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Seeing-From — Imagined Viewing and the Role of Hideouts in Theatre

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ABSTRACT. The objective of this paper is to assess in what ways the dramaturgic device of hideouts is capable of prompting the spectator into an awareness of what it is to be watching and / or what it is to sense being stared at. At the same time we want to consider the implications of this rather paradoxical situation of assuming that someone is invisible when everything else in theatre is designed for visualization. Also, we want to test the hypothesis that theatrical hidden characters constitute a device akin to cinematic subjective shots, leading to the question of how the experience of watching a hidden character on stage alters the theatre spectator's imagining and visualizing.

1. Introduction

This paper is included in a larger research project on the ways art spectators are sometimes called to turn their own aesthetic experience into an *experience of an experience* or rather to inquire the mode in which they are experiencing what they are experiencing. One way of achieving this which seems artistically valuable is to summon the spectator to somehow integrate her own perceptual experience into the object of that experience. Richard Wollheim's notion of the "spectator in the picture" (1987) is a way of achieving this.

Turning our attention to the performative arts we find a somewhat analogous device in the preference playwrights have for showing hidden characters on stage, surreptitiously watching what other characters are doing. Examples abound: Polonius behind the curtain (Hamlet), Cherubino behind the chair (The Marriage of Figaro), Tartuffe under the table (Tartuffe),

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Falstaff in the laundry basket, Willie digging his hole in Oh Happy Days!, or Oktavian in the closet (Der Rosenkavalier).

The objective of this paper is to assess in what ways the dramaturgic device of hideouts is capable of prompting the spectator into an awareness of what it is to be watching and / or what it is to sense being stared at. At the same time we want to consider the implications of this rather paradoxical situation of assuming that someone is invisible when everything else in theatre is designed for visualization. Also, we want to test the hypothesis that theatrical hidden characters constitute a device akin to cinematic subjective shots, leading to the question of how the experience of watching a hidden character on stage alters the theatre spectator's imagining and visualizing.

The issue may be divided into two halves. First, there's the question of considering the special empathy / sympathy that this device adds to the more common, let us say, Aristotelian way of assessing the usual ties that bind spectators and theatrical characters. Secondly, there's the issue of analyzing the particular cognitive twist – if any – that a hidden character – a character turned spectator – introduces in the way the spectator imagines her mode of visualizing the fictional events on stage.

2. To Be: Empathy / Sympathy / Proprioception

How far is the spectator (or "spectatorship") an integral constituent of an artistic performance? One way to answer this is to pursue a kind of *reductio ad absurdum* by testing whether we can have theatre without an audience.

Paul Woodruff argues that audiences possess a constitutive role as theatre is "the art by which human beings make or find human action worth watching" (2008, 18) and requires a co-exercise of both audience and performers: "take away the audience and the watching ends. If no one is watching, it's not theater, though it may truly be a performance" (2008, 42). Well, not even a performance, added Paul Thom (1993, 172). But how intrinsic is this act of watching to the proper characterization of theatre? Is the relation of the audience to the performance somehow different in theatre than it is in other performing arts? *Theatron* in Greek literally means "a place for watching" and despite the importance of the

spoken word theatrical performance is distinctively based on the experience of visualizing human actions. But does this visualizing require a segregated audience?

As usual, philosophers differ in this respect. Some authors, like Nelson Goodman argue that as unread novels are proper novels so performative events without an audience may be properly described as genuine artistic performances (1984, 142). All that is needed is that a proper explanation of the stylistic options or ordering of events involves an assessment of the way they would affect potential – not necessarily real – spectators. Other authors, such as Paul Thom, disagree: genuine theatrical performances require a specific address towards an audience. In the end, what distinguishes artistic performance – say, from sporting events – is that they require a special kind of *attention* from the audience, an engagement, i.e., a "playful beholding": Goodman's analogy between performances without an audience and novels without readers cannot be sustained since – according to Thom – literature does not hold the same kind of "address" as theatre does:

> "In performing, I believe myself to be referring to present persons, to whom I am in effect saying "You, attend to me" and if no one is present at the performance, there is a failure of reference. By contrast, if the novel remains unpublished (...), then there is no failure of reference because the work did not refer to anyone in the first place (...)." (1993: 192).

Against Thom, David Davies proposed a closer inspection of the notion of "intended audience" (2011, 176). Under Thom's account, the notion implies that the performer is guided by a set of "beliefs and expectations" concerning the audience's reactions to her actions. But this does not necessarily imply that she believes that her audience truly exists. All that is required is that the performer is able to "place her actions within a particular *explanatory space*" (2011, 176) and part of this space is constituted by "the agent's expectations as to their reception by an intended audience" (2011, 177). But if this is true two counterintuitive consequences seem to follow: 1) the performer could be said to be her own "intended audience" and be performing to herself; 2) much of what performers do while rehearsing and preparing for actual public performances should already count as

"performance". To solve this problem one should, again, bear in mind that to consider someone as properly performing is to place her within an "explanatory space".

However, Thom holds yet another argument in support of his idea that an actual audience is a necessary condition for having a proper performance: "the act of performing assumes the existence of a gaze that that is making a certain demand of it, and it supplies what that demand seeks" (1993: 192). I.e., there is a causal connection between the gaze – though probably not necessarily the gaze of the spectator - and the performer's actions. Performances change if the audience changes. Along the same lines, David Osipovich (2006) stresses the fact that audience and performers have to contend with each other in a shared space for what characterizes theatre is the conjunction of an act of showing and an act of watching.

Thom and Osipovich regard liveliness as the source of aesthetic properties that distinguish theatre from the likes of cinema or television (even live television). However, there may be works such as Trisha Brown's famous *Roof Piece* (1971) for which no spectator is able to watch the entire performance. Thom replies "Maybe nobody saw everything that was done to produce this performance, but the performers collectively saw it" (1993, 193). Does this mean that the performers are each other "intended audience"? it seems unlikely this could be the case. Although the dancers may be a *possible audience* for this performance, they are not the "*intended audience*" whose eventual reactions shape the stylistic options of the performers. Now this is intriguing because it separates the notion of "possible audience" and "intended audience" which does not seem helpful in proving that there cannot be proper performance in the absence of an actual audience.

James Hamilton worked along the same lines as Thom and Woodruff: he agrees that the interaction between artists and audience is necessary in theatre and a distinctive trait *vis-à-vis* the other arts: "Whereas playing music and dancing commonly can have both audience and non-audience forms of practice, theatrical playing has no common non-audience form of practice" (2007: 51). Why? Because "performers shape what they do with a view to the fact that audiences will observe them. Performers are also disposed to modify what they do in response to the reactions of an observing audience" (2007: 52). In the case of theatre, the performers' ex-

pectations of the audience's reactions include an anticipation of the various interactions between performers and audience and this is, according to Hamilton, an exclusive feature of theatre. Suzanne Jaeger describes theatre pretty much in the same spirit: "Stage presence can be defined as an active configuring and reconfiguring of one's intentional grasp in response to an environment" (2006, 122).

So, theatre seems to call for the actual existence of an attending audience because the *configuration* of the work shifts according to the interaction between stage and auditorium. But what does "attending" mean? It can simply mean the physical sharing of a space. But it should also include the fact that this audience is *predisposed* to attend to what they're watching. Attention and sensitivity to what is being shown compose the explanation philosophers usually provide when they want to describe what it is to attend an artistic performance. And part of this attention is guided by what cognitive neuroscientists call the "mirror neurons".[1] These are neurons especially abundant in the pre-motor cortex that are activated when I perform certain actions or when I observe someone else performing those very same actions. Its functioning in the latter case is quite fascinating because several brain scan data show that mirror neurons participate in the merely imagining the performing a given set of actions. Some studies show that the mere imagining performing some workout routines actually activates the muscular fibers involved in those routines. Other studies show that these neurons explain, for instance, why newborn children are capable of mimicking facial expressions without observing their own faces. Mirror neurons are a key element of what Richard Shusterman calls *proprioception*, i.e., the activity through which one is constantly obtaining information about the positions of our own bodies. By means of receptors situated in ligaments and tendons, proprioception is constantly informing the brain about the way the body is disposed.

Philosophers such as Barbara Montero are now entertaining the idea that proprioception plays a significant role in dance and other performative arts. Proprioceptive beauty would be something like a "felt property of the movement" and one which would go unnoticed if movement were to be considered only as visual property:

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[1] Cf. Montero, 2006; Shusterman, 2009; Davies, 2011.

"In some cases, one might proprioceptively judge that a movement
is beautiful because one knows that the movement, if seen, would
look beautiful. But in other cases one might visually judge that a
movement is beautiful because one knows that, if proprioceived, this
movement would feel beautiful." (2006: 236)

An immediate objection would be that proprioception seems to imply
that there are aesthetic properties of some works - particularly in the case
of dance — that would only be accessible to the performer. But to this
Montero replies that through proprioception the spectator is able to ex-
perience proprioceptive properties of the performer's movement, which
is justified by the role of mirror neurons: the neurological activity of the
spectator tends to mirror the neurological activity of the performer ex-
ecuting a set of movements, and this is true both of dance and of theatre.
Thus, both art forms share a proprioceptive awareness of the execution of
that movement *and* a proprioceptive awareness of its aesthetic properties.

On an earlier essay I defended a kind of proprioception in an analysis of
Pina Bausch's *Café Müller*. On her first entrance the character originally in-
terpreted by Pina Bausch herself walks with her arms are open and leaning
forward. There is a sense of unbalance and lack of support. This should be
understood in a straightforward gravitational sense: Pina's spectre — a dis-
tinct character that never interacts with anyone else - is evidently lacking
physical support. She denotes it by the way her arms are kept open out-
wards and leaning forward forcing her body to advance in small steps as if
performing a village dance, a clumsy convulsion that stops when she gets
to the stage's wall. This, I argued, could be taken as the very physiognomy
of solitude, the piece's main topic: unbalance, incompleteness, an anxious
openness, the search for a physical support that is momentarily provided
by the sidewall. If the viewer tries to perform this very gesture something
of a generative nature occurs. Imagine you're standing in this position;
imagine you're facing the same unbalance and compulsion forward, the
same kinaesthetic need for physical support. There is no mediation there,
just an automatic empathy. The very feeling of loneliness is triggered by
this kind of behavior.

There are at least 3 important objections to this extension of current
findings in neuroscience to the performing arts that may disrupt this path

of analysis: 1) Visuo-motor mirror neurons have been exemplified in monkeys but not in humans. What has been exemplified in humans is the mirroring between engaging in a given activity and imagining that one is engaging in that activity. 2) Mirror neuronal activity has been confirmed, in monkeys, for movements of the face and arms. But nothing has been proved regarding leg movements, which may be a problem for sustaining that there are proprioceptive aesthetic properties in dance. 3) Philosophers such as Montero and Shusterman assume that mirror neurons provide not only proprioceptive *information* but proprioceptive *awareness*. This is fundamental if one wants to defend that it is possible to acquire a "third-person knowledge of proprioceptive aesthetic qualities" as Montero puts it. When watching someone else performing an action I am proprioceptively aware of how it feels to perform such an action. But experimental data is not sufficient to sustain this connection between mirror neuronal activity and awareness.

Nevertheless, and all things considered, there seems to be no reason against adopting a rather moderate notion of proprioception applicable to the particular case of watching other people watching. And if we do, then we should consider the particular kind of perception pertaining to theatre. Bence Nanay (2006) has suggested that there are three different kinds of perception. *Action-oriented perception* which is "seeing the possibility of action in the stimulus" even when "the agent only perceives the possibility of action; the action itself is not performed" (2006: 246). Action-oriented perception is – contrary to more traditional views – our primary form of perception. When perception is not action-oriented then we have "*detached perception*". When we watch a theatre play we are engaged with the way some characters afford actions for other characters. In the example given by Nanay, Mack the Knife is in prison and without any chance to escape until the entrance of Lucy, the police captain's daughter. Upon her entrance, inevitably the audience perceives Lucy as the facilitator of a course of action for Mack and their "perceptual experience depends counterfactually on the very complex action Mack is inclined to perform with Lucy" (2006: 249). Thus, *theatrical perception* becomes a kind of third way between detached and action-oriented perceptions. It is more detached than action-oriented perception since it is the character's life and not our own which is at stake and it is more action-oriented than detached per-

ception since we perceive the space of performance as containing actions.

This mixed kind of perception provides a basis for reassessing the *vexata questio* of "identification" in theatre. As Murray Smith put it, we are supposed to "imagine 'from the inside' the character's experience" (1997, 412). Kendall Walton described this as involving "imagining oneself in the shoes of the person identified with" (1990, 255); Gregory Currie suggested that within the primary imagining of construction the fictional world one is often led to a "secondary imagining", i.e., a "process of empathetic reenactment of the character's imagination" (1995, 153) and Richard Wollheim considered the idea of "centrally imagining", i.e., to "imagine, or visualize, one event (...) from the standpoint of one of the participants" as opposed to "imagine the event from no one's standpoint" (1974, 187).

They all seem to agree on the same: when I centrally imagine a theatre character I imagine having her perceptual experience but the exact extent and phenomenology of this emulation constitute a very tricky subject. Proprioceptive identification, i.e., "central imagining", seems similar to action-oriented perception. Theatre and staging provide us with a prepared way to shuttle back and forth between central and a-central imagining, between action-oriented and detached perception. And accordingly hiding characters in the setting is precisely one way of prompting the spectator towards the recognition of motor actions, starting off with the way characters preserve or divert this tension between being visible and invisible.

Naturally, skepticism regarding the possibility of an emotional identification with fictional characters – empathy – could easily be transposed against the possibility of perceptual identification. Noël Carroll's skepticism, for instance, is directed against explaining the ties that bind characters and audience through different versions of simulation theory. Carroll's objections could easily be used against any suggestion of "central imagining" and his suggestion that "sympathy" is a better candidate for explaining the relation between characters and audience works against the function I've been attributing to theatrical "hideouts". "Sympathy" is something we direct at other people not an emotional state that I can feel for myself; it is "a non-passing pro-attitude towards someone else" (2005, 303). Certainly, if sympathy constitutes the core of our relationship with fictional characters and if this implies that our emotional reactions

are quite different from the emotional states suffered by the fictional characters that are being targeted by our sympathy, the same could be said of perceptual identification. However, even a skeptic like Carroll is willing to give proprioception a distinct role when it comes to explaining the connection between fictional characters and audience. Mirror reflections – i.e., the way we are biologically conditioned to produce fac-similes of our respondent facial and bodily expression also play an important role here: "watching a video of Riverdance, the audience stomp their feet, surrendering to a simulacrum of the dancers vigorous pounding" (2005, 311). The importance of this mirroring is twofold. On the one hand, it keeps us on a high level of excitement and reinforces our concentration on the work; on the other hand, through this muscular mimicking the spectator derives useful information that will reinforce her connection with the character. For instance, mimicking an actor or dancer's posture and following a kind of down-top nervous path, one may gain access to the actor or dancer's state of mind – thus contributing to an inner comprehension of the character's psychology.

But isn't this also a kind of empathy? Through this biologically driven process of emulation aren't we in fact being induced towards a kind of kinesthetic "central imagining"?

3. To See: Imagined Visualization

I want to suggest that the presence of a "spectator-actor" on stage works as a sort of proxy for the actual audience and that this fact prompts the audience to imagine seeing the scene from that particular vantage point. Now, the question of how viewers may or may not adopt different vantage points and thus be able to "visualize" from where they are not is a much discussed topic on philosophy of film (not so much, for obvious reasons, in philosophy of theatre). Hence it is probably useful to take a closer look at the different accounts of what movie viewers imagine is the mode in which they see what they are seeing. In other words, what is it that viewers imagine about the way they came to see what they're seeing.

Two related theories of imagined visualization seem particularly relevant in this context: the Fictional Showing Hypothesis (FSH) and the

Imagined Seeing Thesis (IST).[2]

A. Fictional Showing Hypothesis: Face-to-Face Viewing

Endorsed, among others, by Jerrold Levinson (1996), FSH sustains that (almost) any showing of a fictional scene or story involves a fictional showing [by a putative or implied agent] of the represented elements:

> "The presenter in a film presents, or gives perceptual access to, the story's sights and sounds; the presenter in film is thus, in part, a sort of *perceptual enabler. Such perceptual enabling is what we implicitly posit to explain how it is we are*, even imaginarily, *perceiving* what we are perceiving of the story, in the manner and order in which we are perceiving it. The notion of a presenter (...) is *simply the best default assumption* available for how we make sense of narrative fiction film." (1996, 252; italics are mine)

George Wilson has reworked Levinson's arguments and transformed them into what he called the "face-to-face" version of FSH. What this means is that the viewer is led to believe that she has been fictionally placed in front of the scene presented. Now, of course it is *not fictional* in the work that the viewer occupies such a position, which would correspond to a narrative twist similar to that of Manet's paintings, as suggested by Wollheim (1987). It is only fictional that the "viewer's imaginative perceptual engagement" with the film is that by which the scene is being offered.

Notice that the theatrical hideout posits a different kind – a stronger version, perhaps - of "perceptual enabler": it is indeed fictional in the work that someone is occupying a hidden position. And if *proprioception* and *explanatory space* hold some explicative traction, then the fact that there is a hidden spectator on stage affects the other performer's creative options and the spectator's awareness of the space as well as her awareness of the integration of the *sense of being stared at* in the fictional world. If, as in Manet's or Friedrich's paintings, the act of observing and the corresponding sense of being observed become the artistic topic, then:

(a) There is exemplification of spectatorship through the inclusion of the hidden character;

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[2] Cf. Wilson, 2011.

(b) There is a fictional reference to the spectator's privileged position vis-à-vis the scene (unobserved observer);

(c) The performance provides a proprioceptive imagining of occupying that position;

(d) Establishes a kind of self-reflexivity by making the spectator proprioceptively aware of what it is to be an observer but also of the condition of being observed;

(e) Affects the performers' "explanatory space".

Now, for this to happen one has to consider that when the spectator proprioceptively imagines that she is seeing the scene from the hidden character's perspective, she also proprioceptively imagines being at that hideout. But is this a reasonable assumption?

This shift from *imagine seeing* to *imagine being* is indeed what authors such as Carroll and Currie think is definitely wrong with FSH. When someone is actually watching a scene from a certain visual perspective she is located in a position which offers that perspective. But it doesn't follow from that that when someone *imagines* seeing a scene from a given perspective she also *imagines* being at a place that offers that perspective:

> "Do I really identify my visual system, in imagination, with the camera, and imagine myself to be placed where the camera is? Do I imagine myself on the battlefield, mysteriously immune to the violence around me, lying next to the lovers, somehow invisible to them, viewing Earth from deep space one minute, watching the dinner guests from the ceiling the next?" (Currie, 1995, 171)

Currie goes one step further and argues that no version of FSH is correct for it is impossible to fictionally provide perceptual access to the picture viewers:

> "To *see* is to see from a point of view: there is no such thing as *non-perspectival seeing*. You cannot imagine, of a certain scene presented to you on screen, that you are seeing it, but not that you are seeing it from any point of view. To imagine seeing it is to imagine seeing it from the point of view defined by the perspectival structure of the picture." (Currie, 1995: 178).

But this does not seem right. Surely it seems plausible that there is a distinction – often not attended to – between saying

> (i) In viewing film A, I imagine *being situated at P* and seeing X from that position

which is what people would colloquially say - and saying

> (ii) In viewing film A, I imagine seeing X from the visual perspective one would have *if* one were situated at P.

which is what people imply when they say that they are imagining seeing X from position P.

George Wilson insists – against Currie and Carroll – that the apparently counterintuitive concept of "nonperspectival seeing" or "visual experience from an unoccupied perspective" is indeed quite plausible. The basis for his argumentation is that normally the question of the *source* or *arché* that explains our visual imaginings *is left indeterminate* in our imaginings. In particular, when I imagine watching X from an unoccupied position, I do *not* imagine that I am *not* at that position and "I do not imagine anything about the causes and conditions of my having the relevant visual experience – it is *imaginatively indeterminate* how this came about." (2011: 41). Thus, film – as representational painting – can guide our visual imaginings "without establishing much of anything about the causal conditions of the imagined experience" (ibid.).

But, of course, sometimes those conditions are established. Narrative and visual cues normally prescribe to the viewer the proper viewing protocol. In watching a film about voyeurism and gaze – such as Alain Guiraudie's *L'inconnu du lac* – spectators are readily commanded to adopt a proper mode of visualization. Sometimes – particularly when we are instructed to imagine seeing X following the gaze of character C – something like a FSH watching mode is activated with important cognitive consequences: attention to the possibility of that camera angle being disrupted by a different character emerging from behind the gaze or apprehension for the possibility that the watched murderer suddenly looks directly into the camera. *Mutatis mutandis*, painting also adopts specific strategies for prescribing the viewer with a mode of imagining and to lead the viewer

to imaginatively place herself at a given vantage point in the picture. The "internal spectators" in paintings by Manet or Friedrich are among such strategies[3] and if our initial hypothesis is true than this would also be true in the case of theatrical hideouts.

However, two facts remain – according to Wilson – (a) that it is quite different to imagine seeing a scene from a visual perspective and to imagine seeing a scene from the picture's specific vantage point, and (b) that for the most part it is indeterminate for art viewers what, if anything, permits them to view the artistic objects. In other words, we can have imagined seeing without assuming a fictional showing – the *showing* is not an element of our imagining.

B. Imagined Seeing Thesis: Mediated Viewing

"Fictional showing" is what the movie images allegedly try to achieve and "imagined seeing" is the viewer's proper reaction to those images.

Of course most films are comprised of shots of actors in real places, and one could introduce here the distinction between "picture shots" of actual events and objects and "movie story shots" of fictional characters and behaviours. Movie story shots have the role of "making it fictional in the movie that P" so that "fictionally for the viewer, it is as if the scene S actually took place, there are motion picture shots of S, and the movie story shot X, as it occurs in the movie, is one of these" (Wilson, 2011: 45). Adding to this Kendall Walton's Transparency Theory of photographs, Wilson comes up with a Mediated Version of FSH:

> "When a viewer sees a movie story shot of a fictional scene S, then it is thereby fictional for the viewer of the movie that she is actually seeing S by means of a motion picture shot" (Wilson, 2011: 46)

To Currie, this would entail that viewers were to imagine that it is fictional that a camera was present at the scene, which is obviously absurd. Wilson's reply follows the same kind of argument as before: in the real world it is obvious that the only justification for producing shots of a scene is to posit

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[3] One could consider also whether *trompe l'oeil* pictures, particularly those based on anamorphosis, are among these strategies. Spectators of Andrea del Pozzo's massive frescoes are literally required to assume a vantage point position.

the fact that a camera was actually present at the scene. However, when imagining that there is a motion picture shot of a scene, spectators are not commanded to think that this was obtained through "real world means" (2011: 46). Its source remains largely indeterminate and spectators do not speculate about how that movie story shot of S came to existence. They are "naturally iconic images", i.e., shots that do not directly implicate the property of "being made by a particular kind of picture-generating device" (2011: 47).

Noël Carroll also argued against the concept of "seeing imaginarily": "Spectators see cinematographic images on screen which they use to imagine what is fictionally the case. (...) They do not imagine seeing the event..." (2006: 184). Wilson objects that a proper account of the phenomenology of experiencing fictions in film must be able to distinguish between what we fictionally see and don't see. Consider the case of the murder sequence in Fritz Lang's *M*. Viewers *see* the murderer meeting the little girl and purchasing her a balloon, then they *see* the balloon floating adrift and they infer that the girl was murdered. In Carroll's account, all three events are on a par since we are deterred from saying that we *see* the first two episodes and imagine the third (they are all imagined).

Moreover, it should be remembered here that according to Wilson's Modest Version of IST, to defend that viewers imagine seeing does not entail that viewers imagine being there within the fictional space. In fact, it is indeed very rare that movie viewers project themselves into the fictional space they are watching. The same is true for radio theatre. Listeners acknowledge the existence of an "auditory perspectival structure" (2011: 83) but this does not mean that they imagine themselves located within the dramatic space.

But does this apply to theatre and hidden characters on stage? Can we assume that the presence of a fictional spectator on stage somehow conditions or alters the spectator's perspective of the scene? For all matters concerning the possibility of an "imagined seeing", i.e., the question of visualizing something which is not literally seen – like an unobserved observer -, it is useful to revisit Bernard Williams' famous essay "The self and the imagination". At a given point in his essay, Williams considers the "case of visualizing an object (...) where the idea that it is not seen by anyone is intensionally contained and (...) is essential to the imaginative

project" (1973, 31) He goes on to compare two narrations of a "never seen tree", one in which the narrator tries to imagine an unseen tree, without any reference to the act of seeing, and the other in which the narrator tries to imagine herself seeing a tree.[4] Analyzing both statements one would have to conclude that there is "some incoherence in imagining oneself seeing an unseen tree" and that the second narration involves an important incoherence.

Does it follow – as purported by Carroll or Currie – that it is impossible to visualize an unseen object? A Visualizer – i.e., someone who can only imagine by way of visual images – would have to say no because he can only visualize the tree by imagining herself seeing a tree. But the fact that the first narrator's description is perfectly coherent suggests otherwise: "that although a man may imagine an unseen tree, and do it by visualizing, he cannot do it by visualizing an unseen tree" (1973: 32) in which case he would have to imagine herself seeing that tree. Even when we imagine by way of visualizing, there is always the possibility to subtract elements that are present in what we are visualizing (namely, our seeing the unseen tree or our watching the hidden character):

> "Thus on this account, a man can imagine an unseen tree, and *by way* of visualizing a tree; but he does not, and cannot, visualize an unseen tree, and the reason why what he visualizes is different from what he imagines is that he is allowed to discard elements from his visualization incompatible with the essentials of his imaginative project." (Williams, 1973: 34; italics are mine)

But this is not all. There are good reasons to consider that visualization usually means visualization of an object as seen from a point of view – and this assumption is the ground for Carroll or Currie's criticism of IST. Therefore, it seems natural to consider that when I visualize I cannot help but thinking of myself seeing. Still, Williams argues that even so this does not mean that there is an "imagined seeing" going on in the visualized scene. In other words, what I visualize does not include the element that it is being seen:

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[4] This leads back to the discussion that we previously followed, regarding the possibility of an imagined seeing without "egocentric" consequences (Wilson versus Carroll and Currie).

> "I (...) do not necessarily belong inside the world that I visualize, any more than I necessarily do so in the world that I imagine." (1973: 35)

In theatre, we are spectators of a world we are not in. One can say that we see Hamlet in front of Elsinore Castle and we see it from a certain perspective. But our seat in the audience is not related to that perspective. There is a "lack of formal identity" (Wiliams 1973, 35) between scenery and setting. Because we are not part of the world of the play, things can happen in the play and remain *unseen*, like characters hiding in the setting. In theatre as in film, *we are not there*. Of course, as Williams points out, theatre and cinema are only partly related to the nature of visualization. In proper visualization – as corrected by Williams' analysis – nothing is really seen whereas in both theatre and film we really do see something. But even if we were to allow visualization to include thinking that I am seeing and from a particular vantage point, still there would be no reason to consider that this vantage point belongs to the world that is visualized.

Now, our hypothesis runs contrary to Williams' assumption. The introduction of a hidden character – a character turned spectator – (and if a rather moderate version of proprioception is adopted) makes it possible to conceive that the spectator is engaging on a different mode of visualization, one in which a particular vantage point within the fictional world is indeed shared by spectator and character. In a way, the seeing element becomes the very centre of our imaginative project. Bu how does literal visualization turn into imagination? Is the combination of proprioception, theatrical perception and a highly adapted version of imaginative seeing enough to exhaust the symbolic and phenomenological wealth granted by hideouts in theatre?

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