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Interpreting Calvino: Salon and Studio, a methodology for discovery

Ennis, Kristina Lynn, M.Arch.
Rice University, 1992

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INTERPRETING CALVINO:
SALON AND STUDIO,
A METHODOLOGY FOR DISCOVERY

by

KRISTINA L. ENNIS

A THESIS SUBMITTED
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

APPROVED, THESIS COMMITTEE

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May, 1992
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1992
ABSTRACT

INTERPRETING CALVINO:
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A METHODOLOGY FOR DISCOVERY

by

KRISTINA L. ENNIS

Using the concepts of Being as described by Calvino and the evaluation of Velasquez’s painting *Las Meninas* in Foucault’s, *The Order of Things*, a series of analytic exercises is initiated. Calvino speaks about Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility and Multiplicity; Foucault addresses the shortcomings of language. Interpreting the concepts inherent in these agenda, a methodology for re-seeing the spaces of a Salon and a Studio is proscribed. The results of these exercises provides a program for the construction of a vestibule: reconstructing the space of *Las Meninas*. This reveals the fundamental truth behind Calvino’s writings: the vestibule serves as a tool for examining an environment. No one tool can embody the principles of Calvino; but only in the process of creating or viewing can the methodology for discovery be determined. Ultimately, the purest form of the vestibule lies in the phenomenal, the experiential and the language of the individual’s imagination.
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CHAPTER I
METHODOLOGY AND INTENT

INTENT:

To examine spatial and temporal qualities and their ambiguous relationships present in the painting of an artist's salon and the phenomenal occupation of an existing studio in an attempt to gain an altered understanding of the rooms. This is intended to be an exploration of the dichotomies and correlations between linguistic language (the word and the concept), and the language of architecture (the space and the concept).

METHODOLOGY:

The examination is grounded in Italo Calvino's book, Six Memos for the Next Millennium (Cambridge, MA; Harvard University Press, 1988) and modeled after the analysis of Diego Velazquez's Las Meninas as presented by Michel Foucault in The Order of Things (New York, NY; Random House, Inc., 1973).

Calvino speaks of attempting to give narrative form to abstract ideas of space and time in much of his work, this study is intended to be an inversion of this process. Calvino addresses the relationships between the word and the image: "We may distinguish between two types of imaginative process: the one that starts with the word and arrives at the visual image, and the one that starts with the
visual image and arrives at its verbal expression." He goes on to demonstrate how the visual image has the power to develop and evoke its own potential, generating a field of "analogies, symmetries, [and] confrontations" that envelope it.

Qualities: 1. Lightness
2. Quickness
3. Exactitude
4. Visibility
5. Multiplicity

A series of exercises will be constructed which seek to edify the spatial and temporal characteristics of the five qualities that Calvino describes. The five exercises are configured to follow the structure of Calvino’s book. It is expected that the primary characteristic being explored will result in secondary permutations of the aforementioned qualities during the course of study. These investigations will commence with an interpretation of Calvino’s work and then lead into an analysis of the particular manifestations in the Velásquez painting, *Las Meninas*, supported by Foucault’s exegesis of the painting. This will be followed by parallel investigations into an existing built space, Room 308, Anderson Hall, Rice University, to discover and reveal the poetic qualities in this seemingly banal room. This will hopefully result in an "alteration" of both rooms and a modified understanding of the characteristics and relationships between the salon and the
studio using Calvino's abstract notions about Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility and Multiplicity.
CHAPTER II

INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

LIGHTNESS: Obliqueness

Perseus, is the hero of lightness, whose strength lies in his ability to look obliquely, to reflect upon the object of speculation. His reflective gaze is illumination. His knowledge of the world dissolves the solidity of the world. Lightness is able to transcend the limitations of space and time, and is manifested in reflective associations and connections.

Concepts:

1. The hidden
2. The reflective
3. The mythic
4. The other: gravity and the oblique

Inventory:

1. Cosmography
   a. Visual sources of illumination
   b. Spiritual sources of illumination
   c. Reflective sources of illumination
References:

1. Ovid

"For Ovid, too, everything can be transformed into something else, and knowledge of the world means dissolving the solidity of the world...Ovid’s world is made up of the qualities, attributes and forms that define the variety of things, whether plants, animals or persons."²

2. Guido Cavalcanti

"In Cavalcanti the weight of matter is dissolved because the materials of the human simulacrum can be many, all interchangeable."³

3. Cyrano de Bergerac, *Voyage Dans la Lune*

"You marvel that this matter, shuffled pell-mell at the whim of Chance, would have made a man, seeing that so much was needed for the construction of his being. But you must realize that a hundred million times this matter, on the way to human shape, has been stopped to form now a stone, now lead, now coral, now a flower, now a comet; and all because of more or fewer elements that were or were not necessary for designing a man."⁴

Analytic Strategy:

A sequence of diagrams and illustrations that inventory the concepts...
outlined above result in a map that is a combinatory expression of these qualities.
QUICKNESS: Simultaneity

Quickness is the machine [mental] whose circuits capture and link points, objects and concepts in space and time. Rhythmic harmonies are established between incongruous and enigmatic concepts and objects. This mental invention allows diverse things to be understood simultaneously.

Concepts:

1. Kinesthetic relationships
2. Cognitive relationships
3. Political relationships
4. Abstract relationships

References:

1. Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millenium*

   "My work...has from the beginning aimed at tracing the lightning flashes of the mental circuits that capture and link points distant from each other in space and time...I have always aimed at the image and the motion that arises naturally from the image...it is a question of looking for the unique expression, one that is concise, concentrated and memorable."

2. Giacomo Leopardi, *Zibaldone*

   "Speed and conciseness of style please us because they present the mind with a rush of ideas that are simultaneous, or that follow each other so quickly that they seem simultaneous, and set the mind afloat on such an
abundance of thoughts or images or spiritual feelings that either it cannot embrace them all, each one fully, or it has no time to be idle and empty of feelings.⁶

3. Thomas De Quincy, *The Vision of Sudden Death*

"Glance of an eye, thought of man, wing of angel, which of these had speed enough to sweep between the question and the answer, and divide the one from the other?

Analytic Strategy:

A record and graphic illustration of the mental quickness that links seemingly unlike objects in space and time.
EXACTITUDE: Measure

Exactitude is the tension between the measurable (the sun and the moon) and the phenomenal (the record of human entanglement) that reveals itself in the poetic.

Concepts:
1. Measure
2. Invariance
3. The phenomenal
4. The other (ambiguity)

References:

1. Giacomo Leopardi, *Zibaldone*
   
   "...the light of the sun or the moon, seen in a place from which they are invisible and one cannot discern the source of the light; a place only partly illuminated by such light, the reflection of such light, and the various material effects derived from it; the penetration of such light into places where it becomes uncertain and obstructed..."\(^8\)

2. Italo Calvino, *Six Memos*
   
   "Among the scientific book into which I poke my nose in search of stimulus for the imagination, I recently happened to read that the models for the process of formation of living beings are best visualized by the crystal on one side (invariance of specific structures) and the flame on the other
(constancy of external forms in spite of relentless internal agitation).”

3. Italo Calvino, *Six Memos*

"The contrasting images of flame and crystal are used to make visible the alternatives offered to biology, and from this pass on to theories of language...Crystal and flame: two forms of perfect beauty that we cannot tear our eyes away from, two modes of growth in time, of expenditure of the matter surrounding them, two moral symbols, two absolutes, two categories for classifying facts and ideas, styles and feelings.""
VISIBILITY: Evocation

Visibility is the power to evoke the imagination, to trace a world of paradox and potentialities.

Concepts:
1. Potentialities
2. Knowledge
3. Communication
4. Representation

References:
1. Italo Calvino, *Six Memos*
   "We may distinguish between two types of imaginative process: the one that starts with the word and arrives at the visual image, and the one that starts with the visual image and arrives at its verbal expression."\textsuperscript{11}

2. Italo Calvino, *Six Memos*
   "...it is the images themselves that develop their own implicit potentialities, the story they carry within them. Around each image others come into being, forming a field of analogies, symmetries, confrontations."\textsuperscript{12}

3. Ignatius of Loyola, *Ejercicios Espirituales*
   "The first point is to see people, of this and that kind; and the first of all those on the face of the earth in all their variety of garments and gestures, some white and others black, some in peace and some at war, some
weeping and others laughing, some healthy and others sick, some being born and others dying, etc. ¹³

3. Dante

"In the various circles of Purgatory, besides the details of the landscape and the vault of the heavens, and in addition to his encounters with the souls of repentant sinners and with supernatural beings, Dante is presented with scenes that act as quotations or representations of examples of sins and virtues, at first as bas-reliefs that appear to move and to speak, then as visions projected before his eyes, then as voices reaching his ear, and finally as purely mental images." ¹⁴
MULTIPLICITY: The Encyclopedic

Multiplicity is the method of knowledge which transforms singular objects into a network of relationships which tend through permutation to result in the infinite and the innumerable.

Concepts:

1. Games of chance
2. The temporal
3. Eschatology
4. The other: the reductive

Resources:

1. Carlo Emilio Gadda, *That Awful Mess on the Via Merulana*

   "At first sight, or rather, on first hearing, these seemed banalities. They weren't banalities...but they are rather like a whirlpool, a cyclonic point of depression in the consciousness of the world, towards which a whole multitude of convergences have contributed."\(^{15}\)

2. Jorge Luis Borges

   "I love his work because every one of his pieces contains a model of the universe or of an attribute of the universe (infinity, the innumerable, time eternal or present or cyclic); because they are texts contained in only a few pages, with an exemplary economy of expression..."\(^{16}\)
3. Jorge Luis Borges

"First there is an idea of precise time, almost an absolute, subjective present: 'I reflected that everything, to everyone, happens precisely now. Century after century, and only in the present, do things happen. There are innumerable men in the air, on land and on sea, and everything that really happens, happens to me.' Then there is a notion of time as determined by the will, in which the future appears to be as irrevocable as the past; and finally the central idea of the whole story -- a manifold and ramified time in which every present forks out into two futures, so as to form 'a growing and bewildering network of divergent, convergent, and parallel forms of time.'"\textsuperscript{17}

3. Italo Calvino

"...as an encyclopedia, as a method of knowledge, and above all as a network of connections between the events, the people, and the things of the world."\textsuperscript{18}

Analytic Strategy:

Specifications for a salon and a studio (the distant and the near, the past and the present) in a visual and narrative documentation.

Specifications:

1. General Data
2. Sitework
3. Concrete
4. Masonry
5. Metals
6. Wood and Plastics
7. Thermal and Moisture Protection
8. Doors and Windows
9. Finishes
10. Specialties
11. Equipment
12. Furnishings
13. Special Construction
14. Conveying Systems
15. Mechanical
16. Electrical
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Figure 1. Preliminary Methodology Concepts
Figure 2. Cataloguing Lightness and Multiplicity
Figure 3. The fractile quality of Lightness as scale changes
Figure 4. Mapping the Salon
Figure 7. The Studio: March 21
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Figure 14. The Studio: Recording the phenomenal
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Figure 17. Las Meninas placed in the studio
CHAPTER 3
INTERIM THESIS REVIEW

School of Architecture
Rice University
20 April, 1991

Committee:  Peter Waldman, Advisor (PW)
            Alan Balfour (AB)
            William Sherman (WS)

Guests:     Jim Williamson, Georgia Institute of
            Technology (JW)
            Judith Wollin, Rhode Island School of
            Design (JWo)
            Mark Wamble, Eisenman Architects (MW)
            Mark Linder, Georgia Institute of
            Technology (ML)
            George Cunningham, Rice University (GC)

Transcription:

KE    I began this series of studies and investigations with a reading of
      Calvino’s *Six Memos for the Next Millenium*, and in that reading was struck
      by his positive attitude and the way he looked towards the future, what kind
      of qualities we need to take with us as we embark on the next millenium.
      The qualities he speaks of are Lightness, Visibility, Exactitude, Quickness
      and Multiplicity, going into great depth about each one of them. He
      addresses, number one, their importance in literature and historical
      precedent and how each of these qualities have been carried through from

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Ovid and Lucretius up to more contemporary artists like Borges and Joyce, and he has a real process he goes through [within] each chapter starting with the historical precedents and, as I said, working up to the more contemporary artists. He talks about how these are qualities of literature but also qualities of being and are interacting with one another; humanistic qualities as well. It's a very academic work, for those of you unfamiliar with it, it is completely unlike his *Invisible Cities*. It is a series of essays that he wrote to give as lectures at Harvard University, but [unfortunately] he died right before he was able to give them. There was supposed to be a sixth lecture, on "constancy" I believe, but he was unable to write it [prior to his death]. His wife and a translator put these lectures together from the transcripts and created the book from them.

In his book he talks about, one of the key things I homed in on, the oscillation and the dialogue between the word and the image. To quote him, he talks about it as being two types of imaginative processes: "the one that starts at the word and arrives at the visual image and the one that starts with visual image and arrives at its verbal expression."¹ He relates these to his experiments and the way he writes, sometimes he'll [begin] with the visual image and go into the written word, and sometimes he'll have the written word, or as you read the written word, you come up with the visual image. With that, he goes on to say that the visual image has the power to develop potentialities and to create a field of analogies, symmetries, and
confrontations around it that give it power and sustenance. And so it is in
the spirit of the book that I looked at doing these investigations into the
salon and the studio. It is basically a series of analysis based upon,
structured around his book and his concepts. It is an inversion of what he
says is one of his primary methods of working which is, "attempting to give
narrative form to abstract ideas of space and time" in much of his work. So
this is kind of an inversion of that, taking the narrative, or the ambiguous
ideas about lightness and quickness, translating them into some sort of
visual form that, in the end, will give a heightened sensitivity to the qualities
of space and these qualities of being.

About the same time, I was reading some Foucault, reading his
essay on Las Meninas that is in The Order of Things. He addresses alot
of these issues [that Calvino talks about] in a very direct or peripheral way
in his "reading" of Las Meninas. He talks about lightness and the qualities
of light as both Lightness as the opposite of darkness, and Lightness as the
opposite of gravity. He talks about Quickness as movement and the visual
linkages that are made in looking at [and within] the painting, that are made
within a space. And so it seemed appropriate to take that painting as a
comparative study to the room I was going to use, Room 308, here in
Anderson Hall; to begin with that and use that as the groundwork or
framework with which to do the analysis of the room specific. Foucault, in
his writings about Las Meninas, talks about these ideas and he also talks
[like Calvino] about the conflict, or the dialogue, between the visual image and the word. To quote him, he speaks about the inadequacy of the verbal language to fully express what we're thinking and what we're seeing, that there is always the disparity between what we see and what we say. He addresses this directly to the problem of analysing a painting. He says, "but the relation of language to painting is an infinite relation. It is not that words are imperfect or that when confronted by the visible they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other's terms, it is in vain that we say what we see, what we see never resides in what we say."² From this, which is for me a criticism of the verbal language, he goes on to make a case [argument] for the visual language, putting on an equal footing with the verbal language. He addresses this in the context of doing an analysis; in order to keep an analysis open to possibilities, and keep the infinity of it, [to keep] its potential open, that the language used must be anonymous. So that when he talks about Las Meninas, he doesn't talk about the characters as who they were directly, he talks about the painter, the princess, the child in the front, he doesn't talk about Velazquez, the Infanta, or King Philip IV. He says, "If one wishes to keep the relation of language to vision open, if one wishes to treat their incompatibility as a starting point for speech instead of as an obstacle to be avoided, so as to stay as close as possible to both, then one must erase these proper names and preserve the infinity of the task. It is perhaps through the medium of this grey,
anonymous language, which is always over-meticulous and repetative because too broad, that the painting may little by little release its illuminations."^{3}

So it is in the context of Foucault's reading of this painting and Calvino's analysis and discussion of these five qualities that I set out to do these analysis or investigations into the salon of *Las Meninas* and the studio within which I work.

To begin with, the process I used was to first do an interpretation of Calvino's work -- you have one example of that in your hands -- it is what is represented here. Kind of going through and reading and rereading his work and coming to a one or two sentence summation of what he is talking about for each quality. From that, there were certain concepts that seemed to illustrate, or want to be illustrated and be investigated. There were four concepts that I came up with for each [quality], that as I do these they work down from the quality. For example, Quickness, it talks about the kinesthetic, the cognitive, the political and the abstract. I then set these up in a graph which can be viewed across for each of these analysis. Also there are quotes which support this study and specific analytic strategies for each. What I've presented to you today is simply the beginning of one of those studies. It is Exactitude, which is in the middle of the book and the series and is the subject of today's presentation.

What I've done here is to go through and set up a background for
each of these rooms: *Las Meninas* was painted in the 1600’s, I believe it was finished in 1656, and is considered to be the ultimate achievement of Diego Velasquez. It is located, both the painting currently and its original setting, in Madrid. The Alcatraz [where the painting was created], which was the old palace, burned down in the 1700’s and the ground was subsequently built over with what we now know as the Royal Palace. So it is in the same location as the Royal Palace, along this western edge of the city. The location of the palace within the 1800’s context. The Alcatraz and its immediate environs, and the specific room which biographies of Velazquez have shown to be the subject room of the painting, not his studio proper but the Main Room of the Prince’s quarters on the second level of the palace. I took that to bring the painting, which is a form of representation, and the room, which is a built, occupied space, to a middle ground, constructing the plans and sections of each. So this is the region, the city, the precinct, the building, the room if *Las Meninas* and the region, the city Houston, the precinct Rice University, Anderson Hall, and the construction or the space of the room in which I work. I went through, after figuring these things out and actually figured out where the characters in the painting are standing, which proves to be an important point when you start studying the more political and spatial relationships within the painting.

This is a pure elevation of the space, what I’ve inserted here in blue is what you cannot see within the painting, which is just outside the [viewing]
frame of the painting, this being the line from which the painting is viewed, the room is viewed from. This is Queen Marianna and King Philip IV, who are represented in the painting, in the back, in the mirror, so that what you are seeing is yourself looking into the painting from the perspective of the model. Then, to view the plan, the location of the King and Queen, the Infanta, Velazquez, the canvas, the gentleman seen in silhouette in the back and the various other characters; and the longitudinal section illustrating their positions again.

AB So you stand looking as the King and Queen?

KE Yes.

AB We are all with the King and Queen, not with the model? The child?

KE No, the model is the King and Queen.

AB I thought the model was the child.

KE No, the child is located in front of the painting.

PW The painter is looking back to the Queen and King, looking to paint them...

KE If you follow the gaze of most the characters in the painting, they are looking out, looking back to you, a constant going back and forth of the
visual fields. And so the first move was to do, begin the analysis of this room that is represented in the painting. In Exactitude, which is the study illustrated here, Calvino talks about measure and invariance, constancey and the phenomenal which are all these kind of constants that he begins to address here. He talks about ambiguity. A very important point that he makes throughout the book is that none of these qualities is possible without its opposite. So that Exactitude is not existent without ambiguity or vagueness. Quickness is not without slowness, Lightness not without darkness or gravity. So in the study of Exactitude, one of the quotes cited [by Calvino] is from Leopardi's Zibaldone: he talks about "The light of the sun or the moon, seen in a place from which they are invisible, they are not .... the source of light." And so my thought in these studies was to first trace the measure, the preciseness of measurement, and the invariance in the cyclic and sequential which involves studying the position of sunlight as it occurs throughout the day, at varying times of day and as it occurs during various times of the year. So I selected March 21, June 21, as these are the solstice and the equinox, January which was when I began the study and August, which is when it will be completed, which will be the final set of studied. This is the analysis of March 21 for the room Las Meninas is in. It is located at 40 degrees north latitude. This is it at 6 AM, when the sun has not yet risen over the horizon bringing direct light into the room. Nine AM, when you can see the direct lighting of the room; noon, 3 PM, and
again at 26 PM when the sun has already set. This, then, is the actual room that I am working in; again [illustrating] 6 AM, 9 AM, noon, 3 PM, and 6 PM. These pictorial studies are a record of the light as it changes within the room at these different times of day. This was speaking about the first two concepts of Exactitude, measure and invariance.

The second one, which talks about the phenomenal and the other, or ambiguity, is this study here that was begun of the painting. If you look at the painting you can see there are several centers to it. This is illustrating one of them --which is visually the Infanta or the child in the middle, the center of the painting -- both if you construct these structured lines and if you look at the way the light is falling on her and she becomes sort of radiant [entity] that acts as a magnet for attention. With this, then, the basic structure lines converging upon her location, I went through and did a series of alterations which show [how she remains a focal point of the painting] while hoping to achieve a sort of objectivity about the image. Instead of looking at the painting itself, you are now looking at this matrix of light. What you see here is how she remains the center of this radiating source of Lightness, as well as being a visual source of inspiration or concentration. As you start to de-construct, or make the painting less a painting, less a representation and more a series of lights and darks, you can see that the relationships remain the same. So that within the context of the phenomenal and the ambiguous, there is also, as Calvino says, the
other, which is an element of measure and constancy. This illustrates the same study begun for June in the room upstairs, recording...

PW The intent is not only to do these analysis...

KE But to make a record of these...

PW So that that room gets marked, as Velasquez marked that room in the painting. So the room gets transformed through its markings.

KE The idea is that, in the end, you can take everything out of the room and have these traces of the studies that were done.

AB How are you making these marks?

KE With these, I've started to mark out upstairs this marking of how the sunlight falls on the floor.

AB So, you've actually made these markings on the floor?

KE Right now its marked off with tape, with the intention that it become a more permanent marking.

GC Why do you say that the Infanta is in the center of the painting?

KE When you contract these line, as Foucault goes through a number of studies of triangulation, the space between her eyes is in the center...
GC   The center on one axis.

KE   Right, if you construct it this way, it is a third of the way down.

GC   Then, she’s not the center?

KE   Well, she is. I said that she is one of the centers of the painting, the other is the mirror in the back, with the King and Queen in it.

AB   So you’ve got the room all marked up, taped up? I love where [this] is, but I’m anxious to get a sense of where it’s going. What happens next?

KE   What happens? Well, I guess its a way of transferal of these kind of markings and studies, so that in the end, for the final review, all the analysis will come down here and be presented down here while you’ll be able to go up into the empty space and be able to see the residue of the markings and studies.

AB   A place made more knowable? A place transformed by that knowledge?

KE   A place made more knowable, and for me, its an attempt to create a heightened sensitivity to these qualities of space, that will in the end make me a better designer.

MW   Velasquez recorded this room through an event. Do you feel the
need for an event to take place in that room?

KE I think that the event is the everyday occupation of the space, when I start to do the studies of the phenomenal and the ambiguous, it will evolve into a kind of coming together, the interaction of myself with my advisor and my peers, of different webs of time and space, webs more so than converging lines.

MW Would there be a need for a specific event? This, for example this [Las Meninas] records a specific event. Because it seems that this sort of cyclical event could be just as profound.

PW There was the beginning in January, when you looked at the windows and there were no leaves on the trees, with the coming of spring, it is becoming denser and denser, until summer when the view will be blocked. That [human interaction] is an internal event, I was wondering whether the externality of the sun and the light and the denied view could make, is also. There is a great relief and sort of blistering of the paint around the window, which has the progressive nature to it. So, it may be the opposite of the momentous event, as opposed to the temporal event of ambiguity.

JW The purpose is just to document?

PW To transform the room through the documentation.
JW  That is what I'm curious about, I don't know...

KE  It is about the documentation, its more an analysis. It's obviously not a design project.

JW  How, what are the nature of these marks?

PW  This is the issue. I would submit that by recording and freezing and seeing how the sun comes in, that the multiplicity of them, these are the kind of issues that the markings of, are not the singular kind of plan or section. It is the materiality, the denied view, the progressive blisters, the light that you usually say doesn't affect the room, but is there and moving about all the time. I guess it is the knowledge parallel to the Pantheon that that disc moves around the room; although this is much more humble.

ML  There is a way in which, I'm also trying to get a grip on....you talk about Foucault's analysis or discussion of the painting so the painting becomes a devise to contemplate certain relationships -- discourse in architecture or whatever -- to be real simplistic about it. Then your room, also becomes an instrament, from what you said, an instrament to instruct one in sensitivity or something. This one then is a sort of conceptual instrument and this one is a phenomenal one. Does that make sense?

KE  Yes.
AB And so, what happens to the room after you leave?

KE Hopefully, as I leave it and take my things with me, there will be traces of my having occupied it as Velasquez leaves us this evidence of his having occupied this room in that time. As people occupy this room in the future, they can read these traces and read the study that was going on and come to some sort of conclusion about these qualities [that have been investigated]. This is also an attempt to look at different ways of analysing a room that are, in the spirit of Calvino, are more looking towards the future and what we can bring to it, something more that the traditional nolli plan, figure ground, those kind of studies. Trying to create another way to study, another way of looking.

MW It seems, and I don't want to... I'm curious as to why the production of an artifact isn't a part of your thesis? An artifact other that the analytical ones you've begun.

KE That has been on ongoing debate. At one time it was to transform the space more that just recording these tracings. It was to construct something within the space that addresses these five qualities. I guess, well, like I said it is a dialogue that has gone back and forth. Where I stand now is that that wouldn't happen. But I have until August to complete this...

GC Could you rework the space as in the painting?
KE I think you could. I started with this picture [photograph of the studio], setting it up as, framing it in a similar manner to the Velasquez painting.

GC You would obviously make changes to it, wouldn't you, to measure, to get back to Las Meninas?

KE Yes, and if you lay out...the size of the painting itself is very large, about nine feet by ten feet, which fits...kinda, there are ways it can begin to fit into the room [studio], where it can become the room.

PW So instead of making it the palace room, it could be the space of the painting. There's a Colin Rowe notion about the seemingly difficult task of taking two dimensions to three, but the imaginative task now of taking three now, of the painting down to two within the room, or reducing the room to exist within that painting in its construction by reducing it on down. You could also, I suppose, expand it and make it that size, to the structure of the space.

JWo I'm struggling...I don't know whether its simply something that you haven't said, that would help me understand what you're asking, but the one thing that comes through that is so un-Calvino-esque is the sense, the lack of irony and distance and play involved. There is presumably in his enumeration another level of reading the list in which one must understand
that writing lists at all is very silly. And that, if you read the Calvino, is nacent in the writing, that there is a self, if not self-mockery, at least a sense of reflection and distance within the text itself. I say this, but I can unsay it, and I can only half mean it and if you say it doesn't mean the same thing as when I did. A kind of constant agility in the position of the author which is so different from this sort of reductive documentary aspect of you've put in front of us. It's not that we could know that the light has been there, but...I don't know. Then somehow you must keep it secret from us. Tell us you did it but you can't see it. Some other layer of knowing and unknowing that is, I think, what is intended in the Calvino position. That Visibility isn't simply the clearing away of stuff between you and the thing you want to gaze at; Visibility is some new consciousness in the act of viewing and seeing. And in some way, as in the Velasquez painting, of being on both sides of the canvas at the same time. Something about the sort of simple act of recording that doesn't capture that spirit and doesn't put us in the kind of position that Calvino puts us when we read his texts.

ML For me that play could come in -- it doesn't yet, I don't think you've pushed the right buttons with us -- but it could come in in the very fact of your claiming this to be a thesis in an architecture school. And that you could toy with that more. To me, the analogy I have or sort of similar activity that takes place is installation art, right? Some architects have tried to do it -- I'm not particularly pleased with what's been done -- but I'm sort of
curious about that moment in the sixties, that moment that we locate as a quiet and perplexing period for architects when suddenly things went dead or something. And it's also the time when installation art, earth art, all that sort of performance art was born. I don't understand it, but I have some kind of belief or some kind of nacent theory that there is some kind of usurpation that took place at that time when sculptors took something from us that we abandoned basically. And that maybe it has something to do with these phenomenal qualities. At least in part. So it seems to me that you could start by studying some performance artists, study some installation artists, and see what sort of play, in the sense of theater as well, that they provoke, by claiming that to be art within their institution and what sort of relationship that may have to us as architects. That's how I would imagine it might emerge.

KE: Yes, because what's being shown here is a very objective and rational way of looking at the room(s). Calvino talks about both the objective and the subjective...

JWo: But what we're trying to avoid is the reductive. Which means that always the multiple is present, that there is more than one thing to see about everything you see.

KE: Right, when he discusses that he talks about some of Borges writings and how they are very encyclopedic and [how] he goes through and
categorizes and recategorizes, it's very subjective...

JWo But the key thing in Borges is that the entry that was there last time in the encyclopedic is gone when you look at it again.

JW Or, as in the encyclopedic notation in the beginning of the Foucault book, we’re talking about an encyclopedia that classifies insects, you know what I'm talking about? A very active categorizing is, at least, very tongue-in-cheek, and you can relate that to what Judith was talking about relative to Calvino. You know, insects that look like things that belong to the emporer, something like that.

JWo Dogs that belong to the emporer...

JW Things that look like insects from a very far off distance, that's one category. I think that sort of playing with the category or description...

JWo Let me back up here a minute, the word that comes to mind is heterotopia. That these things, in the act of categorization, also defy categorization. They have mixed up places, that's what heterotopia means. I think that the implicit argument in the Borges and the Calvino and the Foucault is not that we should clear the space, but that we should impact the space. That until we can learn to accept the impacted space, we will be constantly in pursuit of the reductive, which is also, in certain ways, nonsensical. So when you finally record that path of the sun through the
course of the year in a particular room, to the exclusion of the garbage that comes in and gets swept away, to...you know what sort of stuff accumulates in the studio, you are cleaning the space out, you are not necessarily getting at the multiple.

KE At this stage...in the final analysis, which was the one on multiplicity, was to start documenting all of these incidental and phenomenal things occurring in the room. The investigations were seen as cumulative, beginning with Lightness, developing its concepts and qualities, moving on to Quickness, Exactitude and...

JWo But you’re missing the main character, who is kind of the strange eccentric who gives his life over to staying in one room and recording it. There is a body, the body that does that is the key player. It’s not the marks on the space, its not the knowledge one gains from the marks, it’s the story of the marker.

KE Which you can see in the Velasquez painting. One of the key interpretations of it is that it is about Velasquez, his position in the royal household...

JWo What you have to do it get every architecture professor in the school to come in day after day and make their mark, then you have a story! And after every one on the faculty has made their mark, then you have to go
have the janitors leave their mark, and get a dog in there to leave its mark. Accumulate the marks.

JW And then mislabel who made each mark! So that you have arguments made around them.

KE But don’t you still feel that the primary marker should be the artist, myself, who is occupying the studio?

JWo Well, I think that is one way out of the impass. You seem to be painting yourself into a corner; we are left with a thing where the content of these marks themselves seem to be of interest, but I don’t think they are. I think you need to get out of that clump, because then you are left with a marked-up room, you know, and that’s not the point of this.

JW Ultimately, you have to question -- maybe this would be the most useful thing -- you have to question the mode in which you are doing the investigation. You started out with a sort of description with Calvino’s suspicion of descriptive language, right? That you really can’t describe all that occurs. And I think you have to do the same thing with your own drawings. These are actually very descriptive drawings. But if you bring a certain kind of doubt into them or you take a certain kind of ironic take on what they are actually describing or on your ability to actually do drawings like this and describe a room, then you might actually be more in the realm
of Calvino.

MW One dumb way of approaching it might be, not what kind of light falls in the room, but what kind of shadows an individual might leave through the light which begins to describe positions of individuals and what's going on, leaving a trace. And if those silhouettes, whether they're embarrassing or perverse or just sort of curious in some way, that begins to create this other thing that you've been doing, will never be in relationship to the sort of pure analysis...

WS There is another aspect of it, that is suggested through this, that there isn't...there are a number of ways you've studied this, one is through photography, one is through drawing, another is this documentation of locating the sun...the actual designer's consideration, the instrument of the lens throught which you are looking at this, which that thing itself is in some way analogous to the body of it. You are constructing, over time, this way of viewing the room, not just the traces that it may leave, but the physical...

JW You're constructing a room.

WS The physical instrument -- it could be constructing the room as an instrument -- but that becomes a device for understanding the room. So you're not just leaving traces recorded two-dimensionally on the surface of the room, you're actually constructing a thing by which you can come to
know the room; which can take multiple forms which could have aspect of these [qualities]. I guess what I'm getting at, it becomes actually an act which causes a re-seeing rather than purely a documentation. It is injecting something else, kind of like an installation, it is injecting something else that the architect can do, it is injecting something else into the room that allows the room to be seen in a different way, and that is itself the device, rather that this device, that device, this device...A direction which is making much more self-conscious that thing which records the room.

AB I think the comments have been helpful; it has to be directive. It is fascinating the notions that have come up. Thank you very much, Kristina.
CHAPTER 4

LAS MENINAS: THE VESTIBULE

Following the investigations and interim thesis review outlined in the previous chapter, it became evident that the construction of an object was necessary in order to launch the project into its next phase. The "methodology for re-seeing", as proscribed by Calvino's writings was one of three starting points in this process. The physical device that would be created would be based upon three "entities" that would inspire or initiate its design and construction.

1. Las Meninas, the painting
2. The Calvino and the Foucault texts
3. The Salon and the Studio: investigations into the Calvino concepts

Together, these items would dictate the process by which this physical device would emerge.

The analytic studies that were initially done then become the physical instruments for "re-seeing" the spaces of the Salon and the Studio. Phenomenal and physical relationships between these seemingly unlike rooms are discovered through this process as the cerebral concept and process (the translation of Calvino's concepts) are transformed into physical form. From these dichotomous spaces, a network of associations can be defined that lead the designer onto the path of creative exploration. Calvino describes the contrasting images of flame

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and crystal in his book, Six Memos, "Crystal and flame: two forms of perfect beauty that we cannot tear our eyes away from, two modes of growth in time, if expenditure of the matter surrounding them, two moral absolutes, two categories for classifying facts and ideas, styles and feelings...[these elements teach] me not to forget the value of the flame as a way of being, as a mode of existence. In the same way, I would like those who think of themselves as disciples of the flame not to lose sight of the tranquil, arduous lesson of the crystal."¹ As such, the cerebral process or concept is further translated into the construction methodology whereby space is (re)created and transformed.

The translations of the Calvino text lead into a series of studies that were both abstract and measured (see Figures 1-17). The initial studies tended to focus on elements that could be precisely measured, examined, and subsequently described. Criticism about this process was most concentrated in the fact that these studies lacked the ironic quality frequently focused on Calvino's texts. Additionally, the absence of an object or an event as a part of the thesis was also noted. As a result of this commentary and subsequent discussions with thesis committee, I arrived at a program for construction that would embody all the elements of my research and investigations to date. A "vestibule" for the re-seeing of the Salon and the Studio was established as the a priori programmed element. This vestibule was intended to become a tool that would enable the designer (or any audience) to discover new relationships about the space(s) into which one viewed through it.
This approach led to two studies about the nature of a vestibule. The first was a series of boxes designed to illustrate the Calvino concepts of Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility and Multiplicity (see Figures 18-19). Each of 5 boxes was to express the essential qualities of one of these concepts. For example, the box about Lightness, then, must also speak about the oblique; the box about Quickness must also give reference to the quality of awareness and the passage of time. A parallel study was done that sought to impose the planar orders of one space upon the other; to fracture the Salon into fragments within the space of the studio and to distribute the space of the Studio into that of the Salon along the primary zones of occupation. (Note: these zones were determined by the placement of the figures in Las Meninas in their planar and elevational relationships, part of the first series of mapping exercises in the thesis. See Figure 4). Both of these exercises helped to illuminate the secondary elements of the program: the vestibule would contain 5 "spaces" that would reflect the interpretations of Calvino's 5 concepts.

From this, the decision was made that the vestibule, in order to be successful in the spirit of Calvino, must be a re-creation of the space of Las Meninas that was based on the previous studies and the expression of these 5 concepts. The two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional space would now be broken down into a two-dimensional model for construction and then built as a three-dimensional object.

The elemental conditions of these concepts were defined as follows: 1)
The concept of Lightness would be present in the phenomena of temporality and celestial movement. The model would have the capability of recording these qualities in their temporal form. 2) The concept of Quickness would be expressed in the foundation (both literal and figural) of the model that would reflect the groundwork and mental linkages that had been previously established. 3) Exactitude would be measured by the materiality of the object: the construction materials of the actual room in the Royal Palace would be translated into contemporary form and practice. For example, the stone/masonry exterior walls become concrete/plaster that is poured into forms, revealing the process by which it is made, 4) Visibility is grounded in the interpretation of concept and quality. It becomes the focal lens through which we view. In this context, the three-dimensional model as a whole acts as the vestibule for re-seeing. 5) Multiplicity is expressed in the political and social agendas of the painting and of the model. Popular theory maintains that Velasquez created Las Meninas as a vehicle through which to illustrate his position in the royal court and in an effort to equate the painter with endeavors that were then considered to be more scholarly (i.e. poetry, and philosophy). Therefore, Las Meninas the painting can be seen as a stage set for such depiction. Similarly, the model of the Salon created here, interpreting Calvino’s text through the analysis of the Studio, becomes a stage for the expression of the thesis agendas.

The following pages illustrate the process described above and portrays the model in its various stages: conception, construction and finished product.
Figure 18. "Boxes" (tools) for seeing
Figure 19. Tools for seeing
Figure 20. The imposition of planar orders on one another
Figure 21. Concept sketch for the building of Las Meninas
Figure 22. Sectional development of Las Meninas
Figure 23. Planar development of Las Meninas
Figure 24. The building of a vestibule
Figure 25. The building of a vestibule
Figure 26. The vestibule completed
Figure 27. Oblique plan perspective
Figure 28. Oblique view of the model
Figure 29. View of the east wall
Figure 30. Views of the east wall of Las Meninas
CHAPTER 5
SYNTHESIS

The millennium about to end has seen the birth and development of the modern languages of the West, and of the literatures that have explored the expressive, cognitive, and imaginative possibilities of these languages.¹

Calvino's text, Six Memos for the Next Millennium, is about literature, the book, and the qualities of literature that are specific to the development of language and mankind. He express a tradition of optimism for our development as a people and as a culture that has been catalogued in generations of writings by individuals around the globe. And while the personal histories, literary styles, and socio-political agendas of these individuals vary widely, there are transcendental truths in their writings that embody the five concepts - Lightness, Quickness, Exactitude, Visibility and Multiplicity - that Calvino explores. He asserts that these qualities are those whose tradition must be maintained as we embark upon a new millennium. It is in these concepts that mankind can seek renewed beginnings and enlightened understanding.

By transference of this agenda and an interpretation of these concepts, a methodology for re-seeing the spaces of the Salon and the Studio was proscribed. Development of these investigations lead into the specific programming of a vestibule with which to reevaluate the space of the Salon. The design and
construction of this vestibule brought forth new revelations into the quality and impact of the space and generated abundant material for discourse into the nature of this translation and the specific materiality and construction of the ultimate tool for seeing (the vestibule). Within the construct of the vestibule itself, the Salon, the political agenda of the thesis and its permutations of Calvino's concepts were expressed. Most successful in its translation was the concept of Multiplicity as it generates a setting on which to stage social and political agendas. This conversion is best represented on the east wall of the model (see Figures 29-30). It is this wall which occupies the background of Velasquez's painting, serving as a graphic metaphor for the elevating of the art of painting to a noble status in seventeenth-century Spain. It serves as the canvas upon which Velasquez creates his scene as well as announcing his political agenda. The translation of this phenomenon into the space of the model is quite literal in some terms: the east wall was created as a series of "props" that contain the various layers of the wall which is present in the painting, as well as elements from the Studio. Because the wall can be construed to be a window into other agendas than the depiction of the Infanta (as an initial study of the painting might indicate), its first layer becomes the framework through which other layers are viewed and understood. The remaining layers address the Ruben's paintings depicted on the east wall of the Salon, the materiality of the wall, the materiality and "windows" of the Studio, a collage of the multiplicate orders that are intrinsic to the Studio, and finally, a mirror which reflects each layer again and, ultimately, the viewer. As the mirror in the Velasquez
painting reflects the unseen and creates an oscillating effect - "Here, the action of representation consists in bringing one of these two forms of invisibility into the place of the other, in an unstable imposition..." - so the mirror in the model brings us back to the unseen: the phenomenal and the experiential.

As part of the final thesis review, the concept of "vestibule" was explored. Its application in the initial box studies and the final model was evaluated with most of the participants concluding that the boxes, as vestibule, were perhaps more successful in conveying the Calvino notions that the model, as a whole, was. The east wall of the model (the stage set which could be manipulated) was determined to be the most effective re-presentation in the model: both box studies and the wall were regarded as such greatly because of their simplicity of expression. This simplicity allows the observer to bring his or her own interpretations and experiences to the act of viewing and actively engages the observer in the vestibule.

The question was posed at the end of the review: if I had to construct a single device that would serve as the vestibule and yet embody all the Calvino concepts, what would it be? A machine? A toy? How would it function? After contemplating this, I concluded that to maintain the spirit and the tradition of Calvino, the basis for this thesis, no one object could be created to serve this purpose. If forced to create one anyway, it would be a box or a room that was completely without external references. At most, it could be lined with mirrors that would reflect the observer time and again upon himself. The importance of Calvino
and the resolution of the thesis is that there can be no one solution: meaning lies within the individual and the qualities he or she brings to the process. It is the active engagement of the individual in the activity of seeing or re-seeing that determines the interpretation and that defines the parameters of the vestibule.

Maya Ying Lin, designer of the Vietnam Veteran’s Memorial in Washington D.C. says this about her work: "For me, these projects require the kind of art that can communicate with you almost immediately and not be referential. The second you start intellectualizing [about the design], its lost...It’s the difference between telling people what to think and enabling them - allowing them - to think." To embody too much of the theory or too much of the concept in the product - in the vestibule - would be to deny the observer the opportunity for discovery and debate. The methodology for discovery lies in the conceiving and execution of a process. Ultimately, the true form of the vestibule lies in the individual’s imagination.

Who are we, who is each one of us, if not a combinatoria of experiences, information, books we have read, things imagined? Each life is an encyclopedia, a library, an inventory of objects, a series of styles, and everything can be constantly shuffled and reordered in every way conceivable.4

Author’s Note: Please refer to the essay in the Appendix, "The Relationship Between Language and the Imagination," for further discussion on the nature of the Imagination and the process of creation.
APPENDIX

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND THE IMAGINATION

Ancient histories record the world as having been of one language and the people as one. In his quest to establish a universal structure for an ordered reality, mankind effectively shut down the avenues for progress and created a logocentric system of reality. In such a system, the acquisition of knowledge, the opportunity for discovery and creative investigation become so limited that society may eventually stagnate. The notions inherent in closed systems imply singular hierarchical institutions throughout the various sociopolitical aspects of culture. Language becomes fixed and meaning a constant; if we determine that language functions as the impetus for societal development, the cultural organism is destined to turn back upon itself in a self-referential method that precipitates further redundancy within the system and the decay of the organism.

Lesson #1:

And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, 'let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly.' And they had brick for stone, and slime they had for mortar. And they said, 'Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may
reach unto heaven; and let us make as a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.'

Genesis 11:1-4

The biblical reference to the story of the Tower of Babel illustrates language and societal structure as they become mutually reflexive; each building upon the other to create order out of chaos, to make cognizant the qualities of Being that ground mankind in his reality paradigms. The claim that "only in order do things have Being,"¹ contradicts the concept that there is order in chaos. And while recent scientific speculation has laid a basis for an ordering structure to be found in chaos, societal development has long been grounded in the concept of Being being defined by order. The building blocks and structuring matrixes of society have subsequently established a meaningful system of symbols and signifiers that are universally understood: language. Adolf Loos asserted in many of his writings that language developed out of man's need to build; in order to build, an individual must be able to communicate to those with whom he shares a given task. As such, symbolic constructions and signs -- words -- have been created to facilitate mutual understanding and establish the potential for progress. The naming (the calling into Being) of things provides a groundwork for meaning that in turn is the foundation for construction, both literally and figuratively.

"Naming does more than attach labels to things, it orders things relative to a system of concepts,"² This conceptual system has long been linked to creation, the order of known things being dependent upon the order of given concepts. Such a notion assumes the existence of pre-established patterns of recognition
and the ability, or rather the desire, to share these concepts with one another. The act of creating then serves a pivotal role both in the development of language as well as the development of a society and is contingent upon imaginative capabilities. The naming of a thing becomes a unifying agent and is elemental to the universalization of meaning. And so the men and women of biblical Genesis, aspiring to a universal societal system that paralleled their unified patterns of speech, named themselves and completed the evolution of creative acts culminating in the building of the Tower of Babel. Thus the monument of language became inextricably linked with the monument of building.

Lesson #2:

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

Genesis 11:5-7

Having witnessed that mankind effectively completing, or closing, his societal development and language system, the Lord intervened. The people of Babel had created a singular system of language which manifested itself in a singular positioning of society. By inference, we can presume that this pattern extended itself to a singular authority structure, one that did not necessarily position God at its apex. Having so focused himself on his own achievements, seeking to build a
monument to himself in an effort to attain heaven rather than to glorify God, mankind found himself at the mercy of a God. And so, He did "there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." But the rationale for such a divine act can be seen to go further than this initial analysis.

"Progress is the exploration of our own error. Evolution is a consolidation of what have always begun as errors." Having closed his systematic ordering of reality, mankind assumed himself to have attained complete and universal knowledge and negated the possibility for his own error. The acquisition of knowledge operates not in a finite system of language, but in a system where gaps exist in the continuity of expression and understanding. These gaps become the inspiration and source of knowledge. To extending this line of thought, we can observe that these gaps are also the arena in which the creative act of the infinite universe and the imagination dwell. Scientific research is based upon the existence of these interruptions in the language system: inconsistencies and abnormalities in the nature of reality and the quest for resolution are the inspirational factors about which scientific investigation is generated. If the order of reality (as we understand it) is grounded in the structure of language, only in an infinite system can the language of science be exercised. Scientific investigation seeks to ultimately close the system by showing the total interconnectivity of the universe, but ironically would be unable to operate in such a system. Similarly does the imagination function, manipulating the knowns and unknowns and examining the errors of man. "All those who imagine take parts of the universe
which have not been connected hitherto and enlarge [our understanding] of the universe by showing them to be connected. 

It is therefore essential for these gaps - the structural spectrum for the activities of the imagination, creativity, discovery and the acquisition of knowledge - to exist in language in order for evolution and progress to occur. And so we find that the Lord did "there confound their language," releasing the people from the binding chains of a singular and finite system, affording them the aptitude for error and evolution. Had He not, the cultural organism of Babel would have decayed by becoming a self-referential system that was unable to transcend the established limits of their world.

Lesson #3:

So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad the face of all the earth.

**Genesis 11:8-9**

The "linguistic certitude" of the people of Babel vanished when mankind found himself spread across the lands of the earth, unable to communicate with his neighbor. This liberation of man from the singular authority afforded him again the experience of learning. The evolutionary cycle would be renewed: having suffered from the self-destructive cycle of an ordered reality, the Lord's intervention, which resulted in confusion in the meaning of language, He provided
mankind with the ability to (re)construct his reality. The opportunity for error had been realized: the linguistic gap provided a vehicle for the imagination, creativity and intellectual discourse. The world became a blank canvas awaiting the revelations of the creative mind. The creative person would then perform as "a divine agent of change," and engage once more in the process of defining order and establishing meaning.

Evaluation of contemporary society reveals that many factions of it are beginning to function in a similar manner to that of the people of Babel. Scientific discovery and the accumulation of knowledge seem to be increasing at an exponential rate. The peoples of the earth are, once again, able to universally communicate with one another as individuals and cultures become multilingual and as English establishes itself as the dominant language in international trade and commerce. Cultural exchange is mediating the distinctions between societal structures, precipitating an identity crisis on multiple fronts. We must question whether or not we climbing inexorably towards a finite system of language and society in our aspirations for a unified, cohesive world-state? Seeking to know the universe, are we, in effect, closing the evolutionary path?

It would seem unlikely at the this time. Scientific investigation, while proceeding along at an historical rate, is opening more doors for discovery than it is closing. The proverbial quote, "the more we discover, the less we know," seems to have manifested itself in all aspects of cultural expression. Discovery and exploration are, on all these fronts, pursuing paths that widen the matrixes for
creative investigation. The gaps of the language system are widening rather than
closing: meaning is no longer constant, the definition of words and concepts
fluctuate as polysemic thought reveals itself in the contracts of our language(s).
Although it would appear that efforts are being made by many, none have been
able to reestablish the linguistic certitude of pre-Babelian culture. The structural
spectrum that is the inspiration for and the instrument of the imagination still
flourishes, giving rise to the potential for creativity and error.

THE MOTIVATION OF THE CREATIVE WORK

If we are to situate the realm of creativity in the unbridgeable gaps of our
language structures, then it can be seen that the motivation for the creative work
lies in the desire to bridge these gaps in an effort to establish a structure that
orders our lives and defines the parameters of our Being. As previously argued,
these gaps - the indeterminacies of language - are the structural spectrum for the
activities of the imagination: creativity, discovery and the acquisition of knowledge.
These activities take place in the abyss that becomes the canvas of the mind. A
canvas upon which we build our understanding of reality through a constant
layering of information and the exploration of potential. The experiential becomes
tandamount to progress and growth. Italo Calvino, in his book Six Memos for the
Next Millennium, argues that "the artist's imagination is a world of potentialities that
no work will succeed in realizing." So too it is with the minds of scientists,
authors, philosophers; each individual's imagination encompasses potentials that
can never be fully realized. If such is the case, we must question the motivation behind their endeavors.

Traditionally, it would seem that mankind's endeavors have been about progress. “Progress is the exploration of our own error. Evolution is a consolidation of what have always begun as errors.” It can be demonstrated that error is the result of our many and varied pursuits; pursuits that manifest themselves in the activities of the imagination. The product of such pursuits is dichotomous in nature: 1) production as the pursuit of knowledge, 2) production as the pursuit of understanding, or 3) production as the pursuit of the "other" (simply stated, the expression of "what is"). These pursuits all posit themselves within the creative realm, but serve different purposes. In the pursuit of knowledge, the end is more important than the means. Knowledge elevates itself above all else, attempting to establish itself as a Totality, a cosmos of finite facts and figures. The means serves as a way to achieve the end in the pursuit of understanding. And for the pursuit of expression, the means outweighs the end. Creative expression becomes a statement of condition.

By example, we can often observe the idiom that "the more we know, the less we understand." Similarly, it can be argued that the more we understand, the less we know. Calvino goes to great lengths in his book to demonstrate the frustration (and perhaps the ultimate futility) in the singular pursuit of knowledge, particularly as it has been divorces itself from the pursuits of understanding and expression. He describes the twentieth-century novelist Carlo Emilio Gadda in his
attempts to convey an encyclopedic and simultaneous presence "of the most disparate elements that converge to determine every event." An engineer by training, Gadda's obsessions and neurosis lay in his passion for knowledge, to the extent that he removes himself from objectivity and plunges into a world of "irritated subjectivity." Calvino elucidates this condition, "Even before science had officially recognized that observation intervenes in some way to modify the phenomenon being observed, Gadda knew that 'to know is to insert something into what is real, and hence to distort reality.'" His quest for knowledge negated his objectivity and results in the distortion of his reality, his concept of Being and his ability to (re)present. The quest for knowledge becomes a torturous affair for Gadda, fragmenting his writings by his conviction that "this knowledge of things - seen as the convergence of infinite relationships, past and present, real or possible - demands that everything should be precisely named, described, and located in space and time." For Gadda, the pursuit of knowledge produces an emptiness, where existence is devoid of the pleasures of simplicity.

Marco Polo describes a bridge, stone by stone. "But which is the stone that supports the bridge?"
Kublai Khan asks.
"The bridge is not supported by one stone or another," Marco answers, "but by the line of the arch that they form."
Kublai Khan remains silent, reflecting. Then he adds:
"Why do you speak to me of the stones? It is only the arch that matters to me."
Polo answers: "Without stones there is no arch."

-Italo Calvino, Invisible Cities
The contrast between the pursuit of knowledge and the pursuit of understanding can be illustrated in the dialogue between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan. As one of the explorers serving the great Emperor Khan, Polo travels throughout the vast territories of the empire, bringing back descriptions of the cities, their smells, their peoples, their architecture...to the emperor so that he may know his empire. For Khan, "there is a sense of emptiness that comes over [him] at evening...It is the desperate moment when we discover that this empire, which has seemed to us the sum of all wonders, is an endless, formless ruin."\textsuperscript{11} It is only through Polo's accounts that Khan can begin to transcend the limitations inherent in the pursuit of knowledge and establish an understanding of his domain. The cities he visits are likened to dreams by Polo: the fabric of desire and fear, spoken in the signs of change and reflection. Unlike Khan, whose intellectual tendencies reduce knowledge (and his empire) to a geometric and rationalized arrangement of form resulting in nothingness.\textsuperscript{12} Polo's explorations are orchestrated in the pursuit of understanding. Confronted with the indeterminacies and barriers of language as he travels from city to city, he realizes through the wisdom of a sage, that " 'Signs form a language, but not the one you think you know.' I realized I had to free myself from the images which in the past had announced to me the things I sought: only then would I succeed in understanding the language."\textsuperscript{13} The more he understands the languages and the structure of the cities he encounters, the less he knows the peculiarities of each as their distinctive qualities fade into a common dream of images. As illustrated in his
description of a bridge, the action and importance of the arch is not embodied in
the specific knowledge of each stone, but in the understanding that it is only
through the combinatorial efforts of the stones that the arch may function. Kublai
Khan’s insistence on the attaining the specific knowledge of a thing precludes his
ability to understand that thing.

A way a lone a last a loved a long the riverrun, past Eve and
Adam’s, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a
commodius vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and
Environns.

-James Joyce, *Finnegan’s Wake*

Joyce’s *Finnegan’s Wake* can be demonstrated as jointly embodying the
pursuits of knowledge, understanding and expression - a synthesis of motivation
expressed in a single, creative work - but for the purposes of this discussion, his
product as the pursuit of expression will be examined. Understood to be a
complement to *Ulysses*, a novel about the "day," *Finnegan’s Wake*, a novel 17
years in the writing, is about the "night." The traditional academic view of that the
book is that it is about Irish politics: a comprehensive collection of everything from
the Bible to politics to mythology. It is a statement about the condition of things
in Joyce’s world. Non-traditional interpretation of the work maintains, among other
things, that the work is about sex: love, passion, desire and jealousy. It is an
expression about the relationships between men and women which are woven into
a complex, layered tapestry of language and form. Regardless of the interpretation
of academics, Joyce’s writings were, for him, an affirmation of humanity. He
constructs an object of interpretation by deconstructing the traditional, coherent form of the novel. His language is one of deconstructive play, trace and image; a synthesis of the pursuits of knowledge and understanding manifested in the pursuit of expression. An expression about the nature of Being.

The question, then, must finally be asked: which (if any) of these motivations is a valuable exercise? For the individual? For the collective whole? If progress, as stated earlier, is the exploration of our own errors, evolution the consolidation of errors, is progress fundamental to the well-Being of mankind? To reflect upon the lessons learned from the story of the Tower of Babel, we find that the pursuit of knowledge, the knowing of the Totality of the universe, closes the gaps of language through which we are able to explore, create and discover. This condition is met with frustration, stagnation and a spiritual emptiness; one that without intervention is unable to be reconciled (also illustrated in the discussion of Gadda’s pursuits). Only throughout the re-imposition of an indeterminacy in language can this situation be resolved. Thus, a singular, transcendental truth cannot be realized. The relationships of human beings to one another and to their world are dependent upon cultural codings and the indeterminate structure of language.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, the creative work is about progress, but only insofar as it reflects the three types of pursuits discussed here. While it has been illustrated that none of these are successful in the pursuit of progress when excercised in isolation from one another, their combinatory effort frequently produces a work that offers itself to multiple interpretation; in the cultural codings of society and the
individual (for example, *Finnegan's Wake*).

Thus, the motivation behind the creative work can be understood as being about the progress of mankind in its most schizophrenic state. The production of pursuit must not bridge the gap that affords it its existence lest is forever close that gap, and establishes discontinuity in the human experience. It's condition must be palimpsest; one which does not offer any singular transcendental truth but offers itself to multiple interpretations. We must remember lessons of Babel and operate in the spirit of Calvino:

> The artist's imagination is a world of potentialities that no work will succeed in realizing. What we experience by living is another world, answering to other forms of order and disorder. The layers of words that accumulate on the page, like the layers of colors on the canvas, are yet another world, also indefinite...\textsuperscript{15}

THE SYSTEM OF CREATIVITY

It is necessary to pause here and examine the relationship between the creative act and its inspiration. As Calvino illustrates above, there is a world of paradox and infinite conflict between the source of inspiration (the imagination) and the resultant product. Furthermore, our interpretation and understanding of the creative product is colored by the experiential and by the socio-political paradigms in which we daily operate. We are presented with an expansive gulf between these worlds that frequently appears to be unsurmountable. The gap between such worlds can be likened to the gap in language which has been the focus of this discussion. Both gaps exist in dimensions parallel to their respective paradigms: the ideal world and the perfectly communicative and illustrative language. But are
both gaps inherent to these systems?

The necessity of the language gap as being an essential element to progress has been discussed: it is within this gap that the motivation for the creative work lies. It is here that the very existence of the imagination is made possible and its potential power realized. Frequently, it would seem, the creative product lacks the theoretical conviction and spirit that is present in the creative inspiration and process. The conflict between the creative process and the creative product is becoming increasingly pronounced in our late twentieth-century practice of "self-awareness" and self-criticism. The consciousness of the conflicting orders of these worlds - the world of the imagination, the world of experience, and the world of the creative work - is further compounded by the [comparatively] recent awareness of the concept and the existence of the "Other." It would seem appropriate, therefore, to examine the conflict between the creative process and the creative act or product, questioning the autonomy and role of each in the consciousness of the individual and of society.

The system of creativity and the function of the imagination can be broken down into four categories:

1. The Theoretical Framework
2. The Creative Act
3. The Object
4. The Interpretation

The relative autonomy of these categories is highly dependent upon where each
is placed with relationship to the imagination or to the imaginative gap of the
language structure. It can be argued that each step in the process of creating is
sequential and dependent upon the constitution of the preceeding categories. If
so, does autonomy exist in such a system and does the process becomes a self-
referential construct? Assuming such a paradigm, the gaps spoken of earlier
would not exist, and the interpretation of the object, by both the individual and by
society, would directly reflect the theoretical framework of the creator. But, I would
argue that most, if not all, of us would have experienced this type of system to be,
in fact, full of discontinuities and incongruencies. It is instead a series of ruptures
and distinctions consisting of parallel orders of the imaginative construct.

"Each man has an aim in life, a leading motive; that's so, isn't it...I chose
the hardest path, I made my choice deliberately. A man is what he wills himself
to be."¹⁶ Garcin, a character in Jean-Paul Sartre's play Huis Clos, makes the
above statements in response to a discussion with his "cellmates" in Hell. He
argues that given a motivation to action, an individual should accordingly be
presented with a path or methodology that will dictate his or her course of action.
Each person's role in the system of society is defined by this course of action
which is dictated upon 1.) motivation and 2.) a theoretical framework. But the
conflict between theory and action is practically unavoidable. In another of his
plays, Les Mains Sales, Sartre addresses this debate, examining the paradox
between the intellectual construct and the desire or the need for action. In the
play, a young man of great respectable ability and great theoretical conviction is
torn between a call to action by his companions (his role) and the persuasive logic of theoretical reasoning. Instructed by his peers to murder a member of his own political party, he is confronted with the conflict between the necessity for action (the act of murder) and theoretical convictions he maintains. The irony of the situation furthers itself when he discovers that the man he must kill is committed to the same theoretical framework as himself. The condemned man, reasoning with the young man for the preservation of his life, asserts that only a person with no imagination has the ability to kill, as only he would be unable to imagine the potential consequences of such actions. The man who possesses the potential of the imagination is subject to the conflict between theory and action.

In this example, the tenuous relationship between the first two categories of the creative system - the theoretical framework and the creative act - is examined. The creative work can also be defined as such. Many artists maintain some theoretical framework which, in part, dictates the process by which they create and produce. Whether the relationship between theory and production is a conscious act or not depends upon the individual. Most certainly experience periods of creative inspiration and production that are seemingly autonomous to the theoretical dictums of the artist. And frequently, the process of creation can help illuminate and define the parameter of these theories. As such, the argument can be made that, while not exclusively so, these first two categories (theory and action) are mutually dependent phenomenon. When consciously assuming the role of a creator, the artist accepts the role that the societal system imposes and
is subsequently burdened with the responsibility of operating in a conceptually inspired construct.

The relationship between the object (the created work), process and theory is not always so well defined. Whether by intent or not, the products of the imaginative processes frequently do not communicate nor express the theoretical rigor behind them. A peculiar autonomy begins to present itself as a product is created. This may very well express the conflict between intent and process and reflect the circumstantial element inherent in the creative act. As well, it may be a deliberate choice on the part of the artist to not directly or literally reflect his or her theoretical framework in the created product.

"The best work is not the work that takes the most sacrifices. It's the work in which you can best succeed."^17 But what is success and what price does it extract? Is it the gap that occurs in the sequential system and transitional logic of the creative system? Or is it the burden of carrying the message (the theory) from conception to realization to interpretation? For the condemned man in Sartre's *Les Mains Sales*, success is the ability to maintain and complete a theoretical framework. It is the ability to act against the societal mandates and uphold the morality of the individual. As such, the theoretical framework of the individual may not be directly reflected in his actions, or in the context of this discussion, in the creative product. This situation does not reflect upon the inability of the artist to express the theory or the process, and frequently may better serve the ultimate goals of an artist than the unsuccessful and literal construction of the theoretical
framework. In this context, the creative work becomes an interpretation of his own theories by the artist.

The fourth category, interpretation, seems to exist as an autonomous phenomenon as well. Here lies the arena in which the subjective may play its greatest role. It is here that the parallel orders of this imaginative system become most evident. Given that an artist has elected to not directly express the theoretical parameters and processual constructs of his creation, the observer and the audience is left with limited "hands-on" knowledge about the creative intent. Was the work meant to pacify? To accuse? To offend? Did the artist consciously choose to portray society in a cynical or sarcastic light? Does the form reflect function or some vague and vacuous theory? Is there some transcendental truth to be realized?

Regardless of our intention as artist, to express or not to express, to embody or to disregard the constructs of creation, the object or creative work will always be regarded and evaluated by others in terms that are wholly different from our own. The experiential and the circumstantial are inherent phenomenon to our perceptions and to our evaluations. Judgement is linked to the imagination by way of our ability to apprehend the multiple meanings and consequences of the creative work or action. Interpretation is generally far more dependent upon the observer's own theoretical framework than that of the artist. As such, it seems even more appropriate that the creative work remain autonomous from the motivation and the processes of its creator.
Author's Note: The preceding was researched and written under the primary guidance of Assistant Professor William Sherman in an independent study that was formatted to augment the primary thesis research.
ENDNOTES

CHAPTER 1:


CHAPTER 2:

2. Ibid., 9.
3. Ibid., 13.
4. Ibid., 21.
5. Ibid., 48-49.
6. Ibid., 42.
7. Ibid., 40.
8. Ibid., 59.
9. Ibid., 70.
10. Ibid., 91.
11. Ibid., 83.
12. Ibid., 89.
13. Ibid., 85.
15. Ibid., 103.
16. Ibid., 119.

17. Ibid., 119.

18. Ibid., 105.

CHAPTER 3:


3. Ibid., 9-10.


CHAPTER 4:


CHAPTER 5:


APPENDIX:


2. Ibid., 179.

4. Ibid., 110.

5. Ibid., a general term used by Bronowski.

6. Calvino, Six Memos, 97.


8. Calvino, Six Memos, 106.


10. Ibid., 107.


12. Calvino, Six Memos, 72.


15. Calvino, Six Memos, 97.


17. Ibid., 235.
RESOURCES

PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES


_The Holy Bible_. London: Oxford University Press.


**GENERAL SOURCES**


