmatic achievement (2006, p. 76), can hardly be what Baudelaire's dandy-*flâneur*-genius-artist-infant achieves in a crowd that *involuntarily moves him* (both physically and emotively)! If Lacan's "I formation" answers to an "internal pressure" triggered by a "spatial lure" that shifts fragmentary senses of self into an "'orthopaedic' form of its totality" (p. 78), the ego achieves unity at the expense of diverse drives and maintained in and through others on the basis of identification and merger of "aggressive rivalry" (Holland 2006, p. 198). For Lacan the latter shows up in defensive, neurotic structures (in dreams, as he says, symbolised as "a fortified camp, or even a stadium"), while the former tends towards a capture by "situation" of the psychotic

kind (2006, pp. 79-80). The socio-symbolic is that which mediates the excesses either way, and as Lacan said, tasks psychoanalysis with “calculate[ing] the angle of [...] threat to entire communities” - in other words, provides “an amortization rate for the passions of the city” (p. 80). Yet in Baudelaire’s modernity it is a non-amortization economics that prevails in that the principal debt owed a super-ego capable of carrying the symbolic order is forgone. As Holland put it, “In the decoding process of the market, the law of hierarchy and the hierarchy of the law itself are thoroughly subverted” (2006, p. 243). Certainly in Baudelaire it is less a neurotic rivalry of egos that motivates the “lover of universal life”. Instead, unable to stabilise the contingent and the fleeting, a compact of a pre-Oedipal type was sought to merge the ego with the non-ego, yet it was done so on the basis of an aggrandisement or narcissistic elevation beyond life.

All this points to the problem of coupling in the emerging market society – a coupling that is, between unmoored citizen-consumers and capitalist *socius*. As Rancière put it, the nineteenth century was “haunted” precisely by the “Platonic paradigm of the democratic dissolution of the social body” – exemplified earlier in the split between political and ethical *parrhēsia* – but troublingly reconfigured in the European setting as a “fanciful correlation between democracy/individualism/Protestantism/revolution/the disintegration of the social bond” (2009, p. 57). If the Platonic problematic centred on the necessity of conjoining a care of the soul with that of the community – for which the Oedipal scenario (tyranny) was negative motivation – and the modern Oedipal orientation centred on a depressive position impelled to desexualise via ameliorating surface continuities (sublimation), an alternative coupling availed itself, one, as considered previously, that coupled the strictures of reality with irreality in what amounts to the ‘perverts’ road. Holland recognises in Baudelaire exactly such a route in his negotiation of market society. From romantic pre-Oedipal fusing, to a revolutionary impulse conceived of as the “mother and son’s anti-authoritarian utopia” directed against the ‘bourgeois monarchy’ of Louis-Phillippe, called up was what Holland termed “historical masochism” (2006, pp. 194-195). In psychoanalytic terms, masochism repudiates the father as bearer of the authoritative socio-symbolic and invests relational authority in a female figure instead in a parodic reversal and subversion of the Oedipal prohibition. Yet this borrowing of the female as newly invested bearer of dominance institutes an “an-Oedipal” relation, one centred, not on genital ‘satisfaction’, but a “desexualised” and sentimentalised possession (pp. 192-193). This results in a “split” at the level of the masochist’s super-ego where, as Holland argued, “the Oedipal ‘ego ideal’ [the father] is rejected in favour of the pre-Oedipal ‘ideal ego’” (p. 193). The latter, preceding the consolidation of the super-ego, stands as a locus of “omnipotence and connectedness”, not simply in a maternal, familial sense, but as a “distinctly public and even mythical figure” (p. 193). If in this idealised world the symbolic is kept at bay, it in

fact invites a further disintegration of the ideal in which (as Leopold von Sacher-Masoch – whose proper name underwrites the condition - describes in *Venus in Furs*), the contract governing a reversed dominance itself ceases to be mutually contractual and the maternal figure, while feigning a pre-Oedipal beatitude, increasingly adopts a post-Oedipal assertiveness commensurate with a “phallic male lover/husband”, but because foreclosed in the symbolic, returns in the more troubling register of the “real” (1993, p. 194). The collapse of this ideal ego, in the context of a split super-ego results in what Holland calls a “borderline narcissism”, and a conversion of the disillusioned masochist into a “vitriolic and sometimes violent cynic” (1993, p. 194).

Linking this psychodynamic to the historical circumstances in which Baudelaire was embedded, Holland suggests that when the social idealism potentiated in the Second Republic abruptly gave way with the election of Louis Napoleon and the positing of the Second Empire, something like a disorientating eruption of the real – a real akin to the “too big” moment Deleuze attributed to the caesura of the Oedipal repetition – occurred. Baudelaire, and in turn the modernity he was pivotal in shaping, was thrown into a confrontation with a bourgeois socio-symbolic mired in the market relations of industrial capitalism. Paris, the “gigantic whore” as Baudelaire called it, succumb, not just to a lapse of contractual obligation *vis-a-vis* nurturing, socialist ideals, but was betrothed to a new authoritarian usurper who disciplined the runaway, excessive city by way of Georges-Eugène Haussmann’s planning reforms. If Paris achieved its appellation “*La Ville-Lumière*” (city of light), partly on the basis of the early adoption of street illumination at this time, but also in response to the cutting of open boulevards through the labyrinthine vestiges of its medieval street pattern, it did so precisely in terms of a very old urban polarization typified by the pairing of ‘Babylon the whore’ and ‘New Jerusalem’. Baudelaire’s tracing out of the disjunction between two infinities (hell and heaven) no doubt testifies, if not to the dissolution of such eschatological polarities, then to the impossibility of the city’s transfiguration to the latter and the familial resolution it calls on (“And I [...] saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”, Revelations 21:2). Against any final pastoral laying-bare of the city in a consummative sense – what in fact in the Judaeo-Christian tradition amounts to a return to an original pastoral naked beginning – the revelatory arc Baudelaire called up nevertheless entailed a facing-up-to in a psychodynamic sense. Where as an “ontotheological ordering”<sup>4</sup> of face and city centres on denudation - and as Jean Delumeau has argued, it was the apostle Paul who exemplarily clarifies this claim: “Now we see, he says, ‘as if in a mirror dimly’; then [at the revelation] we will see ‘face to face’” (p. 50) - in Baudelaire the would-

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<sup>4</sup> Kristin Ross refers to an “ontotheological” ordering in Baudelaire in which objects, otherwise unrelated, are assigned a teleology they otherwise don’t have (1989, p. 126). This notion is adapted here in light of Delumeau’s emphasis on facing.

be city-bride, first shorn of its authoritarian suitor and then its idealised, nurturing guise (or what Buck-Morss calls a “matriarchal utopia”), assumes a final seducing personae - the take up of all and any suitor. Not surprisingly, given the characterological proximity of prostitution and *flânerie* (as has been widely noted in Walkowitz and Buck-Morss 1986), the boulevards and soliciting came to share the common reference “*Les grandes horizontals*” (Buck-Morss 1986, p. 119).

## 6. City Recumbency

Engineered for rapidly moving traffic, the boulevard was the veritable emblem of its age. The bearer of coursing carriages, Baudelaire could not help but associate such transport, like the city itself having succumb to the market economy, with indolent pleasure: “the carriage follows an alley streaked with light and shade, at a brisk trot, carrying along a bevy of beauties, cradled as in the gondola of a balloon, lolling on the cushions, lending an inattentive ear to compliments, and lazily enjoying the caress of the breeze” (2010, p. 54). As Butor recognised: “When he describes the carriages that Constantin Guys dashes off on paper, Baudelaire will make veritable beds out of them [...] This carriage is in a sense the great brothel that has come to meet him” (pp. 24-25). It abolishes with its “rapid succession through space” the “dreadful solitude” the man of the crowd had cultivated in his pursuit of the city’s mysteries (p. 25). Haussmanization no less forced a new intimacy between the bourgeois domical and the renovated public staging post that was the boulevards. There the bourgeoisie, edging the long thoroughfares cut into the city’s old twisted fabric, could not but oversee at their leisure the city’s succumbing to a trafficking in commerce. Consistent with this forced recumbency, residences on the Parisian boulevards were coupled to continuous balconies mandated under regulations controlling new Second Empire façade construction. The intention was to forge a cohesive, horizontal synthesis along the wide boulevards that countered individual variations building by building. As Andrew Ayers describes the Second Empire apartment construction in Paris (2004, p. 399):

*Rather than volumetric masses in the cityscape, such apartment buildings, with their flat, standardised facades, were conceived to be viewed purely as backdrops, decorative curtains lining the everyday theatre of life that was the street. (p. 399)*

One such backdrop is highlighted by Jonathan Crary (2001) in his consideration of Edouard Manet’s painting *The Balcony* (1868), an image portraying a bourgeois family calmly taking in the urban spectacle from a balcony suspended above one of Haussmann’s boulevards. For Crary the reduction of the background interior to a featureless, black space is indicative of a reversal of romanticism’s eschewing of externality in favour of heightened interior states (2001, p. 83). Manet’s balcony viewers, having stepped through the plane of the facade,



maintain a strictly horizontal gaze, as if the street had itself risen up around them. The balcony as Manet isolates it is not merely a building element amongst others but a street-element first, indeed one component of an elevated walk paralleling the boulevard's length, much as the apartments backing them were likewise constructed as serial spaces (or *enfilades*). As Ayers confirmed, the Second Empire apartment typology specifically departed from the medieval proportioning of the preceding *maison bourgeoise* which was organised vertically across a number of floors on narrow, deep plots that ran from the street frontage to courtyards in the rear. Restoration and Louis-Phillipe-period apartments instead were assigned wide plots allowing suites of rooms on single floors fronting either, more prestigiously, the street or, secondarily, rear courtyards in the fashion of the aristocratic *château* or *hôtel particulier*, both of which "lined up [their] best rooms along the garden front" (2004, pp. 398-399). In this sense the walking-rhythms of domestic life were consciously made to parallel and absorb the rhythms of the street below. As Emile Zola put it:

*It was the ripe and prodigious fruit off an epoch. The street invaded the apartment with its rumbling of carriages, its jostling of strangers, its license of language.* (cited in Vidler 1991, p. 97)

Anthony Vidler likewise noted the "rapacious" "invasion" of the "home" by the new street culture which induced an unprecedented mixing in the Second Empire of social types spanning "the brash and newly rich, the self-made man, the bricklayer turned contractor, [in turn] rubbing shoulders with their partners of necessity, the older middle class and a failing aristocracy" (1991, p. 97).

This architecture/urbanism of the upwardly mobile, private citizen, as Benjamin noted, upheld less the values of democratic citizenship than the edict that each "private individual manag[e] his [own] affairs" (cited in Cohen 1995, p. 214). Moreover the acceleration of circulatory conditions was critical to the bourgeois hegemony and its "business affairs", amongst which the construction of railways were key. Haussmann, charged with enacting a rationalisation of the arterial routes of Paris had a larger circulatory body in mind. Running all the way to rail termini, the boulevards were in turn strategically linked to the conveyance of communications, goods, persons and the military to the country's distant frontiers and beyond. Since their introduction in 1842, rail services were required by law to converge on Paris, as Colin Chant and David Goodman noted, but the ease with which the capital's old narrow streets could be barricaded and closed at times of political disruption (in fact they had been no less than nine times between 1825-52) lent weight to Haussmann's argument that the city constituted a critical weakness in the circulatory unification of the national body (2000, p. 107). Backing this corporeal analogy was the discovery by William Harvey and Claude Galien in the seventeenth century of the circulatory unification of the human body (Mattelart, 1996, p. 16). A more immediate

progenitor was Claude Henri de Saint-Simon who had espoused a “social physiology” that similarly relied on the notion of a circulatory differentiation and health and that contributed at the beginning of the nineteenth century to what Armand Mattelart described as the “*Cult of the Network*”. For Saint Simon the social body, like the organic one it paralleled, if left to its own accumulation of habits, was susceptible to disorder and degenerative states, while a healthy, progressive society, like the robust organic body, required internal coordination and regulation ensuring uninterrupted communication between its parts (p. 87). Systems of communication no less than networks of physical transportation acquired a redemptive, almost spiritual validation for they guaranteed the conduits of exchange upon which vigorous industrialisation depended. In the post-revolutionary context they were what stood against the stagnation and concentrations of wealth typifying the *ancien regime* (pp. 89-90; Vidler 1991, p. 59). If this strain of thought can be recognised as binding a managerial conception of society to “modern space-annihilating devices”, of which Mumford (1984) had counted the cannon as first and certainly not least significant amongst the means of expression at a distance, the boulevards offered a communicative valence, no less than a militaristic one, consistent with the quest for perpetual motion underwriting the nineteenth century marriage of markets and politics. If that century’s progressive ideal was inseparable from a “diffusionist perspective in which influence always spreads out from a tutelary centre that imposes its worldview on diverse peripheries”, as Mattelart noted (2003, p. 31), spatial and societal ‘chaos’ in the capital represented great risk – a risk demanding its’ laying bare.

Charting the new velocities and altered rhythms of market society, what Baudelaire found in the local coupling of the city with vast centrifugal networks was – in Benjamin’s characterisation - an “unfolding of the temporality of hell” (2002, pp. 65-66). For such a temporality, which “does not recognize death”, was everywhere embodied, as Benjamin held, in circulating forms whose limited duration – “fashion [...], the acceleration of traffic and the tempo of news reporting” etc. - mocks death, though not without enacting it on small through a cyclic propagation and truncation of ‘trends’, ‘news’, ‘events’ pointedly aiming at “eliminating all discontinuities and sudden ends” themselves (p. 66). In this sense, even if as Benjamin said, “death as caesura belongs together with all the straight lines of divine temporality” (p. 66), the lapse of convergence in the alpha and the omega doesn’t close off a belief in straight lines, as Régis Debray noted, for they are the very stuff of a “Saint-Simonian utopia” (2004, p.58). With New Jerusalem impossibly remote, modernity is nevertheless the age of “go-betweens” built on “numerous channels of communication”, as Debray held, like so many secular substitutes for angels and their triadic enacting of mediation, hierarchy and passage (pp. 32-33). The nineteenth century, Parisian street made interior, and the interior proper reduced to a resonating chamber for the city’s

machinations, together assert, again in Debray's characterisation, the centrality of the "vestibule" or "hallway" as an existential spatial figure, indeed a conduit singularly apposite to the play of communicatory 'angels' who provide the remaining "grimace of an absent God [as...] small change of a disappearing act" (p. 43). Baudelaire for his part assigned to the angel figure in "*Réversibilité*" ("Reversibility") a plethora of negative inversions channelling the lofty into runaway conditions 'on the ground' (1998, p. 91). There, enveloped in dark over-coats and not wings, the 'everyman' is caught between the fleeting course of time that fashion is testament to and some deeper "discontinuity in time" marked by modernity itself (Foucault 1997, p. 310). For "the modern hero", as Baudelaire, coined this new messaging species, dark clothing, as it entered the canvas of Constantin Guys for instance, unveils the more profound commitment of the age, an enduring *pathos* or relation to death:

The dress-coat and the frock-coat not only possess their political beauty, which is an expression of the public soul – an immense cortege of undertaker's mutes (mutes in love, political mutes, bourgeois mutes...). We are each of us celebrating some funeral. (Baudelaire 1965, pp. 17-18)



Figure 18. Constantin Guys, 1895. Untitled. Source: The Yellow Book (v).

### *7. Mercantile-Communicational Gravity*

This insistent laying down and contracting of everyday life into variously dissolute and rapid circulatory lines can be thought to have produced a dance of acquiescence and resistance vacillating between a rising up and falling down within a mercantile-communicational 'gravity' whose right-angle transposition shows up as a horizontal vortices courting and contorting death. The repetition compulsion driving capitalist decoding and axiomatisation

can be thought to have called for an alternate notion of life, as Baudelaire's *The Painter of Modern Life* hypothesised. Foucault, in the essay "What is Enlightenment?", has explored such an alternative, and in the process, found an improbable alignment between Kant and Baudelaire around the issue of modernity's unique depiction of the present. Neither limited to a notion of the present as belonging to a distinct world era, nor a sign heralding impending events, nor a culminating moment about to usher in a new world, Kant understood the present to essentially potentiate a deviation, "an 'exit,' or a 'way out'" (1997, pp. 304-305). As Foucault noted, Kant is not:

[...] seeking to understand the present on the basis of a totality or of a future achievement. He is looking for a difference: What difference does today introduce with respect to yesterday. (p. 305)

At stake in this difference-making or way out, as Kant accounted for it in his own essay titled "Answer the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'" was the issue of exceeding a certain human immaturity understood as an acceptance of "someone else's authority" (p. 305). In a peripatetic analogy canvassed earlier, Kant figured the public use of reason as something like "walking confidently [...] towards majority". Further, immaturity and maturity, like hobbled motility and independent "free movement", align with the distinction between private and public uses of reason. As Foucault noted, private reasoning is that which submits to prevailing societal roles and obligations (being a civil servant, a soldier etc.) – in short, being "'a cog in the machine'" (p. 307). Standing upright against the grain and gravitas of private, bureaucratic-commercial thought, finds a correlate in Baudelaire, Foucault thinks, because in the poet-critic modernity was upheld not as an epoch or period but an ethos, an attitude (p. 309). As a way of feeling, thinking, and behaving, ethos presumes a certain accustoming to place that "presents itself as a task" (p. 309). Yet if modernity is routinely understood, in Foucault's phrasing, "in terms of consciousness of the discontinuity of time", one that "break[s] with tradition" via "a feeling of novelty [or...] vertigo" (p. 310), what accustoming is possible? In Baudelaire contingency and "perpetual movement" occasion the heroic task of standing up against the grain of rushing time some mode of eternity – even if only ironically, tragically (p. 310). If the *flâneur* as idle stroller exemplifies the "spectator's posture", Baudelaire, as Foucault read him, crafts a "man of modernity" who not only looks and recalls, but who transfigures the real, "who respects this reality and violates it" (p. 311) – in other words who plays perversely with it in the precise sense of the pervert's third way. No doubt an Oedipal overtone (the Oedipus between Thebes and Colonus) can be recognized in Baudelaire's quest to exceed the "fleeting pleasure of circumstance"; the solitary is a roamer of "the great desert of men", for in modernity the city has itself become the other of the *polis* and fashion the harrying atmosphere that worries its terrain (2010, p. 16). Reaching into this transitory, shifting air, the task of the poet is to grasp what eludes obviousness in sight – in other words, "to distill the eternal from the

transitory" (p. 16). Like Oedipus remade and exonerated in the desert, for Baudelaire too, at stake is an ethos or attitude of self-reform, not founded on uncovering or discovering what is secreted within (in Oedipus' case there was Thebes for that), but more radically, as Foucault put it, the task of squaring up to modernity entailed inventing and producing oneself otherwise, even if the only feasible place for such reinvention was an extra-societal one, a place produced in and by art (p. 312).

Butor found a similar process of reinvention, particularly in relation to Baudelaire's uptake of Poe's "Man of the Crowd". As he put it, "In 1852, the Man of the Crowd, for Baudelaire as for Poe, is the man one observes externally and condemns", but subsequent to Baudelaire's French translation, a transformation is evident: the old man pursued in the crowd "has become the narrator himself [with...] the two characters [becoming...] one and the same" (1969, p. 23). Like the translator (Baudelaire) and his idle (Poe), "the second follows in the footsteps of the first", but on condition that the idle knows nothing of the follower and the transformation that he exercises over him (p. 23). The revelatory moment in the pursuit of the man of the crowd that occurs at daybreak – the moment that the pursuer realizes that no deeper penetration into the mysterious motivations of the pursued is possible – is lived differently by Baudelaire the translator: translation offers not equivalence but transformation, or more accurately "Vampirization" as Anne Garrait-Bourrier put it (2002). The take-up is life-engendering and erotic, with Baudelaire rendering Poe both martyr and passionately remade model, a model capable of being taken in on the basis of a certain betrayal. Citing what Harold Bloom referred to as *tesserae* – the aim of "bring[ing] to perfection" by a second writer what a first has written in a quest to stave off the "'anxiety of influence'" – Garrait-Bourrier imagined in Baudelaire's case a homoerotic adoption of Poe, which filtered through an anxiously defined masculinity,<sup>5</sup> required a covert attraction-repulsion, one that both incarnated Poe as a "Mother figure" and counter-actualised him a figure to be dominated (p. 6). Moreover, if Baudelaire goes looking for a heroic stance apposite to modernity via walks labouring within the city's recalibrated gravity, the images he called up – in a reversed masochism – were of a city similarly taken as a 'female object' precariously avowed *and* dominated (Buck-Morss 1986, pp 119-120). Benjamin in an astonishing speculation captures the strange intercourse between the recumbent city and the commercial stride overtaking it when, in the context of the convolutions of fashion, he imagines an evolutionary differentiation between men and women in which the latter, holding on to the "advantages" of a "horizontal positioning of the body" (particularly given the demands of pregnancy and as testified to by the present-day, female attire of "back-

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<sup>5</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, has for instance explored the consequences of an "'obligatory heterosexuality' [...] built into male-dominated kinship systems" and the structural necessity of homophobia as necessary consequence of homosocially-defined, nineteenth century work practices necessary to industrialization and colonial expansion (1985, p. 3).

bracing girdles and trusses”), resolve to “walking erect” later than men and only on the basis of a perversion of courting (as departure from the four-footed manner of animals) demanded by a (presumably standing) “frontal encounter” in “coitus” (2002, p. 80). This fantastical tale of a temporal misalignment in the upward meeting of bodies as prompt to walking no doubt transports a long exercised male privilege that construes itself a virile *figure* stood up (first in this case) in contradistinction to a deferential *ground* awaiting his traversal and disposal. On the other hand, it signals the acute dependence of such privilege on femininity itself made upright, a privilege that can never quite separate itself from that on which it leans. It also suggests, in the context of a recumbent city where figure/ground relations are severely challenged by a horizontal velocity (a mercantile-communicational ‘gravity’ corresponding to Marx’s recognition that “All that is solid melts into air” – a volatile, moving air no less shifting of Benjamin’s Angel of History), a reversal whose rising up of ground (deterritorializations) engulfs, submerges, and draws back down again (reterritorialization).



Figure 19. Paul Klee, 1920. *Angelus Novus*.  
Source: Wikimedia Commons.

What Baudelaire makes imaginable is a male psychotopography (to borrow Seltzer’s (1998) characterisation from a different context) invoked by an urban seductress throwing pedestrian perception into an undecidable posture, a position vacillating between rectitude and recumbency. *Dandysme*, as reaction to this see-saw between dissolve and self-distinction, drives towards, as Benton Jay Komins asserted, a “world of narcissistic satisfaction” where “no space is opened up for the subjectivity of others” (2001, p. 3; see also Garrait-Bourrier 2002, p. 7).

In fact, as Holland has explored, the lapse in a masochistic orientation – one invested in a revolutionary urban body deemed capable of repudiating a seemingly tyrannous, paternal socio-symbolic – opened towards the psychological disorganisation of “borderline narcissism” (2006, p. 26). Borrowed from psychoanalyst Otto Kernberg, the term describes a psychological landscape defined “by lack of integration of the concept of self and significant others” and which results in “identity diffusion” whose management requires “primitive defensive operations centering around splitting, and a loss of reality testing” (2004, p. 15). If as Holland points out, the “borderline psyche” derives its instability from an inability to sustain a “whole mother image” that reconciles and synthesises both good and bad presentations, subsequent self-image and ego-identification similarly fail to coalesce and prevent “erotic and destructive impulses from merging” coherently in the subject (2006, p. 231). Repudiation of the paternal ideal-ego or super-ego similarly prevents the self-observation function adequately managing ego-function, self-esteem and the integration of ideal objects of attachments (p. 212). An intense attendance on the world is driven by the need to find mirrored in it “versions or parts of himself that have been split off and symbolically repudiated”; everything potentially speaks to the need to consolidate a self reactively either through aversion or absorption of partial selves (pp. 212-213). Building on a history of criticism that finds in Baudelaire varying configurations of masochism, sadism and personality splitting, Holland saw in “Baudelairean modernism”, not a personal psychopathology indicative of the poet, but a socio-historical psychological indicator proper to nineteenth century market society as Baudelaire came to live it. In particular, validated and denigrated categories like dandy and prostitute – categories synonymous with buying and selling and therefore difficult to differentiate in market society – constituted societal poles productive of identity diffusion and splitting of assimilative ideals (pp. 26-27).

### **8. *Narcissism On-Mass***

In Holland’s account, the importance of Poe to Baudelaire is his charting of a cultural economy rich in “defunct ideals” and indicative of a “bankrupt reality” (273). Nevertheless, his ability to detach himself from the tragic atmosphere of the market and the subject positions of the “prostitute and the dandy”, offered an ego ideal seemingly risen above selling and buying. Concomitant with the perversity, what the borderline narcissist achieves is a psychotic disassociation still capable of reality testing. For Kernberg this meant the belated production of a differentiated self despite a lived field defined by identity diffusion (2004, pp. 16, 19). It is this that Poe provides Baudelaire, the kernel of a grandiose self capable of mediating the constantly decoding subject positions of the market. Kept in play was both repetitive “self-invention” consistent with the “decoding of experience” and the

semblance of a stable self (if “an-Oedipal” one) set up to cynically judge, “from a safe distance”, these very same “partial selves” (Holland 2006 pp. 250, 274).

Moreover, Holland recognised in this overseeing role what Jacques Attali has termed “the ‘programmer’”, or what is rendered “the *moulder*” in the English translation of his cultural history of music (p. 251). In the context of a capitalist “economy of repetition” dedicated to mass production, the problem of maintaining the convertibility of money to profit via commodification means furnishing the commodity with “semiotic surplus value” in excess of its sheer reproduction – in other words, submitting it to marketing and advertising (p. 251). For Holland, Baudelairean modernity, anticipates, and in many ways prepares, the contemporary advertising mentality that cynically seeks to script the disenfranchising circuits of surplus semiotic while remaining aloof from them (2006, 27). The narrator in the prose poems performs this double action of narcissistically assimilating identity while fantasising about his own unassimilable essence. For instance in “*Les Foules*” (“Crowds”, collected in *Le spleen de Paris*), Baudelaire writes:

The poet enjoys this incomparable privilege, that he can be, just as he likes, either himself or someone else. Like those wandering souls in search of a body, he enters, whenever he likes, into the characters of everyone. For him alone, everything is unoccupied, and if certain places appear to him to be shut, it is only because in his view they aren’t worth the trouble of visiting.

The solitary, pensive walker finds a singular intoxication in this universal communion. The one who weds himself to the crowd enjoys feverish pleasures denied to the egoist, who is locked up like a safe, and also denied to the lazy one, as self-confined as a mollusk. He adopts as his own all the professions, all the joys and all the miseries that circumstances present to him. (1970, p. 22)

Here simultaneous self-dispersal and self-aggrandisement aptly mirror borderline narcissism. The subject of enunciation is imagined to effortlessly converge on the subject of the statement subsuming it as if action and contemplation images where one and the same thing. Where Descartes refuted the walking self as test positive for being (“I walk therefore I am”), for Baudelaire the “pensive walker” finds its very being in a vamparitic slide into the everyperson as occupiable tenancy. In a reversal of the formal narcissism of Neoplatonism - that passage through the materiality of the world in pursuit of an inner infinity – the subjectivism of Baudelairean modernity passes into the mirror of the other in a grandiose and infinite gathering up of scapegoats on-mass!

All this enacts to the nth degree the passional rupture with despotic signification. Born of an exclusionary mechanism generative of betrayal, expulsion and exile, Cain heads a disenfranchised, scapegoated populace. If the key protagonists in the drama that precipitated the state of exile constitute God, Abel and Cain, Gunther Wittenberg, in his consideration of Genesis 4, has emphasised the importance of a fourth, little acknowledged



character in the tale - the figure of the earth. To read the story through this innovation is to recognise that the double betrayal of man and God transports a second perfidy in which Cain and the earth no less turn away from each other. The seeds of this lapse were already in place with Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden where God places them beyond the bounteous of the garden on cursed ground whose barrenness necessitates "toil and sweat" (Wittenberg 2000, p. 107). Cain's murder of Abel leads to the subsequent confrontation between Cain and Yahweh, but a third voice is also raised, that of "*adamah*", or the fertile soil, and in a pointed prosopopoeia that gives face to the Earth itself, the throat of the ground is said to have swallowed Abel's blood and in turn voiced its outrage (p. 109). Further emphasising the characterological nature of the Earth, Yahweh's curse results in Cain being sent out into the land of Nod (or wandering) whose location "east of Eden", as Wittenberg points out, extends the prior curse over the soil's fertility so that "whereas Adam and Eve were banished from the garden to an arid *adamah*, Cain is banished from the soil itself" (p. 110). Without even an impoverished *adamah*, it is to the creation of the city and that Cain turns with his son Enoch to provide a means of survival in the absence of a God-given bounteousness. Yet rendered "autonomous and emancipated from the Earth", sustenance becomes possible only through the mechanism of exchange, or alternatively as Wittenberg describes, through the violence of "extortion, exploitation and oppression of peasant populations" (p. 112). Caught between a bounteous earth and a withholding one, the urban dweller in the Judeo-Christian tradition lives a deeply fraught relation in that the city itself assumes the maternal mantle of provider but only through the relay of wounding and/or solicitation.

At stake is a malfunction in the "whole mother image" consistent with Oedipus', eschewing of telluric forces in favour of an intellectual mediation that in turn institutes a psychical fracturing centred on an irresolution of the monstrous and beneficent maternal. Siding with the "Race of Cain" over the "Race of Abel", Baudelaire in "*Abel et Caïn*" monomaniacally reverses the pastoral privilege of the latter, figuring this race complacent, profligate, crawling and rooting in satiation at time's end. Conversely, the Race of Cain, is pictured as finding its own ground (if an impoverished one) and its own temporality as an overturning of divine ordinance and privilege over the earth:

*Race of Cain, assault the skies  
And drag him earthwards – bring down God!* (1998, p. 267-279)

In this aggressive assailment of 'elevation', two components are evident: firstly, against an earth-divine axis and the hierarchical ordering it implies, there is a pointed siding with a deterritorialized gravity - the mercantile-communicational vortices indicated above - one that nevertheless risks, in the context of constant decoding, ego splintering of a "borderline" type; secondly, to the extent that the former tends to split off incompatible "facets of the

personality" (in opposition to their integration via a normative installation of the super-ego) as Holland says, an ego ideal as *de facto* identificatory anchor is narcissistically substituted instead (2006, p. 219). For Holland, this double response mirrors the production/consumption cycle of market society whereby selling oneself on the job market entails specialisations that serve to decant the self into a cluster of fractured personas, while consumption entails something like an anticipatory and compensatory recovery of an integral self. The intimate pairing of "commoditised leisure time and exploited time", as Holland said, results in "individuals whose primitive and mostly unsublimated ideal egos fuse an-Oedipally with the ego ideals summonsed up by advertising and its muse" – in other words, they ride a pre-Oedipal libidinousness (2006, p. 247). More specifically, the mother figure in this case equates to the city itself whose longstanding renunciation of *adamah*|earth adverts a volatile mix of good and bad states invoked by degrees of satiation and withholding.

Given the amplification by market society of the problematized urban ground arising with Cain, what innovation is available to the narcissistic ego? For Barthes, Baudelaire is amongst a cluster of nineteenth century writers who found in writing a kind of heroism that leant towards mythology in its construal of a world in parallel with, yet opposed to, the given (2010, p. 281). Moreover, this heroism has three defining facets: the writing that arises with it exhibited a "monomania", an obsessive focus whose "transcendence [...] proffers literature as the full expression of an alternative to the world"; secondly, this literary heroism aimed at an autonomy of practice and solitude relative to the world at large; and thirdly, the solitude implicate to a literary apprenticeship was lived as if a state of exile forced on the writer cursedly from the social world itself (2010, p. 281). Seeding this division, as Barthes asserted, was the sense that the writer participates in a milieu at odds with the labours and motivations of the creative work itself. Where and how is one's sensibility to be situated? "In which History? [...] In which Society?" (p. 282). In answer, the writer stages a "grandiose, impassioned obstinacy [by...] claiming not to be present", or rather, of being "both in the present and not in the present", caught at the juncture between a "new world" and an absent world of the past", and that the task is precisely to write that juncture as a thing (p. 284).

Where Oedipus dreams of restoring wholeness through the smoothing out of surfaces, surfaces traversable without break, Baudelaire's literary heroism sought to enter the disjuncture motivating the Oedipal drama itself, perversely re-programming it as a masterable domain set aside as dirtied mirror on the world. Faced with a persistent mercantile caesura inserted into the very fabric of the everyday, a narcissistically construed subject sets itself up as equal to the betrayal of experience to better unify - an-Oedipally - a

picture of urban place. Yet language itself undercuts the exiled self-sufficiency of the literary hero. If the movement of the phallus is to rectify and gather the partial objects and intensities underwriting it, writing itself is also the bearer of an incising, cutting, tearing action as Blanchot has noted (1993, p. 28), one that breaks the bond between the word and the self that claims utility, even mastery, over it (1989, p. 28). Writing levies its own cost and what Blanchot called the “Tyrannical Prehension” describes a compulsion to write carried out by a hand failing to know any end to its labours. Writing, carried to infinity by this “sick hand” seeking to capture the departing objects of its attention, can be relieved only by the *other* hand, the hand that doesn’t write, but that intervenes to prevent a descent into absolute passivity and loss of self (1989, p. 25). In fact this interplay of hands – one scribing its way to death and the other opening a pause for renewing or claiming back life – offers a precarious balance with, on one side, a return to a self actively synthesising, and on the other, a tipping over into what Blanchot described as a “third person substituting for the ‘I’” altogether (p. 28):

The third person is myself become no one, my interlocutor turned alien; it is my no longer being able, where I am, to address myself and the inability of whoever addresses me to say ‘I’; it is his not being himself. (p. 28)

Deleuze, in a different context, called this third person, “the man without name”, seeing in it a castrating of the Phallus itself, castrating in the sense of a desexualisation that asks what thinking might amount to in the context of the dissolved *cogito* (1994 p. 194). If this raises questions such as “what is writing?”, “what is it to sense?”, “what does it mean to think?”, it points in fact to the existential, indeed the “ontological scope” of a “question-problem complex” arising with Oedipus, for it is Oedipus who first showed “the power of the question to put the questioner in play as much as that which is questioned” (p. 195). For Blanchot it was Arthur Rimbaud, the Bohemian, peripatetic poet who abruptly ceased writing in his twenties, who demonstrated the potency of an incessant will to write via a sick hand that only a tyrannical prehension could interrupt (p. 25, 53). For Barthes, this doubleness shows up as a defining split in the “linguistic subject” who is left negotiating an increasingly defective present (2011, p. 153). It is this doubleness - a duplication without narcissistic programming - that the following chapter addresses.

## CHAPTER 6

### *'Angleterre' | Terra Incognita*

You will go everywhere, since you have come from all times.

**Arthur Rimbaud**, 1872-1874

Rimbaud experienced his great crisis when he was eighteen, at which moment in his life he had reached the edge of madness; from this point on his life is an unending desert.

**Henry Miller**, 1946

#### *1. Maximising the Surface of the Self*

For Blanchot the work of writing demands of the writer an exit from the self. In Rimbaud's case it was necessary to make the world itself a "shelter [...] of protective forgetfulness" from the demands of his own writing (1989, p. 53). If he was forced to disavow this passage to the limit, it is equally certain, as Blanchot remarked, that no writer can remain "face to face with the work" for it departs its author, and siding with the fate of life itself, slides "into the distress of the infinite" (1989, p. 26). Nevertheless, Rimbaud, while famously ceasing to write, continued to side with the diminishing draw of the infinite, a draw he answered by means other than writing. For Baudelaire, literary heroism is anchored by obsessional writing; for Rimbaud it was maniacal travel. Indeed, it preceded the writing as indicated by a letter to the Paul Demeny in 1871 at the age of seventeen: "You see: I'm a pedestrian, nothing more than that", and hoping to find work enough to survive in a move to Paris, he added, "tell me of work not too absorbing because thought demands large blocks of time" (cited in Fowlie & Whidden 2005, p. 387). Joined up, peripatetic and thought offer an antidote to deadening work time. A long distance walker throughout his life - eventually travelling much of Europe and considerable stretches of the Sudan on foot - he was noted as having an especially purposeful stride. French essayist,

Ernst Delahaye, in a letter possibly to Rimbaud's brother-in-law Paterné Berrichon<sup>1</sup>, similarly underscored Rimbaud's compulsive pedestrianism by emphasising both his physiological and psychological predispositions for walking:

His long legs calmly took formidable strides; his long, swinging arms marked the very regular movements; his back was straight, his head erect, his eyes stared into the distance. His face wore an expression of resigned defiance, anticipating everything, without anger or trepidation. (cited in Robb 2000, p. 278)

In a letter to Paul Verlaine dated April 1876 Delahaye illustrated just these facets when he showed Rimbaud marching across the border between France and Austria after his expulsion from Vienna for vagrancy (Figure 20). Barthes was similarly struck: "It's literally mad; already in his adolescence, incredible journeys on foot: walking, walking, without a penny" (2010, p. 152). For Barthes, writing in Rimbaud's case amounted to "a Desire, a Passion"; yet the cessation of that passion – what he called a "Counter-Writing, a "Not-Writing", a "Para-graphy [or...] A-Graphy" – didn't end "Desire itself", just the siting of its mania: instead, scappering, travel, exploration, geographic mapping, gun-running, business, colonisation, etc. (p. 150). Constantly evidencing a "Desire for the Other" of what subsists statically, it was only the cruel and ironic onset of cancer in the right leg that curtailed this will and his life in 1891.



Figure 20. Ernest Delahaye, 1876. "Le nouveau Juif errant". Bibliothèque littéraire Jacques Doucet.

<sup>1</sup>Jeremy Harding and John Sturrock (2004) attribute the passage to a letter to Berrichon dated 21 August 1896, though Robb (2000) suggests any attribution remains uncertain.

Nevertheless, for Rimbaud his poetic vocation started with city streets and their potential for perturbation. Writing to Ernest Delahaye from the Rimbaud family home in provincial Roche after an eight-month sojourn in London, he exclaimed:

I am absolutely thwarted. Not a book, not a bar within reach, not an incident in the street. How horrible the French countryside is! My fate depends on this book, for which I still have to invent a half-dozen atrocious stories. How can I invent atrocities here? (Letter of May 1873, in Fowlie & Whidden 2005, p. 393)

His return to London and cohabitation with Verlaine in June of the same year did not fail to produce the city-centred atrocities necessary for his first poetic project – *Une saison en enfer* (*A Season in Hell*, 1873) – along with the infamous unravelling of their relationship, the drunken shooting of Rimbaud in Belgium, and Verlaine’s subsequent imprisonment there. Motivating the production of atrocities was the demand to have something to retell. As Kristin Ross noted with reference to Blanchot, the aim was a *récit* or restaging of an “exceptional event” located elsewhere in time (1987, p. 62). More generally, the *récit* can be thought to make up a “transhistorical antigenre”, one that contests prevailing literary conventions, particularly the nineteenth century novel’s concern with everyday mores and verisimilitude. As Ross summarised Blanchot’s reading of *Une saison en enfer*, the use of the *récit* can be thought to contest both the dominant English “novel of education or acculturation” and its French equivalent, the *roman de formation*, which each in their way pursued the genesis of bourgeois personality (1987, p. 62). Countering the bourgeois self, no less than Romanticism’s lyric subject, Rimbaud rendered poetry an explicitly political vehicle, one that eschewed the typical assumption that prose portrays “a social production of reality” whereas verse produces “a desiring production that is mere fantasy or wish fulfilment” (p. 63). Instead, as Blanchot asserted, Rimbaud in fact sought to “help man go somewhere, to be more than himself, to see more than he can see, to know what he cannot know – in a word, to make literature an experience that concerns the whole of life and the whole of being” (1995, p. 155). Yet this grasp of an existential whole differed from Baudelaire’s. Against the theory of correspondences with its counter-nature, and supernaturalism that potentially finds a link in every divergent thing, Rimbaud sought a version of totality revelled through extreme exhaustion in a sampling running all the way to expiration (pp. 139, 158-159).

In another contrast with Baudelaire, Jeremy Harding and John Sturrock in the Penguin collection of Rimbaud’s poems and letters, noted a difference between Baudelaire’s *flaneurism* and what they call the “Rimbaudian self”. The later, they held, amounts to a “harsh experiment” designed to distend and distress subjectivity to better achieve a “maximum surface area to which unusual information (the ‘unknown’) [might] adhere” (2004, xxiv). Walking was in Rimbaud’s case not incidental to a project to expand the

surface-area of the self and it was one of the critical vectors by which encounter and capitalisation on the unknown was engineered. For instance in “*Ma Bohème (fantaisie)*” (“My Bohemian Life (Fantasy)”, 1870), the experiential dividend of an eight day walking expedition through Belgian found form in a bawdy, wandering cosmicity celebrated in a crossing of road surfaces with the night sky: “I walked under the sky, Muse! And I was your vassal; | Oh! oh! what brilliant loves I dreamed of! | My only pair of trousers had a big hole. | - Tom Thumb in a gaze, I sowed rhymes | As I went along [...]” (2005, pp. 65-67). Renovating the poetical travelogue, Rimbaud sought in this and similar early works to troublingly shift the ground beneath the romantic road poem by threading through its pleasing and predictable format the ignoble instincts and innuendo of the schoolboy ditty, much as Baudelaire before him had done (Robb 2000, p. 60).

If in an Oedipal solution surfaces are contrived to better manage a metaphysics of separation and the divided world underwriting bourgeois-mercantile politics, with Baudelaire such surface-making was eschewed in favour of an *an-Oedipal* orientation – a desexualisation calling on the displacement of the super-ego/ego-ideal with the desiring liberty of the ideal-ego aiming to bring down paternalism. Conversely, the reinstatement of a surface orientation in Rimbaudian poetics suggests a pseudo-Oedipal posture indexed less to amelioration than spoiling. Key in this sense is a spoiling of the subject itself, which like Hölderlin’s recognition of a breaking-through implicate in the Oedipal positing of a caesura, reserves the capacity for the ‘atrocious’ (staged or incidental) to remake all that precedes it. Breaking-through, or what amounts to the pure event for Deleuze, causes something new to appear in the vacancy of the present, something “produced without a producer” and free of the predicates conditioning it (Faulkner 2006, p. 135). It is this pseudo-Oedipal orientation that this chapter explores relative to Rimbaudian poetics and its encounter with Victorian London.

## 2. A Vigorous Indolence

A poet born of the Paris Commune of 1871, Rimbaud rode a politic that then contemporary writer, Maxime du Camp (1822-1894), linked to the “time of Genesis” and Cain’s crime: “It is envy that lies behind all those demands stuttered by the indolent whose tools make them ashamed, and who in hatred of work prefer the chances of combat to the security of daily work” (cited in Ross 1987, p. 62). The Bohemian polemic damning work in Baudelaire (selling oneself on the market), is in Rimbaud a howl against development of trades, professions, vocations – in other words, against an industrious subject. In the “*Mauvais sang*” (“Bad Blood”) section of *Une saison en enfer* he wrote: “I loathe all trades. All of them, foreman and workmen, are base peasants. A writer’s hand is no better than a

ploughman's. What a century of hands! I will never possess my hand" (pp. 265-267). In contrast with an ode to wounded shoes and an extended surface intimacy with the world as travelled in "*Ma bohème (fantaisie)*", Rimbaud pitches motility against immobility in "*Les Assis*" ("The Seated Men" 1871), where resentful and reactive, sedentary watchers of the world shamelessly conjugate with supporting furniture: "In seizures of passion, they have fused | Their own fantastic skeletons to the back | Bone structure of their chairs, day upon day | Their feet now grafted to the creaking leg-rests [...]" (2005, p. 127-129).

Personification in this case invokes an entirely different conjuncture of the erotic and the oneiric than that offered by "*Ma bohème (fantaisie)*". Where the later construes the world in terms of multiple and marvellous conjugations on the move, "*Les Assis*" parodies a pedagogical (and in some interpretations pederast<sup>2</sup>) replication of routine sameness pointedly apprenticed to the bureaucratic domain of paperwork and officialdom. Ross read in the lament of hands in the "*Mauvais sang*" a critique of dependence and co-option: only beyond the regimes of work is a celibate engenderment (to be one's own work) possible (1987, p. 65). Yet to bring about one's own birth is far from the borderline narcissism of Baudelaire; in Rimbaud it meant mobilising collectives – particularly anti-bourgeois populations. As Ross put it: "In Rimbaud the minimal real unity is not the word, nor the individual subject, nor the concept, but rather the *arrangement*, the process of arranging or configuring elements" (p. 66). Again in "*Mauvais sang*", the advancing European world of work is countered briefly as a narrator identifying with a soon to be colonised, "inferior race" defined by corporeal intensity: "Yells, drum, dance, dance, dance, dance! I can't even see the time when the whites will land and I will fall into the void. Hunger, thirst, yells, dance, dance, dance, dance!" (2005, p. 271). Antithetical to the poet as an outsider/genius, socially withdrawn from his or her world, Rimbaud samples and absorbs what the nineteenth century mobilised en masse – dissident populations and identities. His own flight from home at sixteen (actually repeated departures and returns) was far from exceptional, for amongst those convicted for vagabondage (a rapidly rising figure across most of the nineteenth century in France), children of education age was particularly high, as Ross noted, and amounted to a "ritualization of the entry into work" played out as rupture or convulsion (p. 69). No doubt, unmoored from fixed placement, the vagabond was held up as a virtual criminal, one whose sheer mobility invites the mobilisation of atrocity and misdeed (p. 70).

If in "*Les Assis*" the satiric fusing of immobile bodies with chairs is plainly intended to disparage fixed placement and the privileging of intellectual labour, it is consistent with the specific critical preoccupations of the Parisian Commune that Rimbaud is believed to have

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<sup>2</sup> See Robb (2000, p. 100).



participated in from late April 1871.<sup>3</sup> Commune participant, Marxist Paul Lafargue (Marx's son-in-law, whom Rimbaud likely met in Soho, London subsequently while attending the "Cercle d'Études Sociales"<sup>4</sup> with Verlaine), similarly criticised the bourgeoisie for their "absolute laziness", parodying them with comparable images of physiological incapacity. Satiated and squatting immobile in their places of privilege (intent on exclusively pocketing for themselves, as Kristin Ross noted, the rights to "leisure, pleasure, intellectual life"), Lafargue linked bourgeois excess with the decaying and collapsing organism (see Ross 1989, p. 61). Paralleling individual physiological decrepitude with that of the larger social body, his critique mirrored anxieties arising with Second Empire French urban life that fused excessive production with an insatiable commodification running in the shadow of Napoleon III's authoritarian return. In turn, as Ross argued, much French revolutionary impetus then turned on an oppositional rhetoric pitting those who were perceived to work and produce against those considered parasites on 'honest' labour, Lafargue and Rimbaud are both noteworthy for intuiting a third way in the search for "revolutionary praxis". Specifically coded in Lafargue's *The Right to Laziness* (1883), but no doubt operative in Rimbaud's poetic motivations well before that date, was a call to overturn the monopoly of the capitalist class on leisure thereby leaving open to workers and producers an opportunity to recoup their "taste for abstinence and to develop indefinitely [their] consuming capacities" (Lafargue 2000, Chapter 4). Framing the revolutionary "Rights of Man" in terms of a mandatory 'right to work' courted, by Lafargue's account, only misery, when contradictorily, the right to something akin to a virile laziness was needed instead:

If, uprooting from its heart the vice which dominates it and degrades its nature, the working class were to arise in its terrible strength, not to demand the Rights of Man, which are but the rights of capitalist exploitation, not to demand the Right to Work which is but the right to misery, but to forge a brazen law forbidding any man to work more than three hours a day, the earth, the old earth, trembling with joy would feel a new universe leaping within her [...]. (2000, Chapter II)

At stake - contrary to Maxime du Camp's fears - was something like a reconciliation of the two earths divisively afforded Abel and Cain: in fact this reconciliation (minus a melancholic backwardness, solitariness and non-urban polemic) was decidedly Rousseauian in its virtual virility. Certainly the interdiction against excessive work was rich in renovative societal potential. In as much as laziness was "the mother of noble arts and noble virtues", as Lafargue claimed, the masses must necessarily "take the hygienic and calisthenic exercises requisite to re-establish their health and improve their race" (Chapter 4). In the colourful caricature of this Communard Marxist only bodies in healthy motion

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<sup>3</sup> Despite disagreements among biographers, Robb points to strong evidence that Rimbaud witnessed the Paris Commune, perhaps even being amongst its reserves briefly (Robb 2000, pp. 78-79).

<sup>4</sup> A group publishing information about the Commune intended to counter "Versillais anti-Commune propaganda". See Ross, note 28, pp. 72-73.

might rouse and restore the languid, flabby torso of France commandeered by capitalism. Hence the “old earth”, not the estranged, couch-bound version doctored to by an “ape-like” industrialism, might yet be brought into happy animation. As Lafargue parodied:

Capitalist France, an enormous female, hairy-faced and bald-headed, fat, flabby, puffy and pale, with sunken eyes, sleepy and yawning, is stretching herself out on a velvet couch. At her feet Industrial Capitalism, a gigantic organism of iron, with an ape-like mask, is mechanically devouring men, women and children, whose thrilling and heart-rending cries fill the air; the bank with a marten’s muzzle; a hyena’s body and harpy-hands, is nimbly flipping coins out of his pocket. Hordes of miserable, emaciated proletarians in rags, escorted by gendarmes with drawn sabers, pursued by furies lashing them with whips of hunger, are bringing to the feet of capitalist France heaps of merchandise, casks of wine, sacks of gold and wheat. (2000, Chapter IV)

Consistent with a work model that striates horizontally and vertically - horizontally in the sense of the earth “stretching herself out”, languidly awaiting consummation/adulteration, and vertically in the sense of the carousing capitalist, amassing and concentrating wealth at will - this caricature binding landscape and socio-types, can be thought to respond to a broader surface demarcation and characterisation of national territory. As Ross identified, at work was a “massive, synchronic expansion” seeking to coordinate the nineteenth century European national and colonial enterprise (1989, p. 86). Pivotal to that synchronisation was academic geography, or what was proclaimed in France in the 1870s the “science of landscape” (in fact a “bastard offspring of history”) that sought a regional partitioning of space and its coding on the basis of physiognomies, “‘individualities,’ personalities” (1989, p. 86). Championed by founding geographer Vidal de la Blache, the new geography was concerned to capture the qualities of place, specifically according to visual criteria that apprehended territory as ‘landscape’. Purportedly defined by the detail of “‘what the eye embraces with a look”” (Vidal cited in Ross 1989, p. 86) - an approach metaphorically redolent of sexual penetration, as Ross noted - in fact what the geographer achieved was, less a mastering of the seen, than an imposition and tabulating of landscapes according to what *wasn’t seen*, precisely because what was given in these descriptions were limited to “the typical landscape [...] construct[ed] from abstract and derivative cliché formulations” (pp. 86-87). Nevertheless, in line with the physiognomic impulse (whether exercised sociologically or geographically), at stake in this “landscapism” was the quest for a correspondence between image/surface/exterior and an inner truth or verisimilitude. Sought in fact was a predictively productive demarcation of fixed, dependable character.

### 3. Observational Fields

Vagabondage as virtual miscreancy, like adolescence as a vestibule of ‘anti-social’ subject positions in need of rectification, played into a larger demand to tabulate and identify the proliferating subjectivities spawned by market society. No less pressing in cities than it was for landscapism in national territory, a concern with identifying physiologies quickly slide towards a physiognomic project seeking to uncover ‘natures’ and ‘tendencies’ otherwise signalled by obtuse visual cues. Equally it constituted an observational field rich in the possibilities of overlooking and misrecognition. Such a ‘seeing past’ is particularly evident in a sketch of Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud walking in London (Fig. 21).



Figure 21. Félix Régamey, 1872. “Verlaine et Rimbaud a Londres”. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Drawn by French painter and ex-Communard Félix Régamey (1844-1907), it shows the pair shortly after their arrival in the city for the first time in September 1872. Intent on capturing the perambulation of two urban walkers, the sketch leans toward a “representation of contingency” (Ebner 2008, p. 187), or what amounts to a chance view akin to what the “snapshot” would eventually come to avail. To the extent that Régamey’s sketch hovers between impromptu street scene and portraiture, it does so by starkly stripping the setting of surrounding urban and social particularity – save for the iconic London ‘Bobby’ wearily scrutinising the passing Frenchmen. In this its curious combination of arrest, observation

and occlusion aptly diagram a physiognomic viewpoint. 'Contingency' here serendipitously catches a perquisite junction of persons and place that will, firstly, inaugurate a literary break sufficient to catalyse 'modern poetry', and secondly, 'a new love'. Régamey presents the perambulations of two poet-lovers precisely in the decade it became possible to ascribe to that love 'that dare not speak its name', the new name, "homosexual".<sup>5</sup> Citing Carl Westphal's article on "*contrary sexual sensations*", Foucault offered the date of 1870 as the point at which incidental, sodomitical relations became ascribable to a new species of man - the homosexual (1990, p. 43). In the shadow of the event that made of diverse sexual acts or practices definitive identities, and with it recognition of a definitive range of internal perturbations of gender sensibilities and attractions, Régamey, knowingly or not, was likely the first to set down on paper such newly imaginable walkers.

Not coincidentally, the stretch presents a gaze between Verlaine and Rimbaud that precisely mimics the prevailing representational code for erotically involved couples promenading in public. Stephen Kern has called this convention, particularly prevalent amongst English and French artists in the second half of the nineteenth century, the "*proposal composition*" - a moment of indecision between a male and his female companion in which she appears to turn from his gaze to consider a weighty proposition and thereby leaving the viewer to ponder a decisive, "*Will she or won't she?*" (1996, p. 7; emphasis in original). Moreover the romantic interregnum reinforced divergent gender expectations as Kern wrote:

The man's single profiled eye implies the limited depth perspective of monocular vision and single-mindedness of purpose; the woman's two frontal eyes imply the greater depth perception of binocular vision as well as a wider horizon of visual interests, a broader range of purposes, and more profound, if not more intense, emotions. (1996, p. 07)

Correspondingly, Verlaine's somewhat awkward, profiled stare is suggestively penetrating, while Rimbaud's frontal gaze lies somewhere on the hesitant-resolute range of the feminine. This composition in fact mirrors the circumstances and prejudices of the situation: on one hand Verlaine, the married man fleeing his wife and child for London; on the other, "*Mlle Rimbaud*", as the French National newspaper *Le Peuple souverain* satirised the juvenile *poète maudit* on 16 November 1871, a "charming young lady" purported to have been seen "arm-in-arm" with Verlaine in Paris (cited in Robb 2000, p. 139). In fact, what the drawing more likely sets up is a physiognomic parody, both of the erotic promenade and of the solitary figure of the *flâneur*. In the spirit of Rimbaud's first London poem, "*L'enfant qui ramassa les balles...*" ("The Child who picked up the balls...") scribbled and illustrated in

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<sup>5</sup> Karl-Maria Kertbeny first used the term in an anonymously authored pamphlet published in 1869. The term was subsequently adopted by others including Gustav Jager in *Discovery of the Soul* (1880) and Richard von Krafft-Ebing in *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886).

Régeamey's album,<sup>6</sup> the sketch sets in play a knowing innuendo that undermines appetent surface certainties. In contrast to the regional physiognomies of landscapism or its poetic equivalent, Parnassianism - a poetic form named after Greece's Mount Parnassus (site of Delphi and the Sanctuary of Apollo) and with which Verlaine was associated - that was overly concerned with "mimesis" and a poetically faithful rendering of what is seen, Rimbaud wanted nothing to do with those "O very-peaceful photographers!", seeking instead a perturbation refiguring the seen (Rimbaud 2005, p. 111; also Ross 1989, pp. 83-83).

In contrast to the street stripped bare of detail in Régamey's sketch, to walk London's streets in the nineteenth century, was not only to encounter foreign others drawn to the Empire's capital - Verlaine and Rimbaud in their passage from Charring Cross Station, through Trafalgar Square and up Regent Street on first arriving were astonished enough to write, "it seems to be snowing negroes" (Robb 2000, p. 190) - it was to encounter an alien remaking of city space itself. In fact to walk through Victorian London was to discover the "first city of the world", a locale where the most far-flung geopolitical machinations were troublingly brought 'home' (Walkowitz 1992, p. 197). While colonial expansion had presumed as unremarkable the centrifugation of the British (and European others) around the globe, the return of a sea of new social actors, racial and foreign others along with commercial, criminal and moral 'undesirables' to its shores had unexpectedly created what was construed to be a "terra incognita", an unknown land, at the heart of Empire (p. 33). Where John Nash's reorganisation of Trafalgar Square in the 1820's sought to bring into clearer relation the political actors in the country's capital and the Empire's centre (a gesture subsequently reinforced by the addition of representative colonial 'houses' at the square's perimeter), the far less consciously and convincingly ordered East End and Docklands provided a much disparaged source of unpredictable colonial 'leakage' into the West End, thus miming an older east-west tension at London's heart, bifurcated as it has long been between the City and Westminster. Rich in imperialistic overtones, the resulting proliferation of discourses proclaiming an "East/West opposition", as Judith Walkowitz has argued, sought to reorder the "social and epistemological disorientation" found up close in the Capital, yet not without revelling in the pleasures of an enriched urban spectatorship this potentiated (p. 19 & 197). Here, any observer was but a drop in the ocean, set afloat on an unfathomable social field expanded, seemingly, without, limit as Friedrich Engels suggested in 1844 and Henry James, somewhat differently, in his essay "London" (1888). A "thematics of fluidity" (to borrow David Wills' phrase from a different context, 2008, p. 115) found in these accounts of London sought stability in the east-west arc organising the

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<sup>6</sup> The poem effected a smutty identification with 16 year-old Imperial Prince Louis, then exiled in Chislehurst in Kent, who is portrayed as an incessant masturbator - a then widely recognised code for homosexuality (Robb 2000, p. 185).

imperial capital's imaginary. The Victorian city was remarkable not just for the civil engineering reforms prompted by the hygienist movement; urban 'sanitation' was inseparable from a parade of inspectors and administrative observers whose supposedly 'impartial' and well-meaning attendance on the technical machinations of water supply, drainage, street lighting etc., drew on social concerns awash in moral indignation and revulsion at modes of deprived city living (Joyce 2003, p. 68). No less in this period, a cadre of male urban walkers of varying professions and privileged station set out to observe and tabulate the sensory excesses, social deprivations and immoderate circumstances of London's newly assembled internal orient. In so far as Verlaine and Rimbaud must be counted amongst those commentators at once demonstratively repelled, yet also whetted by an incremental airing of the pleats of the Victorian urban behemoth, as foreign adventurers themselves, they were caught as Régamey's sketch makes plain, in a slide between observer and the observed. Washed up on the paved shores of the English Capital fresh from the disquietude of the Paris Commune and in retreat from societal and domestic scandal of their own making, they had reason to attract scrutiny.

In this regard, the uniformed presence of the constable in Régamey's sketch can be read as more than a touristic addition by its amused French artist; the then relatively new technology of beat policing introduced with the establishment of the Metropolitan Police in 1829 in London (and subsequently across other British metropolitan centres) ambitioned a highly visible and repetitious presence of law enforcement on city streets. Where previously city policing had operated according to stationary watchmen whose principal aim was the protection of property, particularly at night, police beats entailed a new and mobile surveillance of city space based on an older "military Shorncliffe system of communicating scout patrols" (Metropolitan Police 2013). Its aim was the traversal of predefined beats uniformly measured by "beat wheels" and repeatedly walked every 15 minutes, day and night. Citywide, the everyday walking of streets unavoidably entailed movement through a cellular patchwork of militarised scrutiny spatially and temporally circumscribed by these beat rhythms. While the explicate intention of the new patrols was the detection of criminal activity and the apprehension of perpetrators, the unavoidable disciplinary effect, given the constant sense of police oversight, was an amplified circumspection and self-surveillance amongst the citizenry themselves (Joyce 2003, p. 111). As Patrick Joyce has written, given the previous, longstanding collective monitoring and shared policing of relatively autonomous communities by themselves, save for the occasional intervention by State militia, this arrangement helped set in train a much starker, and far from popular, distinction between public and private spaces. Imposed over what was previously an informally ordered social terrain, what the new, municipally centralised policing effected was a bifurcation between, on one hand, places of collective access

regulated by police passage and oversight, and on the other, places of individual proprietorship and restricted access. Not surprisingly, these newly defined public spaces took on the characteristics of a “neutral medium”, primarily dedicated to impediment-free circulation but over which an edict against loitering and gatherings were regularly enforced with the commonplace imperative to ‘move along’ (p. 111).<sup>7</sup>

Something of this circulatory clearing is evident in the Régamey sketch, stripped as it is of the press of impediments and extraneous others. The imperative to separate and partition persons, one from the other as part of a broader “hygienisation of the city” (p. 73) was a long standing goal of social reform and sensory diminution from the eighteenth century. The “crowding together of bodies”, as was widely believed at the time, facilitated the accumulations of “morbid emanations” or miasmatic contamination and new standards of personal cleanliness, while slow to take hold, progressively raised sensitivity to proximal smell of others and a corresponding veneration of something approaching ‘personal space’ (Corbin 1988, p. 101). Taking its lead from earlier military techniques of distancing and individuating bodies in mass manoeuvres and parading, the pocketing of persons in singular spatial enclosures ranging from single beds to individual graves, served to counter concerns over unregulated and immoderate mixing (whether social, familial or material) and the detrimental consequence of a fall into states of inertia and stagnation. In ideal conditions, all persons were to be maintained, much as Claude-Nicolas Ledoux argued for a paradigmatic Neoclassical architecture in the century before, as “‘islands in the air’”, independent of all extraneous adherence to better battle, by way of ventilation, the effects of bad air (cited in Corbin 1988, p. 101), but also to suture the utilitarian with the utopian. The diagrammatic economy of Régamey’s sketch similarly revels in an air of separation, though a qualified one. Baudelaire’s championing in the preceding decade of an observational rendering of modern life according to a bare “physiognomy” or outline “bony structure” of things is evident too (2010, p. 21). Favouring caricatures, rapid sketches and comic renderings against the prevailing taste for laboured heroic subjects, Baudelaire was at pains to recommend against the observer’s “will to see all and forget nothing”, a frugality of line that would resist being “trampled under foot” by “a riot of detail” all anarchically calling for inclusion on the canvas (p. 16). In this sense, Régamey’s rendering of the street can be seen to raise a sparse visual depiction from a setting more commonly celebrated for its mobbing spectacle. The pictorial economy here entails a seeing-through that uniquely befits modernity, a looking for “the salient or luminous points of an object” as Baudelaire called for (p. 21).

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<sup>7</sup> Certainly the British Police Acts of 1839 and 1835 empowered constables, as Joyce has observed, to intervene in “non-criminal street activities for the first time” and in particular, the “1867 Traffic Acts increased police powers over the regulation of traffic” itself (2003, p. 217).

Diverging from the images by Constantin Guys that Baudelaire had in mind is the framing of the strolling poets by a police officer. The iconic, if apparition-like, figure of a London Bobby in the scene starkly invokes legal force and portends the explicitly erotic and turbulent relationship between Rimbaud and Verlaine that infamously concluded in the following year with Rimbaud's shooting and the imprisonment of Verlaine in Belgium for sodomy. If the police presence suggests a general atmosphere of suspicion, as Robb had indicated, it was not unwarranted, for as subsequently became known, "spies who reported to Ministers on both sides of the Channel" monitored the visiting French poets, as they did for many of the political exiles and immigrants thought to compose, with varying degrees of commitment, an "international socialist underground" in London's Soho (2000, p.189). If that observation comprised a *covert* operation, the *manifest* police observer in Régamey's image, foregrounds, with its array of sideways glances and avoided face-to-face recognition, a reflexive field consistent, not with a despotic, paranoiac/interpretive register, but a post-signifying mix of self-surveillance, passionate determination and social counter-expression. It pictures in fact an elemental unit of social space redolent with the pastoral machinations and disciplinary technologies Foucault associated with the emergence of the nineteenth century "subject of desire". Régamey unerringly stages the complex observational field that the walker as a subject of desire and bearer of (potential) sexual perturbation (for which Verlaine and Rimbaud were taken as actual markers) comprises – or what amounted to a field of post-romantic decipherment and visual referencing that was entirely antithetical to the romantic notion, as Celeste Langan asserted, of walking as a "transcendental surplus" that emphasised universality and equivalence over "the contingent details" of gesture, gait, apparel, or societal relation (1995, p. 05). Emphasising this relational field is Régamey's composition itself which has both the constable and Rimbaud symmetrically turned inward toward the taller figure of Verlaine who centralises the composition, but who in turn adds a certain imbalance or tension by looking back across his shoulder toward Rimbaud. The incongruity of his diverted attention serves to displace any sense of forward momentum and with both feet essentially planted flatly, and legs minimally bent while widely spread, suggests he has momentarily paused or is shuffling to a halt. In contrast, Rimbaud, body and head inclined forward, one leg planted, another rising and with clear room all about him is clearly advancing at pace suggestively compressing the space between them. In the background the more spectrally rendered constable, wide-legged and with knees locked, is resolutely stationary. While Verlaine's sideways glance was linked to the proposal composition above, in fact its slightly more rearward trajectory accords with a less openly rendered or even acknowledged propositional gesture, "the rearward glance", itself a telling icon of sexual interest whose exercise in public between males, was increasingly understood in the nineteenth century to signal homosexual recognition as Mark Turner has explored. The *propositional glance* (belonging to the "cruiser", as Turner assigns 'him') as



decoding of the *proposal composition* takes up the small hiatus in the teleology of the romantic interregnum – or what Lee Edelman calls a “temporality of desire” indexed to “the reproductive Couple” and a futurity resting on familial closure and Oedipality (2004, p. 87 & 2011, p. 148) - extending it indefinitely, not in the sense of consummating, casual sexual acts, but in the perpetuating dynamic of “walking, gazing and engaging another (or others)” outside all completion<sup>8</sup> (Turner 2003, p. 60). It entails, in other words, surrendering to the “omnipresent, diffuse sexualisation” of the city itself as a mobile domain of attraction and indifference, a domain coloured by the neutrality of a ‘maybe’ and the search for a double or companion through recognition (Henning Bech cited in Turner 2003, p. 60). Integral to this attraction is a language naming and delimiting companions *tout court* (the homosexual, the heterosexual) and yet language itself orchestrates that naming’s undoing – radically so. Language, like the city at large, is never other than an anonymous companion, an impersonal personation that never satisfies, in the nexus of observation it extends, either definitive recognition or satiation.

#### 4. *Orchestrating Language*

The vacillation between the propositional composition and the propositional glance in Régamey’s sketch, speaks to the broader problem of eliciting from male bodies specifically signification capable of telling, within a presumed gender solidarity, a defining difference – the homosexual difference. For Edelman, the historical circumstances making possible the naming of the homosexual leaves no sexual position untouched and in fact set in play a “hermeneutics of suspicion” adhering to all male bodies (1994, p. 7). Like Cain the betrayer marked indelibly for his crime, the ‘homosexual body’ is in turn conceived of as a discursive entity, an entity required to manifest its difference visually, and therefore ‘textually’ as a ‘truth’ capable of being read - a gait, an affectation, an indiscrete look. In doing so it frees its other – the heterosexual body - from any specific, signifying demand, thereby affording it a purported nature and naturalness exempt from representation (pp. 5, 9). *Homographesis* is the term Edelman coined to describe in fact the play of difference and sameness determining sexuality and the discursive performance extended to all bodies in modernity. Centring moreover the victimage mechanism of homophobia, is the capacity to identify (deviant) cues metaphorically expressive of an essence – specifically in the Anglo-European context an essential passivity equated with femininity. Following Lacan, Edelman argued - against metaphor, and any essentialness in sexuality - for the primacy of metonymy

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<sup>8</sup> Edelman makes the point that irony in the manner Paul De Man defined it, causes narrative to be “suspended, interrupted, disrupted”, and in the context of a serial chronology implicate in the “reproductive Couple”, Régamey’s ironising of the proposition composition implies a lapse of futurism for which the ‘crusier’, indeed the homosexual couple, are exemplars (2004, p. 87).

as desire's indicative mechanism and the decoded ground upon which all metaphor troublingly plies its trade in equivalence:

Metaphor, that is, binds the arbitrary slippages characteristic of metonymy into units of 'meaning' that register as identities or representational presences. Thus the historical investiture of sexuality with a metaphoric rather than a metonymic significance made it possible to search for sexual signifiers that would testify to the presence of this newly posited sexual identity or 'essence'. (p. 9)

If, as indicated previously, excessive semiosis in capitalist market relations operates metonymically, the imposition of metaphoric signification amounts to one means of imposing an identificatory stricture against the former's erosive passivity. As such, the 'queerness' of Rimbaudian poetics (a queering, that is, of the narcissistic counter-actualisation of borderline states pursued by Baudelaire) lies less in rendering visible a new sexuality than in 'exploding' all metaphoric determinacy. At stake is a poetic driven not by resentment at the lapse of promise portended by bourgeois culture; Rimbaud rails instead against the hegemony of that culture by mobilising, amplifying and redistributing the dissimilitude underwriting it (Ross 1989, p. 125). That this took the form of a tropic malfunction is widely noted in the literature on Rimbaud. Ross exemplified Hugo Friedrich's highlighting of "absolute metaphor" in Rimbaud's poetry where identification with substitute figures, rather than implying similitude, is total (p. 79). For example, the self taken as a boat on a drunken course in "*Le bateau ivre*": "As I was going down impassive Rivers, [...]"; 2005, p. 129). Similarly, Jean Paul Sartre, as Ross noted, found in Rimbaud a "'leftist' turn of the imagination" that deployed "'centrifugal', 'generous', and 'explosive' metaphor" (p. 125). Evident in Rimbaud, as Sartre found, was one particular strand of modern poetic which unifies through expansive gathering, "compel[ling] natural diversity to symbolize an explosive unity" by forging in the disassembly and motion of things ever-greater circuits of connection (Sartre 2012 pp. 463-464; Ross 1989, pp. 125-126).

In Rimbaud then is this double valence: the body made a site of speech (a demand to speak its 'secret truth' as spoiler of bourgeois masculinity) and a subject of enunciation (the "'I speak'") that lets itself go by entering into what Foucault, in another context, described as an endless, spreading forth of language (1987, p. 11). Contrary to a bourgeois origination in the Cartesian *cogito* and its linking of interior states with truth-finding, what Foucault called the "I speak" knows no certainty against doubt and draws the thinking subject into an "outside" relieved of all fixed features or orientating markers (p.11). Foucault sought in the essay "The Thought of the Outside" to consider beyond experience as internally predicated, thinking instead into the being of language where he found a paradoxical place – a kind of non-place - between silence and actual speech. Not unlike Rimbaud's absolute metaphor, he imagines a sheer equivalence between speech and the self, but one shorn of any transitivity or object-reference (the thing I am "speaking about or of"; Lawlor 2011, p. 93).

As Lawlor described this thought operation, “when I suspend the transitivity of speech, I find myself located with an indefinite or even infinite supporting discourse, a discourse that becomes definite and limited only with the speaking of or about one thing” (2011, p. 93). Suturing the ‘I’ to speech prior to any particular articulation renders it absolutely exposed to the abyssal multiplex state that is language’s anonymous, networked being - its “informal murmur” (p. 94). Doubled with a foundation that founds nothing but the loss of foothold, the speaking self, as opposed to the thinking one, experiences immanence as grafted to a beyond that no actual speaking will overcome. To think this outside is to enter into a realm of anonymity where forgetting and diffusion prevail and where “waiting for nothing in particular” (for no particular thing avails itself) induces both interminable boredom and an over-zealous grasping of the ungraspable – qualities in fact consistent with Blanchot’s double characterisation of Rimbaud in his pursuit of an exhausted and exhausting unity. More broadly, this “attraction-withdrawal” couplet is indicative of literature itself, which must be understood to invariably open a passage to the “neutral space” or ‘outside’ underwriting language (Foucault 1987, p. 13; Lawlor 2012, p. 179). For this reason, Foucault asserts, “it is now so necessary to think through fiction”, to find thought not as an “entire tradition wider than philosophy” has, in “deepest interiority”, but in the “being of language” that knows no interior (1987, pp. 12-13). The “‘subject’ of literature (what speaks in it and what it speaks about)” does not belong to the “dynasty of representation” (1987, p. 12) - that remaining vestige of despotism – but to the beyond of what can be stated in positivity or certainty. The space of fiction no doubt extends a problematic around truth. Much as Socrates’ confrontation with political *parrhēsia* shattered “the foundations of Greek truth” with the possibility that “‘I lie, I speak’” (Foucault 1987, p. 09), it set up a confrontation with immanence – a grappling with the immediate contingency of one’s own truth – opening the way for metaphysics to overarch it with a superior world exceeding manifest appearances (Lawlor 2012, pp. 03-04). With a reassertion of an Oedipal trajectory in Cartesian thought there is also a reassertion of immanence, or at least, as Lawlor said, that version of it first understood “as internal, subjective experience” (p. 200). Yet, if the thrust of post-Cartesian, Continental philosophy has been an overcoming of Platonism specifically, and metaphysics generally, subjective experience itself has increasingly lost its claim to certitude or truth while immanence has come to mean “ungrounded experience” - something which insistently ‘companions’ the subject and to which it only precariously rises above (p. 200).

While Certeau critiqued the grounding of the scriptural or literate subject in the island of the page, an island mimetic of a mercantile-capitalist remaking of the world, Foucault saw in the scriptural operation, firstly a fortressing of the self (its disjunction from the world that can be named), and secondly, the exile to a “surrounding desert” subsisting with every

reach towards transitivity in speech. The subject so mired in a hiatus, “inserts distances” into its quest for self-presence (Lawlor 2011, p. 98). If Descartes provided the model for modern auto-affection and immanence “‘I am thinking, I am thinking about..., I am thinking about my own ideas’” (cited in Lawlor 2011, p. 98), for Lawlor, thinking as an inner monologue (consistent with Plato’s overcoming of a dialogical *alterno pede*) implies “‘hearing oneself think’” seemingly simultaneously, yet to hear - even inner speech - is to have invoked, however small, a temporal span and mediation (p. 98). This miniscule split, like the division Merleau-Ponty ascribes to the auto-affection invoked by vision which makes the subject always a seer and the seen, divides the present in which thought occurs. Rimbaud for his part set out to similarly undermine the surety of thought, “degrading” himself, deranging “all the senses, to better convert himself, via poetic vision, into a “Seer” (letter to Georges Izambard 13 May 1871; 2005, p. 371). In a follow up to the famous “I is another”, Rimbaud, calling on a certain disassociation arising with waking moments, wrote, as indicated previously, of watching internally his thoughts coming into being (2005, p. 375). The self, no less than the thoughts that emanates from it are far from *sui generis*; an orchestral tempo and temporality course through them. Concomitantly, for Lawlor auto-affection means finding in oneself:

[...] the sounds of others [...] other voices, which come from the past [so that...] it is impossible for me to hear myself speak all alone. There is a multivocality, a sort of murmur or clamour coming from the past. Others’ voices contaminate the hearing of myself speaking. Just as my present moment is never immediate, my interior monologue is never simply my own. (2011, p. 99)

Not that thought is incapable of forming unique or singular expression, but it answers to what Lawlor called a double structure: a spacing that repeats or brings into play repetitious traits, traits of the past; and a singularization that combines them as novel events (p. 99). Together these two ‘structural elements’ operate by failing to unify, by ensuring an end-heterogeneity or out of jointedness that in fact render thought a “hetero-affection” whose “immanence dissolves into multiplicity and that taints any cognitive interior with an outside that murmurs ‘we’ (p. 99).

### 5. Legal Force & Un-Seaming

For Régamey’s poet-walkers, mired in something akin to neutral space, an absence of encircling city or even a viscerally substantive ground - commonplace in eighteenth century accounts of pedestrian passage where impeded or contaminated street surfaces abound – points to a certain abstraction of place – in fact an eidetic reduction of sorts. The redaction of city detail leaves only an anonymising, socio-legal triangulation, where desire lines travel without converging or completing their promise. Following Foucault, ‘attraction’ in the sense that Blanchot deployed it, courses through the composition – which is to say that it

presents an open whole without “positive presence” or real intimacy (1987, pp. 27-28). And if there is attraction in this image, there is negligence – the flipside indicator of Blanchotean attraction as Foucault saw it – too: neglect of the city proper, neglect of the familial and circumstantial background of the exiled poets, and, despite an askance glance, neglect of the intimate attraction that drove them to neglect bourgeois prudence and reasonableness to the point of a devastating intersection with the law. Ultimately there is negligence of writing. On the other hand, zeal - drunken and desperate (desperate to harvest an unremitting boredom) – takes solicitude too far, and as Foucault held, strides towards “distraction and error” multiplied by steps that “dizzy with stubbornness” (p. 29). So Régamey, perhaps with a prehension of where the poets’ zeal and negligence will carry them, personifies the law via a ‘Bobby’, or perhaps he just wanted a marker of the foreignness of the city he left undelineated. In either case, the figure of the law doubles with the couple no less than the city spaces it comes to define. Foucault referring to this companioning function, saw in it an insistent sovereignly force haunting “cities, institutions, conduct, and gestures”, one that keeps them in order without ever manifesting itself completely (p. 33). As such, the law, as something only ever approached but never grasped, operates as an “outside that envelops conduct” much as language envelops the ‘I speak’ without any speech being equal to it (1987, pp. 34-35). Moreover, as Foucault claimed, “The law is the shadow toward which every gesture necessarily advances; it is the shadow of the advancing gesture” and as such is its own diabolical attractor (1987, p. 35). That Rimbaud could not imagine a poetic output without atrocities, and achieved poetic notoriety precisely on the basis of making ‘atrocities’ his companion, something of the law’s potency as progenitor is evident. Correspondingly, in the essentially groundless portrayal of the walking poets, what grounding credence Régamey’s sketch does invokes takes the sole form of shadows (belonging to Verlaine and Rimbaud), shadows that fall towards, and tightly frame, the *shadowless* figure of the law. And if, as Foucault said, it is in the nature of “The law [to] avert[...] its face and return[...] to the shadows the instant one looks at it” (1987, p. 41) - or what amounts to the same thing, a place without shadow – what can be recognised in the legal force Foucault described is the double betrayal characterising what Deleuze and Guattari’s called the passionate or a-signifying regime. That the law, like the being of language, finds its essence in withdrawal to an outside with no substantive or positive manifestation, it is because, unlike the despotic reign that links decrees and interdictions to a “an external model, a referent, face”, the postsignifying semiotic institutes a discourse vacillating between finitude and the infinite as vast impersonal power that betrays all referents. Rimbaud from “*Villes*” (“*Cities*”): “But the law must be so unusual that I give up imaging what adventures are like” (2005, p. 333).

Such is the mark of Cain impressed on its exiled peoples as an infinitely postponed sentence, one born of an interdiction proceeding all interdiction (the *first* murder). As Steven Connor noted: “Cain kills Abel, but what law does he break? The law that his own act institutes as prior to it; thus Cain is marked with the primal mark. Cain is marked with the sign of the deserter; but [...] he is marked in order that he can never desert, that he will always be at home in his wanderings” (2001). If it is the body that links, as Connor phrased it, the “law and letters” within what he calls the “law of marks” (or what amounts to a passional regime in extreme compaction), the mark of Cain calls up a disturbed siglum indeterminately implicating wandering bodies. The biblical word for mark is the Hebrew “*ot*”, something that itself “came to have the meaning of a ‘character’ or ‘sign’” (2001), and therefore suggests a circular or undecideable logic further carried over into Latin translations where, as Ruth Mellinkoff confirmed, an ambiguity over whether God “placed a sign on Cain” or “made Cain (as) a sign” has tended to be resolved in favour of the former, causing much speculation over the precise nature of the sign, speculation well in excess of any scriptural specification (1981, p. 02). The drive to make the mark, any mark, *manifest*, again in Connor’s characterisation, means that the “law takes him [the subject under law] out of his own time, and submits him to its durance [hence it is...] a system for making the past and the present commensurate, [of keeping] the past and the future in balance” (2001). But Oedipus the Greek Cain, is the one in whom no balancing of past and future can be achieved in the present. The mark events but does not signify. Similarly with Cain, as the bearer of a monomaniacal passion, there is no equivalence between mark and law, no mark of equivalence and therefore no closure of the law. God holds him in reserve, protected from revenge by way of an “apotropic” sign, a sign attracting exception but also repudiation (Connor 2001). Certainly, Rimbaud’s own assumption of Cain as a narrative hero in “*Mauvais sang*”, completed in the aftermath of the London sojourn with Verlaine and during Verlaine’s imprisonment emphasises, as Carrie Jaurès Noland has explored, a “kind of holy loneliness, an immunity, but also a permanent isolation from his fellow men” (1997, p. 567).

In Régamey’s sketch, Rimbaud and Verlaine stand before and, in a certain sense, knowingly against the law. No doubt, behind the cold intimacy of the image is the persistence of the Romantic idealisation of the artist as outsider, marked out in isolation from context and surrounding social convention, but something new presses through too: the possibility of passing unrecognised, despite a physiognomic-inclined observing field seeking deeper truths via the surface of things, and despite a law seeking to signify, in all positivity, the difference, the divergence, the deviant within a law of equivalency. These two walkers, as newly minted ‘homosexuals’, suggest the difficulty of bodies to testifying in the physiognomic sense, but also to the possibility of difference being inscribed within

sameness consistent with Edelman's homographesis. For Edelman, the emergence of a nineteenth century hetero-homo demarcation overturning an earlier "*socially diffused homosexuality*" without metaphoric valence (a term borrowed from Alan Bray; 1995), far from stabilising 'essential' (and asymmetrically valued) differences in sexuality by making them "available to signification", instead come to "signify the instability of the signifying function *per se*" (1994, p. 6). Perturbing of three key signifying arenas - the theological (where it is coded as sodomical and heretic), the political (where it is coded as treasonous), the social (as misplaced "gender roles and stereotypes") - homosexuality in fact fails its metaphorical task by calling all desiring subjects into suspicion via a "metonymic dispersal" readable everywhere. Further, "homosexuality comes to signify the potential permeability of every sexual signifier - and by extension, of every signifier as such - by an 'alien' signification" (pp. 6-7). On the other hand, if the production of the "gay body as text" amounts to the grasping of a homosexual essence supposedly "always already inscribed" in *certain* bodies, the impossibility of securing a visible token of that difference in *any* male body (a morphological difference) points to the uncertain initiation of any body into the law of desire and into textuality. It speaks in fact to a lapse in the whole physiognomic project that would converge the "two into One" in a metaphoric essentialism that puts words to bodies and fixes them in statements (Edelman 2004, p. 87). Instead, a doubling persists, and like the being of language and the law's ever-distant retreat, this queer companionship opens up all and any interiority accorded the subject of desire. Further, it calls time on that subject's claim to an enduring futurity or what amounts to the realisation, and coping with that realisation, that out front and beyond there is nothing but a lapse of finitude - in other words an absolute outside (1987, p. p.47).

For Edelman what defines this coping is a "fantasmatics of futurity" in which social reality receives its status as reality by virtue of its exceeding individual mortality and thereby providing a structure "to identify ourselves with what's to come by way of haven or defense against the ego's certain end" (p. 34). Indeed desiring subjects can only dwell in and through the "sheltering office of fantasy", that itself instils an "imaginary suture *in the face of death*" by dissolving such subjects into the very scene and setting of social space (2003, p. 230; emphasis in original). To be in the scene is to always be invested in its longevity, and by borrowed reference, our own; it is to be invested in a reproductive agency seeking to exceed the Real as a figure of impossible enduring - in other worlds, as figure of the death drive itself (p. 231). Adolescence, richly verging on societal reproduction - both socio-economic and sexual - is also a placeholder for desiring ambiguity no less than virtual miscreancy and in Régamey's picturing of a parodic, propositional composition, and the bridging of adolescence into infamy, the scene of social absorption is one severely shorn of manifest futurity. Its going-nowhere (in the sense its non-place traversal) resonates with

Edelman's identification of a queer refusal of the fantasmatics of futurity. Building on Lacan's depiction of the *sinthome*, ("an old way of writing what was subsequently written as symptom"; 2013, I-19) or what he understood, not as a signifier opening the unconscious to interpretation, but a nonsensical indicator and interpretive blockage uniquely inducing subject coherence via a *jouissance* bringing together the real, the imaginary and the symbolic, Edelman proposed the *Sinthom*-osexuality instead to specify an interminable blockage operative in "a heterosexually elaborated symbolic order" (p. 232). Specifically:

[...] *sinthom*-osexuality specifies the 'sin' with which the 'homosexual' continues to be charged as that of figuring a threat to the subject's faith that its proper home is in meaning, a threat made real by the homosexual's construction in the image of a radically despiritualized 'home'. (p. 232)

If fantasy provides "an unbroken continuity to the meaningless circulation and repetitions of the drive", *sinthom*-osexuality is its antithesis on the basis that it potentiates the erosion of all limits to pleasure (p. 232). Moreover, it characterises the flipside of an ameliorating Oedipal surface:

*Sinthom*-osexuality [...] – denied and denying the seductive appeal to fantasy thus exerts, refusing the pledge of futurity that mends all tears, however mean, in reality's dress with threads of meaning) attached as they are to the eye-catching sequins of sequence, and thus of consequence) – presents us with fantasy turned inside out, the seams of its costume exposing reality's seamless as mere seeming, the fraying knots each sequin in place now usurping that place. (p. 231; emphasis in original)

While for Lacan the *sinthome* amounted to a fourth knot or binding holding together the symbolic, imaginary and real circuits composing a topology of the subject and thus preventing the whole structure sliding into a psychotic state, it nevertheless operates to show up and enjoy the unruly collision between bodies and language, the symbolic and the real (Thurston 2004, p. 166). Like Barthes *punctum* that dwells up close in details and has the power, contrary to "hide-and-seek", interpretive desire, to expand metonymically, Edelman's picturing of *sinthom*-osexuality is all stitching, and messy knotted construction that singularly undoes, via the eye-catching incongruity of its patchwork, the seamless of the big picture (or what Barthes called the averaging reality of the stadium image) (2000, pp. 26, 43-45). On this basis the lapse of futurity the homosexual body is made to phobically embody covers over a move severe desexualisation than sublimation's way forward. Edelman's arresting, *no future*, coalescing about the *sinthom*-osexual undoing of all signifying certainty, if given a Deleuzian inflection, translates as something like a metaphysical surface where castration propels, not a fantasy overbridging in its preoccupation with the restoration of couples, but an altogether different leap past what Deleuze saw as its "deadly furrow" – the trace of castration brings to the fore "the crack constitutive of thought, or between sexuality and thought as such" (1990, pp. 218-219).



Not unlike Lacan's eschewing of a representational basis for fantasy, what inhabits the rupture that constitutes thought for Deleuze is the phantasm, a non-representational, non-personal, event whose infinitive nature transcends localisation in a person, a time, or a place (Faulkner 2006, pp. 28-29). Passing from figurative expression to abstract symbolism, the phantasm amounts to an incorporeal take-over of bodies that dissolves subjects in action in excess of personal representation (1990, p. 220). In short, the phantasm draws all bodies (no less than the homosexual one) towards an unstable, textual imbrication as suggested previously with regard to Klossowski's tripartite soul.

Thus does writing as phantom repetition shuttle between the "corporeal surface of sexuality and the metaphysical surface of thought" (1990, 222). On the other hand, the reverse surface of fantasy, the unseemly inside of every solidly and dependably enduring reality – Edelman's *Sinthom*-osexuality in fact – accords with that body perpetually making itself foreign to any corporeal organisation – what Deleuze and Guattari called the "body without organs". As the model of "non-productive stasis", in fact "the model of death", the body without organs is an attraction-repulsion mechanism that both gathers desiring machines and shuttles them off (2000, pp. 9, 329). In its repelling mode it models death by closing down and resisting all organisation or appropriation (catatonia as figure of zero intensity); in its attracting mode it binds together and distributes operational parts of a desiring nexus. If desire only works on the basis of both attracting and repelling operations, as Deleuze and Guattari argued, there must be both a model of death and an immanent experience of death at the heart of any desiring nexus. Further, it must be a matter of converting the death model into the experience of death – in other words, "Converting the death that rises from within (in the body without organs) into the death that comes from without (on the body without organs)" (p. 330). More plainly, there is no feeling that does not entail a divergent becoming, one whose passing into actuality necessarily traverse a point of zero affective intensity as datum marking the point at which the feeling is felt (p. 330). More radical still, every new affective departure potentiates an 'I' who is another without necessarily invalidating the other constituent attractions and repulsions that may have rightfully called themselves a One' in prior affective state (p. 331). Not coincidentally did Deleuze and Guattari cite Rimbaud in this context, emphasising the contingent making and remaking of perceptual horizons in excess of the single experiencer: "Let him die in his leaping through unheard-of and unnameable things: other horrible workers will come: they will begin on the horizons where the others collapsed!" (p. 331).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The citation comes from Rimbaud's letter to Paul Demeny dated 15 May 1871 (2005, p. 373-377).

## 5. An Alchemy of the Foot

All this suggests that for Rimbaud and Verlaine, London was a type of attraction-repulsion machine for shattering the limits of the lyrical self but also the urban given as such. For instance, in two city prose poems in *Illuminations* - "Villes" ("Cities") - both take London as referent and yet craft a non-mimetic relationship with the city, vastly distending and amplifying it. From "Villes II":

The official acropolis surpasses the most colossal conceptions of modern barbarism. Impossible to express the flat daylight produced by this unchanging gray sky, the imperial glitter of the buildings, and the eternal snow on the ground. In a singular taste for the gigantic they reproduced all the classical architectural marvels, and I visit exhibitions of paintings in rooms twenty times larger than Hampton Court. (2005, p. 331)

Like much poetry nineteenth century city poetry, Rimbaud gives a descriptive account of urban place in the throes of industrialisation and urbanisation, yet going beyond such accounts, his narrator is given, less to aghast distance, than wonder. From "Villes I":

Swiss chalets of crystal and wood move along invisible rails and pulleys. Old craters girdled by colossi and copper palm trees roar tunefully in the midst of fires. The sounds of love feasts ring over the canals suspended behind the chalets. The pack of chimes clamour in the gorges. Guilds of gigantic singers come together in cloths and banners as shining as the light on mountain tops. On platforms, within precipices, Rolands blare forth their valor. On foot bridges spanning the abyss and on the roofs of inns, the burning sky decks out masts. (p. 329)

An alchemistic and ecstatic remaking of city specificity is at work in these depictions, one eschewing the degraded palette Baudelaire was compelled to sample in pursuit of an ontotheological coordination of wholes out of parts (Ross 1989, p. 126). Rimbaud's incendiary metaphors – "metaphor that "explodes and scatters in all directions" – instead achieve a "dynamic unity" through sheer combustion alone, as Ross noted (p. 126). Fusing the historical with contemporaneity, nature with the urban, and festivals and love with work, a transmorgrification consistent with the mystical origins of guides and the old pre-industrial economies crafting value from putrefaction can be thought to be involved, particularly in "Villes I" (Ahearn 1983, p. 294). Yet the merging with nature in *Villes II* portends a more troubling futurity, a deurbanising conglomeration of infinite reach, one giving rise to savage, neo-Rousseauian, social actors:

The suburb melts strangely into the country, the 'Country' filling the eternal west with forests and gigantic plantations, where savage nobles hunt their news columns in the light which they invented. (2005, 333)

In a tradition “stretching from Blake to Yeats”, as Ahearn noted, apocalyptic gravitas is coupled with ecstatic visionary experience (death as model and experience perhaps?) and if Rimbaud gathers up these themes, both repelling and attracting, he no less *exacerbates* them, drawing them into fantastical configurations as if illuminating a re-seamed flipside to concrete urban perturbation. In fact *Villes II* might be imagined to concretise a critique of urban centrifugation for if the last paragraph charts a melting into suburbs and savagery (for which no first person reference attests), the preceding two paragraphs, rich in observer reference (“I went down”, “I trembled at the sight”, “I thought I could estimate” etc.), imply an immediately explicate facing of urban specificity. Here an incendiary metaphoric expands into the eye-witnessed fabric of things, though not without remaking what is habitually known.



Figure 22. Illustrated London News, 1865. Embankment Construction of the Thames. Source: Wikimedia Commons.

In fact the given-ness of the city was itself in great flux at this time with the London City Corporation undertaking widespread street paving and cleaning programmes, in addition to numerous road-straightening and realignment projects between 1850-1870 - works likely to have remade much of the surface terrain walked by Verlaine and Rimbaud between 1872-73. Following Nash’s Trafalgar Square/Regent Street formation in 1814-1825, the Thames Embankment riverbank reconstruction designed by Joseph Bazalgette and undertaken by the Metropolitan Board of Works between 1862-70 followed - a civic initiative seen as answer

to “the brilliant achievements of M. Haussmann”.<sup>10</sup> Proposals for a single unified bank-edge for the Thames had been advanced as early as 1666 by Sir Christopher Wren after the Great Fire, but the 1860s version - entailing a new traffic artery providing east-west diversion for congested Strand and Fleet Street nearby - was extended along the length of the swampy, north bank of the Thames and was unprecedented in the vertical extent of its carriageway development (Fig. 22). Below ground, behind extensive retaining walls, it accommodated a railway tube (the Circle Line), multi-level sewers and interceptors of London’s lost and undergrounded rivers, along with gas lines; above it provided a tree-lined, granite paved promenade complete with cast-iron benches and gas lamps, monuments and, if its earlier planned version had been completed, jets of ornamental water (Winter 1993, pp.26-27).

What this Regency merging of the “healthful and the beautiful” (pp. 27, 30) – if also concentrating idlers and “ragged youth”<sup>11</sup> - underscores is the dramatisation and specialisation of street terrain in the nineteenth century, particularly a sense of an unseen but pervasive ‘beneath’ integral with its traversal. In a unique shift, walking was made to play out across a surface of unprecedented technical complexity, a surface not merely rolled out across variable terrain, but one whose form harboured a routinely indecipherable sentience or rationality of its own. While the experience of large-scale infrastructural systems are commonplace, even banally experienced in this century, their spread into every aspect of daily life in the nineteenth was no doubt deeply confounding. The developmental continuity of the Embankment’s riverside walk no less offered an synthesis that brought into abrupt contact not only the depth of the river and its tidal surge held back by an urban underworld, it offered a new measure of the city’s temporal draft bringing into a single viewable sweep, as the *Daily News* contemplated in 1869, the vast interior of St Paul’s at one end and the gothic towers and chambers of Westminster at the other. In between, the “Titanic grandeur of the [then newly constructed] Charing Cross Railway-bridge” had trains and engines wondrously “rolling to and fro high up in the air”.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, the *Daily News* was moved to further announce:

If this is not the age of the Graces, it is the age of the Cyclops; and the Cyclops have a grace of their own. Harmonious and connecting all, the fluent softness, reflects the lights, and manifold activity of the river, contrasts charmingly with the objects on shore.

Sons of Mother Earth, the one-eyed Cyclops (builders of “gigantic walls and master-smiths” all three; Graves 1992, 3b) were so named for being “ring-eyed” – in other words, having had concentric circles inscribed on their foreheads to signify their use of compasses for

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<sup>10</sup> *Daily News*, “On the Thames Embankment”, Wednesday October 13, 1869, Issue 7317, page 5. Source, British Library.

<sup>11</sup> Refer the *Daily News*, “On the Thames Embankment”.

<sup>12</sup> Refer the *Daily News*, “On the Thames Embankment”.

marking metal. Metal-smiths in turn assumed a cyclopean association on the basis of the patch allowing them to stare, protected, one-eyed at fire. This inhuman urban association no doubt points to the challenges of seeing a world made anew in the furnaces of modernity.

For his part, Rimbaud, who lived briefly from March 1874 with Germain Nouveau at 178 Stamford Street, Lambeth, close to Waterloo Station and across the river from the Embankment, had regular cause to contemplate its submerged gigantism in his daily traversal of the river.<sup>13</sup> Again, the topographical vision of "*Villes II*" describes a river-edge, constructed terrain of perplexing depth and scale that pointedly evokes the Thames Embankment:

The upper part of the city has inexplicable parts: a river from the sea, without boats, unfolds its blue slate water between wharves supporting tremendous candelabra. A short bridge leads to a postern right under the dome of the Sainte-Chapelle. This dome is an artistic framework of steel, about fifteen thousand feet in diameter. From a few points of the copper foot-bridges, and platforms and stairways surrounding the market and pillars, I thought I could estimate the depth of the city: this is the miracle I was not able to judge: what are the levels of the other parts above or below the acropolis? For the foreigner of our day, reconnoitring is impossible. (2005, 331-333)

Commentators have seen in the "tremendous candelabra" explicate reference to the Embankment and its ornamental gas lighting (Cohn 1973, p. 318) – similarly referred to at the time by the press as candelabra.<sup>14</sup> Robert Greer Cohn links Rimbaud's city vision here with English painter and engineer John Martin (1789-1854) whose fantasy architectural and landscape depictions include *Belshazzar's Feast* (1821) and *The Seventh Plague of Egypt* (1823).

Like Martin's panoramas and their quest to recreate lost urban worlds where "the great becomes gigantic, [and] the wonderful swells into the sublime" (cited in Ray 1992, p. 44), what "*Villes II*" likewise offers is attendance to a semi-submerged gigantism. Yet as suggested above, Rimbaud's facing up to urban facticity meant more than a subjective accounting of it. For as "a decentred man [...] a man of the hiatus and not one of lived duration", as Jacques Plessen put it (cited in Whidden, p. 136), Rimbaud's narrator effects a magnification of the disparities between object reality and the visions subtending it. The narrative strategy of poems like *Villes II* depends, not on a distancing spectatorship, but

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<sup>13</sup> Robb notes Rimbaud and Germain's likely daily walk at that time across the Blackfriars Bridge to temporary work in a box factory at Holborn. He similarly notes Germain's complaint of the long hours they spent walking and crossing "no end [of] bridges" throughout the city (2000, pp. 243-244).

<sup>14</sup> See, *The Graphic*, on Saturday May 21, 1870, in an article titled "A Grumble About the Thames Embankment". Source, British Library.

looking and describing bringing forward a new scenographic real. Beyond habitual perception, what Rimbaud's narrative technique flagrantly emphasizes is the autonomous, revealing power of pure imagination and vision freed of real object-fields. As Ahearn put it, the results are visions "seemingly unmotivated by reality, indeed superior to reality" (1983, p. 326). Breaking with lived experience because its pattern and rhythm are beyond grasp, a hiatus within the seen forces thought to reconceive the whole that it confronts. Yet no cumulative perspectivism can master or encircle the scene; instead, as Deleuze describes the task of modern literature, "To every perspective or point of view there must correspond an autonomous work with its own self-sufficient sense", a perspective that breaks open not just the object but the subject that beholds it in accordance with the lapse of Kant's object = x (1994, p. 69; Faulkner 2006, p. 142). Both one-eyed like the Cyclops, and monstrous because, one-eyed, the subject cannot coordinate the circumnavigation it is required to repetitiously make of the world, and is carried into the "decentred circles" persisting beneath lived duration – in other words, into "the lived reality of a sub-representative domain" (Deleuze 1994, p. 69). Consistent with the foot and foot work as a "dark precursor" limpingly breaking the urban given into divergent series confounding the here-now of the what and who of experience, Rimbaud levers against the brute quotidian an unmoored temporality calling up under the guise of 'London' qualities at once too big and too small, too old and yet futuristically new, too close while infinity dispersed. Borrowing from Machiavelli, Barthes said of Rimbaud: "there were two different beings inside him, 'joined by an inconceivable jointure'" – in short a traveller and a poet (p. 153). Constituting "two discontinuous languages" as companions paralleling each other, they run one-eyed to a horizon which, unlike the orientating terrain crafted by the *Homo pictor* of myth, can never be reconciled (p. 153).

## 6. *An Oceanic Ebb*

Born by foot, a word-body problem inaugurated by the Christian *logos* hangs over Rimbaud's horizontal flight. As the Gospel of John puts it: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God [then...] The Word became flesh and made his dwelling amongst us" (1, 1-15). For Jacques Rancière, in nineteenth century literature is found the persistence of an old Christian tradition in which "body and spirit go together and stand in opposition to the 'dead letter'" (2009b, p. 56). Freed from a despotic linguistic monopoly, the result, as he put it, is that "a vast egalitarian surface of free words" – or what amounts to a "limitless, indifferent chatter of the world" – both confounds the "old expressive conventions" and sets in play a drive to forge a "direct relationship between the potential of words and the potential of bodies" (p. 57). Foucault credited Hölderlin with first

recognizing that “the gods had wandered off through a rift in language” leaving behind an ungrounded speech and bodies waiting for a relation to satisfy that rupture (1987, p. 17). As Rancière notes of such “speech on the march”, it “takes possession of souls, leads bodies and gives rhythm to their walk” (2004, p. 04). The problem of releasing a “new harmony” that reconciles the wait with action and causes a “new man [to] rise up and march” is not only what Rimbaud sought; it is “the cardinal directions of his century” (pp. 4, 49). Yet this new man is not a solitary being, it/he is the people, the last remnants of that tribe (of Israel) seeking union with its gods and in doing so immuring itself in the “whole of language” in pursuit of a utopian reconciliation (p. 65). From the desert of words is promised the New City and its peopling. Ross gives a similar prognosis on Rimbaud by way of Louis Gauny: the emancipatory vector is born of both the desert (or the sea as its surrogate<sup>15</sup>) and the city: “it is in the desert that seditious thought ferments, but it is in the city that such thought erupts [for...] Liberty likes extreme crowds or absolute solitude” (cited in Ross 1989, p. 21). If Rimbaud stands in the interstices between the old lyric project singing “the song of the people [with...] the salvation of bodies” and the strident assertions of “the poetical and political avant-gardes”, as Rancière held, he also sought that middle place Barthes called *idiorrhythmy*. The task of his anachoritism (withdrawal) was to draw from the interminable heterorhythmy of the wait a reconciled communality. Hence the acute sociability of his poetics (as Ross said, an “asocial” tendency toward free coalescence) that attracts, much like a treacherous shore, a veritable “scrapyard of a civilization” (Ross 2000, pp. 20, 233).

It is useful to think of this space of all possible connection as the ocean, something David Wills did in his essay, “A Line Drawn in the Ocean” (2008). There, amongst meditations on lines and sea, Wills endeavored to think through - both in terms of figurative ‘content’ and figuration as a gap or opening - Rimbaud’s “*Le bateau ivre*” (“The Drunken Boat”). If standing on firm ground is exemplarily undone by the sea (inducing “nothing but the supine” as Wills noted), technologies like boats and poems about boats can be thought of as mechanisms for managing fluidity (2008, p. 105). Yet oceanic life, well before a bipedal motility that might put bodies upright on decks, bestowed what Leroi-Gouhan coined an anterior existential field, and with it, a bi-symmetrical “articulation”, or the lever-action of fins/limbs. Animation and motility is, as Wills emphasised, technologization from the get go:

[...] there is technology as soon as there is limbs, as soon as there is bending of those limbs, as soon as there is any articulation at all. As soon as there is articulation, the human has rounded the technological bend, the technological

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<sup>15</sup> Rimbaud himself says of the sea in “*Délires*” (“Delerium”): “I had to travel, to divert the enchantments assembled over my head. Over the sea, which I loved as if it were washing me of a stain” (2005, p. 295) – that stain likely being the economy of sin that so motivated Baudelaire (Rancière 2004, p. 55).

turn has occurred, and there is no more simple human. Which, for all intents and purposes, means there never was any simple human. (p. 03)

It means too, as Wills continued:

[...] the ocean will here surge in the back – and not so background as the paradox of a *natural technology*, a *pretechnological technology*, or *technological difference* [making...] Limitless oceanic water [...] the energetic force of an essence of technology [...]. (p. 105; emphasis in original)

Otherwise “floating in technology”, as Wills put it, Oedipus, as the mediator and engineer of surfaces, is also a lever-arm and law wielded against an “oceanic [psychical] force” in the quest, as Freud had it, for an exclusive ground for civilisation (p. 105). Yet Oedipus as complex, like the anterior field at large, is directional; it rests on a front-back, before-after trajectory, both forward-facing and fronting a blind field or behind seemingly done with. Yet Deleuze and Guattari’s passional regime, with its double betrayal (God and man’s) condenses both a flight from despotism into exile *and* an askance longing for return to despotic origins. Along these lines, Wills attributes to Oedipus, with his “podiatrically challenged” gait, a problematized forwardness, one, as he says, that seems to be both simultaneously “limping back home and away from home from the beginning” (p. 67). Having “one foot caught in the earth”, as Oedipus’ dragging limb does, invokes this tension of a past and a soil that can’t be got free of despite an implantation of *logos* into the soil of myth. The *literal* immediacy of the limp no less stands in as *figure* for the subsuming persistence of telluric forces and the lapse, as Wills says, of any “terra firma of the literal”, any possibility, that is, “of an operative distinction between literal and rhetorical” (p. 107). Oedipus’ chronically contrived hold on any kind of ground (its blatant artificiality – a limp consequent to a paternal riveting of ankles no less!) is nothing if not a hypostatizing of the *problems* of return and forward motion as they seek a footing; he concretises in fact the threat of a mode of being that aspires to rise above the ground, to free itself into absolute knowledge – a knowledge that is self-engendered, not other-dependant – and in this bears the mark of what Patočka calls the “*fascinosum, mysterium, tremendum*”, an unspeakable or unrepresentable mode of being (2002, p. 55). As such Oedipus represents a thaumaturgy, a miraculous work that should not have arisen, for as the Oracle had decreed, he would be the bearer of a “loss of humanness”, which means to say he aspires to encroach on, and appropriate for himself, the clarity afforded the divinities (p. 55). So does Europe extend this desiring ‘anomaly’ in Patočka’s view.

Wills similarly sees the European project as taking its cue from forcing wandering into clarity, a vector that he links to the Book of Exodus, and in the context of Moses and his followers fleeing the Egyptians, is defined by the capacity of a fleeing peoples to take to the ocean as if “walking on the dry land” (2008, p. 112). The resulting instituting of religion as



a territorializing drive not only pre-empts Europe as “sectarian inheritors” of Judeo-Christian tradition, but it consolidates “the nonconformist walker” as an exceptionality that is the norm. If this exceptionality is given concrete expression in God’s drowning of the Pharaoh and his army by the returning sea, it is further consolidated at Mount Sinai where the delivery of the law as clarity from on high stands over the domain of wandering and ultimately seeks to forget the tumultuous sea – for on high, even the ocean can be rendered a surface and pathway, one imaginable without mystery or thaumaturgy (pp. 111-113). Nevertheless, like temporality’s return in Oedipus, the ocean always reasserts itself for it is Europe’s unconscious (p. 107). It is this that “*Le bateau ivre*” taps in Will’s view (p. 119), with its “loosened peninsulas” giving way to a bathing in “the Poem Of the Sea” beyond “the stupid eye of the lighthouses” (Rimbaud 2005, pp. 129-131). And even the return at the poem’s conclusion to Europe – that “black Cold puddle” - doesn’t quite add up to a restoration of solid ground, but instead refutes the territorialisation of the seas themselves (held under the “pride of flags and flames” and “the terrible eyes of prison boats”; p. 135) by European imperialism. The business of keeping at sea or at least staying afloat despite the wretched shallows, oddly enough can also be thought to show up in Régamey’s stripping, in the London sketch, of all territorial orientation and reference. In the lee of “*Le bateau ivre*” – the poem that Rimbaud used to seduce Verlaine and launch his European derangement – the keel is well and truly broken while the Oedipal Zephyrs run flat. Adrift in the observational field of the law, no less than the anonymising voice of language, wandering *sinthom*-osexuality ensures that there is no tropic distinction between the literal and the figurative. Or rather, as Wills put it, “the literal has to be understood as one figurative position among others” (p. 126). In other words it events simulacra all the way down (Deleuze 1994, p. 68). As such, the long Occidental voyage from aspective, through perspective and on to psychical transpective can be thought to resolve in an inversion. The incorporation triggered by Oedipus of an oceanic unknown in the form of the ‘personal’ unconsciousness at last ebbs and then churns out through the headlands of the self (subject of enunciation and the subject of the statement). Desire channels worldward. On the flipside of reality where the psyche and corporeality are merely two modes (not substances) of one ontological force, ‘life’ is horizontally driven to totalise through the lever action of motility what is perpetually untotalizable (Barbaras 2006, p 117, 127).

## CONCLUSION

### *Turning Over the Times*

Man flees. First he flees something, then he flees all things through the unmeasured force of flight that transforms everything into flight. Then when flight has taken hold of everything [it...] makes the whole, by a repulsion that attracts, slip away in the panic reality of flight [...] it is the very category of the whole – the one borne by the general question – that is unseated and made to falter.

**Maurice Blanchot**, (1969)

#### 1. *What Labour in Questioning?*

In this work I have aimed to develop a method for thinking about how cities, motility and senses of self intersect historically – a method I’ve termed onto-peripatetics. Tracing the genealogy of a tradition of self-conscious walking by what I’ve termed observing walkers – specifically writers who foreground pedestrian experience – I have sought to identify the origins of, or at least a deeper temporal substratum to, the relatively well-canvassed association of walking and writing in romanticism and nineteenth century urban accounts. Both are progenitors to an aesthetic regime that by the twentieth century takes the urban itself as an aesthetic ‘object’ graspable through walking practices – inclusive of Duchamp’s city as readymade, the Surrealists linking ambulation with “psychic automatism”, and the *dérives* of the Lettrists and the Situationist International (Careri 2004, p.75-106). If these ‘movements’ evidence both a drive to uncover and possess the perturbing sensory distribution arising with cities – indeed a tentative grasping tuned to affective, atmospheres and spectacle - the initiating motivation for this inquiry was that at least as far back as Descartes a particular disjunction between self and world occasioned a synthesising drive tuned to travel, observation and written reflection. If in this synthesis a particular cognitive bias prevailed over bodies, what I wanted to do was less suture thinking and extended substances (in fact a project Descartes himself broached in *The Passions of the Soul*, 1649) than think into that hiatus itself, to unearth the genealogy and the productivity - politically, aesthetically, philosophically – sustaining it. Despite the historical nature of this study, the

gambit has been that thinking about and asking after walking engages with and questions our own time – to rework a phrase from Blanchot (1993, p. 11) – a time marked by the becoming-urban of the world starkly enacted at the cost of world-creation and freedom in Nancy's sense. In a beautiful meditation on the act of questioning itself, Blanchot wrote: "To question is to seek, and to seek is to search radically, to go to the bottom, to sound, to work at the bottom, and finally to uproot", and adding that "This uprooting that holds to the root is the work of the question" (p. 11). Further, uprooting means turning over the times, making it a site of work, and ultimately, to "turn oneself back into question" (p. 11). It is a temporal work of this order that has been undertaken here, one that has found it necessary to go deeper than the originating edge (as complex as that is) of modernity. It has meant sounding both historically and philosophically the equally complex crossover between *mythos* and *logos* in the context of the Greek *polis*.

If Descartes, emblematically for modernity, asked after the 'I' that thinks, looking where to place and placate doubt, his questioning came up short because, as Goux and Negri have demonstrated in different ways, he failed to drive the question deeper than an anthropocentric surface designed to shut out the temporal perturbation coursing through his time. Crafting an ontology apposite to fledgling bourgeois interests, he crossed out via a metaphysics of separation partisan theological dependence in favour of a proliferation of surface 'bodies' suspended *partes extra partes* and therefore answerable to human cognitive and organizational agency – an agency characterised by having or possessing, rather than inducing of human transformation. Blanchot linked this type of elision, as Goux himself did, with Oedipus who, in answering "man" to the Sphinx's riddle, causes a more profound question to disappear, to disappear in fact "into the man who bears it and into the word – man" (p. 18). If this way of answering meant understanding "man as a general question" – a generality given by the Sphinx in terms of a normative walking progressing from infancy, through adulthood and into old age (four, two and three legs) – Oedipus remains ignorant of the "profound question" transmitted via his own disfigured walk (p. 18). Hence he achieved "on the one hand, abstract clarity, that of the mind, but on the other hand, he plunges concretely into the abominable ignorance of his depth" (p. 18). My response in this project has been to think both against the grain of a Cartesian metaphysics of separation – in other words to think depth-intensively – and against the vertical thrust of metaphysical transcendence, or what I've termed a metaphysical walk. Falling-up, as Wallace termed the tendency for peripatetic to write out the specificity of excursion in favour of an excursus indicative of wholeness, consciousness and stability has been countered here (after Serres) by a noisy, "metaphysics of the foot" sounding out questionable instances of ground. Moreover, I have pursued a twofold presumption: firstly that this Greek way of questioning (where "the most profound question and the general question mutually seize and obscure one another"; p. 17) has bequeathed to the West a persistent hiatus structuring its existential

rhythm or gait; and secondly, that both this hiatus and its namesake are integrally tied with Occidental urban life.

Bolstering the first of these presumptions was Serres' claim that all cultures derive their existential specificity from the particular intersection they make of divergent spatial types: in the case of the West, he thought, Oedipus exemplified a propensity for that culture to test its existential placedness historically against a backdrop of wandering and journeying, and in doing so, to define itself according to "spatial accidents" - crossroads, deviations, swerves, and loops. At its mythological origin, Oedipus then can be thought to stand as figure for the shadow of wounding in every discovery, or as Blanchot put it, the return of the "perfidious depths" at crossroad seemingly leading towards "tranquil human reign" (p. 18). To the extent that the crossroad (or what amounts to nodal intersections in today's ubiquitous networks) emblematises the potential to reach anywhere and everywhere, the Occident instils in the question – any question – "the question of everything": hence for Blanchot, "where we see men, it is the question of the whole that stares at us – this is what we are handling and what is handling us" (p. 16). Yet, the question of everything (which in the first instance is eminently Oedipal), cannot free itself from "the panic question" that "draws 'everything' into play" (no less eminently Oedipal), collapsing the draw of the whole and its claim to hold onto same and "singular identity" (p. 19). To be driven by the shadow of a profound or panic question in every encounter, is to be caught up in a leap and flight whose renouncing of foothold risks falling back into what for Blanchot "is other than everything" – in other words what is "Entirely Other" (p. 19) - and which Deleuze (1990) termed first the "otherwise-Other", or "the great Health", and later with Guattari (2000) the body without organs.

In a not dissimilar way, Lacoue-Labarthe has pointed to the pivotal nature of Oedipus for the West – a centrality whose significance he thought remains to be fully explored. If Oedipus can be assumed to be the very "name for the West", as he hypothesised, it is a name split between desire and work, or, on one hand, a certain libidinous eroding of determinate ground, and on the other, a restorative labour pursuing knowledge, truth-seeking, and bridging amelioration. Because Oedipus does not name one thing, but rather is the name for a problem in knowing what naming speaks, the West would be, by this account, a series of shifting relationships between these seemingly divergent terms, effected on the basis that they have forgotten to each recognise in the other an integral companion. I have sought to account for this blind companioning in a series of city settings historically, noting in various ways how standout figures parry with a figural that endlessly dissolves perambulation into an everyday that escapes record. Time no less corrosively companions the name Oedipus. Divided 'internally' by opposing locales on the body – foot and head – a nominal indetermination occasions both forgetting and a sense that there is something to

recover from its vacancy. Compacted in this bifurcation is a mode of self-consciousness riven by both passive and active determinations – the uncertain mechanics of which drive a complex psychical and philosophical field, a portion of which has been canvassed here.

The second presumption motivating this research – that Oedipus is a figure integral to urban understanding – to the best of my knowledge has received lesser critical attention. A pervasive tying of Oedipus to the psyche, following a still persistent mind-body partition introduced by the Cartesian *cogito*, a phenomenological demarcation arising with the Kantian *cogito*, and Freud's ego-development, has favoured an inner, temporally subjective anchoring of the Oedipal implications. In Serres' correction of this tendency - one that favoured a topological reading of the Oedipal phenomenon - there is an invitation to pursue, specifically, spatial and motile considerations, or rather, what amounts to recognition of various spatio-temporal complexes confounding object-subject demarcation. More specifically, Oedipus' urban association shows up in Greek tragedy as the very embodiment of the *polis* – specifically Athens as Knox identified. In the Greek context a *polis tyrannos* was one effecting an imperial over-assertion and whose centrifugation was ruinous of *isonomia* and autarkic ideals. Moreover, the *tyrannos* was figure for excesses running ahead of constraint and self-knowledge, and found expression in *chrematistics* where self-interest and the profit motive rode an erratic temporality that knows neither cyclic renewal nor eternity, but only infinite linear accumulation. Profit-time, became linked with the democratic *polis* where political *parrhēsia* (with its sophistic inflation of opinion and immoderate persuasion) catalysed a call for the new ethical *parrhēsia* or internal accounting. Oedipus-Athens, as bearer of a runaway temporality undermining the Apollonian edict to “know thyself”, and bearer of a horizontal immanence eschewing transcendence and temporal measure, reversed the *pharmakon* or scapegoat mechanism through self-exile and wandering. Rendered *apolis*, Oedipus between Thebes and Colonus, it has been argued, analogously pictures an excessively porous and extended urbanity – an urbanism of the bad infinitive as Nancy diagnosed its eventual contemporary form. At Colonus though, a reconciliation with the Athenians sees Oedipus achieve a centre and (foreign) ground via a secret burial whose whereabouts must be passed on, via Theseus in the first instance, as an occluded urban inheritance running in perpetuity. The Oedipal aftereffect not only founds the democratic *polis*, it instances a secret or mystery on which urban wellbeing is said to depend. As a phantasm ghosting the urban given, this mystery, indicative of pre-Classical magico-religious determinants, instituted *alētheia*, or unveiling as a key urban response, yet one shorn of its prior collective initiatory stricture. Intersected with the deterritorialised social terrain fostered by *apatē*, the *polis* was made a site for uncovering and hunting out falsehoods via a perspectivist self-consciousness. It was in this context that philosophy was instituted, substituting blind wandering for clarity and a

decisive motion in thought. Metaphysics then arises as a contemporaneous, urban adjunct set up to account for and ameliorate an existential break with what Bakhtin referred to as “adventure time” in the “abstract-alien world” circumscribed by *mythos*. In short, Oedipus is the vehicle that crosses from the “*oikoumenē*” or cosmologically figured household condensing an unequal community of mortals and immortals, into the everyday *polemos* or battleground of unconcealment characterising urban place.

## 2. Dark Origination

If Oedipus can be considered another name for the West, no less than it is integrally tied to walking, cities and the emergence of philosophy, the potential and difficulty of this research has rested on how to account for its persistence without imbuing it with representational fixity, and in turn, imparting to the historiography pursued here a dialectical inevitability or *telos* – precisely the thing Blanchot’s profound or panic question cuts away from generality. My answer has been to propose an Oedipal vector traversing myth, tragedy, aesthetics, psychoanalysis and schizoanalysis, a vector or part mechanism that operates by repeatedly folding the arcane into the contemporary consistent with what Deleuze and Guattari (1990) termed a disjunctive synthesis. To the extent that the disjunctive synthesis is concerned with the problem of prolonging a plethora of passive syntheses (narcissistic egos or larval selves subsisting solely through habit in the present) sufficiently to invoke experiential duration, and with it, memory, it pits the present against a past in general that is not equivalent to it and which demands some form of reconciliation. If as Deleuze claimed habit (Eros) and memory (Mnemosyne) constitute the two legs on which the self is ultimately bourn – green and red legs respectively – their divergent rhythm (one surging forward, the other conditioning, limiting the difference the first draws off) imparts to this self a limp or impaired grasp of the given. At its most general level I have referred to this halting gait as an alienation-possession couplet – in other words a problem of recognition and the ‘style’ of that problem’s resolution. At stake is the recovery of an active understanding from out of sensory indeterminacy, but always with Oedipus it is a matter of how recognition is maintained across a hiatus. The Oedipal vector then is that conditioning mechanism that resolves in varying stylistic generalities – tragedy, anthropocentric cognition, caesura, sublimation.

With this in mind I commenced this study thinking about the Oedipal vector in topological terms as something inducing potentially endless empirical figures while never exhausting its particular figural persistence – no doubt there are Oedipus’ everywhere and of everything as Deleuze and Guattari claimed (2000, p. 217). Picking up on topology’s first instancing in Königsberg as a walking problem in which Euler sought to predict how a single linear path

might traverse the plethora of paths making up the city, I saw in the notion of a linear trajectory simplifying urban complexity (the one way or royal road) and the constant parrying of that transiting line with an unmasterable complication, a broadly Oedipal problem. The Oedipal vector, I said, was what variously implicated Eulerian and non-Eulerian series and motivations historically. Plainly the Eulerian route in modernity has run - in accordance with the generality of transport, the circulation of equivalence, and maintenance of certain operational sameness - all the way to the planetary scale, though not without inducing a similarly scaled non-Eulerian complex – or what can be thought of as compounding immanence.

If metaphysics sought, in varying ways, to run a Eulerian line at a transcendent level, it was Kant who, closing off that avenue, instead imported a transcendental function into the subject. The self divided between noumenal and empirical versions replicated the Cartesian demarcation but internally where a “mind-body dualism” within the *cogito* harbours an a-temporal, active agent and a passive one that “is nothing more than time” (Faulker 2006, p 23). In turn I have followed Deleuze in his revision of this split subject and his vesting of sensation and passive syntheses in pre-conscious determinations prior to any *a priori* understanding. Phantasms, or what Deleuze called dark precursors, shape “obscure impressions” into pre-representational figures that only contingently arise as objects breaking into conscious awareness - not through the unified action of that consciousness (pp. 26-28). Kant’s “object = x” - the formula defining how noumenal, and therefore unknowable, objects run a line into phenomenal awareness where they are picked up and unified by the ‘I think’ – and Deleuze’s renovation of that notion which replaced infinite understanding on the theologically inflected transcendental side with an unthought and ultimately unthinkable unconscious (p. 74), I have further extemporised with the notion of the walker = x. The urban object, itself a thing exemplarily rich in contradictory intensities, attributes and perspectives, has long been held up as model for forms of theological and reasoned unity, while the observer-walker, a receptive agent set on reading into and through the multiplex dimensions of the urban thing, has variously attempted transcendental abridgments. This project commenced by charting precisely such an abridgement found in the inaugural, textual intersecting of philosophy and the *polis* where a walking commentary is made to span, via split footwork, *mythos* and *logos*. Plato’s metaphysical walk in the *Republic*, pitched against Oedipal tyranny and yet Oedipal in its own takeover of cognitive agency from myth, configured a Eulerian walk running up and down between Ideas and appearance, in an attempt to bypass the non-Eulerian *mise-en-abyme* through the a-temporal mechanism of double-seeing. In a trajectory that broadly runs from Platonism to naturalism, and in turn, from the metaphysical walk to modernity’s *promenade métaphysique*, various instances of split footwork have been tracked: Descartes’

bourgeois-Arcadian span, Defoe's colonial-other abridgment, Rousseau's stepping between history and a-temporal, originary man, Baudelaire's parrying with the borderline splitting of market society and a programming narcissism, and Rimbaud's surfacing of the submerged perceptual phantoms companioning London's *terra incognita*.

### 3. "An-Ethics"

The walker = x, extended as discourse, is inseparable from superlinearity and the overcoding of gestural repertoires by written language – a linearisation underwriting the signifying regime and its despotic totalisation of the semiotic field. Yet the Oedipal West, itself the bearer of a unique mode of historiography and temporal relation no less than a societal and mercantile immanence gnawing away at the despotic body wherever it coalesces, imparts a passional tincture to the resonance of language with monopolistic power. Defined by the capacity to depart, betray or turn a back on settled states (and States), this passional impulse, as Patočka (1996) has suggested, is the source of history-making and a freedom arising with a break with models of perenniality. Nancy (2007) similarly recognises this freedom as resulting in a "denaturalization of history" or rather an overcoming of natural, cyclical 'history'. This has required living in the mode of "radical questioning" and with the consequences of a slide into a needing-to-be-sounded immanence. That is the legacy modernity takes up and deepens and it is what both makes "internal, subjective experience" pivotal and what drives it towards "ungrounded experience" or the questioning of presence, origins and determinate purpose (Lawlor 2011, p. 92). Phenomenology pursues this freedom by leaping free of a natural attitude and ontic states into transcendental pre-conditions of experience, though not without reifying consciousness (Lawlor 2013, p 185). The scriptural economy, as a place of islanding and mediation with immanence – a place for sorting out one's place and for turning a world about that place – runs a precarious course out of despotism and into the capitalist shoals. Neither solid ground, nor the sandy shore, nor even wade-able shallows, the scriptural-self runs across the acute deterritorialisation of language itself whose drop-off is unfathomable. Deeper than the impersonal semblance of *apatē* and crowding, anonymous opinion rumouring and running streets and media-ways, this language speaking through the subject makes the self itself a detour. Oedipus, the Greek Cain, is a creature of flight, and what gets pulled into flight is the whole of things, the whole signifying arrangement preceding it; stealing away makes, as Blanchot asserted, reality appear as a whole, and a whole that is lost (p. 21) – or what Deleuze rethinking the phallus, identified as a perishing good. Contrary to an anachoritism seeking refuge *simply* in solitariness, the flight of the whole gives up a crowd:



[...] belonging to flight makes of being a crowd, an impersonal multiplicity, a non-presence without subject: the unique self that I am gives way to an indefiniteness that is paradoxically always growing, that sweeps me along and dissolves me in flight. At the same time, the empty self that is undone in the crowd in flight remains solitary, without support, without contour, fleeing itself in everyone who flees: an immense solitude of flight where no one accompanies anyone else. (Blanchot 1993, p. 22)

This doubling of the crowd and the unattended mimes Deleuze and Guattari's a-signifying regime where the subject of the statement and the subject of enunciation, like the Kantian subject scythed into temporal and a-temporal selves, turns one through the other in a haltering progression (see figure 7), or better, a stationary flight as Blanchot preferred, one where "a given people" caught in a "simultaneity without constancy" front "a fleeting reality" (p. 22). Keeping this all on the level is Oedipal amelioration and a surfacing that circles the globe striving for a becoming-equal to the petit and not so petit ruptures of decoding. Half turned towards a long-lost (and belatedly longed-for) despotism, and half turned towards new beginnings, the whole a-signifying rig is powered by as a comic-tragic torque finding its measure and perpetuation in exchange value where nothing can remain outside the reign of monetary equivalence.

Nevertheless, I have aimed to show that while the passional inflects accounts of city-walking from the start, and that these accounts condense a reality or world-making of a different measure; in varying ways, they speculate on and therefore event the urban – much as Oedipus events by implanting a vacancy into the present. From Plato to Rimbaud, the seen passes through the seer, a beyond-seeing pried open by the object = x (whether transcendent or immanent). Beyond the mass circulation of generalities, the walker stands out as a key if anachronistic lever whose becoming-equal potentiates going beyond tragic-comic repetition of the agora-market at full extension in a speculation running past speculative gain. These accounts variously call up violence, for speaking (writing in fact) about cities as if they had been walked plays a betrayer's game with the seen. Writing isn't the speech of the seen because it cuts, incises a line that runs deeper than the psychological subject and the ontic appearing of things (Lawlor 2013, p. 181). If beneath the auto-affection of reflective force, there is only hetero-affection, as I've examined in relation to Rimbaud, the outside of language floods the I think, marking it speak in a multitude of voices and through a plethora of disjunctive perspectives. Auto-affection, in its constituting of one who thinks, finds itself beside, touched by, doubled with other(s) in a distancing analogous to a bipedal reach that cuts all place-presence into a here-there, then-now spanning (p. 183). If the cognitive pole of Oedipus signals a will to overpower the disjunction and voluntarily get to the bottom of divergent appearances, paradoxically, via *dianoia*, the corporeal pole contributes an involuntary momentum and blindness rich in indiscernible mixtures always ready to overcome the rise of thought towards its end. The

walk, despite all best intention – in Plato’s case a delivery of the Good – remains in the middle on a line without origin or end carried on a heterogeneous gait rich in loose ends and unsynthesised threads. Encouragingly, as Blanchot held, walking’s advance is always a “crab’s progress”, a seeking that sidles and turns (1993, p. 32). Adapting Lawlor’s reading of Deleuze, walking could be said to reverse Platonism from the start, turning the metaphysical imposition of *arché* and *telos*, and therefore a world without loose ends, towards a less violent resolution where remainders abound. Yet in the run from Platonism to immanence the cost is a counter-effectuation that dissolves the self in its reach for the future. At stake is a becoming-equal to a world-encircling given to ever more rapid thanatic repetitions exercised for the sheer pleasure of it. Beyond this bad-infinity, the city ought not to be a thing to be unveiled or restored, nor net-worked to infinity, but manifested anew, *ex nihilo*, meaning, as Nancy suggested, made according to a world-becoming falling short of the world formation and totalisation ambitioned by metaphysics, onto-theologies and univocal value systems (2007, p. 51).

Uprooting and “detheologising”, if there is an enduring promise in the Oedipal vector it rests on the eventing of a present that calls out for an ethos or attitude that looks to extant limits and an experimental “going beyond” (Foucault 1997, p. 319). Against the Platonic quest for a city of justice, at stake may be an injustice of a very specific type, a counter-ethics, or what Eleanor Kaufman has called, in the context of Tournier’s *Robinson Crusoe* and the surrender to the perverse or otherwise-Other structure of *Speranza*, “an-ethics” - an ethics that allows for the (urban) world to be left open to the upstand of time (2012, p. 114). It is this that returns Oedipus as cliché or as stereotype back towards the phantasms and intensities that ground its alternative corporeal semiotics, and where a care of the soul might meet its Klossowskian other. Against a “logic of dispossession and [...] concealment”, the three-part constituents of the (Platonic) soul may be understood to resolve into a contrary third-ness unable to be possessed by anyone (Rancière 2011, p. 15). Whereas Rancière understood this third-ness to be a mode of translation always already driven by an inherent distance mediating and undoing any neat partition between observation and action, the potential I hope this work has opened up is recognition of the inherent temporality of this third-ness. Cities, neither yielding to a Eulerian logic of “straight, uniform transmission” (p. 14) (and pursuit of a paternal simultaneity – ‘now!’), nor offering a riotous terrain waiting to give, from the street up, a new fraternal community (out of the “crushed and mechanized man of the great metropolises” as Deleuze described; 1998, p. 74), might be understood instead as so many paths given to difficult passage. These impasses, contrary to an Oedipal urbanism attracted to every (city) wall as a site of breeching and burst-through in the name of a universal, mobile subject and a general economy of nomadism (Rancière 2004, p. 162), show up as places of political traction, frictional sites whose immobility demands a squaring

up to what is perpetually without equal – an indeterminate motility in time itself. It is this that seems key in walking's transition to an aesthetic practice in the twentieth century and to which an onto-peripatetic broached here may yet avail itself.

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