

The Glance: Kinaesthetics, Emergence and Power

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Abstract: Why differentiate “glancing” from “gazing”? This translation and rendition of a text that has appeared only in Portuguese considers the distinctiveness of the glance in the Western tradition of visualicity, power, knowledge and gender. While the glance has been acknowledged in visual studies and phenomenology, twenty years on from the original publication there are few sustained attempts to consider its role in the repertoire of visualicity or the ways that the glance is an example of aesthesis: it connects kinaesthetic experience to knowing and to sociality or relationality. Foucault, Hegel, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard cite the glance as a flash (de Koonig) of power-knowledge and its exercise, generally as an attribute of masculinity (Hegel) or authority (Foucault). The glance is liminal foresight into the coming moment as a scan of the visual present as well as an anticipatory search. It expresses desire and is attracted by visual stimuli, knotting affect to visual physiology. The glance is additionally tactical, anxious and furtive, an exercise in counterpower that seeks to “rotate the world on its axis” (Buber) in a way that repositions subjects and objects of the glance in a relation.

Le coup d’œil est souvent trompeur, pas le coup de nez.

— — Philippe Sollers

A glance, *coup d’oeil*, *blik*, *olhadela*,^[1] is a different habit and gesture from the gaze. But it is difficult, especially across languages, to agree on exactly what we mean when we refer to the glance. Why then do we persist in referencing a certain supplementarity to normative notions of visualicity (Shields, 2004) for which we use terms like gaze, the look, and seeing?

Gaze and Glance

Most approaches to vision and visual studies assume a Cartesian perspectivalism in which an ocularcentric subject dominates consciousness and the narrative. Even where this is not assumed, the purposeful, looking, gazing subject is the presumed point of departure for Western researchers. This normativity is pervasive enough that ‘a glance’ and ‘a look’ are easily interchangeable expressions. And yet, in everyday parlance, ‘glances’ are widely referenced and one may reasonably ask what logic governs this word choice. “At first glance,” as the expression has it, *au premier coup (d’oeil)*, is both the same as “on a first look,” or “at first sight,” and yet carries overtones of a decentred agency, not a purposeful and conscientious gaze, but a

cursory and passing form of vision that darts or pans over things in a manner that welcomes and searches for diversion and distraction, transitioning into a concentrated focus on some stimulus only after the fact of being attracted to or noticing it.

There is a history of inquiry into why the glance has its own identity and peculiarity apart from the gaze. It is not solely human, but embodied. Cats may be said to glance, but few frame the video captured by surveillance cameras, AI or robots as glances. We can also find a history of references which mobilize the term as part of wider analyses, sometimes thoughtfully, sometimes simply as a way of relieving or making an analysis of visual aesthetics interesting through the allusions of the word “glance” to movement and a more lively interaction with the world in contrast to the focus of the gaze.

For example, film studies has an extensive history exploring the “gaze,” but late twentieth century television scholars often employed the “glance” to explain small screen reception. Ellis argued that the gaze “implies a concentration of the spectator’s activity into that of looking, the glance implies that no extraordinary effort is being invested in the activity of looking” (1992: 37). Chesher adds that the glance is useful because of the “structured way of looking” established by television for its audiences. He notes, the “viewers’ attention can often drift, and has to be drawn back regularly... Content is segmented so that viewers can easily rejoin the narrative at any point” (Bennett, 2005: 10; Chesher, 2004). The glance is brief, rapid, never slowing. It is social and spatial in that glances are often said to be exchanged. One could almost imagine a networked geography of glances: a topography of flickering laylines that exert a metaphoric pull, reaching out and drawing their objects back (see Casey, 2000: 147), momentarily engaging the glancers in the practices of intervisibility.

Where they are differentiated in visual culture, the glance is often the subject of quasi poetic assertions, a foil to the careful and sustained analysis given to the gaze. For example, in Michel Foucault’s *Birth of the Clinic*, the glance is a complement to the gaze of doctors. There, the glance is of short duration and seemingly like touch and above all tied to minor decisions: it is a professional trick of the trade which reaches out penetrates, demystifies and releases the truth. Based on a practitioner’s experience, the medical glance is a technology of rapid diagnosis and triage which helps sort medically interesting cases from those that are mundane or not in need of professional intervention. For Foucault, the glance is uncoded, tacit knowledge required to parse and apply scientific research in the complexity and variety of the field of practice. In this case,

The glance thus does not scan a field: it strikes at one point, which is central or decisive; the gaze is endlessly modulated, the glance goes straight to its object. If it strikes in its violent rectitude, it is in order to shatter, to lift, to release appearance. It is not burdened with all the abuses of language. The glance is silent, like a finger pointing, denouncing...The clinical eye develops a kinship with a new sense that prescribes its norm and epistemological structure; this is no longer the ear straining to catch a language, but the index finger palpating the depths... (Foucault, 1973: 121–2)

Foucault’s haptic, tactile version of the glance is a kind of visual “palpation,” reaching out to touch, the forefinger pointing, extended. It is utopian in its unmediated quality — it seems like a *magical* supplement to his more incisive comments on the medical gaze. That is, “magical” as in the saying that “the hand is quicker than the eye.” This leaves us wondering if the glance is more than a speedy or small and compressed “look”? Isn’t Foucault’s piercing glance dependent on a broader habit of scanning the visual field around us? He

argues that the medical gaze implied an “open field, and its essential activity is of the successive order of reading; it records and totalizes; it gradually reconstitutes immanent organizations” (p. 121). And, precisely in Foucault’s citation of historical clinical practice, it is the glance as a decisive synthesis of knowledge and sensory data within the visual field which the clinic comprises: “It is ‘the doctor’s glance which often prevails over the broadest erudition and the most solid instruction [...], the agility of its rapport, this certainty of judgement that is sometimes so rapid that all its elements seem simultaneous, the whole of which is understood under the name of tact.’” (Jean-Nicolas Corvisart (1808) cited in (Foucault, 1973: 122).

In this analysis, whereas the glance is a visual form of decision, where exactly it is cast or directed within the clinic is a more specific scale of the analysis which is missing. The glance as a visual form of decision is spatialised in Foucault’s analysis, located at the bedside during grand rounds, but pervading and taking over the clinic to define clinical activity. The Foucauldian clinic is a controlled space of professional glancing. As if it was a verb, “to clinic” is to glance. The abductive, intuitive insight of the practitioner also is a metaphor for patients’ brief, structured encounters with the medical profession. The clinic is a theatre in which, day after day, the same symptoms from the community of patients are seen, staged, and a diagnosis made. The clinical space is pervaded by the glance, which is the figure of a roving, fluid, experienced visuality in the service of diagnosis. This is a practical form of directly sensed, experience-based knowledge, or *aesthesis*—the classical Greek sense of a community’s shared experience of self-evident realities, such as the visual symptoms of a malady (For fuller treatment see Shields and Hardy, 2024). As the precursor of Western theories of Aesthetics (an abstract theory of formal rules of how given objects “should” appear), it links the visible to memory, practical experience and shared social knowledges of the world.

The whole dimension of [medical] analysis is deployed only at the level of an aesthetic...in that it prescribes the norms of an art. The sensible truth [about the patient's body] is now open, not so much to the [doctor's] senses themselves, as to a fine sensibility. The whole complex structure of the clinic is summarized and fulfilled in the prestigious rapidity of an art: ‘Since everything, or nearly everything, in medicine is dependent on a glance or a happy instinct, certainties are to be found in the sensations of the artist himself’.... the essence of the clinical gaze... replaced by those that are to constitute the glance. (Cabanis, 1819: 126; cited in Foucault, 1973: 149)

The glance can thus be understood as a restless, scanning mode of vision which is continually in movement, only rising to conscious notice when something that might be significant is found, at which point it appears as if a decision had been imposed on consciousness. Lefebvre lampoons the disembodied and abstract approach of Foucault: “The pure, disembodied glance which is so perceptive that it penetrates (or thinks it penetrates) the flesh of other people is one of the great comedies of our age. Penetrating and perceptive subjectively – this glance is an objective feature of a world where everything becomes a spectacle for everyone, without any living participation” (Lefebvre, 1992: 353). My specific interest is in the unconscious, scanning mode of the glance as both visual and tactile as well as epistemological and pragmatic, that is, “seeing” the truth, and decisively. This is more radical, less static and unified than Foucault’s historical, medical *coup d’oeil*. It opens up questions of the scenopoetic staging of the visible—of what can be seen—and the occlusion of the invisible, what passes unseen “right under our noses” (Simone, 2001). These questions of regimes of the visible and the overlooked, or “visuality,” are invariably urban and political (Shields, 2006b).

A quotation from an ethnography of Seattle bicycle messengers attributes similarly magical power to the

glance, suggesting it disrupts the normal codes and regimes of visualicity:

...you've got cabs and buses whizzing in and out of the corner of your eye, but you keep looking straight ahead, because you got eyes all over your head. You take everything in, you don't miss nothing, the whole street and things coming at you from around corners as you round corners, and you can see things before they appear to the non-messenger eye, you can see through buildings, you can look down a cross-street before you even get to it, half prophesy, half feel, half hear the way's clear. You have to if you want to survive... (Breedlove, 2002: 3)

These comments from different perspectives suggest there is more to the glance than simply a brief or a mobile gazing. I take such magical understandings and reports as indicators of the relationship between the glance as a specific mode of sight to the virtual, understood as a class of intangible things and latent developments: real but not actual, ideal but not abstract (Shields, 2016).

Scan and Emergence

Whereas the gaze is directed at a focus, an icon, the glance surveys a field, a context. It is a rapid scan, momentarily bringing into retinal focus a peripheral movement in search of emergent elements of the visual field. Restlessly striking first one element then another, knocking them out of the context or background into the foreground, continually interrupting the current focus of attention. The glance is visual *flâneurie*: sauntering, roving, distracted by stimuli. Scanning the horizon, the literature of urban visualicity is packed with notes on the surveillance of the present for contrail traces of the future—Baudelaire's love interests passing by in the nineteenth century metropolis, Benjamin's commodity enticements of the Arcades, the hazards of any stroller. The glance, in short is an overlooked aspect of urban sight and foresight. Chaplin and Walker (1997:99) hint at this when they cite the visual artist Willem de Kooning who commented that the content of his paintings was,

A glimpse of something, an encounter like a flash. Fleeting sensations and observations were perceived via glimpses and glances; for instance, things seen briefly from a moving car. de Kooning maintained that his "content" was "tiny"; for example, the light reflected from a puddle of water. He described himself as "a slipping glimpser" because his perceptions were most acute when he was slipping, that is, off balance. (cited in Schiff, 1994; Walker and Chaplin, 1997: 99).

These diverse comments on the nature of the glance describe it as both a restless scan and as jumping from point to point like a moment of distraction or disruptive event which accomplishes a synthesis of seeing and knowing. The glance is both mobile and fleeting. The gaze might be understood as contemplative, critical and intentional, but the glance serves as a metaphor of curiosity and affection or even attraction – it marks the itinerary of those subconscious desiring processes which are most easily distracted. In this understanding, one's attention is distracted, that is, attracted by something glimpsed that intrudes on our awareness. Casey assimilates the glance to attention, echoing Bergson's notion of "attention to life" (Casey, 2004: 161). The glimpse thus trips and alights, only to be pulled on again without even being a conscious process. Thus, while the gaze is purposeful, the glance is a figure of an environment that is engaged with at a subconscious level of visual immersion.

On or In the Present? Liminal Time

The glance refers us to elements of our world that are not simply “there”; that is, they are not present in an actual, material or tangible sense. Unlike concrete objects that may be visible, both the gaze and the glance seek out intangible, virtual aspects of reality. The gaze may studiously attempt to find a greater degree of detail, of resolution or patterns of color, geometry or consistent sequences in the flashing of a light. The glance is described by Lyotard as scanning for latent objects and events that are “held at the threshold of the visible/invisible” (Lyotard, 2003: 112), in the liminal space of the about to happen, the becoming and emergent that is betwixt and between the present and the future. Not only does the glance “alight” or “point” or suddenly “strike.” Between these presences when the glance is a glance of something, these sources describe it as roving, scanning, seeking, in a liminal between-time. This interval and mobility are crucial components that distinguish the glance. It is kinetic rather than stable. “To glance” is a searching openness to detecting something unknown in the moment before this is lost in the mesmerizing quality of its found object, on which one might perhaps then gaze, or not, moving on from it like a child discards a toy.

Nietzsche feared the strange temporality of the glance which brings future and also past together in present moments of desiring, allowing glimpses of what is befalling or about to befall us, and what was. This entangling confounds temporal categories. The resulting “glance of eternity” inspires love (Nietzsche, 1999: 83) but also nostalgia or lost opportunities and crushed hope (see below) – the antithesis of joy. “Where can we escape the surreptitious glance which imparts a deep sadness, the backward glance? ...this glance sighs: ‘but there’s no hope of that’” (Nietzsche, 2003: 95). The immediacy of the glance is not a pure present, but a flash of the future-in-the-present, an alterity that Lyotard refers to as the future perfect tense, a vision of what is coming, “what will-have-been” (1980), what is befalling us. This applies not just to the flash but to the broader process of scanning that the glance undertakes.

Glances thus scan for emergence (Centola and Baronchelli, 2015; Gilbert, 1995), unpredicted outcomes, self-organizations resulting from the complex interaction of forces and bodies in the field of visuality (Shields 2004). Heidegger assimilates the glance (*Augenblick*, seen “in the blink of an eye”) to eruptions of insight in moments (*kairos*) that galvanize attention and new directions of acting (Heidegger, 1962: 376n2 ss.II.3). One might add that emergence is not properly *in* the present, rather it rides *on* the cusp of time, straddling the present and the nearest-future. Hence the formulation of the glance as “astride” the present. The moment, the becoming of a place in time, disappears into the future as an unpredictable and hence un-locatable emergence. The glance thus arms the repertoire of visuality of any moment with becoming, with the “about-to-be.” It rocks the gaze with its continual unbidden alerts, messaging change, bringing about a curious mixture of stasis and mobility. Stasis as it settles on a point of focus, and mobility as it roams kinaesthetically. In this sense, the glance attends to the actualization of what is latent or virtual in the present. One could even say that the glance is the closest way we have of seeing the intangible or virtual *in vivo* (Shields, 2006a, 2020). But by straddling the intangible and the tangible, the ideally-real and the actually-real, the glance is liminal and syncretic.^[2]

Glance and public masculinity

Closer to Foucault’s usage, the English translators of Hegel’s *Aesthetics* use glance rather than gaze to render

Hegel's assertion that the eye expresses the soul. A person's "glance is what is most full of his soul, the concentration of his inmost personality and feeling. We are one with a man's personality in his handshake but still more quickly in his glance" (sic Hegel, 1998: 732). If the eye is said to be "the window of the soul," Hegel is also suggesting that the glance projects or communicates affect and intention. In this manner, we can think of a person's glance as a vehicle or medium. As such the glance is distinct from its content and virtual in its intangibility in that it communicates a set of affects and intentions which form in a bundle a personality or someone's character. As such, the glance is a medium for a wider set of virtualities such as soul, attention and intentionality. However, the interest of the glance is its liminality as a boundary object that is both virtual and can also be specified as a particular physiological process, a material aspect of cognition, and a specific visual event within a wider process of everyday seeing. The glance is able to mediate between the virtual and material. It communicates a certain "capacity to act," otherwise known as "virtue" (we have an "insight" into the character of the other, of the man, *vir*), a line of flight to a different status or disposition which Hegel suggests we might predict on the basis of a person's glance.

To push this analysis further, such a bundling of cis-masculine and visual metaphors of knowledge constructs a certain Euro-American tradition of maleness as a subject with knowable intention, thus a predictability and discernability that marks out a candidate for social interaction on the basis of their known character, placing the "glancer" in the public sphere, etymologically speaking, the place of men (*pubes*). Hegel's glance thus has a gendered quality, the command of which might be called *public masculinity*. This case of *aesthesis* (shared, commonly and generally accessible experience) sets a foundation for Foucault's sociological comments above on the clinical glance two centuries later in which he argues that the medical professional's glance yields an authoritative insight quite different from that of the patients' whom we might imagine as equally deploying glances but guarding their privacy by not so evidently gazing about the clinic or waiting room and limiting their glances to focus on their own malady, uncertain in malaise, in *mal à l'aise*.

Counterpower

There is another side to the glance, that of its object, the recipient of the fleeting glance. In fiction characters are sometimes "silenced with a glance."

Sartre understands that the looks of other people can make us feel like we have less control over the situation we're in, and that having less control is frightening. When people look at us, it can make us feel like an object of their gaze, rather than a subject in our own right. It reduces us to feeling like how we appear to them, rather than feeling like we're at the centre of our world, and in control of our situation. (Davidson, 2002: 9)

Following Goffman, in North American rules of public behavior "we are "allowed" to glance at people, and acknowledge that they are there, but, as we all know, it's rude to stare at and make another person the object of too much attention" (Davidson, 2002: 12). Not only can the glance subvert power but it can furtively skirt power and the "rules" of polite interaction. It attempts to remain undetected as a covert tactic for gaining information relevant to one's own interests under conditions of surveillance and without giving itself away as an intrusive gaze on the Other, on those who might object to being objects of scrutiny. For example, Bennett notes that the gay and bisexual glance "has allowed for an evasive identification with those who are not

looking to be found [out]” (Bennett, 2005: 7).

While the glance has long been associated with power (the clinician) it is thus important to also link to the “counterpower” (Benasayag et al., 2002), to surreptitious visual tactics (of the patient). Sartre suggests that the “freedom of the glance” is the first element of a truly revolutionary situation in that it breaks with the surveillant knowing in clinical scenario and more specifically the regimented frontal staring of the crowd enthralled by authority or its spectacles (Casey, 1999; Sartre, 1960). While he misses the opportunity to investigate in more detail, the power of the glance defies religious and totalitarian injunctions against looking at the mighty because of its kinaesthetic mobility and tactical brushing across the elements of any situation. Casey, in his study of the temporality of the glance, surveys recent philosophers. He finds that “neither the nomadology of Deleuze and Guattari nor the model of revolution found in Sartre’s *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960) acknowledges this power [or freedom]. Nor does Derrida in his parallel assault on the metaphysics of presence...” (Casey, 1999), challenge this form of what Foucault aptly calls “royal power.”^[3]

Is the glance then the apogee of covert surveillance? If so, it is an element of visualicity that still escapes static approaches. Following Deleuze, O’Connor argues that an *anticipatory* quality is central to techniques of montage in cinema and these resemble the rapidly shifting foci of the glance. It engages with the displacement of sources of control and centres of power grounded in the present, as in Foucault’s panoptic model of surveillance and discipline (O’Connor, 2003). Displaced into the next moment, governance takes on a “cinematic” quality that is focused on what “lies around the corner,” or what “will be seen” like the art of montage in which cinematic shots and scenes are set up so that they appear to follow naturally from one another. This is done by ensuring that cues to the unfolding of the plot are provided in each shot so that viewers do not experience a sensation of dislocation or notice each cut between the shots in the montage process. This process works to anticipate actions that follow on from a present situation and to exclude other actions or responses. Yet it is difficult to engage with because of its lack of location within the typical timeframes of critical analyses. Technical surveillance devices, even security cameras constantly panning, have little of this sense of glancing, for even under algorithmic analysis, the machinery itself is a blank eye, offering nothing like a glimpse of soul.

Affect

The glance can thus be understood in a wider framework of exchanges and situations of social interaction and communication. These are better understood holistically as not merely situations in which signals are exchanged (strangers in the night, exchanging glances...), but as dialogical situations in which the affect of the various parties is “torqued” by the changing presence and engagement of multiple Others. This theory of “affect” comes from Spinoza’s pre-social scientific philosophy of the modulating sense of self and of empowerment, *affectio*, in the course of day-to-day life. The “exchange of glances,” for example, glosses the diffraction of selves and personal communicative spaces. Spinoza refers to increases in this sense of capacity for self-actualization as “joy” - “my heart leapt with joy” or “my heart sank,” something which Deleuze reminds us is a melodic line of emotional consistency which Spinoza sees as quite distinct from a given, reified emotional state such as sadness. Affective passage is an increase or decrease of capacity, *puissance* or lived

power, rather than one affection per se.

This brings us to a very different position from that associated with metaphors of knowledge and masculinity. The modalities of a visually-melodic glancing include not only the *tactical glance* that seizes insightfully upon a stimulus, but the affective glance seduced by stimulus which behaves according to a logic of desire. Such *affection glances* may also be furtive visual brushes across stimuli. And further, the *exchanged glance* is a tactical, repressed and visual form of sociality that engages embodied agents. As an element of impolite interaction, the gaze, and more intriguingly the glance, enters into this interpersonal play of affect and is a ballistic element of the social world of empowerment and disempowerment. In *The Seducer's Diary* Kierkegaard (2013) follows the moralizing tradition which casts the glance as “the lust of the eye” that chains us to the realm of the senses but also links it to secret knowledge and thus differences in power (Pattison, 2002). To be the recipient of the glance alerts us to another person's action and to their *potential* impact on us. To catch someone's eye, to engage the play of tactical and affective glances, is a tactical strategy of seduction. It brings the parties into a de facto relationship, even if acknowledgement is barely acknowledged or repressed. In these exchanges, tactics such as “revealing too much” may trap the unwary into betraying their interest and losing the power of detachment, or losing face for too obviously breaking norms of public interaction. A mere glance thus carries the risk of embarrassment and disempowering revelation.

Martin Buber's Cat

The glance transcends the human and non-human. Martin Buber in his theology of the *I-Thou* relation gives the example of entering a room and noticing a cat that gives him a momentary glance that is not a “truly ‘eloquent’ glance” received from Buber, but the anxiety of a being in the face of the becoming of the world. It is

Not (as we sometimes imagine) the gift of the truly “speaking” glance, but only – at the price of the animal's primitive disinterestedness – the capacity to turn its glance to us prodigious brutes [*uns Untieren*]. But with this, in its dawn and continuing in its rising, a mixture of amazement and of inquiry comes into it that is wholly lacking in the original glance, for all its anxiety. The beginning of this cat's glance, lighting up under the touch of my glance, indisputably questioned me: “Do you mean me? ... Do I concern you? Do I exist in your sight?... What is that coming from you?...” The animal's glance, the language of disquietude, rose in its greatness – and set almost at once. My own glance was more lasting, to be sure; but it was no longer merely the flow of a human glance. (Author's translation. Compare Buber, 1937: 97, 1970: 145)

Buber likens this exchange and engagement of affects to a “rotation of the world” (Buber, 1937: 97), a relationality between animal and human that lights up the world then seamlessly fades back into a neutral relationship as the cat returns to being a mere “it,” an object in the theologian's study, and vice versa.

The first tactical *anxious glance* is a key feature of the animal world and perhaps beyond. Cats may glance but what of the multidirectional stare of insects' compound eyes? However Buber's “speaking glance” suggests a relation of more abiding sociality and a visual turn-taking in the exchange between human and the feline. Kramer's gives a sense that Buber is describing something similar to Spinoza's discussion of affect:

While the cat does not speak human language, it does speak the language of a glance, an eloquent, speaking glance. We can “hear” this “speaking” when we gaze directly into the eyes of a cat sitting on the edge of a windowsill. Suddenly, we become aware that the cat is watching us, as if it has left its world behind and entered into ours. And we might feel, too, as if we have left our world and entered the world of the cat. In response to the cat’s “truly speaking glance” we are touched by the cat’s unique wholeness. (Kramer and Gawlick, 2003: 54)

Buber’s insight is relegated to a footnote in Derrida’s comments on the feline gaze in which he stresses its inscrutability to human analysis and its insouciant staring as a demonstration of the animal’s independence from human norms of looking (Derrida, 2008: 4–7) and from anthropomorphic projections of affect and meaning onto the cat’s action. This is despite their ancient symbolic importance to human cultures (Łogoźna-Wypych, 2018). Instead, Derrida asks whether the cat ever looks and engages in an entirely different, functional manner with its surroundings. Could it have a disinterested gaze, or is every feline looking a functional, anxious glance (Derrida, 2008: 159–160) to which we ready ourselves for its unpredictable but possible action?

Often this sort of “look” is subsumed into discussions of “body language.” Kramer follows Buber who translates the visuality of the glance into a form of speech. However, the glance is essential to the experience of the visual world as a lived, relational space-time. To make it a synaesthetic exile diverts discussion into semantic issues while at the same time it diminishes the visual. It is indicative of a kind of attention which can bring us into an engagement with the absolutely Other, including raising questions that cross the species barrier and challenge assumptions based on human gazing and glancing.

Reprise

The human glance is a boomerang thrown at the world which it returns to us. The glance is not just a sudden flash or decision of visual logic, but an element of a subconscious, mobile scan that is an overlooked element of visuality. This visual *flâneurie* is an affectionate, desiring gesture, a caress feeling for emergent traces of the future. Even if it is liminally “there-not there,” its haptic quality is that of an intercorporeal touching touch. Several moments of the glance have emerged in this survey that separates glance from gaze or look. Each have their own modality: the roving, unfocussed, covert, tactical or anxious glance that is a pervasive visual element that questions, seeks to detect and even defies; de Koonig’s “flash,” the alighting, attracted, affection glance; the authoritative masculine aesthesis found in Foucault’s decisive glance of the expert and the relational exchanged glance of sociality, whether between people or non-humans. All share a future-oriented and anticipatory temporality. In sexing the glance as cis-masculine, more subtle questions are opened about the diversity of the male gaze.

The glance communicates virtues, will, affect. It is a medium of micro-power (action on actions) and defiant counterpower which straddles the material and virtual, the present and immediate future. It is thus a vector of anticipation and influence on the world, not merely a mode of perception. Rather it is part of an ongoing receptivity and dialogical exchange with the world and with others, rather than a one-sided interaction at the world. As a kinaesthetic, “ballistic” affect, in the glance we leave our world behind and enter others’, as they ours.

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Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was published in Portuguese as "O que e que a olhadela comunica?" in the Brazilian communications journal *Contemporanea* (5:1-2) in 2007, periodicos.ufba.br/index.php/contemporaneaposcom/article/view/3499.
 2. *Syncretism* designates an exchange or mobility between the ideal and actual (intangible and tangible, respectively) as continuous actualization and virtualization. Syncretism is a porous, incomplete merging of different elements which preserves enough of the original's identities to not fully subsume them into a new synthesis (compare Shields, 2011).
 3. For Derrida, the "blink of the eye" is the key example which deconstructs the myth of unmediated presence by introducing a gap, or more famously, a "cut." This alterity undercuts the privilege given to the subject's presence-to-things as a metaphysical grounding for the self-evidence of the world as it presents itself to us and is witnessed to us through our senses. It inserts a fleeting instance of a dark, abyssal subjectivity within ourselves into this naturalized picture of objective reality (Casey, 1999: 81; Derrida, 1970).
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